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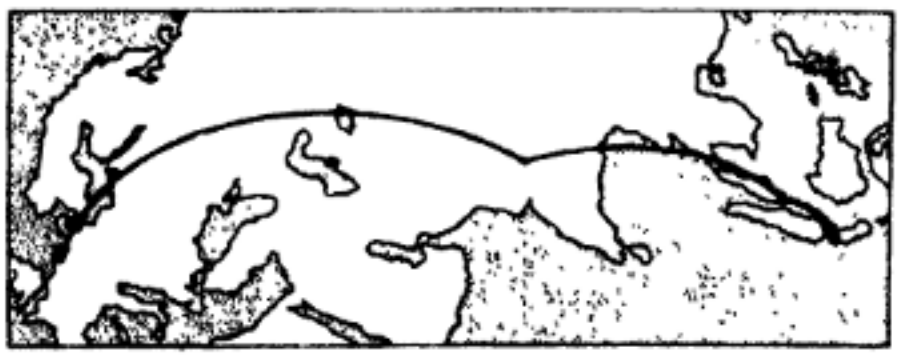
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GUEST COLUMN/CHANCHAL SARKAR

Civil Rights in a Democracy

Why are civil rights bodies in Delhi trying to nudge the courts about the anti-Sikh riots? It is to try and wrest a remedy from an unwilling government. Though the writ petitions have asked for the prosecution of named police recalcitrants and political *agents provocateurs* and asked for pension for the women made widows, there is always a prayer attached—the appointment of a commission of inquiry or at least a probe by the CBI. An enquiry should have been natural (see Bhopal) but it hasn't yet been ordered. The presumption is that the findings would be thorny for the government and the ruling party which have their eyes cocked towards the elections.

Meanwhile relationships between Sikhs and Hindus have turned to one of unspoken reserve. Far too many thinly-veiled ethnic remarks are now heard. Sikh children in Delhi schools are asking for transfers away from the city, Sikh property is on the market for sale and even if a recent estimate (150,000) is an exaggeration, some Delhi Sikhs have definitely migrated to the Punjab.

Public interest litigation lawyers hope that they can convince the courts that there is a case for investigation and get directions from the court to the government. At least three petitions have been put before the Delhi High Court. One on behalf of the *Nagrik Ekta Manch* sought the recognition of refugee camps which the government was ignoring. The court ordered the recognition. Another, filed by a journalist, wanted the prosecution of some policemen allegedly neglecting their duties. The third, moved on behalf of the People's Union for Civil Liberties and the People's Union for Democratic Rights carries the names mentioned in the PUCL-PUDR report *Who Are The Guilty*. The list has been expanded (and the areas covered) and prosecution sought of those named.

Actually the *prima facie* case *is* sound. The people at the top swithered over calling in the army and declaring a curfew. For the first two days the curfew was nominal and the violence careened on. The lieutenant governor (then Gavai) declared that he thought refugee camps would not be required! The home secretary (then Wali) gave figures of casualties that were absurd (like 5 on the first day). Police were not just absent, in places they joined in the arson and loot. Pointers show that the wrecking, looting and killing were not spontaneous but organised and some Congress(I) 'leaders' from the under-side of politics seemed to have had a guiding role.

The evidence for all this will have to be wormed out of witnesses who still fear for their lives and livelihood. But it can be done. As the government seems coy about appointing a commission into the riots (Mr Justice Thakkar is to enquire, in camera, into the assassination, Mr Anand Ram into the question of the police and the security of VIPs) seven good men and true have started an inquiry themselves. The chairman is S.M. Sikri, former Chief Justice of India, and the others are Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, Jajeshwar Dayal, Govind Narain, Badruddin Tyabji, S. Srinivasavaradan and Gurbachan Singh. They have started work at the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, visiting the blitzed areas and listening to whoever wants to speak to them. But they fear they will find the pinning of responsibility difficult without access to official papers.



If one looks at the range of investigative journalism done by the American, British, Japanese, as well as a number of Indian instances, it is clear that non-official enquiries can ferret out a great deal of information. There would be little charm in a democracy if they didn't.

Nevertheless they are surely on to a worthwhile inquest. If one looks at the range of investigative journalism done by the American press (Watergate is only one example), the British (the thalidomide case and Kim Philby cases) and Japanese (Kakuei Tanaka's finances) as well as a number of Indian instances in the last three years (Kuo Oil, Dhirendra Brahmachari's affairs) it is clear that non-official enquiries can ferret out a great deal of information. There would be little charm in a democracy if they didn't.

In turning up clues from the reactions of individual policemen, army officers, administrators and citizens of Delhi, the press did an excellent job. Having just done a survey of the first seven days' coverage in Delhi's English dailies, I am full of admiration. The signal failure of judgment of the people at the top, the delay in tamping down the violence, the misplaced confidence that everything would subside in a few days, the incompetence and worse of the police and the failure of the telephones and hence of the machinery of seeking help, the doings of the politicians, the overwhelming importance given to the lying-in-state of Mrs Gandhi and the internationally attended funeral—all these stand out in sharp relief.

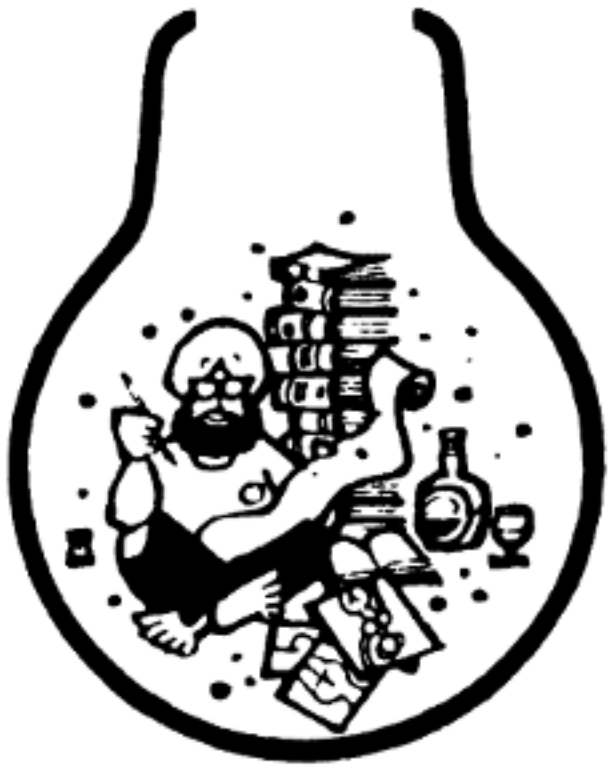
To depend exclusively on press accounts would, of course, be a mistake. Tapped out for next morning's paper, there are generalisations and perhaps even some errors crept in. It is for systematic enquiry to winnow and check them out. But the information and the reactions reported are invaluable source material. It is the press, too, which reported the remarkable response of the ordinary public with relief articles like warm clothes, medicines and food and the quite splendid work done by voluntary agencies like the *Nagrik Ekta Manch*, especially by young people.

What chances are there of the Supreme Court or the Delhi High Court taking an unconventional innovative and path-breaking line? Paradoxically a human situation, the composition of a bench, is often the deciding factor—and the stature of the advocate arguing the issue.

Jinnah's Love Life

The image of the Qaid as a cold, austere, single-minded lawyer-politician has persisted largely because little is known of his emotional life. Stanley Wolpert, author of *Nine Hours to Rama*, the story of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination which was banned in India has now written Jinnah's biography, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Oxford University Press). It reveals quite a lot of Jinnah's married life and the mess he made of it.

In 1916 when Jinnah was 40 and generally acknowledged as the outstanding politician of India and the symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity, he was invited by his client, friend and admirer, Sir Dinshaw Maneckjee Petit, to spend a few days with them in their chateau in Darjeeling. The Petit's only child, Ratanbai or Ruttie, was then a vivacious and pretty girl of 16. Jinnah and Ruttie fell in love. A few months later, Jinnah asked Sir Petit what he thought of inter-communal marriages. He expressed enthusiastic approval of such marriages as a step towards national integration. Jinnah promptly asked for his daughter's hand. And was as promptly turned down by the very irate Parsi baronet and forbidden to see Ruttie ever again. He did not know his self-willed daughter nor his more self-willed son-in-law to be. Two years later when Ruttie came of age, she converted to Islam, took the name Mariam and married Jinnah on 19 April, 1918 in his house South Court, Mount Pleasant Road, Bombay. Sir Dinshaw never saw his daughter again. The Jinnahs spent a short honeymoon in Naini Tal in the house of Nawab of Mahmudabad who had earlier given the groom a wedding ring for his bride.



Despite Jinnah being more than twice her age, Ruttie was very happy and enjoyed her husband's eminence. At the time the only Indians of the same stature were Tilak, Gokhale and Moti Lal Nehru. Gandhi had returned to India and was busy recruiting volunteers for the Red Cross to serve with the British army Jinnah was the revolutionary and hero of Indian youth and the only one who could give the English *bara sahibs* as good as he got from them. Soon after their honeymoon, the Jinnahs were invited to dinner by Willingdon who was then governor of Bombay. Ruttie turned up in a very low cut Parsian evening gown displaying much of her bosom. Lady Willingdon ordered one of her lackeys to bring a "wrap to cover up Mrs Jinnah." Jinnah leapt up from his seat and snapped at his hostess: "When Mrs Jinnah feels cold, she will say so and ask for a wrap herself." The two stormed out of Government House never to re-enter it till after the Willingdons had left.

Ruttie enjoyed the rough and tumble of political life. A year later she and her husband were manhandled at a public meeting. Bombayites raised funds to build a People's Jinnah Memorial Hall to mark his triumph over conservative elements in the Congress. Next summer, they were in London. Diwan Chaman Lal recalled Jinnah's "uninhibited laughter when telling a funny story" and Ruttie's vivacity. It was in London that their only child, Dina, was born on 15 August, 1919.

Jinnah made friends with Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald and Montagu but earned the hatred of Willingdon, Chelmsford and the new governor of Bombay, George Lloyd who described him as "fair of speech and black of heart."

Soon after the birth of their child, the Jinnahs began to drift apart. This coincided with the emergence of Gandhi as the supreme leader and Jinnah's breach with the Congress. He began to resent Ruttie's brash ways: she would turn up in her husband's chambers improperly dressed. At one meeting when Jinnah was fighting an election from a purely Muslim constituency, Ruttie turned up with a tiffin basket and in front of everyone said: "J, guess what I have brought you for lunch ! I have brought you some lovely ham sandwiches." Although Jinnah observed no religious taboos regarding food or drink, he was put out by this *faux pas*. However, till 1925 being Indian was more important to him than being Muslim. He told the Nawab of Mahmudabad: "My boy, you are an Indian first and then a Muslim."

Jinnah's total absorption in law and politics drove Ruttie to cultivate other interests. She began attending seances to communicate with the dead, wearing charms that had been magnetised and started taking drugs. Instead of confiding in her husband she began to confide in his friend Kanji Dwarka Das. She admitted to him, "I don't profess any creed nor do I subscribe to a belief." Her health began to fail. She turned to Theosophy and called on Mrs Annie Besant. Mrs Besant wrote to Dwarka Das : "Don't you see unhappiness in her eyes? Look at her!" Ruttie was then 25, in the prime of her youth and hankering for a full life; her husband was an ageing 50 immersed in his work with no time for her. The love that Ruttie could not get from her husband nor dared to get from other men, she got from her pets: she kept numerous cats and dogs, pampered and nursed them as her own children.



Mohammad Ali Jinnah (left) with Mahatma Gandhi

The Jinnahs went abroad together but only to keep up appearances. In 1928 when Ruttie returned to Bombay, she did not go to her husband's home, South Court on Malabar Hill but rented a suite of rooms in the Taj Mahal Hotel. When her husband came back from London, she was not there to receive him. Thereafter they never slept under the same roof.

Ruttie's health declined rapidly. She was in Paris when her temperature shot up to 106 and was reported to be dying. Jinnah rushed to her bedside. By the time he got there, she had got over the crisis and soon after returned to Bombay ahead of her husband. Thereafter she was bedridden most of the time. Her only companions were Kanji Dwarka Das and her pets. Jinnah would drop in briefly in the evenings. The last words she spoke were to Kanji Dwarka Das: "Look after my cats and don't give them away." Two days later she died on her 29th birthday.

Jinnah was in Delhi when his wife died in Bombay. Kanji Dwarkadas met him at the railway station and told him that Ruttie had expressed her wish to be cremated. Jinnah ignored the plea. Ruttie was buried with Muslim rites in a Muslim graveyard. M.C. Chagla who was present describes the scene. Jinnah maintained his reserve till the body was lowered into the grave and as the closest relative he was asked to throw the first clod of earth on the corpse. Then suddenly he broke down, sobbed and wept like a child. "There were actually tears in his eyes. That was the only time when I found Jinnah betraying the shadow of human weakness."

When Thousands Die

When people die in the thousands, victims lose their personal identity. It was only a month after the event that I came to know that amongst the victims of the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi was an old friend of my Lahore days, Giani Kuldip Singh (72) and his son Ravinder (37). They lived in the Trans-Yamuna colony known as Shakkarpur—appropriate name for Kuldip's locality as amongst his many other habits was to fill his pockets with candy before stepping out of his house to give to street urchins: he was a mobile *Shakkarganj* (sugar market of *Shakkarpur*—sugar town. Kuldip Singh had done many things in his life. He worked for Reuters, *The Tribune*, *Sainik Samachar* and taught journalism before he retired to devote the remaining years of his life to organising Punjabi litterateurs and providing amenities in his colony. He was much respected and loved by his neighbours.

On the 1st of November the mob came for the aged Giani and his family. Hindu neighbours hid his women folk and children in their homes and padlocked his door from the outside. Giani and his son decided to stay inside hoping their kindly neighbours would persuade



Kuldip Singh



Ravinder Singh

the vandals to spare their home. They did their best: they lied to the *thugs* that the Giani and his son had fled to safety. "In that case we will burn down their house," they said. They set it on fire. Father and son ran out of the blazing inferno into the frenzied mob and were battered to death.

Giani Kuldip Singh was one of the rare species of humans who had made 'not hurting peoples feelings' into an article of faith. His death hurt the feelings of thousands of his friends.



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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Wanted: A Consensus

All that is said by leaders of political parties during an election campaign is not to be taken seriously. But many things said during the present poll campaign have been unfortunate and should not have been said. The Congress(I) has particularly erred more in this than the others. The party's advertisement blitz in the print media—the bill runs into several crores of rupees—were in bad taste; those who wrote the copy seem to have allowed words to creep in which are not in good taste: for example, they have used *bhangi* to refer to a harijan and "taxi driver" to suggest a Sikh.

Still worse has been Rajiv Gandhi's depiction of the opposition parties as forces threatening the country's unity and integrity. He has blamed them for encouraging the extremists in Punjab and anti-national forces in Kashmir and elsewhere, suggesting that there is no great difference between them and traitors. These are observations not worthy of a Prime Minister. Moreover, the Congress(I) is to blame for most of the problems facing the country. And at times one wondered why he had reduced the election to a referendum on the Anandpur Sahib resolution which, he erroneously, equated with the demand for Khalistan.

Leaders of the other political parties may have been provoked to retaliate, but that can be no excuse for some of the unfortunate remarks they have made. Both sides have given the impression that one is not really to concede even an inch to the other. The result is that an atmosphere of confrontation has developed. This cannot but cause concern. For, from whichever angle one looks, the country has to have a consensus on major issues. Now that the poll is over, this exercise must begin.

The practice of narrowing differences by dialogue among political parties, which was an integral part of Nehru's policies, was made meaningless during Mrs Gandhi's regime. She did call opposition parties at times for a discussion and even associated them with the talks on Punjab and Assam. But these exercises always turned out to be part of her strategy to show that even the opposition parties had no solution to offer or that they too were exasperated over the demands made.

Seldom were they taken into confidence or given a role; the effort was to score points. Perhaps, the opposition parties had their views and did not want the ruling party to get the credit for a settlement and so did not try to find one; perhaps, they were divided among themselves and found it more convenient to make the Congress(I) a scapegoat to be blamed for all the ills of the country.

But whoever is to blame, some kind of togetherness on tackling certain problems has to be developed for the country's sake. One does not know from where to pick up the thread, but it has to be picked up; the warring posture that all the parties without exception have adopted cannot alone solve the problems that the nation faces.

Take Punjab and Assam. In Punjab, the problem is not as intractable as the Congress(I) has made it out to be. In his poll speeches, Rajiv Gandhi has himself said that the territorial and water problems are solvable and these are the main issues. As regards the Anandpur Sahib resolution, which is vague and at places objectionable, it should not present any difficulty in reaching a settlement though the Prime Minister has said that it cannot even be considered.

The Akalis have themselves gone on record as having said that the Anandpur Sahib resolution should be referred to the Sarkaria Commission which is now looking into centre-state relations. This is unexceptionable. In fact, it was Swaran Singh, Mrs Gandhi's emissary, who had made them agree to it. That was more than two years ago and Longowal has repeated this assurance in a tape-recorded interview with me.

As regards Assam, it is the government that has gone back on its word. It announced time and again that the cut-off year would be 1971, that is, all those who had crossed into India from Bangladesh after that period would be deleted from the electoral rolls and deported from Assam. The All Assam Students Union (AASU), which launched the agitation, did not agree to it at that time, but is now willing to do so . Political parties have agreed to this and the Election Commission too has endorsed the proposal to have a poll in the states on the basis of the 1971 electoral rolls.

But now, the government of India has opted for the 1979 electoral rolls; in fact, the rolls are under revision. The Congress(I) has done this with an eye on its votebank comprising a majority which has come into India from Bangladesh.

The Assamese would feel alienated further. And, the problem which now is near solution on the basis of the 1971 electoral rolls would again be reopened. Already New Delhi has divided the Assamese on communal and other lines. H.C. Sarin, now India's high commissioner in Kathmandu, did enough harm while he was adviser to the Governor of Assam in the late Seventies.

The new government should settle the Assam and Punjab problems because on this depends the future of India's polity. The people will certainly not accept the dismemberment of the country, but if to keep the country together we have to accept an authoritarian government, the remedy would be worse than the disease. It is only by consensus at this time that a way out can be found.

The new government should settle the Assam and Punjab problems because on this depends the future of India's polity. The people will not accept the dismemberment of the country.

A Colossal Waste

The cover story, *The Selling of a Prime Minister* (SUNDAY, 9 December), made interesting reading. The Congress(I) is going ahead full steam in an effort to launch its image-boosting exercises. And judging from the advertisement campaigns, it appears that the Congress(I) may walk away with a bulk of the votes in the elections.
Sumit Mukherjee, Jamshedpur

• I agree with the statement that "style makes the man and the party." But, spending crores of rupees on advertisements that "may be a little too heavy for the breakfast" for the people is a colossal waste.
Sujit Ghosh, Calcutta

• The article, *It's Congress(I) Time*, by Behula Chowdhury and Roma Ghosh, shows that Doordarshan has become a spokesman for the ruling party. Should the Congress(I) win in the ensuing elections, I feel that we should switch off our television sets, since most of the programmes will be dull, being Congress(I) programmes.
A. Mitra, Delhi

• Question: "Will your groceries list in the future include acid bulbs, iron rods, daggers?" My answer: "No. These have been always given to us free of cost by politicians and their parties. We have no evidence to believe that this practice will be stopped, either now or in the future.
V. Durga Prasad, New Delhi

Perceptive

Madhu Limaye's analysis of the Punjab crisis (*Communal politics of the Akalis*, 25 November) was impressive and illuminating. But while referring to the army operation in the Golden Temple, the author implies disapproval. Was it a rule by force? Can any government worth the name tolerate conversion of the holy temple to a terrorist base?
P. Subramaniam, Madurai

Apt Analysis

M.J.Akbar's *Dateline* (11 November) was logical, scholastic and thought-provoking. However, I do not agree with him that the Delhi riots were masterminded by Hindu fanatics. Such a view is biased.
Dibyendu Ghosh, Siliguri (West Bengal)



A Heinous Act

Khushwant Singh's *At the Receiving End (Gossip sweet and sour.* 25 November—1 December) pained me. While no words can be sufficient to condemn the gruesome assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi, it could be complacency on our part to take the ensuing eruption of senseless violence and communal madness as a momentary and sudden outburst of emotion and grief over the grim tragedy. The orgy of violence, loot and arson will have serious repercussions. Though we have options available at the moment, the time is ripe for introspection. It will be helpful to us if we learn from our past mistakes and view matters in their proper perspective. Communal politics has come of age and a majority of us are passive spectators to communal incidents. We have been critical of the role of Sikh intellectuals *vis-a-vis* Operation Bluestar. Now, let all intellectuals irrespective of caste, creed or community rise to the occasion and rededicate themselves to the cause for which Mrs Gandhi made the supreme sacrifice.
Abida Samiuddin, Aligarh

• For the first time Khushwant Singh has understood how the Jews felt in Nazi Germany and how Muslims must have felt in Bhiwandi and Moradabad. But how insecure the Hindus must have felt in Punjab before Operation bluestar is not mentioned. What has Mr Singh done for the Hindus killed by the Sikhs led by Bhindranwale?
Santosh Sinha, Berhampore (West Bengal)

• Khushwant Singh's statement that "such things never happened during British rule" is ridiculous. It is surprising that a journalist should have such little knowledge of history or of the state-engineered communal riots of British days. Perhaps, this yearning for the British *raj* and for "things *phoren*," explains why he preferred to take shelter in the Swedish Embassy than with his Hindu friends. It is astounding that not a single Hindu friend of his was ready to help him, whereas in our locality, no Sikh was harmed because their Hindu neighbours protected them.

What turned some Hindus away from Sikhs (I am not talking of *goondas*, touts and political agents who were responsible for the killings) was not the crime committed by two Sikhs but the irresponsible statements made by the so-called Sikh intellectuals who condoned the murder of Hindus in Punjab, putting a temple above human lives and alleging that only Punjabi Hindus helped the Sikhs during the recent riots. This policy of creating a rift between communities is typical of British rule, of which Khushwant Singh is an avid admirer. His statements to the BBC and the local press smack of opportunism.
Mridula Garg, New Delhi

• A much deeper vision is expected of a writer like Khushwant Singh. However, his statements suggesting that the Sikhs were sheltered by only a particular section of the Hindus can be equated with Giani Kirpal Singh's denial of having issued a statement expressing griet at Mrs Gandhi's massacre.

It is clear that there are no Sikhs with rationale and vision in the Akali Dal or other Sikh organisations. Otherwise, how could they allow a murderer like Bhindranwale to occupy the Golden Temple?
B. C. Biswas, Siliguri (West Bengal)

• Mr Khushwant Singh's article, *At the Receiving End* had certain objectionable paragraphs. He claims that the *Granth Sahib* was burnt by Hindus. That can never be the case because the *Granth Sahib* is also a holy book for the Hindus. Is he aware of the fact that many Hindus saved Sikh lives by hiding them in their own houses? To compare the Sikhs with the Jews in Nazi Germany is nonsense. All Jews in Nazi-Germany were removed from important posts and treated as sub-humans. In India, many Sikhs occupy top positions and are given equal opportunities.
Surendra Prasad Tripathi, Santragachi, Howrah

Unreliable

There cannot be any behaviour more condemnable than conspiracy against the country (*The Conspiracy*, 25 November—1 December). The Delhi police, like other policemen all over the country, are to be blamed.

Rajia Ashraf, Kanpur

• Since independence, the police have lost all credibility. People today are certain that they can live peace fully and safely even without them as their presence in sensitive areas creates more problems. I do not hesitate to say that a trained dog squad would have served more faithfully than Satwant Singh and Beant Singh.

A.A. Alvi, Aligarh

Praiseworthy

Madhu Jain's article, *Sikhs: Still Refugees* (25 November 1984) was praiseworthy. The wave of violence has ended and it is time for us to come forward and heal the wounds. Compensations should be given without delay.

Vezopra, Kohima

JP's Only Mistake

Kuldip Nayar in his column, *A Commission for Revenge (Exclusive*, 2—8 December 1984) has rightly asserted that the Kudal Commission has been appointed to undo all that Jayaprakash Narain did. JP, who is widely respected all over the country, committed only one mistake in his life: the formation of the Janata Party. It is only due to this that the ruling party is trying its best to undo what he did. The Kudal Commission's area of inquiry and terms of reference should be widened to go into the irregularities of all the government departments and projects.

S.C. Mathur, Agra

Informative

The cover story, *Ready, Steady, Go...* (2—8 December 1984) by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya was very informative. Only the Congress(I) is ready and steady to face the coming elections, though how successful the party will be is questionable.

V.N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

Unique Organisation



SEWA women at work

In *The Good Samaritans* (2 December), Tushar Bhatt presents an interesting picture of SEWA, a unique organisation for improving the conditions of women. SEWA sets an example not only for the Gandhians but also for the non-Gandhians. Under the able leadership of Ela Bhatt, SEWA will add a new dimension to the concept of womanhood. Its long-term programmes will be fruitful, provided they are not politicised.

Kartikeswar Behara, Keonjhar (Orissa)

Hypocritical

In his article, *I am Ashamed Today* (11 November), the veteran journalist, Kuldip Nayar, bravely announces that he is ashamed of being an Indian. It is no doubt a great thought by a great man in the wake of Mrs Gandhi's assassination and the communal flare-up that followed.

The point is: Has Mr Nayar just woken up after a long slumber, like the legendary Rip Van Winkle, to find himself "ashamed today"? Since 1947 there have been mass killings in India on some pretext or the other. The worst killings in recent history took place in Assam in early 1983 when about five thousand innocent people were butchered. Mr Nayar did not find sufficient reasons to be "ashamed of being an Indian" then. Did he not feel any concern for the thousands killed and hundreds of thousands rendered homeless in Assam? Did he not feel the same way when hundreds were killed in Tripura? Why these double standards? This is most sickening, especially when it comes from senior journalists of national repute who are supposed to be builders of healthy public opinion. This is not only duplicity, but also hypocrisy and smacks of communalism. It is expected that responsible people should be more consistent in their approach and more so while they write for public consumption.

Indrajit Gupta, Guwahati

Revealing

M. J. Akbar's essay, *Religion, Life and Death* (11 November) was highly revealing. In India, politics is very much entwined with religion. Unfortunately, today, religion is dividing the people instead of acting as a cementing force. As Marx rightly said, it has become the opium of the masses. Mrs Gandhi was murdered simply because she wanted to protect religion. In a country like the United States, where Christians form 88 per cent of the population, the Supreme Court held that children should not be compelled to participate in Christian prayer meetings. In India, soon after independence, the Constituent Assembly advocated a total ban on political parties formed on communal lines, but nothing has been done to that effect. With religious extremism assuming abnormal proportions, it is high time that communal parties were banned.

Thomas Kutty, Hyderabad



THE QUEST

How five men have been striving for five years to become Prime Minister

BABU JAGJIVAN RAM

For Babu Jagjivan Ram, the senior-most parliamentarian in the country, the quest for prime ministership has been a two decade-long dream. He almost made it to the coveted office in March 1977 and again in July 1979, but on both occasions there was the ironical slip between the cup and the lip. Babuji is now 76 years old, but his name has again cropped up as a prime ministerial probable, albeit hypothetically. The chairman of West Bengal's ruling Left Front and CPI(M) leader, Saroj Mukherjee, has gone on record recently saying that if a coalition government is formed at the centre, he would prefer Babu Jagjivan Ram as the Prime Minister. Whether a coalition is likely at the centre in the immediate future is debatable. Equally debatable is the CPI(M) leader's contention that Babu Jagjivan Ram would be acceptable to many. However, when a national party like the CPI(M), which is a major opposition force, makes a commitment, it cannot be taken lightly.

Babu Jagjivan Ram's quest for prime ministership began in 1964. After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Jagjivan Ram, who had quit his ministerial post a year ago under the Kamaraj plan, became a serious contender for prime ministership along with Morarji Desai. Babuji had been a cabinet minister at the centre since 1946. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly in 1946 and by virtue of the election became a member of the Constituent Assembly. Between 1950 and 1952, after the Constituent Assembly had finished its work, he was a member of the provisional Parliament and has been elected to the Lok Sabha without break since 1952. (Only the Revolutionary Socialist Party leader, Tridib Choudhury, can match Babuji's unbeaten record in the Lok Sabha.) The candidatures of both Babuji and Morarjibhai were opposed by the powerful syndicate in the Congress. They preferred Lal Bahadur Shastri. (The syndicate, which was dislodged from its predominant position in the party by Mrs Gandhi following the 1969 split, had as its important members K. Kamaraj, the then AICC president, S.K. Patil, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Atulya Ghosh and Chandra Bhanu Gupta.) Such was the importance of Babuji's bid for prime ministership in 1964 that the day Lal Bahadur Shastri was elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, he went to Babuji's residence at 6, Hastings Road (now called Krishna Menon Marg) at 8.20 am and accompanied Babuji to Parliament House, where the leader was to be elected. As per the party's wishes, Morarji Desai proposed Lal Bahadur Shastri's name and Babuji seconded it. Thus ended his first quest for prime ministership.

Babu Jagjivan Ram first became a minister in 1937. He was made a parliamentary secretary in Bihar that year. He had been nominated to the Bihar Legislative Council a year earlier. Between 1937 and 1946, he was a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly. Thereafter he shifted to elective posts in Delhi. He joined Nehru's cabinet in 1946 as the labour minister, a post he held till 1952. Between 1952 and 1956 he was the communications minister (the ministry then controlled the railways and the transport departments). He was the transport and railways minister in 1956-57 and when the railway ministry was first formed, he became the minister (1957 to 1962). In 1962-63, he was the transport and communications minister, till he was dropped under the Kamaraj plan. Prime Minister Shastri did not make him a minister.

When Shastri died in January 1966, along with Morarji Desai, Babuji made his second bid for prime ministership, though he real-



Jagjivan Ram with JP in Bombay in 1979

ised his lack of support soon enough and did not fight a losing battle against Indira Gandhi like Morarji Desai did. While the syndicate had supported Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1964, this time the leading role in making Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister was played by D.P. Mishra, the then chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. Mishra rallied as many as 14 chief ministers to Mrs Gandhi's side. The syndicate fell in line and Babu Jagjivan Ram also supported her.

In 1966, Mrs Gandhi rehabilitated Babuji in the cabinet. He was given the labour, employment and rehabilitation portfolios. After the 1967 elections, he was given the ministry of food and agriculture and after the 1969 split he held additional charge of the labour, employment and rehabilitation portfolio. Between 1970 and 1974, he was the defence minister and along with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi shared the laurels for the 1971 Bangladesh victory.

At the time of the 1969 Congress split, Babuji supported Mrs Gandhi. So crucial was his support that when the Congress (Requisitionist), the party of Mrs Gandhi, held its plenary at Bombay in 1969, Babuji was made to preside over the historic session and was elected the Congress president at Bombay. For two years, amidst controversy regarding dual posts, he was both the party president and a cabinet minister. In 1971 he, as the Congress president, led the party to the massive Lok Sabha victory which ushered in the golden period of Indira Gandhi's regime.

After the 1971 victory, Mrs Gandhi realised the threat which could be posed to her if Babu Jagjivan Ram continued to hold dual posts o. party chief and a cabinet minister. Taking advantage of the hue and cry over the dual posts held by him, he was eased out of the Congress presidentship. In 1974, he was divested of the defence portfolio and assigned the ministry of food and agriculture instead. While he was the food and agriculture minister, the crisis of 12 June 1975 shook the country. Mrs Gandhi had been unseated from the Lok Sabha by a verdict of the Allahabad High Court. The news of the verdict was flashed on the United News of India (UNI) teleprinter at Babuji's residence at two minutes past ten that morning. By 10.10 am Babu Jagjivan Ram had reached 1 Safdarjung Road and extended support to Mrs Gandhi at her hour of crisis. He remained with her till around one in the afternoon and then returned home. Ministers then had not become totally subservient to the high command as they are now. As in the case of the 1966 switchover, some chief ministers tried to play a role in June 1975 as well. Maharashtra chief minister V.P. Naik, S.C. Shukla of Madhya Pradesh and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna of Uttar Pradesh had reached Babuji's residence by the afternoon that day and they pleaded with him to become Prime Minister for the "interim" period, till Mrs Gandhi's appeal to the Supreme Court was disposed of. A strong lobby of senior MPs was also actively working for Babuji. He, however, chose to maintain a low profile. While the lobbying for an "Interim PM" (there is no such provision in the Constitution of India which says, "There shall be a council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister") went on, Babuji kept on reassuring Mrs Gandhi. "Unless Mrs Gandhi herself wants to resign, there is no claim from my side," was Babuji's line. Ultimately the laws were amended. The PM was put above the purview of the courts. The Emergency was imposed on 26 June 1975, a fortnight after the Allahabad judgement. In retrospect, Babu Jagjivan Ram's political maturity paid him dividends. Though he was close to Jayaprakash Narayan, he did not protest



Jagjivan Ram: perturbed by the Janata crisis?

when Emergency was proclaimed. When Parliament reassembled for the monsoon session in August 1975 (with most opposition leaders in jails) Babu Jagjivan Ram moved the resolution endorsing the presidential proclamation of 26 June 1975.

After the elections were declared on 20 January 1977, Babuji pleaded with Mrs Gandhi to lift the Emergency. His relationship with Mrs Gandhi had always been cordial. Mrs Gandhi, in fact, used to take more care of Babuji than any other political colleague. For example, in every meeting of the party's high command where as per Congress custom members sat cross-legged on the floor, Mrs Gandhi used to ensure that a chair was brought for Babu Jagjivan Ram. In the early Fifties, while he was on his way to Geneva, Babuji's aircraft crashed and he fractured a leg. Since then he has difficulty in sitting on the floor.

When the Congress Parliamentary Board



Such was the importance of Babuji's bid for prime ministership in 1964 that the day Lal Bahadur Shastri was elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, he went to Babuji's residence and accompanied Babuji to Parliament House, where the leader was to be elected. As per the party's wishes, Morarji Desai proposed Lal Bahadur Shastri's name and Babuji seconded it. Thus ended his first quest for prime ministership.

met on the morning of 2 February 1977 at 1 Akbar Road, Mrs Gandhi looked around for the chair which was to be placed for Babuji. The chair was there, but it was empty. She asked her aide, R.K. Dhawan to telephone Babuji's residence and ask him to come for the meeting. Only the night before the two leaders had met. Though Babuji had insisted that the Emergency be lifted, there was no hint that he was unhappy. When Dhawan telephoned 6, Krishna Menon Marg, he was told that Babuji would be reaching the meeting soon. In fact, at that very moment Babuji's letter of resignation was being typed At 10.30 am Babuji's aide, O.P. Arora, drove to 1 Akbar Road and handed over a letter addressed to the Prime Minister to R K. Dhawan. Arora and Dhawan were together in school. Without opening the sealed letter, Dhawan knew of its contents. He rushed to Mrs Gandhi and gave her the letter There was dismay in the meeting. Could Babuji be asked to rescind? Mrs Gandhi was upset. But hawks like Bansi Lal were of the opinion that the old man should be allowed to go. (It was Bansi Lal's stray statement that youth should be accomodated by denying tickets to old men like Babuji which had triggered off the process, which was later termed the "J-bomb.") After O.P. Arora reported back at 6, Krishna Menon Marg, Babuji drove to Rashtrapati Bhavan, to brief President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed about the developments. He had resigned both from the government and the party. At 11.45 am, while Babuji's car was leaving Rashtrapati Bhavan, Mrs Gandhi drove in The two leaders crossed each other on the road; neither stopped. Babuji, who had stood by Mrs Gandhi since 1966, had opted out. That evening, along with two former chief ministers, H.N. Bahuguna of UP and Nandini Satpathy of Orissa, Babuji launched the Congress for Democracy (CFD), a party which contested the 1977 polls on the Bharatiya Lok Dal symbol (*chakra-haladhar*, the present Janata Party insignia). The formation of the CFD was the first indication of how the Congress would fare in the elections. The events which unfolded in the

"Indira Gandhi Was Supreme"

Siddhartha Shankar Ray told SUNDAY

After the Allahabad High Court judgment which set aside Mrs Gandhi's election, nobody else in the Congress wanted to become the Prime Minister. Everybody wanted Mrs Gandhi to continue as the Prime Minister. In fact, I remember we immediately issued a statement—there were 30 or 40 members of the working committee and the parliamentary board including Jagjivan Ram, Swaran Singh and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed—saying that Mrs Gandhi must continue as the Prime Minister. When the judgment came over telex, I was at 1, Safdarjang Road and the Prime Minister took me to her dining room and said, "Siddhartha. I must resign. This judgment is against me." I told her, "You must not resign. There is no occasion for you to resign."

Within minutes, another telex message came intimating that the judgment had been stayed by the same judge who had set aside her election. I told her: "There is no question whatsoever of your stepping down We shall not have it. You must continue." Thereafter, K.C Pant and I prepared a statement sitting in the Prime Minister's dining room The statement was signed by all the leaders. Nobody thought for a second that somebody else should replace her

There was no question of Babu Jagjivan Ram making moves to become the PM. I think the people who hated Babuji tried to spread false propaganda to make him look ridiculous. I do not think that Babuji tried to become the Prime Minister. As far as I remember, the only thing Babuji said was that if Mrs Gandhi resigned on her own, she should not nominate a Prime Minister. Babuji also said that in case Mrs Gandhi thought of resigning, the next Prime Minister or in this case, the acting Prime Minister until the Supreme Court appeal was decided, should be elected by the parliamentary party and not be nominated by anybody. Perhaps, Babuji wanted to contest for the post of Prime Minister in case such a contest arose. However, whether he wanted to contest or not, I cannot tell you. But he signed our statement unhesitatingly, when I along with V.V. Raju and C.M. Stephen took it to his residence.

In such circumstances, the parliamentary party could have authorised Mrs Gandhi to nominate her successor. Babuji was not willing to accept that but was willing to accept Mrs Gandhi as Prime Minister. There was certainly no question of any race for prime ministership. Though Mrs Gandhi dropped Swaran Singh and Uma Shankar Dikshit from her cabinet after the declaration of Emergency, I do not think these were pointers to a power struggle in the Congress when Mrs Gandhi was the Prime Minister. I was in the Congress then. I think Swaran Singh was made the chairman of some very important committee. In fact, when Mrs Gandhi was the Prime Minister, until 1977, I was then in the Congress Working Committee and the Parliamentary Board and I did not even have the faintest notion of a power sruggle. Indira Gandhi was supreme and nobody questioned her authority, leadership and wisdom. In so far as the Allahabad judgment was concerned, there was no question of choosing anybody because Mrs Gandhi continued as Prime Minister. After her assassination, there was no Prime Minister. The Parliamentary Board had to move in the quickest possible time as the country could not remain without a Prime Minister. I am not in the Congress and I do not know what happened. Perhaps, because to call a parliamentary party meeting would take some time, the Parliamentary Board said that Rajiv Gandhi should become the Prime Minister in anticipation that theparliamentary party would fully endorse its view.

Interviewed by Tapan Mukherjee

days following 2 February 1977 can certainly be attributed, at least partially to Babu Jagjivan Ram. The formation of the CFD on 2 February was followed by a massive rally on the Boat Club lawns in the capital on 5 February. Mrs Gandhi's aunt, Jawaharlal Nehru's younger sister, Vijaylaxmi Pandit, joined Babuji in criticising the Emergency regime: the Janata wave had begun.

Babuji made a serious bid for prime ministership after the defeat of Mrs Gandhi in the 1977 elections. Had a ballot been held among the newly-elected Janata MPs, Babu Jagjivan Ram would have polled more votes than both Chaudhary Charan Singh and Morarji Desai (in that order). But history could not record the massive support enjoyed by him in March 1977 because not entirely democratic methods were used while selecting the first non-Congress Prime Minister. Initially, Chaudhary Charan Singh was not averse to anyone selected by the party MPs. He was ill and had been admitted to the Willingdon Hospital (later renamed Dr Ram Manohar Lohia hospital). His group, the Bharatiya Lok Dal faction of the Janata Party, had the maximum number of MPs. The Bombay lobby, which had seen in Kanti Desai, the businessman son of Morarji Desai a good ally ever since Morarjibhai had come to Delhi as the commerce minister in the Fifties, worked overtime to ensure that Babuji's massive support did not ensure him the prime ministership. The Jana Sangh faction (predecessor of the present Bharatiya Janata Party) was supporting Babuji. A large section of the erstwhile Socialist Party members too favoured him. And Babuji had at his disposal the services of the astute political manipulator, H.N. Bahuguna, who had been Mrs Gandhi's star-performer during the 1969 split.

The decision, however, was not left to the party MPs but to the wishes of the moving spirit behind the Janata Party, the late Jayaprakash Narayan. The ailing Sarvodaya leader was camping at the office of the Gandhi Peace Foundation (GPF) on Deen Dayal Upadhaya Marg in Delhi. The GPF secretary, Radhakrishna, the owner of the *Indian Express* chain of newspapers, Ramnath Goenka, former Socialist Party leaders Madhu Limaye and Surendra Mohan and the Orissa stalwart Biju Patnaik, were by the side of JP in his sickbed. The RSS leader, Nanaji Deshmukh, seemed to be present everywhere. While Madhu Limaye (who was being relied upon heavily by JP) and Nanaji Deshmukh favoured a secret ballot, the rest were advocating a "consensus" or, in other words, favouring manipulations to a democratic election.

On the night of 23 March 1977, Babuji hosted a dinner at his residence. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Nanaji Deshmukh, Biju Patnaik, Madhu Limaye, Chandra Shekhar, H.N. Bahuguna, Madhu Dandavate, Chand Ram, Mohan Dharia, Mohammad Yunus Saleem, Ram Dhan and Nandini Satpathy were the prominent invitees to this dinner which lasted till around midnight. The consensus among the distinguished diners at 6, Krishna Menon Marg that night was that ballotting was the best way to elect a leader. Babuji was reassured. He knew what the outcome of a voting in the Janata Parliamentary Party could be His quest for prime ministership seemed to be in its final, successful phase.

A cheerful Babu Jagjivan Ram drove to the Gandhi Peace Foundation at 8.45 am on 24 March 1977. The Janata Party's MPs were to meet that day to elect the new leader. As he walked into the GPF, many party MPs congratulated him, in anticipation of his impending election. Babuji had gone to the GPF to meet JP. He was informed that JP was too ill to meet him and instead Acharya



CNS

Jagjivan Ram with his wife

J.B. Kripalani met him. Babuji and J.B. Kripalani never got along well. Babuji insisted on meeting JP. He was told that JP would meet him at Parliament House later that day.

Raj Narain, the man who had defeated Mrs Gandhi at Rae Bareili, had played a game that morning. He had gone to the sickbed of Charan Singh and got from him a letter for JP, in which the BLD faction's support was ensured for Morarji Desai. While JP personally did not favour Morarji Desai, he had no option but to take into account the views of the leader of the predominant group in the new ruling party. Secret ballot or open voting was given the go by.

Babuji returned home from the GPF. Before the MPs met, JP reached Parliament House. He sat in the office of the erstwhile



Babuji's relationship with Mrs Gandhi had always been cordial. Mrs Gandhi, in fact, used to take more care of Babuji than any other political colleague. In every meeting, for example, of the party's high command where as per Congress custom members sat cross-legged on the floor, Mrs Gandhi used to ensure that a chair was brought for Babuji.



Jagjivan Ram (first row, second from right) with other Congress leaders at Bhubaneswar in 1964

A cheerful Babuji drove to the Gandhi Peace Foundation at 8.45 am on 24 March 1977. The Janata Party's MPs were to meet that day to elect the new leader. As he walked into the GPF, many party MPs congratulated him, in anticipation of his impending election. Babuji had gone to meet JP but he was informed that JP was too ill to meet him and instead Acharya J.B. Kripalani met him.

Congress(O), which was now turned into the Janata Parliamentary Party office. He telephoned Babuji and asked him to come to Parliament House. Babuji took sometime to leave home. By the time he reached Parliament House, it was too late. The decision, based on "consensus" had been taken in Morarji Desai's favour.

When the Janata Party split in July 1979 Babuji, then a deputy Prime Minister (a post which was given to him and Charan Singh in January that year) asked Morarji Desai to step down from the leadership of the truncated Janata Party in Parliament. He wrote a letter to Morarji Desai, which reached the PM's house around ten at night. By then, Desai had gone to bed. United News of India had managed to get a copy of the letter and it had been flashed on the wire service network that night. So, when Morarji Desai was given Babuji's letter the next morning, he had before him newspapers which carried the text of the letter, as reported by UNI. In that letter, Babuji had sought Morarji Desai's clarification on some aspects of the government's functioning and said that unless he got specific replies, it would be difficult for him to interject on the government's behalf in the no-confidence debate the next day. Morarji Desai refused to oblige Babuji. In the process, the Janata Party went out of power. Morarji Desai resigned from the prime ministership but for a while retained the leadership of the Janata Parliamentary Party. Later, with the support of party president Chandra Shekhar, Babuji became the JPP leader.

When it became clear to President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy that Charan Singh was not in a position to command a majority in the Lok Sabha despite the support extended to his party, the Janata (Secular), by the Congress (Reddi), predecessor to the present Congress(S), he called Babuji and asked him if he could command a majority. The day the Lok Sabha was dissolved on 21 August 1979, accompanied by Chandra Shekhar, Babuji went to Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President told him that he had 24 hours to prove his majority and become the Prime Minister. Babuji agreed. His secretaries, O.P. Arora and Triveni Sahai, started getting signatures of most MPs on identical letters which had been prepared for the occasion. At 10.45 am that day Babuji met the President. At 11.45 am, when the prime ministerial aspirant had just reached Parliament House to supervise the operations in which he had managed to get the support of 245 Lok Sabha members, the radio announced the President's decision to dissolve the Lok Sabha. Charan Singh continued as the interim Prime Minister with the support of the Congress(I). Babu Jagjivan Ram's last serious bid for prime ministership was foiled.

When the Janata Party was routed in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections, Babuji was the parliamentary leader. He parted company with Chandra Skekhar's party within a fortnight of the election debacle. He initially joined the Congress(R) and later formed his own party, the Congress (Jagjivan Ram). He contested the recent Lok Sabha polls as the president of his own party, named after him. The Congress(J) is reckoned as a force in parts of UP and Bihar. In coalition politics, the Congress(J) could play a role if the ruling combination requires less than ten seats to form a government. One does not know if the CPI(M) leader Saroj Mukherjee's fancy for Babuji can make him the PM. But one thing is certain: If at any stage Babuji were to become the PM, he would get overwhelming support from the bureaucracy. Even at the height of the Janata crisis days, when he toured the length and breadth of the country for partywork, files in the defence ministry did not pile up. And, the remarkable thing was that Babuji disposed of the files in his own handwriting: the neat notes written in good English and red ink are popular with the bureaucrats who run this country. Babuji knew too well as a minister that a handwritten note from the minister ensures that the bureaucracy does not take things for granted. Babuji outside the government certainly is a loss for the administration.

CHARAN SINGH



K.M. Kasan

Charan Singh with JP

"How can you tell me to go back and work for Morarji Desai, when the nation wants me to be Prime Minister?" Chaudhary Charan Singh triumphantly asked his wife Gayatri Devi, in August 1978, while nursing his illness and a few grievances. He had parted company with the Janata government headed by Morarji Desai (his critics called it defection) and had just welcomed a journalist who told him something which pleased him no end. The taxi driver who took the journalist to the jat leader's house refused to accept any money: how could he take money from somebody who was going to see the only *kisan* leader India had. Moreover, the driver said that he would go to the Bangla Sahib gurudwara and pray that the leader of the *kisans* would soon become Prime Minister. Charan Singh was very keen to have the story repeated to his wife who, perhaps, did not then believe that her husband could be Prime Minister one day.

Charan Singh has never stopped dreaming of becoming a Prime Minister ever since, not even after the shortlived rule of six months when he finally sat on the much sought-after prime ministerial *gaddi* propped up for him by Sanjay Gandhi, from July 1977 to the end of that year. He did not even have the honour of attending a session of Parliament as Prime Minister.

The jat leader has always been in search of an ally in his quest for prime ministership over the years. Although he has a mass base, it is a portable one which travels with him from party to party. Actually, all he really does is to change the name of his party.

In this complicated quest, added to the usual additionandsubstraction of caste votes which Charan Singh is so fond of carrying out, he was willing to consort with anyone, even the devils of the past. Thus, in 1983 he formed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) along with the BJP, conveniently forgetting the fact that he himself had made it a point to demonstrate his aversion for the BJP. He had wanted the former Jana Sangh constituent out of the Janata Party on the issue of dual membership and he broke away from the Janata Party on this issue. The jat leader who has not slipped up on his caste arithmetic had concluded that his followers along with the BJP's would make a winning combination. When this combination proved to be still-born, the Chaudhary began to covet other pastures.

The opposition unity efforts in 1984, in fact, turned out to be the longest political serial of the country. The story is still not over, with many components in the opposition to bring out their trump cards and begin the bargaining. The Chaudhary continues to be looked upon with suspicion till today. The most blatant, of course, was the remark of the vice-president of the BJP, Ram Jethmalani, in Solapur this August; "If this aged leader who is unable to stay awake after eight pm decides to retire from politics, opposition unity can be achieved in a mattter of minutes..."

The BJP president, A.B. Vajpayee had to apologise for Mr Jethmalani's remarks, even though he must have considered the NDA an unholy alliance of sorts. Much as many opposition leaders may dislike Charan Singh, they cannot do without his votes. The farmer's man has consolidated his base among the peasantry, "other backward castes" and artisans and extended his fiefdom beyond Uttar Pradesh to Bihar, Haryana and parts of Rajasthan. In this move to extend his base, Charan Singh had to consort with H.N. Bahuguna whom he once described as a KGB agent. Thus on 21 October 1984, the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party was born, with Mr Bahuguna as the DMKP spokesman.

The return of Devi Lal, Karpoori Thakur and Kumbharam Arya to the DMKP was described as an act of "political piracy" by the Janata Party. Until then, there had been frantic efforts for a merger of the United Front and the Lok Dal. The elusive unity among the opposition parties was almost achieved many a time, but Charan Singh wanted complete control over the distribution of tickets for the 1984 election. He did not want to share that election duty with United Front chairman, Chandra Shekhar.

But, of course, the Chaudhary stands out. He has never contested a Lok Sabha election from the same party. After he left the Congress and formed the Bharatiya Kranti Dal—he left along with 17 of his followers—he contested the 1967 elections. (In fact, in the 1967 UP byelections, the BKD won 99 of the 425 UP Assembly seats.) In 1974, he contested as a member of the Bharatiya Lok Dal. In 1977, it was the Janata Party. In 1980, the Lok Dal and in 1984 the famous DMKP. The party remains the same, as does its leader, his politics and his ambitions. Only the name changes, and what, after all, is there in a name?



ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE

"It shall be an objective of Jana Sangh policies to end the separation of India and Pakistan and to bring the two together..."
—National policy statement in the party documents of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1951.

"Jana Sangh is not prepared to recognise English and or Urdu as Indian languages. It will take steps to remove Urdu from the list of languages recognised in the Constitution..."
—From Bharatiya Jana Sangh party manifesto, 1954.

In 1978, when Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then foreign minister, described the Simla Pact as a "bedrock of Indo-Pakistan relations" at a press conference in Islamabad, a Pakistani journalist had then questioned him on how he who had led a "torchlight procession to Delhi" to protest against the Pact could make such a statement. The foreign minister, never at a loss for words, had replied: "That was the stand of the Jana Sangh, which is dead now. I belong to the Janata Party, which has a different policy..."

Not only had the former Jana Sanghi (he took over as the president of the party after Deen Dayal Upadhyaya was murdered in a train in February 1968) proved that he was a statesman, he also showed that he had come a long way from being a proponent of Akhand Bharat, and more important still, was a possible contender for the prime ministerial *gaddi* one day. A.B. Vajpayee, unlike some opposition leaders has never made a direct bid for prime ministership. He stood apart while the struggle for the *kursi* took place in 1979. It is only after the reincarnation of the Jana Sangh (which was dissolved when the Janata Party was born) into the Bharatiya Janata Party—BJP—in April 1980, that the grooming of its president as well as the party as a "national alternative" to Indira Gandhi and the Congress(I), respectively began.

The turning point was the first BJP national convention, held in Bombay in December that year. In his presidential address, Mr Vajpayee made a significant departure from the previously-held party line: the BJP, he said, "has accepted the concept of Gandhian socialism after due deliberation." The BJP, he promised, would "mobilise itself" to have Gandhian socialism accepted as a "third alternative" since communism and capitalism, the twin brothers, were both decaying. Gandhian socialism was then to take the BJP down this third path which would transform the party, limited thus far to the northern Hindi belt, to Hindus and to the urban population.

In its efforts to become broad-based, the BJP began a thrust southwards, beyond the Vindhyas. The party took in more Muslims (in Delhi the BJP had five Muslims in the civic bodies compared to Congress-I's two) and it has also rapidly shed its conservatism and stretched its umbilical links with the RSS to a near-breaking point.

During the BJP national convention held in Cochin, Kerala, in April 1981 (the convention was held in the south to demonstrate its all-India character), Mr Vajpayee reiterated that the BJP was no longer a party of the north. He also said that although Hindi was good as a link language, the south could retain English for as long as it wanted. A far cry indeed from 1954. It was at this convention that Mr Vajpayee advocated the three-language policy. And, most important, BJP leaders, including the party president declared emphatically that their party did not take "dictations" from the RSS, which was a "social and cultural organisation."

The BJP also passed a strong resolution to "integrate harijans into the main body of the country." To demonstrate how it had now spread its base to include the interests of minorities, the BJP leaders stressed the point that Muslim merchants had also contributed to the holding of the national session in Cochin.

This apparently acceptable face, that the BJP is trying to put forward was in full evidence at the national study camp held in Vrindavan in September 1981 where the strategy to enable the BJP to "share" power after the next general elections was outlined. By 1981, the BJP had grown confident of its growing clout in national politics.

The Vrindavan document defined the BJP as a "national alternative party" in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, the "number two party" in Gujarat," a "major force" in Maharashtra and a "complementary party" in Haryana, Kashmir and Punjab. In Punjab, the document admitted it was lagging behind, although there was a "fund of goodwill" for it in Assam. It was nowhere, said the document, in Orissa and in West Bengal.



Atal Behari Vajpayee with Gen Zia

It's a hard day's night
I've been walkin' the town
Makin' a living
And I'm feelin' down
I've been on the move
'Cos I got money to make
But after it's all over
A man needs a break
So here's to the good times
It's gotta be said
I'm ready for a Royal
I'm lookin' for the Red

Yeah, I'm lookin' for the Red



WHEN
YOU'RE LOOKIN'
FOR A LIFT

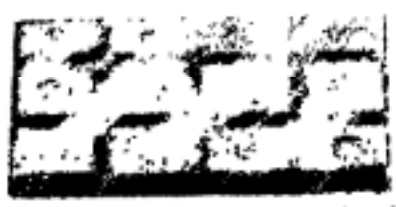
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Soft and creamy, like Swiss chocolates ...



its creaminess sealed in silver foil ...



and foil-board carton to keep it fresh.



Amul CHOCOLATES

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Atal Behari Vajpayee with Nanaji Deshmukh

Even the CPI(M) in its party Congress in Vijayawada revealed that it was not averse to including the BJP in its anti-Congress(I) thrust. The BJP was after all emerging as the only party which had a charismatic leader, who could challenge Mrs Gandhi, a growing national following and a newly-found non-sectarian appeal. By 1982, the BJP's party membership had been expanded to 3.5 million, a million more than in 1980. When, on 28 March 1982, Arif Beg, then BJP secretary, said that his party was trying to bring in non-Hindus and to "spread the organisation in the rural areas" and that there was a favourable response to its initial overtures among the Muslims in the south and the Christians in Kerala, it was clear that the BJP was attempting to increase its base nationally.

The BJP could pat itself on the back because it had in the almost 100 parliamentary and Assembly byelections held since June 1980, gained two Lok Sabha seats and as many Assembly seats. A.B. Vajpayee had been described by the eminent M.C. Chagla as the best foreign minister, and even the future Prime Minister. In Karnataka, the party increased its strength from 4 to 18 seats, in Andhra Pradesh, it added one more seat to its existing three. By 1983, however, the situation had changed. The balloon was first pricked after the BJP defeat in the Delhi civic elections held in February 1983. Mr Vajpayee resigned as party president, though he was reinstated a few days later. The BJP fared badly in the municipal elections in Madhya Pradesh and in Jammu. In fact, it was all but wiped out. By mid-1983, the euphoria of being the only "national alternative" (Vajpayee in Vrindavan had even said: "We are not power hungry but we want power to change the social structure...") had evaporated. A.B. Vajpayee then began to talk about a national democratic front and electoral adjustments with opposition parties.

This the hardliners within the BJP were reluctant to accept for they believed that this would further dilute the identity of the BJP. In fact, Mr Balraj Madhok, president of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh made a call to all "genuine Jana Sanghis" to come back to the "Jan Sangh and the *Bhagwa* flag...otherwise the BJP would fall between two stools."

Mr Madhok might in the end prove to be right. The more universally acceptable face of the BJP was not soft enough or convincing enough for the minorities. Moreover, the Congress(I) had taken some of the thunder out of the BJP in its increasingly pro-Hindu postures (especially in Jammu and Kashmir in 1983 and in Punjab in mid-1984). Nor was this new image acceptable to the party hardliners. But the downward turn had begun. On 8 August 1983 the National Democratic Alliance was formed between the BJP and Mr Charan Singh's Lok Dal. The two parties would sit as one block in Parliament and in the state legislatures.

But Mr Charan Singh has never been a dependable ally. And so, while the BJP was holding its national council in Bombay in October this year, Mr Charan Singh announced the formation of yet another party, the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party. Mr Vajpayee unilaterally dissolved the NDA, but many dreams must have been shattered.

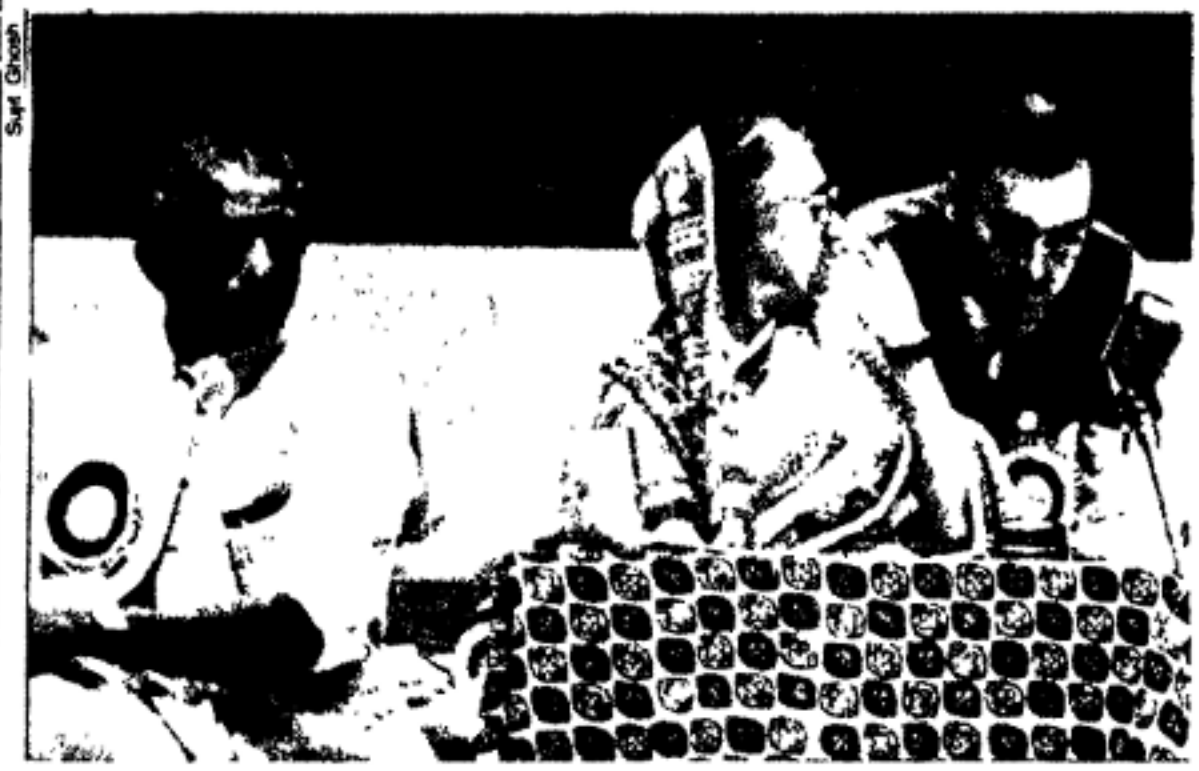
At the close of the historic Bombay convention in 1980, Mr Vajpayee had said: "Standing on the shores of this ocean beneath the Western Ghats, I can say with confidence about the future: darkness will be dispelled, the sun will rise, the lotus shall bloom." Today it is darkness at noon, the sun looks as if it is setting and the lotus has begun to wilt.

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D V Javer

RAJIV GANDHI

Rajiv Gandhi's quest for prime ministership must be the envy of every politician in democratic countries. Till 11 May 1981 he was reluctant to come into politics. And, on 31 October 1984, he became the Prime Minister of India. In no democracy has a politician made such rapid strides to the highest executive office of the land. The 40-year-old Rajiv Gandhi is not only the youngest ever Prime Minister of a major democracy, but one of the few personalities whose record in political success is unparalleled A tragedy has put the mantle of the government on his shoulders. It has to be seen how long the young shoulders can carry the responsibility, not only of the government but also the party he leads. The beginning has not been impressive. Though there were apprehensions about Mrs Indira Gandhi as well when she first became the Prime Minister in 1966, this time the fears are great as there are too many disparities between the personalities of Mrs Gandhi and her elder son.


Sujit Ghosh

Rajiv Gandhi with his mother at the Calcutta plenary session

Rajiv Gandhi cannot be a match for Mrs Gandhi due to a simple factor: politics, while being the art of the possible, requires long commitment, and the understanding of the problems of a great country like India is not an easy task. Mrs Gandhi was actively associated with Jawaharlal Nehru's political life over the years. Neither of her sons took a similar interest in her activities. Sanjay Gandhi jumped into politics when his unsavoury deals of the Maruti Ltd was attacked on the floor of Parliament. Having been attacked politically, Sanjay Gandhi came into politics and the phase of dynastic succession in Congress politics began. While his younger brother was getting enmeshed in politics and emerging as the heir-apparent to Mrs Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi remained aloof. He never asserted his right as the elder son. Even when Sanjay Gandhi died and Mrs Gandhi eagerly wanted Rajiv Gandhi to join politics, he wavered. Had it not been for the fact that Menaka Gandhi was to turn 25 on 26 August 1981 and she would have become eligible to contest the Lok Sabha byelections from Amethi, Rajiv Gandhi would have remained reluctant to join politics. In effect, he entered politics not for his own sake, but for the sake of ensuring that Menaka Gandhi did not have a chance to contest Lok Sabha elections as soon as she turned 25.

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The events of the first week of May 1981 are worth recalling. Mrs Gandhi was to go on a tour of the Gulf. The Air India Boeing 707, Makalu, which was to fly her abroad was suddenly found to be sabotaged a few days before the scheduled departure on 5 May. (Till today the Makalu case has not been solved. No one has been convicted, though *en masse* some Air India employees in Bombay lost their jobs after the "sabotage" was detected.) Mrs Gandhi pleaded with Rajiv Gandhi to realise the threats to her life and to join politics so that stability could be ensured. Partymen also sang Hallelujahs in praise of dynastic politics. But the pilot-son of Mrs Gandhi was unmoved. In the meantime, the Prime Minister decided to fly abroad not in an Air India aircraft but a Boeing 737 of the Indian Airlines. The reliability of the Indian Airlines was thus established. Within a week of Mrs Gandhi's departure, on 11 May, while she was in the Gulf, Rajiv Gandhi entered politics. He contested the byelection at Amethi and trounced the opposition rival Sharad Yadav of the Lok Dal. In the June 1981 byelection, Rajiv Gandhi's performance was excellent. Sharad Yadav was no ordinary candidate. He had made history in 1974 by being the first ever "Janata" candidate, who won a byelection from Jabalpur, wresting a traditional Congress seat. He was a strong opponent to defeat but he had to forfeit his deposit.

The real test for Rajiv Gandhi will be after the elections. If he is able to lead his party to a massive mandate, by winning over 350 Lok Sabha seats, then one cannot see any possibility of anyone stopping Rajiv Gandhi in the next decade. If, however, the mandate is not massive, things will be different. Mrs Gandhi faced pressures from the powerful syndicate leaders in the undivided Congress after she failed to get over 300 seats in the 1967 elections. In her case, political experience made her utilise the debris of the Congress after the 1969 split and build up her charisma in such a way that today after her death her son, who is a novice in politics, has been accepted as the unquestionable leader by Congressmen. Partymen rallied around his mother for votes. Her vote-getting ability made many parasites and less popular personalities, in addition to the powerful politicians in the Congress, surround her. Rajiv Gandhi too has been accepted as the leader because Congressmen feel that he can get them votes. If he fails in this acid test, then his problems will begin.

The way tickets were distributed in the

Lok Sabha elections have left many wounds in the hearts of partymen. The arrogant behaviour of Arun Kumar Nehru, the powerful general secretary of the AICC(I), has made many partymen disgruntled. These will surface in case the majority in the Lok Sabha is small. Many personal ambitions will have to be accommodated if the party gets less than 300 seats. Assembly elections in major states are round the corner. When tickets are distributed, either in March-April or in May, a lot of heat will be generated. The possibility of a split in the party cannot be ruled out as a result of the dissensions which Rajiv Gandhi will have to face on the eve of the Assembly polls.

If he starts relying on political elements, both young and old, then things can be different. Mrs Gandhi allowed D.P. Mishra, H.N. Bahuguna and their likes to run the party apparatus in her initial days. She never slighted the elders. In the first days of the Rajiv Gandhi regime, many elder statesmen have been hurt and their silence during the elections should not be taken as a sign of surrender. If the opposition was not in its present state of disarray, then a Jagjivan Ram-type move on the election-eve by some elders could have been possible. The tragedy of Rajiv Gandhi is that he is surrounded by people who do not have much of a mass base. Buta Singh cannot contest elections from his home state. P.V. Narasimha Rao has to seek a mandate from Maharashtra. Pranab Mukherjee, while being a Rajya Sabha member, cannot represent his own home state, West Bengal.

The organisation of conducting the campaign from the AICC(I) office at 24 Akbar Road was handed over to people who had no experience of elections before. A military-style control room was set up and its running entrusted to retired armed forces officers. Their rough behaviour matched the mood in the AICC(I) office, controlled by Arun Nehru. Many senior partymen protested about the way the control room was responding to their calls. For example, Sitaram Kesri, the party's treasurer, had to intervene one day and tell the ex-servicemen how to behave in politics.

Vishwajit Singh, a cousin of the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary, Arun Singh, was entrusted with the distribution of the publicity material from the control room. Vishwajit Singh may be known for his suave manners, but he has no previous experience of a general election. There were many mishaps in the distribution process and from many places there were frantic calls because the material did not reach in time.

Even in his election campaigns, Rajiv Gandhi's meetings were much different from Mrs Gandhi's. He kept on harping on the Anandpur Sahib resolution, which many people in the villages never understood. There were no political speeches made from the podium before Rajiv Gandhi reached the meetings. No political songs were sung to keep the audience occupied till the VIP arrived. Only the local police bosses went up on the dais occasionally to ask the people to maintain order till the PM came. Rajiv Gandhi does not seem to have understood the reason for the inattentive crowds at many places. Ironically, at a public meeting he addressed at the Kayasth Pathshala grounds in Allahabad on 18 December, the crowds started leaving when he rose to speak. Reason: The microphones were not effective and Amitabh Bachchan, the star-attraction of the Congress(I), had already finished speaking. (People apparently had gone to see the filmstar and not to hear speeches.) If such lapses had taken place in Mrs Gandhi's campaign, then a few heads would have rolled soon after the meeting.



Rajiv Gandhi's composition of the new cabinet will show the way his mind is working regarding the future of the party. There is a whisper campaign going on in the capital that the people who had for a while aspired to become the "acting" Prime Minister on 31 October, Pranab Mukherjee and P.V. Narasimha Rao, may not be in the new council of ministers. Delhi is a city which produces 365 rumours in an equal number of days round the year. So, one cannot comment on the veracity of this story, but there certainly is a strong lobby around Rajiv Gandhi which wants some of the old faces out. Already, the two principal aides of the PM, parliamentary secretary Arun Singh and special assistant Rajinder Kumar Dhawan, have had a confrontation. The bone of contention was the car parking space outside the PM's office in South Block. Arun Singh wanted his car to be parked at the spot where Dhawan has been parking his car over the years. Dhawan bowed to the wishes of the parliamentary secretary. Such instances are bound to multiply. When inexperienced hands run the show, infantile disorders are bound to occur. Though experience has not played any role so far in Rajiv Gandhi's quest for prime ministership, unless it is utilised in good measure in the coming days, his quest may be shortlived.



Rajiv Gandhi (back to camera) with Arun Nehru

The tragedy of Rajiv Gandhi is that he is surrounded by people who do not have much of a mass base. Buta Singh cannot contest from his own state. Narasimha Rao has to seek a mandate from Maharashtra.



Among Congressmen even today, there are many who admire Chandra Shekhar. His admirers, of course, are those who were in politics before 1975, before the advent of Sanjay Gandhi on the political scenario and before neo-politicians began controlling the politics of the Congress party.

CHANDRA SHEKHAR

"Chandra Shekhar has great acceptability both at home and abroad," Mrs Indira Gandhi told journalist Harish Chandola in an interview in September 1984. She was not paying a compliment to the Janata Party president. Instead, she told Chandola (this was published in the *Indian Express* of 11 November 1984) that "outside forces seeking to oust me must surely support Chandra Shekhar. Several outside forces and countries want to see me out of office. Some Muslim countries (and she named a few, which Chandola did not name in his report) are trying to turn our Muslims against me. An European country, the Christians and a superpower—they are all one in seeing to it that I lose." Mrs Gandhi's repeated references to the "foreign hand" had acquired paranoid proportions. Whenever she saw a threat to her power, she blamed the "foreign hand," which was never specified. By referring to Chandra Shekhar as the possible beneficiary of the "foreign hand," Mrs Gandhi, in fact, expressed her apprehension that he was a person who was capable of replacing her. In the same interview, she had dismissed the chances of opposition stalwarts like Charan Singh, H.N. Bahuguna and even N.T. Rama Rao. In Chandra Shekhar, not only in 1984, but even a decade earlier, Mrs Gandhi saw a person who had the potential to challenge her. Though Chandra Shekhar had yet not made a serious quest for prime ministership, his ability to become the Prime Minister was recognised by no less a person than Mrs Indira Gandhi.

Chandra Shekhar is 57 years old and by Indian political standards, despite Rajiv Gandhi having become the Prime Minister at the age of 40, 57 is considered to be "young." Mrs Gandhi had been the beneficiary of his vociferous support as the leader of the band of "Young Turks" during the 1969 Congress split. The Janata Party president could have been a top Congress leader today, had he not been expelled from the party for six years in 1975,soon after he was arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), during the Emergency. The six-year period of expulsion was over in 1981. Technically, he is entitled to be a Congress leader even today. His wide acceptability among Congressmen was a matter for concern in the Indira Gandhi camp in the early Seventies. If Mrs Gandhi singled out Chandra Shekhar as the most dangerous person in her interview with Chandola, then there was good reason for her doing so. Among Congressmen even today, there are many who admire Chandra Shekhar. His admirers, of course, are those who were in politics before 1975, before the advent of Sanjay Gandhi on the political scenario and before neo-politicians (those who became active in politics not in their student days, but later) began controlling the politics of the Congress party.

Chandra Shekhar had been an elected member of the Congress Working Committee between 1969 and 1975. In 1971, he created a flutter by contesting the elections for the membership of the Central Election Committee of the Congress against the wishes of Mrs Gandhi. He was elected although he was not in the official panel sponsored by Mrs Gandhi. This victory of Chandra Shekhar was the last occasion in the history of the Congress when in an inner party election, a rebel won. In May 1977, after the election defeat, the Congress witnessed a rebellion again, but it was not successful. In the AICC session held at the Mavlankar Hall in New Delhi, Siddhartha Shankar Ray challenged Mrs Gandhi's nominee, K. Brahmananda Reddi, but lost. (The election was necessitated due to the resignation of Dev Kanta Barooah from the Congress presidentship.) Among the old Congressmen, if there is admiration for Chandra Shekhar today, it is because they remember his feat at the Simla session of the party in 1971. At that time, he had defied the might of Mrs Gandhi when she was at the height of her glory.

Chandra Shekhar, then a member of the Congress high command, was arrested under MISA after the Emergency was proclaimed in 1975. He was the only political detenue who was kept in solitary confinement. Such was the anger of Mrs Gandhi against him that she singled out her own party member for one of the worst punishments in those days. Here too Chandra Shekhar's popularity among partymen became evident. He was kept in a jail in Haryana. The then chief minister, Bansi Lal, who has been well known for his rough behaviour was soft towards Chandra Shekhar. He sent word to



Chandra Shekhar (middle) with Morarji Desai and Jagjivan Ram

Chandra Shekhar that if he required an air conditioner or any other comforts, it would be provided. Chandra Shekhar refused these comforts, but this gesture of a hawk like Bansi Lal in the days of the Emergency amply showed the popularity of the Young Turk leader among Congressmen.

When the Janata Party was formed in May 1977, Chandra Shekhar was JP's nominee for the party presidentship. He did not have any powerful party faction behind him at that time. The other constituents of the Janata Party, the BLD, the Jana Sangh, the Congress(O), the Socialists and the Congress for Democracy readily accepted Chandra Shekhar as the party chief. The Janata Party has undergone many changes since May 1977. But its president has remained the same. Chandra Shekhar has not rushed to any opportunistic alliances although there have been times when his isolation in politics has been near total, with one stalwart after another leaving the Janata ranks. Chandra Shekhar can, perhaps, take some pride in pointing out that Chaudhary Devi Lal, Karpoori Thakur, Biju Patnaik, George Fernandes and many such leaders returned to the Janata fold after having deserted him in 1980. It is another matter that Devi Lal and Karpoori Thakur deserted him again on the eve of the elections this year. But that did not affect the consistent political line of Chandra Shekhar. In the defection-dominated opposition scenario, Chandra Shekhar is the only major leader who did not get bogged down in the quicksand of defection politics. His stable political line in the Janata too has won him admirers among his former partymen in the Congress.

The Karnataka election of 1983 was a turning point for Chandra Shekhar. After the 1980 debacle, the Janata Party had looked like it had to be written off politically. Somehow during the election campaign in the winter of 1982 he had gauged the popular mood. He had planned out his *padayatra* from Kanyakumari to Delhi, which was to begin on the day the polling was to be held in Karnataka. This correspondent met Chandra Shekhar on the flight from Hyderabad to Bangalore on the eve of 1983. He was in a jubilant mood. "We are winning in Karnataka," he said. At that time, his statement sounded incredible. When the results were announced, the impossible had been achieved. But Chandra Shekhar did not rush to Bangalore to join in the celebrations and the exercise of government-making was left to the state leadership under Ramakrishna Hegde. When the news of victory was announced in Bangalore, Chandra Shekhar had completed his *padayatra* upto Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu. He continued with the Bharat Yatra confidently.

There was some criticism of Chandra Shekhar on account of the Bharat Yatra. While he was the president of the Janata Party and the Janata flag was used throughout the long march, the programme was not



H.R. Raja Shekhar

Chandra Shekhar with Hegde in Bangalore

attributed to the party. The reason was simple. At that time Chandra Shekhar was facing vociferous opposition from a section of the party leadership which, while not in a position to control the party, was making loud statements against him and seeking his ouster from the presidentship. If Chandra Shekhar has been the party president without a break since May 1977, then the reason is not that there is lack of inner-party democracy in the Janata Party. There have been party elections during this period and Chandra Shekhar's hold on the party organisation has been tested by the ballot box.

Chandra Shekhar may look lonely today, with a galaxy of opposition leaders having lined up behind the Charan Singh-Bahuguna-Karpoori Thakur-Devi Lal combine known as the DMKP (Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party). The process of opposition unity which began with the Vijayawada conclave in May 1983 received a setback on 21 October 1984 when the DMKP was formed with its "dominant" outlook. The Janata Party as it is constituted today, by itself may not look like a force which can return to power at the centre. Only in a phase of coalition politics can Chandra Shekhar make his bid for prime ministership.

The only time Chandra Shekhar expressed his desire to become the Prime Minister was when the Janata split took place in July 1979. For a while he had been in the run to take over the leadership of the truncated parliamentary party of the Janata Party. After sometime he decided to remain the organisation head and let Babu Jagjivan Ram lead the party in Parliament and make his bid for prime ministership. Had Chandra Shekhar tried to become the PM in July 1979, his reputation among politicians would not have been what it is today.

In the quest for prime ministership, Chandra Shekhar seems a sure bet in the next few years. His elevation to the high office cannot be foreseen in the immediate future, but two or three years is not a very long period in politics. So far Chandra Shekhar has shown exemplary patience as a politician. One will have to see if this patience pays him dividends in future.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya and Madhu Jain, Delhi

The Karnataka election of 1983 was a turning point for Chandra Shekhar. After the 1980 debacle, the Janata Party had looked like it had to be written off politically. Somehow during the election campaign he had gauged the popular mood...He was in a jubilant mood. "We are winning in Karnataka," he said.

The Run for Prime Ministership

The ambition of every opposition leader to become Prime Minister brought about the failure of the Janata experiment, writes Arun Gandhi

I was with Morarji Desai at his Marine Drive residence a few days before Chandra Shekhar was due to arrive in Bombay in the course of his gruelling cross-country *padayatra*. There were some friends who were trying to persuade Morarji Desai that he should meet Chandra Shekhar at the city limits.

"Why should I go?" Morarjibhai asked with undisguised irritation.

"After all he is the Janata Party leader and if you don't receive him you will be feeding grist to the rumour mills. It will be taken as a confirmation that there is indeed a rift between you two," they argued.

Morarji Desai remained adamant. "The Janata Party has nothing to do with this *padayatra*," he countered vehemently. "He didn't seek the party's advice before embarking on the *padayatra*. He is pocketing all the money and the publicity for himself because he cherishes ambitions of being the next Prime Minister." He spelt out unequivocally the fundamental problem that has decimated the opposition parties: The consuming ambition of every leader to become the Prime Minister of the country not excluding Morarji Desai.

Among opposition leaders, it is only a question of depth of the ambition and the extent to which each is willing to go to see the fruition of their passionate dream. Of them Charan Singh will go down in history as the man who subjected Indian politics to international ridicule. His inglorious term of six months as caretaker Prime Minister has only served to whet his appetite for a full term and his fulminations only bring into sharp focus the bankruptcy of the opposition parties. However, two obstinate men—Atal Behari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani—will have to bear the cross with Charan Singh for ruining the only chance the opposition parties had to change the complexion of Indian politics.

L.K. Advani now claims they did not know Charan Singh well enough until it was too late. Had they known they would never have supported him. He expects the people to believe this patently transparent and reprehensible lie. Charan Singh's reputation was well known since the early Seventies to anyone who was even remotely connected with politics. How can one believe that two stalwarts, whose main political sphere has been the northern Hindi belt for as long as anyone can remember, were unaware of Charan Singh's consuming ambition?

Assuming they were naive or blind or both, what about all the indications that Charan Singh gave from the very inception of the party? What about their colleague Nanaji Deshmukh who had known Charan Singh closely and had, in fact, helped him in many of his nefarious activities like toppling ministries? If these were not indications enough what about the warning administered by Shyam Nandan Mishra in Bangalore jail when Advani, Mishra, Vajpayee and Dandavate were discussing the possibilities of forming a federal party? Let Advani himself say it from his book, *The People Betrayed:* "One party?" Shyam Babu asked incredulously. "With Chaudhary Charan Singh? Only those like you who do not know him can think of such a proposal. It is impossible to work in the same party with Chaudhary Charan Singh." Did they forget this denouncement so easily? The fact is they had their own unpleasant designs.



In January 1977, when it was suggested that Charan Singh become the general secretary (of the Janata Party), he screamed: "What? Me become a *munshi?*" It seemed as though the birth of a new party was going to be aborted.

The unseemly tussle for leadership began the moment the leaders were released from jail following the announcement of elections. On 20 January 1977, when the opposition leaders met in New Delhi to forge a new alliance, Charan Singh made it known he wanted to be the boss. He threatened to walk out if this was not conceded. Morarji had already staked his claim for the chairmanship and this was more appealing to others because of his vast experience, sincerity, reputation and the manner in which he had handled the Janata Morcha in Gujarat.

When it was suggested that Charan Singh become the general secretary with all executive powers, he screamed: "What? Me become a *munshi?*" It seemed as though the birth of a new party was going to be aborted. Vajpayee claims he suggested that Charan Singh be made the vice-chairman with the powers to deal exclusively with the selection of candidates for the entire northern belt. This was acceptable to Charan Singh because it was a step towards the ultimate goal.

Morarji, however, denies there was ever such a suggestion. He says Vajpayee is lying. "It was I who suggested that Charan be made the vice-chairman because of his seniority and there was no talk of selection of candidates," Morarji says quite categorically and adds, "How can I acquiesce to something so patently undemocratic? How can one person be given the sole charge of selecting candidates for more than half the Indian Parliament?" Morarji says that there must have been a deal struck privately between Charan Singh and Vajpayee. He was absolutely positive that he

was not a party to any such understanding.

Having resolved this thorny issue, the question of prime ministership was deferred until after the elections not because they wanted to avert any unpleasantness but because each constituent party wanted to see how strong they were to strike another bargain. As it turned out, the Jana Sangh group and the BLD had the most number of seats, and neither were in favour of Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister. He could be tolerated as a party leader, they felt, but the sanctimonious old man was just not their idea of a Prime Minister.

The Jana Sangh on the other hand. under the pretext of giving the country the first Harijan Prime Minister, proposed the name of Jagjivan Ram. Morarji was so sure that he would be selected that he was blissfully unaware of what was going on until, as he says, he went to pay a courtesy call on Jayaprakash Narayan and found Jagjivan Ram sitting in the lounge. JP told Morarji Desai what was happening and said, "You must help us get out of this situation." This came as a shock to Morarji but he withstood it stoically and says he told JP: "There is nothing I can do to help. This is your problem and you must solve it as best as you can."

When Charan Singh heard about what the Jana Sangh group had done, he unabashedly blurted out: "I will not support that *chamar* (harijan)." He immediately shot off a letter to Jayaprakash Narayan saying he would support Morarji Desai for prime ministership and tilted the balance. This is why he kept boasting that it was he who had made Morarji Desai the Prime Minister and on that coun: forced Morarjibhai to give him the second slot in the cabinet: the home ministry. Having left the decision of the leadership to JP and J.B. Kripalani there was nothing the various factions could do. Even Jagjivan Ram swallowed his pride and accepted a lower grade. Morarji Desai himself was determined not to allow Jagjivan Ram to become the Prime Minister and it is believed the moment he learnt of the move, knowing Charan Singh better than anyone else, leaked the information to him. Morarji Desai says: "How could I allow him to become the Prime Minister when I know of his corrupt attitude and his moral turpitude? His own daughter-in-law had complained against him when Nehru was the Prime Minister and Nehru had sent the complaint to me asking for my advice. Knowing this how could I put the affairs of the country into the hands of a man like him?"

The battle for prime ministership, however, did not end there. "Everyone in the cabinet behaved as though he was the Prime Minister," complains Morarji Desai and adds, "It was difficult to make them understand there was such a thing as collective responsibility."

Others say that Morarji Desai was supercilious and kept aloof from the rest of the team and that he did not take them into confidence on many issues. Perhaps he was, but still he was less offensive than Charan Singh and there were numerous instances which should have sounded warning bells among all those who were genuinely interested in seeing the Janata experiment succeed. That no one noticed the warning signals indicates that no one was really interested in the Janata Party.

There was yet another instance that should have served as a warning. Advani recalls a cabinet sub-committee meeting in late 1977 when he and Shanti Bhushan were made to wait for the arrival of Charan Singh. When he finally arrived 15 minutes later, he was ranting about an altercation he had had with a journalist who accused him (Charan Singh) of being ambitious. "What's wrong with wanting to be the Prime Minister?" Charan Singh had asked the journalist. "Don't you aspire to be the chief editor in your own set-up? Well, if you don't, you are a worm." Then Charan Singh went on to make some shockingly uncouth remarks in the presence of officers. He said, "After all he is 83 years old: he will die one day. Can I not become Prime Minister after his death?" Everyone was stunned and flabbergasted.

Advani had still not heard the warning bells. When Charan Singh finally made the notorious Suraj Kund statement condemning the whole cabinet as being "impotent," Morarji Desai called a cabinet meeting at which everyone unanimously—including Advani and Vajpayee—agreed that both Charan Singh and Raj Narain should be asked to resign from the government. Which is what Morarji did. However, soon after that Advani and Vajpayee were overcome by compassion (or was there some design?) and embarked on a relentless campaign to get them both back. Why? No one but Morarji Desai offers an explanation.

Morarji says they were clearly afraid he would override them. They wanted somebody in the cabinet who could keep him in check and they thought Charan Singh was the only person who could do so effectively. They were both so adamant that they made it impossible for the government to function until Morarji relented and took Charan Singh and Raj Narain back into the cabinet. What happened thereafter is so unpleasant that it is best forgotten.

If these two stalwarts, who never lose an opportunity to speak of their sacrifices to keep the Janata Party together, had kept better counsel the party would not have been blown to smithereens. Charan Singh and Raj Narain would have been consigned to the political garbage dump where they belong and the Janata Party may have been the elusive national alternative the country has been looking for. Above all, the party and the people of India would not have to hide their faces in shame in international forums when confronted with the cruel joke perpetrated on the people.

Two obstinate men—Atal Behari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani—will have to bear the cross with Charan Singh for ruining the only chance the opposition parties had to change the complexion of Indian politics.



SPECIAL REPORT

Sunil Gavaskar Vs Kapil Dev

Kapil Dev's sacking is an extension of the north zone – west zone rivalry in cricket

Sunil Manohar Gavaskar is the greatest batsman India has produced. And Kapil Dev Nikhanj is the most explosive all-rounder the country has thrown up. Both have emerged in an age in which cricketers are treated like demi-gods.

Gavaskar hit the headlines in his very first series—scoring 774 runs in only four Tests—and has been something special ever since. Kapil began less impressively, in 1978, but within 15 months of his Test debut, had carved out an exceptional niche for himself by capturing 11 wickets in the Madras match against Pakistan, apart from etching out a more than useful 80-odd runs. That ensured two series wins in a row, in course of which he had played a no mean part.

But with the advent of the Eighties, relations began to sour between the two extraordinary men of Indian cricket. Both, by this stage, had developed king-sized egos, which was hardly a help. More crucially, the Bombay and Delhi newspapers, not to mention some motivated cricket officials, started putting ideas into their heads. Both, to their discredit, were gullible enough to be influenced by such misguided advice, in addition to being greedy for power and the purse. Result: the falling out of the two which is now international knowledge, and a most embarrassing experience for Indian cricket.

To be more specific, however, why and where did these two prized possessions of Indian cricket differ? The origins of this dispute, if one is to be truthful and analytical, date back to the sacking of Bishen Singh Bedi, when Kapil Dev was but a fledgling Test player. Bedi, as it might be recalled, was eased out of the scene after the England tour of 1979, at which point Gavaskar regained the captaincy and introduced Dilip Doshi into the squad.

In Gavaskar's opinion, Bedi was past his prime and, therefore, no longer a force to reckon with. He was right. But in the north zone this move, not unfomented by Bedi himself, was interpreted as a "conspiracy" by his Bombay colleague, allegedly with the object of removing a strong man and a rival. More tragically, the unity that had developed among Indian Test players probably for the first time disintegrated completely, giving rise to a new hostility between the north zone and the west zone, especially Delhi and Bombay. Bedi, because of his enormous contribution to the projection of the game in his zone was, not surprisingly, regarded as some sort of a folk-hero in his part of the country, while being quite popular elsewhere as well. A blow to him was received rather personally by pressmen in the north, while scribes in the west went out of their way, and unnecessarily, to justify Gavaskar's stand. And, from this messy business was created a rift, which has not healed till date.

Next came the issue of Mohinder Amarnath, another northerner, with the additional clout of being Lala



Kapil Dev in the second Test against England: an appeal for justice

Amarnath's son. In 1979, a damaging defect cropped up in his technique—his penchant to hook over his shoulder and into the air. Not only that, he became physically susceptible to the bouncer after he was hit in a county match in England, and again in the Bombay Test against Australia, in which, in fact, his solar hat—fashionable in his father's days—fell on his stumps to mark his departure. But Amarnath through sheer weight of runs in domestic cricket, and a conspicuously altered stance soon began to knock at the door of Test cricket once more. For the '80-'81 tour of Australia, however, he was unofficially offered an opener's berth, which he seemingly refused, for he went away to participate in club cricket Down Under, thus absenting himself for the trial games before the party was picked.

Two years later, though, he was recalled for the trip to Pakistan on his own terms, i.e. as a middle order exponent and emerged out of it as the most successful visiting batsman, and that too in a team containing Gavaskar and Gundappa Vishwanath. The skipper, of course, was never given any credit for the readmission of Amarnath. On the contrary, it was said that the choice had been forced on him by the selectors, particularly the now quite-powerful Bedi. Indeed, if anything, the volley of absue from the north about Amarnath's long exclusion gained ground.

Significantly enough, throughout these battles between Gavaskar and representatives of the north, a simple and self-effacing young man from the dusty plains of Haryana was perfecting his trade, and lending yeoman service to the helmsman from Bombay. The most potent weapon in the policy switch from spin to pace, Kapil Dev finished as the highest wicket-taker against Kim Hughes' Australians and Asif Iqbal's Pakistanis to virtually spearhead victories in both series. In Melbourne, he made light of an injury to demolish the home side. A year later, in Bombay, he flattened English hopes by assisting in another win. And then, in England itself, he conjured up the most devastatingly consistent batting performance and a fiery bowling display at Lord's to earn a place in the Wisden Almanack's short-list of five cricketers of the year. Indeed, what Asif Iqbal had stressed in early 1980—that Kapil was the best all-rounder in the world—had become fairly unanimous by the summer of 1982. And all this had happened under Gavaskar and not without a degree of cooperation between the leader and his right hand man.

However, all along this same period there was one major irritant, which surfaced in public from time to time. Gavaskar favoured a disciplined approach to batting. Kapil was instinctively impetuous. Gavaskar believed that Kapil had ample talent as a batsman and, therefore, could be a regular run-getter if only he curtailed his belligerence and organised his defence. The latter largely ignored such suggestions. Gavaskar flared up on this from time to time, once pronouncing in print that Kapil "would never get another half-century in Tests." The dazzler from the north remained unmoved by such criticism and, in fact, went on to demonstrate in England in 1982 that he could succeed in defiance of Gavaskar's orders by hitting 89 off 55 balls at Lord's and then 97 off 92 deliveries at the Oval.

There was another reason for discord. This was the fundamentally different outlooks of the two players. Gavaskar believed in a thoughtful and considered handling of situations and detailed discussions at team meetings. Kapil was not interested in theorising, but believed in instinctive response in the "mid dle." Indeed, after the disastrous tour of Pakistan two years ago, Gavaskar complained that he had no one to turn to as the crisis deepened.



Gavaskar turning one down the leg side in the Delhi Test against England: egoistic?

Kapil had at that time gone as his vice-captain.

Upto this point, however, there was no real animosity between the two. The hostility, in fact, commenced the moment Gavaskar lost the captaincy and the mantle was handed over to Kapil.

The new captain, according to his assessment, got no assistance from the deposed skipper during the difficult tour of the West Indies. The former felt that Gavaskar was not only not exerting himself both as a batsman and a fielder, but was also not available for consultation as regards strategy. The senior professional, on the other hand, denied that he was not putting forwardhis best and declared himself as having been perfectly willing to actively partake in team meetings as well as offer his viewpoint at the start of a match, if approached. But he was disinclined towards becoming a full-time member of the "think tank " set up by the manager, Hanumant Singh, and in which Srinivasan Venkataraghavan was quite prominent. Gavaskar was, in fact, resentful of the fact that the veteran off-spinner was part of this planning unit, more so because Venkataraghavan's appointment had preceded the invitation to the Bombayite. Actually, Gavaskar joined the tourists a fortnight or so late, by which stage Hanumant Singh's operations were well underway.

Basically, Gavaskar had taken his removal rather badly. Apart from being convinced that he had been given a raw deal and, perhaps, felt that Bedi had engineered the whole thing, he was, strangely, upset about Kapil Dev succeeding him. He, of course, explained this reservation in cricketing terms by saying: "How can you appoint a man as captain for a tour of the West Indies when he has never visited that region?"

As for Kapil, he silently stomached his part-mentor's supposed non-cooperation while in the Caribbean; but with success coming his way in the World Cup, he gradually began to assert his authority. He was clearly displeased about Gavaskar's relative lack of effort in the field and coupled as this was with the maestro's total lack of form, he proceeded to drop him from the team for two of the league games. This, if anything, worsened the friction between he two stalwarts, for Gavaskar maintained that no one had even the decency of informing him in advance about his exclusion.

Then, as the euphoria over the sensational victory in the competition boiled over, Air India went overboard in not only dishing out free tickets to the players, in order to accommodate a preplanned unofficial tour of the United States, but by extending the same courtesy to the cricketers' wives. One spouse notably omitted from the junket was Marshneil Gavaskar.

Following this, in the last season, the opener par excellence not just

The North – West Divide

At the root is money: The rift in the Indian cricket team over sharing the prize money first showed up when Mohinder Amarnath refused to share his prize money totalling Rs 90,000 he won in the West Indies and Pakistan, with his teammates. Till then, the practise of sharing the prize money in true sportsman's spirit which was started in India by Ajit Wadekar worked quite well. Amarnath set the precedent which other players followed. Kapil Dev, pointing to Amarnath, refused to share the prize money he got. And so did Anshuman Gaekwad. The three between them earned approximately Rs 1,70,000 last year.

Then it was Sunil Gavaskar's turn. He refused to share the huge purse he got from President Zia-ul Haq after he completed his hundredth Test match in the last series in Pakistan. Gavaskar's logic was that the purse was for his performance since 1971 and if he was to share it he would have to give a share to every player who played with him since 1971.

Kapil needed no convincing that Gavaskar was instrumental in his sacking although he did not say it in as many words. When reporters told him that the selectors had made up their minds even before Gavaskar joined them, Kapil retorted: "The captain has more say in the selection of his team." He justified his style of batting in the Delhi Test, saying that just before going in to bat he had told Gavaskar that he would be using the long handle and Gavaskar had replied, "Play your natural game but don't attempt any Vishwanath style cuts." Kapil said he felt it safe to play as he liked as four batsmen were to follow him. Kapil later told a Delhi daily: "I have no grouse or complaints against anyone if I am dropped if I don't deserve a place in the team. But, if I am sidelined on grounds of indiscipline then I should know the reasons because I don't think I have ever been guilty of misbehaviour on or off the ground." He felt that he could not ascribe the selector's decision "either to his performance or behaviour."

The former Indian captain also refuted Sandeep Patil's charge in the editorial in *Ekatch Satkar* emphasising that no player invited to play at Varanasi was told what amount would be paid to him. What surprised the cricket lovers was Kapil's decision to join the Congress(I) hoping, perhaps that the President of the BCCI and union minister N.K.P. Salve would back him. At the time of going to press the minister was closetted with the two players trying to patch up the differences.

The north-south divide in Indian politics has been creeping in on Indian cricket also for a while now. Actually it is Bombay versus the north. Since 1932, Bombay players have been dominating Indian cricket. Bombay's decline started with the exit of industrialist and former captain Vijay Merchant from the selection committee. Soon Bishen Singh Bedi was brought along by Lala Amarnath and Eknath Solkar had to give way. The Varanasi incident that placed Gavaskar and Kapil Dev on a collision course is as much a manifestation of the great divide in Indian cricket as it is of how money spoils sportsmen.

Gone are the days when team members shared their booty and shared alike. Kanath Sansgiri, executive editor of *Ekatch Satkar* recalls an incident narrated to him by Gavaskar in 1974. When the captain of the visiting English team Tony Grieg came to know that the prize money was being equally shared by the Indian players he introduced the practise in his team also. As things turned out India lost every match in the series and received none of the prizes. Even then, Tony Greig shared the prize money that his players received with the Indian team.

Olga Tellis, Bombay and Lokesh Sharma, Calcutta

returned among the runs and firmly rehabilitated himself in the Test side, but also branched out into a new demeanour, that of negotiating the fire of the West Indian pacemen with the fire of his willow and otherwise of "enjoying" his cricket. His supporters reacted to this role with sympathy. For, Gavaskar had, undoubtedly, carried a most heavy burden during all his earlier years as a Test player. But his detractors, Bedi and Kapil among them, deemed this change in character as downright irresponsible, if not as being cunningly aimed at creating instability in the Indian batting.

But the wheels of fortune were beginning to turn once again. Kapil, the undisputed star of the World Cup triumph, was sans the Midas touch in the home series against the West Indies. And with Gavaskar, coming back as captain for what transpired as a flawless campaign in the Asia Cup, the time had arrived for Kapil to be unseated.

However, the bad blood between the two leading cricketers of India became all but irreconcilable during the first Test of the current series. Kapil, in course of the match, accused Gavaskar of not parting with his deserved share of money for an exhibition tournament in Varanasi, while levelling the additional charge that the latter had made an astronomical sum from the same tourney. Gavaskar refuted this by saying that Kapil had been duly paid what had been promised him. Obviously, what irked the all-rounder was that the organisers should disburse so much more to the Bombay batsman than to him. The figure earned by Gavaskar has been reported as varying between Rs 50,000 and Rs 75,000, while the amount handed out to Kapil is said to be a mere Rs 7,000.

But why this public outburst? The background to the mudslinging is believed to be the contents of Gavaskar's latest book, *Runs 'N Ruins* in which he had named Amarnath as being a principal defaulter in terms of sharing the prize money won by him with his teammates, as is the general practice. The book is also not effusive in its praise for Kapil.

All said and done, it would be a mistake to link the years of escalating disagreement between Gavaskar and Kapil Dev with what occurred at

Sandy's Storm

SANDEEP PATIL's editorial in the Marathi weekly, Ekatch Satkar

The Bombay Test was getting interesting. We saw hope for the first time after 31 Tests. As we and each Indian were looking forward to victory I read a news report in a Bombay newspaper—'fraud by Indian players', it said. My name was also included in it. It must be a dastardly conspiracy as the news appeared when the Test match was in progress. The gossip and discussion in this connection was heard within the team as well as outside. I had participated in the cricket match that was held at Varanasi and my name had also appeared in the report. Hence I feel I must reveal the true facts.

The Varanasi match had been organised almost two months ago. The member of Parliament, Shyamlal Yadav, had requested, and Sunil and other players agreed to play. Such festival matches are nothing new to us, nor is the remuneration we get for them. Then why did the complaint about money arise this time?

I recollect that Sunil and Ashok Yadav (son of Shyamlal Yadav), had negotiations in our Nirlon office at Worli. We players share the entire "prize money" that is generated in such matches. Sometimes a specific sum is allotted and then the division is done in a different way. This is well known and accepted by all the players.

Sunil was given Rs 50,000 to distribute for the Varanasi match. He had indicated what would be my share almost a month in advance. In this sense, other players were



Sandeep Patil

given their assigned amount as per their standard, before leaving Delhi for Varanasi.

We went to Varanasi as usual. Last time the Varanasi match could not be played because of the rains. Even then we got our share of money for nothing. Such festival cricket matches are organised at places where Tests, one day internationals or first class cricket matches cannot be played. This is done in order to promote cricket and some honorarium is also paid to participating players.

The single wicket tournament at Varanasi was won by Yashpal Sharma. Everything went off very well. But in the evening when we were returning, Kapil started asking everybody what amount they got. In fact he did not have any right to ask what others got. But some people are very curious! Kapil went to the room of Dilip (Vengsarkar) and (Balwinder Singh) Sandhu that night and discussed these money matters. He demanded to know why they got such paltry amounts, when Sunil got Rs 75,000 instead of Rs 50,000. That day Kapil had played at best, six overs and was given Rs 7,000 for that. The craze for money is bad, but worse is keeping an eye on somebody else's money! He did not have any need to do *chambharchokshi* (cobblers' gossip) about what Sunil got and what we got. Had he felt that the amount given to him was too low he could have told Sunil so, before the match began. To accept in the first place and then spread discontent, is like stabbing someone in the back. The most despicable thing was to give this news to the press at the time of the Test match so as to generate dissidence in the team and create difficulties for winning the match. At least Kapil should not have dared to provoke the Bombay players against Sunil. In case he is not aware, I am writing explicitly: Bombay players will do anything free of charge for Sunil, leave alone play a match. It needs just one word from Sunil.

There is going to be a little bitterness between Kapil and me after this explanation. But the truth hurts everybody and is it not better for the team to get the truth exposed rather than letting false hoods ring in the ears of the public?

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Delhi on the final day of the second Test. On that occasion, Kapil batted almost irresponsibly in the second innings—not for the first time in his career—to virtually pave the way for an Indian defeat. A few hours later, the selection committee comprising Chandu Borde, Bishen Bedi, Hanumant Singh, Kripal Singh and Ambar Roy, ordained that he should cool his heels for the next one-day international in Cuttack and the Test match in Calcutta.

It has been widely remarked that Gavaskar was behind this move and that he even threatened to resign if his demand was not complied with. The fact is, the selectors are not bound by the recommendations of a captain, who has no voting right in any way. The responsibility for doing away with Kapil must, therefore, rest with Borde and company or, as the case might have been, with the majority who decreed against the former skipper. But, of course, it goes without saying that Gavaskar could not have opposed the measure in the least.

An endeavour to impose discipline is always laudable. But such action is best executed after prior caution. And so, this correspondent strongly feels that Kapil should have been given a warning instead of being sacked. The decision also does not make much sense when one takes into account the fact that Kapil is still India's best seamer in what is considered a rather weak attack. This is not to condone recklessness, but to come down in favour of a realistic policy.



Wadekar introducing Gavaskar to Mrs Gandhi: two eras, two attitudes



Kapil Dev receiving the Padma Shri award from President Reddy in 1982 : height of glory

Also, not very healthy in the climate of things are the utterances of Sandip Patil who too, got the axe as part of what has been seen as a balancing act by the confused selectors. His statement of loyalty in favour of Gavaskar reflects nothing but svcophancy and a tactless move to further complicate the already vexed relationship between the north and the west.

And, finally, the Indian Cricket Board president should desist from interfering with selectorial wisdom (or the lack of it). Just as much as two bad decisions by an umpire do not correct a situation, two mistakes by the authorities will not rectify the present unhealthy atmosphere. In other words, Mr N.K.P. Salve should not insult his selectors by rescinding their decision. Ethics demand that the president of the Board accepts the conclusions of an elected body of experts, irrespective of whether these have widespread approval or not.

Ashis Ray



Vasundhara Raje campaigning in Bhind

Royal Battles

Several members of royal families fought the recent Lok Sabha elections

Socialism has replaced feudalism decades back, but kings and princes still occupy a special place in the hearts of the Indian electorate. They still command considerable sway over the masses. It is therefore natural for political parties to woo them to their side. The Lok Sabha as well as some state Assemblies, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa in particular, are packed with royal personalities. Shivendra Bahadur Singh, Congress(I) MP from the royal house of Khairagarh in the Chattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh, remarked that he had "about 35 relations in Parliament...there could be [illegible] MPs with a feudal background in the seventh Lok Sabha." The eighth Lok Sabha elections saw besides filmstars, many kings and princes trying their luck at the hustings. In the rural areas these royal personalities inspire no less awe than filmy superstars in the cities. If Amitabh Bachchan was sermonising to capacity crowds in Allahabad, Madhav Rao Scindia was mesmerising his listeners in Gwalior.

In Madhya Pradesh, for example, the Congress(I) had fielded no less than six members from the royal family. The opposition was not far behind. The daughter of Vijaya Raje Scindia, Vasundhara Raje, contested from the Bhind parliamentary seat on a BJP ticket while Narendra Singh, the scion of the house of Panna, was the BJP candidate from the Damo constituency.

In Uttar Pradesh, which has over 1,200 royal families, political power and influence was the birthright of kings. Most members of royal families in UP continue to back the Congress. This time, however, an interesting development was noticed in the feudal politics of the state: while the elders remained loyal to the Congress, the younger generation was lured away by Menaka Gandhi's Rashtriya Sanjay Manch. In fact, many a royal house was sharply divided with regard to political affiliations. Zulfiqar Ali, the nawab of Rampur and a Congress(I) candidate was opposed by his *bhabi* (sister-in-law) who contested as an independent candidate.

The late Sanjay Gandhi, astute politician that he was, packed the state Assemblies of northern India with members of the royal and landed classes. The Congress(I) in 1980 gave over 106 party nominations to *zamindars* for the UP Assembly elections, of which nearly 80 were returned.

Rajiv Gandhi followed his younger brother's footsteps. Initially, the

Congress(I) tried to woo some of the bigwigs: Bhawani Singh of Jaipur, Gaj Singh of Jodhpur, the scion of the house of Jhalwar and the Rajmata of Alwar. The Rajput princes—some of them who have not quite recovered from the experiences of the Emergency shied away from politics.

The Congress(I), however, did manage a coup: the party roped in the distinguished Martand Singh of Rewa. Known as the king of kings in the Baghelkand region he had always contested as an Independent. He polled over 74 per cent of the votes in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections. The other influential prince in the Congress(I) was the scion of the house of Mysore.

Nowhere was the fact that feudalism is still an integral part of the polity more in evidence than in Bhind. The area full of ravines, reverberating with tales of dacoits and their heroic deeds, was the setting of a "battle royal." One of the protagonists in this epic was a princess: Vasundhara Raje, the daughter of Vijaya Raje Scindia (the Rajmata, as she is called, is a revered figure in the Chambal valley. Kings and dacoits in the past have had relationships bordering on mutual respect). The other was a prince: the Maharaja of Datia, Kishan Singh. The princess was contesting on a BJP ticket, while the prince was a Congress(I) candidate. The other person in the fray was the formidable, Rama Shankar Singh of the DMKP, who projected himself as the son of a poor farmer. Pitted against the *raja* and *rani* Mr Ramashankar's one-point programme was to banish the royalty. The contest was for him a "continuation of the freedom struggle of the Chambal valley." From Bhind to Lahar—all through the ravines—Mr Singh's message was scrawled on the mud huts and walls of the villages and towns: "*Raja, Rani mahal ko jao, Rama Shankar ko vijayi banao* (Go back to the palaces, king and queen, make Rama Shankar victorious)." Loudspeakers in Bhind blared out: "*Mahalwala ayash karne wale hai* (palace-dwellers live a life of luxury and ease)."

In Katha, a village near Lahar, Rama Shankar was heard telling his listeners: "Half of the Madhya Bharat seats are reserved for *rajas* and *ranis*...Look at the Scindias. The Maharaja is contesting from Gwalior, his sister from Bhind, his former aide-de-camp from Guna and another prince from Rajgarh. This is not *lok tantra*." To add punch to his attacks on the royalty, Mr Singh had distributed pamphlets describing how the maharajas of Datia, Dhaulpur and Scindia helped the British during and after the sepoy mutiny.





(Above and below) Madhav Rao Scindia campaigning in royal style in Gwalior

Vasundhara Raje remained undaunted by the criticism: "Yes, I am a princess...I am wealthy and I live in a palace but unlike politicians I am not greedy to make more." Most of the posters in her favour showed her along with her mother. And, in most of her meetings Vasundhara Raje referred to the inseparable bond between the people of Gwalior and the Scindia royal family.

In Gwalior, 39-year-old Madhav Rao Scindia carried out his campaign in royal style. He went from village to village in his helicopter. Wherever Mr Scindia went he was welcomed with open arms. Some of the people who came to meet him even touched his feet. Feudalism is too strongly embedded in the soil of Gwalior. The son of a maharaja always succeeds his father and no one questions his right to rule. The huge blue poster in Bhind depicting Rajiv Gandhi embracing his son seemed to subtly convey this lesson: *Apres moi, mon fils* (After me, my son).

Madhu Jain

INDIA: THE SIEGE WITHIN

CHALLENGES TO A NATION'S UNITY

M.J. AKBAR

BOOK E

The Tragedy

Why was there no settlemen
the Akalis and the centre? W
the face of rising extremism?
India: The Siege Within, M.J.
Delhi allowed the wound to
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The tempo of the violence kept rising. On 18 July 1982, the authorities finally arrested two leaders of the Bhindranwale faction, Bhai Amrik Singh and Baba Thara Singh, the manager of Bhindranwale's headquarters at Chowk Mehta. Bhindranwale now decided that discretion was the better part of valour. He ran away to hide in the Golden Temple—safe from the reach of policemen. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale did not leave the sanctuary—until the army brought out his corpse

The Akalis had become bystanders in all this drama They did not want to associate with the secessionist cry and the violence of Bhindranwale, but they were terrified of being left behind. If anyone else ever managed to lead a successful Sikh movement then utility in the community would be destroyed Nor could they rule out the possibility that the Congress (Indira) leaders were playing a double game. Supposing the Congress government negotiated with Bhindranwale and "conceded" a few of his demands, where would the Akalis be then? It was, as events have proved, a tragic case of mischievous governance and weak, unsure response which stoked a fire which soon went out of control.

The extremists had stolen a march by starting an agitation without asking the Akalis for permission or even cooperation However, the Akalis refused to take the option of grand gestures like demanding secession. When on 12 and on 15 August 1981, a general secretary and MLA of the Akali Dal, Sukjhinder Singh, asked for a referendum in Punjab on the Khalistan issue, the party forced him to resign. The Akalis had three options open to them. The first was to work closely with the extremists; this was advocated by SGPC president Tohra. On the other hand, the former chief minister, Badal, continued his silent efforts to take the party gradually away from the militant theocrats, completely rejecting Bhindranwale and his ilk. And the president of the Akali Dal, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, tried to steer a middle course depending on the issue involved and the political environment in which a decision had to be taken. However, all the leaders were agreed that the party would have to do something if they were not to be totally isolated. They began talking of a "holy war" to win realisation of the demands listed in the Anandapur Sahib Resolution.

What were they, specifically? First, Chandigarh must come to Pun-



Sant Bhindranwale on the terrace of the complex: low ambition

XTRACT

of Punjab

of Punjab's problems despite a series of talks between
y did the moderate Akalis fail to assert themselves in
n the concluding portion of the extract from his book,
KBAR analyses how the Congress(I) government in
come septic, instead of healing it. The book is
d. (represented in India by Penguin Overseas Ltd.
u Place, New Delhi 110 019, price Rs 46.60).



Sondeep Shankar

jab, without any territorial compensation to Haryana. Second, Punjabi-speaking areas left outside Punjab should be brought into the state. Third, the control of the Punjab irrigation headworks should be in the hands of the Punjab government, as should be the management of the Bhakra-Nangal dam. Fourth, Punjab, being a riparian state, must be allowed much more than the 24 per cent share of the waters it gets (the rest went to non-riparian states like Haryana and Rajasthan). Fifth, there should be greater industrialisation through a larger investment of central funds in Punjab. Sixth, the centre, accepting the principle of genuine federalism, must surrender some of the power it had usurped from the states. Seventh, army recruitment should be on merit, not population percentage. Eighth, Sikh farmers in the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh should not face any harassment. Then there were the religious demands: the installation of a radio station to relay hymns from the Golden Temple; election to the managements of all *gurdwaras* in the country; and a ban on the sale of tobacco and liquor around the Golden Temple area, that is, in the precincts of the walled part of Amritsar. These demands were presented in 1981.

In the autumn of 1982, the government of India staged, at a prohibitive cost, the Asian Games. Such was the paranoia of a frightened Delhi that special security measures were mounted to prevent any sabotage by Sikh extremists. This included arbitrary body searches on Sikhs. Not even senior ex-servicemen (including generals) were exempt. Calling this the ultimate humiliation, the Akalis started a "holy war" to achieve their demands. It was quite a while later, more than a year, in fact, that the Akalis got a brainwave and added one more demand to their list.

Article 25 of the Constitution of India guarantees the fundamental right of every Indian to freedom of religion: "Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion." A second clause said: "Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law (a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice; (b) providing for social welfare and reform or throwing open of Hindu religious

institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus." Two explanations followed. First, "The wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion." Second, "In sub-clause (b) of clause (2), the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly."

Red rag. To the Akali Dal, which was formed in 1920 precisely to rescue the Sikh faith and identity, the inclusion of the Sikh in the "classes and sections of Hindus" was nothing short of sacrilege. The "holy war" was intensified, and senior Akali leaders publicly burnt Article 25 of the Constitution and went to jail in



The Akali leaders with P.C. Sethi during the talks at Delhi

March 1984. But the surprise was not that the Akalis were raising demands, but that there had as yet not been any solution to the Akali-Delhi confrontation. What the moderate Akalis really wanted was a "victory" over Delhi which could enable them to take the initiative away from the extremists by restoring their credibility as "champions of the Sikhs." Even a blind government in Delhi could have seen that and offered a way out as Nehru did so often when dealing with Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh. But instead of healing the wound, Mrs Gandhi allowed it to become septic.

The truth was that, at one time or another, a solution had been worked out to each one of the Akali demands. And the moderate Akalis, eager to make matters easier for Delhi, were only too willing to leave the unresolved issues to the discretion of either the Supreme Court or an acceptable third party. The Akalis were as anxious to get off the back of the tiger as anyone else. Whatever may have been their contradictions, whatever their political ploys, they understood that this time around there was a dangerous element to the confrontation over which they had no control: the violent, well-armed well-financed secessionists, who were not responsible to majority Sikh opinion or to reason, and were fanatic about their dream.

The government had indicated that it was willing to concede the religious demands. There remained the political side. The biggest issue was Chandigarh. But Mrs Gandhi herself as early as in 1970, had categorically awarded Chandigarh to Punjab. As far as Fazilka and Abohar were concerned, in order to transfer them to Haryana, a ten-mile long and four-mile wide corridor would have to be created since the areas were not even contiguous to Haryana. They could easily be left in Punjab. The Akalis suggested a way out of the boundaries, headworks and water distribution impasses by suggesting third party arbitration. As for centre-state relations, Delhi had appointed a commission to examine the matter. Army recruitment and the problems of the Terai region were not important enough to become stumbling blocks. As for Article 25, the government was willing to let a panel of judges consider the proposed amendment. Then why was there no settlement? The answer did not lie only in intransigence, of which of course we had ample evidence. It also lay in a new, and very untypical policy that influenced Congress(I) decision-making in the post-1980 spell of Mrs Indira Gandhi's rule.

A feeling had begun to grow, towards the end of the Seventies that since Independence the minorities had been pampered at the cost of the Hindu majority. The charge of appeasement for electoral gain was brought particularly against the Congress, which had always sought and got the vote of the minorities. Nehru of course was the arch villain of this "plot," but his daughter was held no less guilty. The highly publicised conversions to Islam of a few hundred untouchables in the Tamil Nadu village of Meenakshipuram in 1981 was propagated as the final straw. Hindu revivalists began saying that in Hindu-majority India Hinduism, not Islam, was now in danger. Organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Virat Hindu Sammelan (headed by the descendant of Gulab Singh Dogra, Karan Singh) doubled and redoubled their efforts to "save Hinduism." And such was the impact that Mrs Gandhi also began to believe that there was bound to be a "Hindu backlash" against any further "pampering" of the minorities. Far from challenging such revivalism, she decided to ride it as far as it would take her. And so, there was not even the minor consolation of words of sympathy from Mrs Gandhi after Moradabad saw in 1981 one of the worst instances of violence against Muslims in independent India. The Hindu revivalists reached their high point when in 1983 they organised cross-country marches to "Save Hinduism."

Mrs Gandhi often displayed a strong antiminority stance. Pakistan became a favourite target for her rhetoric. She did not stop at that. She kept hinting that the Muslims in India had still not given up their destructive games; there was always talk of a "foreign conspiracy" behind any problem related to Muslims. The same suspicions were continually aroused about the Sikhs, and with the latter it became a self-fulfilling prophecy to an extent. Mrs Gandhi did not, therefore, have a Punjab policy; she had a minorities policy which she extended to the two minority states, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The Sikhs, and particularly the Akalis, were painted in the speeches made by her and her son, Rajiv Gandhi, as potential secessionists. And the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir, along with their leader Dr Farooq Abdullah, had to face even more blatant accusations of

treachery and worse. It was radical departure from traditional Congress behaviour. In the past, if and when a section of the Sikhs or the Muslims tended to make anti-patriotic noises, it used to be deliberately played down by the centre, while those Sikh and Muslim leaders who showed faith in the Constitution of India were given prominence. Now we had just the opposite scenario. While it was National Conference leader Dr Farooq Abdullah who kept insisting every minute that he was an Indian first and last, that Kashmir was an integral part of India, it was Indira and Rajiv Gandhi who kept making snide and open references to the quality of Farooq Abdullah's patriotism. It was a disastrous exercise in a centrifugal internal policy, born out of a misinterpretation of the popular Hindu mood of north India.

And so in Punjab, instead of cooperating with the Akalis to isolate the Sikh extremists, Delhi played into their hands. Fanatic Hindu organisations were encouraged to "teach" the Sikhs a lesson. A Hindu Frankenstein, who would not listen when Delhi eventually began seeking peace, was encouraged: the Hindu Suraksha Samiti (Hindu Safety Organisation) led by Pawan Sharma rose to the "defence" of Hindus. The price which this Frankenstein extracted began to be paid evidently in February 1984, when after successful private negotiations the government was ready to sign a settlement with the Akalis at a formal tripartite meeting which included the opposition parties. On the very day of this meeting the chance of peace was sabotaged by the Samiti, which had become nervous about what the Akali-Congress deal might mean for it. While the talks were in progress, the Hindu Suraksha Samiti indulged in daylong violence against the Sikhs in Haryana, humiliating, terrorising, injuring and killing innocent, isolated Sikhs. The talks collapsed. And Bhindranwale, sitting in the comfort of the Golden Temple, was particularly delighted. Not only had Hindus destroyed the chance of a settlement, but he had more fodder for his anti-Hindu communalism.

But the most unique thing about the long tale of terror in Punjab from 1981 to June 1984 was that, despite all the provocation and opportunity, despite all the engineered tension and suspicion, there was no outbreak of mass mayhem and rioting on the 1947 pattern. It is the age of the semi-automatic now, not the sword, and any such riots would have led to massacres. The Sikh masses did not respond to Bhindranwale's efforts to create anti-Hindu riots. The Akalis, caught in a cleft, remained unsure about when to break publicly and openly with Bhindranwale. By May 1984 they were edging in that direction. The Akal Takht, the highest authority of the Sikh faith, began to prepare charges against Bhindranwale. The secessionist Sant responded by saying that he would not listen to the Akal Takht; the Akal Takht warned that never in the history of Sikhism had the Akal Takht been disobeyed, and it would not tolerate disobedience now.

The five Sikh headpriests in the complex after it was handed over by the army



Bhindranwale's problem was not only an uncertain Akali leadership, but also the fact that the large majority of the Sikhs were simply not interested in breaking India's unity. It was not only the urban or the Mazhabi Sikhs who felt this way—but also the Khalsa Jats, including most of Bhindranwale's neighbours in his birthplace, the village Rode, when I visited it in February 1984. The young man I spoke to reacted sharply when I suggested that perhaps Rode should get ready to enjoy celebrity status as the new spiritual capital of Khalistan: "Where do you stay?" he asked me. "In Calcutta," I replied. "Could you rent me a room in Calcutta?" he asked. I asked why. "To live in, if Khalistan ever becomes a reality," he said. "Who would want to live in a country ruled by this mad Sant?" he asked. The unanswered question is how many people have changed such views after the Army action in the Golden Temple three months later, how many of those who spurned the living Bhindranwale have become followers of the dead secessionist.

A sharp man sitting on a roof, dreaming of becoming the preacher/warrior/king, talking already as a head of state, saying that if the government of India or its Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi wanted to talk to him they could come to the Golden Temple, he would not go to Delhi: was his death a victory: Was he afraid of anything, I asked, including death. "I am not afraid of death," he had answered. "A Sikh cannot be afraid of death; if he is afraid, he is not a Sikh." There was the glow of adulation on the surrounding faces while the Sant looked most pleased with his impromptu proverb. The many threads of convinction, emotion, honour, identity, fear, growth, prosperity, dependence, opportunism, chincanery, greed, nobility, helplessness, fanaticism, ambition will knot and purl as Punjab goes through yet another upheaval. The quadrangular war between a volatile if divided Sikh majority, the determined secessionist, a hardened Hindu and an elected government influenced by many variables will test secular, democratic India as never before. If India proves larger than the petty ambitions of passing leaders, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale will lose.

ANALYSIS

The River Waters Dispute

Successive central governments have not made sufficient efforts to solve the problem, writes Madhu Limaye

The Anandpur Resolution does not contain any elaborate discussion regarding the distribution of river waters among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. In the section on agricultural sector there is only a cursory reference to this problem. The Resolution says that the Akali Party will "make special efforts to bring the Thein Dam and the Bhatinda Thermal plant to a speedy completion" so that increased and cheaper power and irrigation facilities are made available. In the Resolution, there is also a demand for the establishment of an atomic power station in Punjab. And yet distribution of the river waters has become a main issue of contention. Majority of the peasants have become extremely conscious, and are easily swayed by the prospect of both increase and cut in supplies of irrigation water.



A view of the Bhakra dam

The roots of this problem go back by many decades. When the waters of the Indus and its tributaries began to be tapped on a large scale, both the provinces of British India as well as the native princely states began to press their claims for more water. The partition of India and the splitting up of the Indus territories between two sovereign and often antagonistic states gave a new turn to the problem. There was a long period of negotiations between the two governments as also sustained third party mediation. The result of these long-drawn-out parleys under the auspices of the World Bank was the Indus Waters Treaty signed in 1960. India's representatives, the foremost among them Niranjan D. Gulhati, played an outstanding role in effectively putting across India's case for a large share of these waters. They argued the country's case not as Punjabis, Haryanvis or Rajasthanis—they argued the matter as patriots free from all parochial taints.

The Indian representatives made use of modern ideas in the matter of development of river resources: multiple purpose plans and river *basin* concepts. They forcefully argued that there was need for an integrated basin development programme because of the interrelationship "between the availability of water and its possible uses in the various sectors of a drainage area." (*U.N. Panel of Experts Report*, p.50 and p1). Optimum development of water resources was "to be treated on the basis of a whole drainage basin or an entire river system." The focus was on "the basic hydrologic unity of the basin". (*Development of Inter-State Rivers* By. N.D. Gulhati, pp.49-50). The idea of bringing large tracts of arid and desert areas under irrigation and the prospects of growing food and other crops, of feeding and clothing the hungry millions could not fail to appeal to the humanitarian instincts of the World Bank mediators. A narrow approach would have failed to move them. It would not be out of place here to give some idea of the vision that moved India's chief negotiator:

> A river basin is a topographic entity. While political boundaries may change from time to time and the governments which exercise control over a basin may change in number or in nature, the limits of the watershed of a river remain fixed for all time. In case of scarcity of water in relation to requirements, the watershed boundary provides a definite area within which to ration the waters; otherwise there would be no end to the claims that may be made on the scarce resource.
>
> The water resources of a river basin are directly related to the area within the watershed. The volume of surface-flow into the river is a direct result of the rainfall within the limits of the watershed. The quantum of ground waters within a basin is, in most basins and, in any case, over all or most part of a basin, also related to the natural or artificial application of water within the area bounded by the watershed line. (*Development of Inter-State Rivers*, by N.D. Gulhati, p.89).

What constitutes the Indus basin has always been a debatable question. The Indian Irrigation Commission of 1901-1903 joined the Luni basin to that of the Indus. It then demarcated this more broadbased concept of the Indus basin from the Jamuna-Ganga basin. Gulhati himself thought it improper to add the Luni basin to the Indus basin. It is not disputed that eastern Rajasthan does *not* fall in the Indus basin. It comes within the limits of the Jamuna-Ganga basin. But Gulhati's concept of the Indus basin definitely included the western parts of Rajasthan (Jaisalmer and Bikaner) in this

river system. In making the final allocation of the Indus waters between India and Pakistan the mediators were profoundly influenced by the concept of integrated development of the entire Indus basin and, in particular, the idea of making the Rajasthan desert bloom.

The demarcation line between the Indus and the Ganga basins in Haryana is very thin. "The watershed between the Sutluj and the Jumuna," in what was then southernmost Punjab, "is so flat as to be virtually indistinguishable" *(The Indus Rivers*, By Aloys A. Michel, p.318).

The Bhakra-Beas-Rajasthan project did not suddenly spring into existence in 1955. It grew gradually. Nevertheless since it was fully realised that the Sutlej waters stored at Bakra would be inadequate for the Rajasthan project, investigations were started on the Beas, both at the Pong dam site and at the Pandoh diversion site, as early as 1955 *(Ibid*, p.321). Michel wrote that "no hard" data on the drainage aspects of the Rajasthan project was available. "With most of the laterals or distributaries pointing towards the Bahawalpur (Pakistan) border," he thought that the Indian assumption was that "the sub-soil water will drain in that direction." (*Ibid*, p.336) Although Michel is by no means sympathetic to India and is in fact a critic of the Rajasthan project, his criticism itself shows that western Rajasthan is indeed a part of the Indus basin. He has devoted almost two pages to a discussion of the definition of "catchment area," of drainage and whether it includes only surface flows or also sub-surface flows. He has further analysed the relevant treaty provisions (*Ibid*, pp.336-40). Michel lamented that the Indus Water Treaty did not solve the problem of the irrigation affluents of the Rajasthan project (*Ibid*, p.336).

A study commissioned by the Indian Law Institute, basing itself on modern developments, has observed that apart from the tributaries there may be "other waters including underground waters" which contribute to the total flow of an international river. The words "river" and "riparian states" have been substituted in international law by "drainage basin" and "basin states." The international drainage basin is defined by Helsinki rules "as a geographical area extending over two or more states determined by the watershed limits of the system of waters, including surface and underground terminus...if there is to be international law governing use of international waters, the law must apply to all the waters of drainage basin and the states whose territories lie within its basin" (Quoted in *Inter-State Water Disputes in India. An Indian Law Institute Study*, Tripathi, 1971, p.93).

The purpose of the foregoing discussion is to show that since the distribution of the Indus waters between India and Pakistan had the development of Rajasthan as one of its main objects, it would be quite wrong for the successor states of the former state of East Punjab to deny the rightful claims of Rajasthan to be taken into consideration in any final settlement of the Indus water dispute in north-western India.

Throughout the Indo-Pakistan negotiations under the World Bank auspices, the Indian representatives had a very difficult task to perform. These difficulties can be appreciated by having a look at the initial position of the governments of India and Pakistan. We have to bear in mind the known Western sympathy for Pakistan. The plans presented by the two governments. even after mutual concessions, "differed widely":

Indian Plan

Useable supplies allotted to

India • All of the Eastern rivers and 7% of the Western rivers.

Pakistan • None of the Eastern rivers and 90% of the Western rivers.

Pakistan Plan

Useable supplies allotted to

India • 30% of the Eastern rivers and none of the Western rivers.

Pakistan • 70% of the Eastern rivers and all of the Western rivers.

(*Indus Waters Treaty*, by N.D. Gulhati, pp. 134-35)

These were the original claims of the parties. The Treaty, as it finally emerged, said: "All the waters of the eastern rivers shall be available for the unrestricted use of India (Article III)." It also made certain allocations to Pakistan during atransitionperiod which was to terminate in 1970. Pakistan was to receive "for unrestricted use" all the waters of the western rivers flowing into Pakistan subject to certain limited and specified uses for India. But India was not to construct any storage reservoirs on these rivers (Article III). If we look at the original claims and the final allocations it will be perceived that India's case was so cogent and its claims so modest that India could secure a just allocation for itself. For developing alternative sources to the waters which were being used by Pakistan at the time of partition, India had "to make a fixed contribution of Pounds Sterling 62,060,000 towards the cost of these works (Article V)." It is alleged by the concerned states that all these factors have been ignored by some narrow-minded politicians and experts in Punjab while advocating the claims of their own state.

The definition of the term "tributary" in the Treaty is so comprehensive that it obviously bears the imprint of Gulhati and of his way of thinking. Let me quote Gulhati:

> "The term 'tributary' of a river means any surface channel, whether in continuous or intermittent flow and by whatever name called, whose waters in the natural course would fall into that river, e.g., a tributary, a torrent, a natural drainage. an artificial drainage, a *nadi*, a *nallah*, a *nai*, a *khad*, a *cho*. The term also includes any sub-tributary or branch or subsidiary channel, by whatever name called, whose waters, in the natural course, would directly or otherwise flow into that surface channel. (*Indus Waters Treaty*, by N. D. Gulhati, pp.376-77).

Paul Singh Dhillon, former chief engineer, Irrigation Works, Punjab, has contested the validity of the Indus basin and integrated development of the *whole* Indus catchment area and has invoked the doctrine of riparian states to exclude Haryana and Rajasthan from the use of irrigation waters of the three eastern rivers allocated to India. Though a champion of the Punjab monopoly over these waters, he had to concede that Gulhati's concept of "the indivisible hydrologic unit" played an important part in shaping the Indus Waters Treaty and its provisions with regard to final allocation. In a footnote to his book, *A Tale of Two Rivers*, Dhillon writes:

> The hypothesis of Ghaggar basin being a part of the Indus basin, a pet child of Gulhati, had to be adopted in the national interest in the context of negotiations with Pakistan for the division of waters of the Indus system so as to magnify the Indian part of the Indus basin and thereby prop up what, at that time, appeared to be our

sagging requirements of these waters. This was necessary to strengthen our bargaining position in the said negotiations. Pakistan's designee is said to have contested this hypothesis on the basis of pre-partition records, but the post-partition records of government of India, prepared and fielded by Gulhati with sure effect, proved more than a match for the former.

This question has now assumed crucial importance in the context of Ravi-Beas water dispute between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, because it is only by the extension of the Indus over the Ghaggar basin that the two latter states can normally become entitled to a share in Ravi-Beas waters on the basis of the basin concept, as described hereafter. (*A Tale of Two Rivers*, by Paul Singh Dhillon, pp.6-7).

It was thus proper for India to advance the concept of Indus as an indivisible hydrologic unit in order to win a larger share of its waters for itself, but it is wrong to use that concept to justify allocation of water to Rajasthan and Haryana. The former, Dhillon justifies in the name of "national exigency" or as "extra-scientific considerations" advanced "in national interest." But he has no compucation in denying the validity of the concept to refuse a share of the waters, jointly won in the name of all, to the sister states of Rajasthan and Haryana. Could anything be more immoral? (*A Tale of Two Rivers*, Paul Singh Dhillon, pp6-8). Disputes over distribution of river waters between states are not a new phenomenon. The fathers of our Constitution realised this and so they empowered the Parliament to pass legislation on this subject to tackle the problem. Two laws were in fact made by Parliament with a view to resolving these disputes. Even before these laws were passed the government of India realised the urgency of reaching an inter-state agreement and of according sanction to some of the proposed new works. Gulhati wrote from Washington (January 1955) emphasing the necessity of bringing "home to the visiting World Bank and Pakistani groups the need for, and the importance we attached to the full utilisation in India of the waters of the eastern rivers." An agreement was secured among Jammu and Kashmir, the PEPSU states, Punjab and Rajasthan. The largest share of water was allocated to Rajasthan. (*Indus Water Treaty*, Gulhati, p. 358). R. S. Gill in his foreword to Dhillon's book argues



Morarji Desai

that this was done for the "digestion" of the World Bank. Thus a case is cynically being built for violating the sanctity of an inter-state agreement which it must be remembered, had an international ramification.

My object in examining the various aspects of the river water problem is not to refute Punjab's case for more



Prakash Singh Badal

water. I am not pleading any state's case. I am only pleading for fair play, for putting national interest above parochial considerations. River water distribution is a highly technical and complex matter. The American Supreme Court thought that instead of a judicial adjudication, mutual agreement was preferable in a matter like this. Party politics and rivalries, however, preclude adoption of this salutory suggestion in India's case. So let there be recourse to a tribunal. But must we not have the assurance that its decision will not be challenged and sought to be overthrown by extra-constitutional means?

The reorganisation of Punjab caused fresh difficulties. The dispute continued through the Seventies. There were fact finding committees, Planning Commission interventions and also recommendations by the chairman, Central Water Commission. Finally, the central government issued a notification on 24 March 1976 under the powers conferred to it by the Punjab Reorganisation Act. Throughout, the Punjab government disputed these findings, recommendations and orders.

In the general election of 1977 the Congress was defeated from Punjab to Orissa. An Akali-Janata coalition came to power in Punjab. Two Akali ministers were included in the central council of ministers. It was widely expected that the induction of the non-Congress governments both at the centre and in the states would not only have a moderating effect on the conflict but also result in a settlement of all outstanding issues. For a time it seemed that a new era in Sikh-Hindu amity and centre-state relations had been inaugurated. But the Janata government failed to settle the dispute.

The draft of the Anandpur Resolution had been adopted on October 1973. It was finalised on 1 August 1977. The resolution was passed at the Ludhiana Conference of the Akali Party in October 1978. It is not as if the grievances and demands of Punjab originated in 1980 after Indira Gandhi returned to power. The question is legitimate as to why the Janata-Akali government did not work out a settlement regarding the reasonable Akali demands, persuading the Akali party to drop the rest. Why did they not set a noble example before the country in the matter of national integration?

The late Indira Gandhi can certainly be held responsible for the crisis in Punjab. But is the opposition free from criticism? Mrs Gandhi was quite fair when she told the BBC

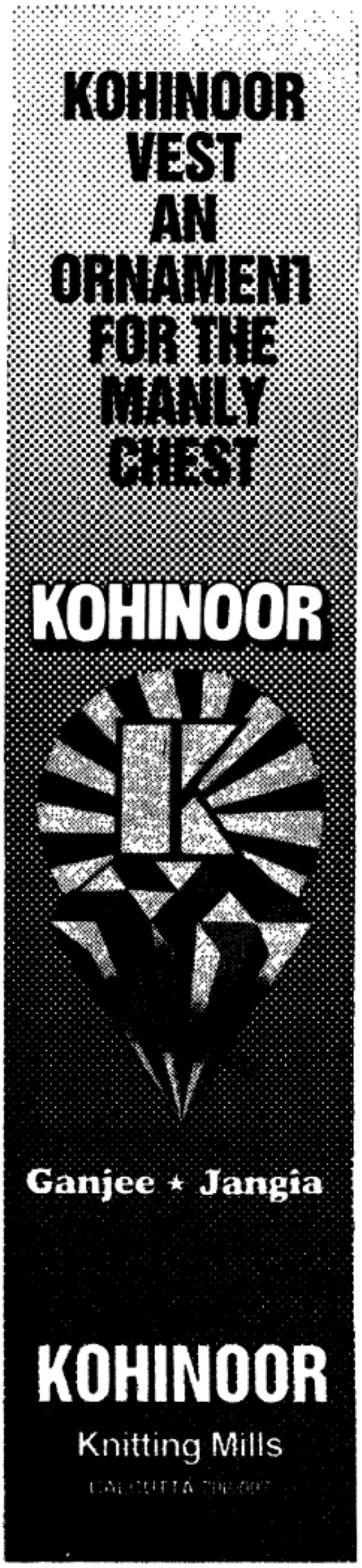


A view of the Panchna dam canal project in Rajasthan

interviewer:

> Firstly, the Akali Dal, which is a political party, with whom we were talking, did not raise or press their demands for three years when they were in power in Punjab and had two of their ministers in the central government. The agitation started only when they lost the election rather badly to my party. (*Patriot*, 20 June 1984).

Among the important crisis arising out of the formation of the Punjabi Subha was this issue of distribution of the waters of Ravi and Beas. Could the Janata Prime Minister have taken the stand that since he was opposed to the formation of the Subha he was not concerned with its fall-outs? He could not do that. But that seemed to be his attitude to the problem. The problem was of course, placed before Morarji Desai by the Punjab and Haryana chief ministers. It was discussed threadbare at several meetings held in which Morarji Desai participated. The Haryana government was insisting on the implementation of the Central Government's Order of 1976. The Punjab government wanted a revision of the order. Morarji at one stage threatened to use sanctions against the Punjab government should it fail to execute its part of the Sutluj-Jamuna Link Canel. But he did not carry out his threat. He always wanted that the two governments should appoint him as the sole arbitrator and accept his award. Morarji Desai emphatically declined to refer the water dispute to a tribunal which could have been set up under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act. He asked the concerned states to file suits if they felt like doing so. Law suits were filed by the two governments: Punjab challenged the validity of the 1976 order and Haryana pressed for its implementation. The real reason why Morarji Desai did not intervene was different. His principal private secretary, V. Shankar, once told chief minister Devilal's cabinet colleague that the Prime Minister was not keen on deciding the question because Devilal was not in his good books. When Prakash Singh Badal asked Morarji Desai to hand over the Bakra-Nangal headworks to Punjab, the Prime Minister flatly refused. Surjeet Singh Barnala was the irrigation minister in Morarji's cabinet. He is not known to have resigned on the issue.



SUFI POETRY

Poems of Peace and Tolerance

By DR NAZIR AHMAD

Anyone looking at the Muslim institutions of Indo-Pakistan would be struck by the fact that from Haryana eastwards, there are well-established theological institutions like Deoband, Bareili, Lucknow and Azimabad, etc., from where thousands upon thousands of *molvies* have graduated and later worked for spreading theological knowledge all over the subcontinent. But to the west of Haryana, in Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the Frontier, there are hardly any comparable institutions. Instead, there are *khanqahs* and *dargahs* of sufi saints like Hujveri, Mian Mir Shah Husain and Bullhe Shah (Lahore); Baba Farid (Pakpattan); Shah Latif (Bhit, Sind) and Rahman Baba (Frontier). Most of them are also poets of the first rank whose verses are known by heart by the common folk. It is this poetry rather than the sermons of the *mullah* and *molvi* which has given the folk here their aims and ideals of life. This, perhaps, will be regarded as a simplistic picture of the east and west social institutions for, as a matter of fact, there are sacred shrines at Ajmer, Kalyer and Delhi and there are theological madressahs at Lahore and Multan. But it is undeniable that the poetry of sufi saints has influenced the lives of the folk in the west much more than in the east and relegated the madressah to a second position.

The Sufi creed

Before discussing this influence, we should first know what a sufi is and what it is that he teaches. Briefly, a sufi is a Musulman who emphasises the importance of the content, meaning and the spirit of Islamic religious practices as against their formal observance. Not that he denies the obligation of saying prayers or the giving of *zakat* alms. Rather, he thinks that the genuflexions of the prayers without the feeling of God's presence while at them are no prayers at all. Similarly, he would say that *zakat* is not the giving away of 2½ per cent of what a man has saved from a year's earnings, but it is rather keeping 2½ per cent for himself and giving away the rest in charity. A sufi's conception of God, too, is different from that of the *mullah* who thinks of Him as a distant Being in the high heavens. To a sufi, God is near, nearer even than his jugular vein and residing in the believer's heart. Again, while a *mullah's* main concern is to make people fear God, the sufi dwells more on God's forgiveness of sins that man cannot help committing.

Not long ago, many western and Indian critics of Islam used to say that the liberal ideas of sufism were alien to original Islam and had been borrowed from Neo-Platonism of the west and Vedanta of India. Lajwanti Ramakrishna of Lahore in her book, *Punjabi Sufi Poets*, took much malicious pleasure in pointing out that the highest in sufism was but a second-hand copy of *Advaita*, the Hindu term for the Unity of Being. However, all modern authorities on Islam, both east and west, are now unanimous that *tasawwuf* is an indigenous movement in Islam which began as asceticism, which in turn was a reaction against the sudden influx of wealth that resulted from Islamic conquests in its very first century. Later, when ideas of love and God's immanence got emphasised, it became Islamic mysticism, i.e., *tasawwuf*.

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The name "sufi" is derived from the Arabic word *suf* which means wool. Rough woollen garments were being worn by Christian ascetics before Islam, and these were adopted by the Muslim ascetics too. Those Muslim ascetics who adopted them began to be called sufis.

When Sufism first came to the subcontinent, it was already a well-developed doctrine of *Tariqat* (the path), and was divided into many *silsilas* or brotherhoods, as attested by Hujveri in his classic, *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*. He was the first notable Sufi master who came to the subcontinent, having migrated from Ghazni to Lahore in the 11th century. Lahore at that time was a centre of Islamic learning.

Another notable figure of the time was Masud Sa'ad Salman of Lahore, a distinguished Persian poet, of whom it is said that he also wrote Punjabi "si-harfis," which shows that Muslims and non-Muslims were already meeting each other intimately. Hujveri also was a Persian poet but he wrote no Punjabi. His influence in the Punjab was mainly due to his personal character and the *khanqah* that he set up. The Gujjar tribes around Lahore were the first to become his disciples. Even to this day the Gujjars of Lahore make an offering of the entire produce of their day's milk at Hujveri's shrine on his annual "urs." It would be useless to look for milk in the markets of Lahore on that day.

Central Asian emigrants

While Islamic armies were rapidly advancing in northern India at the beginning of the 13th century, unexpected changes were taking place in Central Asia. The Mongol hordes had begun invading the Muslim homelands to the east till they had completely destroyed the Abbasid caliphate. Muslims who escaped with their lives from the Central Asian countries migrated to Fgypt, Africa, India and other far-off countries. Among the waves of Muslim migrants to India were included some who founded sufi institutions there. For instance, the Chishti *silsila*, which was to bring profound changes in Indian society, was founded by Khwaja Moeen-ud-Din Chishti, who arrived and settled in Ajmer in 1223 A.D. A learned divine, Shoaib, had migrated earlier from Kabul and was appointed a Kazi in Multan, where his grandson, Farid-ud-Din Masud, better known as Baba Farid, was born in 1175.

Baba Farid established a sufi circle of *jama'at* khana at Pakpattan, then known as Ajodhan. Although his mother tongue was Persian, he produced most remarkable sufi poetry in Punjabi and became the first known poet of this language. In his time Ajodhan was surrounded by wild country and wilder Jat and Rajput tribes. These tribes were Hindu and believed in the congenital inequality of castes, the burning of widows, depriving daughters of inheritance and in worshipping idols. They flocked round this man, Baba Farid, who though belonging to the ruling race, considered them as his equal and preached the unity of godhead. Among his *mulfuzat* (diaries) there is no mention of his exhorting people to get into the Islamic fold, but it seems that whole tribes from the 'bar' areas of Punjab joined Muslim society under his influence Today these tribes remember Baba Farid with the deepest gratitude and visit in great hordes his mausoleum on the "urs" days.

Baba Farid's verse

Baba Farid's Punjabi verse has been saved for us by a lucky incident. It happened that towards the close of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th, Baba Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was collecting verses of sufis and 'bhagats' to put them together in a volume for the instructions of his disciples, or Sikhs. During his search he came upon the *gaddinishin* of Baba Farid's *khanqah* at Ajodhan, who gave him the Punjabi verse of the Baba. These verses, which were written more than seven centuries ago, remain unexcelled in depth of feeling and the beauty of diction. Baba's main themes are the universality of pain, the inevitability of death, the transitoriness of worldly pomp, the uselessness of the most austere penances for discovering God and much else besides. Here is an example of what he says about the universality of pain:

مَیں جاناں دُکھ مجھی کو دُکھ سبھائے جگ
اُچّے چڑھ کے دیکھیا گھر گھر ایہا اگّ

"I thought that pain was my portion alone. But no, it is the fate of all. I had only to go up a height to discover that every home was sending up the smoke of pain."

Note the concentration of meaning in the phrase '*uchhey charh ke dakhia*' which can mean both the physical ascent on a hill or the elevation of soul that will see the pain of others.

On the inevitability of death:

آیو بندہ دُنی وِچ وت آسونی بنّھ
مَلک الموت جد آوسی سب درّ وجّھے بھنّ
تِنھاں پیاریاں بھائیاں اَگّے دِتا بنّھ
دیکھو بندہ چلیا چھُوں جنیاں دے کنّھ

"Man has come into the world with bundles of hopes. When the Angel of Death comes smashing through all doors your own dear ones tie you up in a shroud for him. Look, there goes the man, carried on the shoulders of four pall bearers."

Note here the terrific sound effect of *sabh darwajjey bhann* in the second line. You almost hear the ramrod striking the solid closed doors. Also note its contrast with the passive yielding sounds of *dekho banda chalya* describing the mournful final departure of man.

Baba Farid is universally regarded by sufi masters as having undergone the most severe "chilla" penances possible. And yet he of all the sufis was bold enough to admit that these failed to reveal God to him. Here is a shlok testifying to his failure:

تن سُکا پنجر تھیا تلیاں کھونڈن کاگ
اجے سو رب نہ بوہڑیو، دیکھ بندے دے بھاگ!

"The body has dried up and become a mere skeleton by doing penances. Crows begin pecking at it, thinking it to be a dead body. Yet God has not revealed Himself to man—look that is Man's destiny."

Counterforce to tyranny

Baba Farid's generosity, love and teachings resulted in expanding the fold of Islam, just as the examples of Hujveri and Moeen-ud-Din Chishti had done before him. The need for instructions in the basic Shariat rules for the growing Muslim populations gave undue importance to the *mullahs* and *pesh-imams* who really have no *locus standi* in Islam. Contrasted to the *sufis*, who shunned the courts of kings, governors and officialdom, the *mullahs* sought their nearness. They justified the actions of those in power by false *fatwas* and hair-spliting legal quibbles. Naturally they won favour with the ruling powers and in their own turn exercised their power against the Muslim society. Their tyranny had to be met, and in the Punjabi it was the Punjabi sufi poets who met it.

After Baba Farid, these poets were Shah Husain of Lahore (1538-1599), Sultan Bahu of Jhang (1630-1691), Bullhe Shah of Kasur (1680-1750), Khawja Ghulam Farid of Bahawalpur (1844-1901), and some others. It would not be possible in this short article to discuss them all and show how their poetry countered the dry formalism and tyranny of the *mullah* in religious and social matters. There should really have been no conflict between Islam and *tasawwuf* because form and content imply each other. It is the *mullah* and his selfish power-seeking proclivity which have been at fault and have forced separation between them.

Bullhe Shah's *jehad*

Of all the poets named above, Bullhe Shah provides the best example of battling with the *mullah*. His verses which ridicule the *mullah's* hair-splitting quibbles, stupidity and greed, bring a breath of fresh air in an atmosphere which would otherwise be hemmed in by irrational restrictions. His verses have become so popular with the common folk that they get frequently quoted as proverbs. Here is a verse satirising the *mullah* and others of his habits:

وارے جایئے اُنھاں توں جیہڑے مارن گپ شڑپ
کوڈی لبھی دے دیون تے نُچّے گھاو گھپ

"I bow before those who preach and talk big. They will return a *cowrie* they have found, but keep back a money bag."

Here is a verse admonishing the *mullah* and his patron whether he be a lord or a landlord:

جس ٹھانے دا مان کریں توں
اوہنے تیرے نال نہ جانا
ظلم کریں تے لوک ستاویں
کسب پھڑیو لُٹ کھانا

کرلے چاوڑ چار دیہاڑے
اوڑک توں اُٹھ جانا

"The station of which you feel so proud will not go with you (into the grave). You persecute and oppress people.

To loot others in your living.

Rejoice, if you must, for four days you are sure to go away humbled."

Following is a daring piece on the uselessness of saying prayers which *mullahs* and pundits show off for the benefit of their followers. If somebody were to write it today, the contemporary *mullahs* would lynch him. That Bullhe wrote it in the 18th century Mughal Punjab and escaped shows that his adversaries were, after all, not as strong as they are today:

وید قراناں پڑھ پڑھ تھکے
سجدے کردیاں گھس گئے متھے
نہ رب تیرتھ نہ رب مکے
پھوک مصلے بھن سٹ لوٹا
نہ پھڑ تسبیح، عاصا، سوٹا

"I am tired of reading the *Vedas* and the *Quran*.

My forehead is worn off by constant prostrations in the mosque. But the Lord is neither at the Hindu Shrine nor at Mecca.

Burn the prayer mat, break the bucket and touch not the beads or the stave or staff."

The vanity of knowledge is another favourite subject of Bullhe, who in the following verses is thinking of the hair-splitting lawyer-divines who occupied well-paid government posts of *Kazis* and *Muftis* and whenever the occasion demanded, sided with the government and were hard on the people. Bullhe calls them executioners rather than judges and warns them of the punishment awaiting them in the next world:

کیوں پڑھنا ایں گڈ کتاباں دی
کیوں ہوئیں شکل جلاداں دی

سر چانائیں پنڈ عذاباں دی
اگے پینڈا مشکل بھارا اے
اِک الف پڑھو چھٹکارا اے

"Why do you read cart-loads of books?

Now you look like a hangman.

On your head is a huge load of sins.

The journey ahead is hard and arduous.

Read Alif alone, it will liberate you!"

In the same vein is another, better known, *kafi*-poem of which the refrain is, "Learn no more knowledge, O friend!" Bullhe is an enemy of knowledge that helps the learned ones (divines or otherwise) to become tyrants and exploit the illiterates to their own advantage. Such knowledge lights only their exteriors but their hearts remain devoid of light and human feelings:

علموں بس کریں او یار!
پڑھ پڑھ لکھ لکھ لاویں ڈھیر
ڈھیر کتاباں چار چوفیر
گردے چانن وچ انھیر
پڑھ پڑھ شیخ مشیخ کہاویں
اُلٹے مسلے گھر دیں نباویں
بے علماں نوں لُٹ لُٹ کھاویں
علموں بس کریں او یار!

"Learn no more knowledge, O friend!

You read and write and pile your books in heaps.

These piles be on all your four sides.

There is light around you but in your heart is darkness.

You read and read, and are acclaimed as a *shaikh*.

You affirm perverse rules of your own making.

You rob and exploit the poor illiterate people.

Learn no more knowledge, O friend!"

Finally, it has to be admitted that though Bullhe and others of kindred spirit may have kept up a veritable *jehad* against the tyranny of establishments, that tyranny has not ended. In the last resort a man has to fall back on his own inner resources (*tawakkal*, according to the *sufis*) and adjust himself to the environment. This is possible when he realises that men, universe and God are facets of one Reality (Wahdat-ul-Wujud of the *sufis*). This is brought out in the following verses of Bullhe:

"You cannot push back the true word once it has come up to the tongue! Bullhe! God is not separate from Man.

None exists apart from God;

Only the seeing eye is lacking

Only for that lack does your self suffer pangs of separation."

Tolerance, peace

In the Indian subcontinent, where the population is deeply divided by numerous religions, creeds and castes, sufism has brought tolerance, harmony and peace among them, a truly great achievement. Among the Musulmans, it has brought joy of life to those who would be afraid that indulging in song and dance was against the tenets of Islam and hence fit to be shunned. By allowing *same* (listening to music) the sufis of the Chishti order have not only made music popular among the Muslims but have also helped the evolution of classical music.

In the lives of individuals, sufism has stressed the precedence of spirit over form in religious practices, thus making them more meaningful and satisfying. Sufism, moreover, lays stress on individual spiritual experience though it warns that the experience of no person can cancel the injunctions of the Quran and Hadith, or become valid for another person. Its emphasis on *tawakkal*, or relying solely on God in all situations, has given dignity to the lives of even poor people, who would not ask for help of another person even when that is permissible under the custom. Also, it has given an inward direction to the struggle or *jehad* against the evil forces lying outside man.

The enlarging of the Muslim fold in India and Punjab has been mainly due to the loving conduct and sublime character of individual sufis, the Muslim governments having seldom shown any interest in it.

(Translations of Bullhe Shah are by Atam Singh.)

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MIZORAM

Truce in Sight

Laldenga is optimistic about current negotiations

Peace is finally in sight in troubled Mizoram. For 58-year-old former Indian army combatant clerk Laldenga, who raised the underground Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1966 demanding independence for the Mizo tribe, it has been a long journey from war to peace. Fresh hopes of peace were raised with the arrival of Laldenga in New Delhi on 29 October 1984, to resume truce talks which broke down in January 1982, because the two sides could not agree on a solution within the parameters of the Indian Constitution. As his guerrilla band resumed its hit-and-run raids in Mizoram after the talks failed, a bitter Laldenga with his wife Biakdiki and their two children flew out of New Delhi on an Indian passport and settled down in Woking, Surrey.

This time too, at the end of his talks with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's principal aide on foreign affairs, G. Parthasarathy, chairman of external affairs ministry's policy planning committee, Laldenga flew out of New Delhi to be with his family members in England during Christmas. But on this occasion he went a happy man. He could finally reach a truce/agreement with New Delhi and he himself announced that a solution had finally been found within the framework of the Indian Constitution. By his reckoning a formal agreement is expected after the talks are resumed on his return to New Delhi next month. And the people of Mizoram can now look forward to a splendid New Year gift.

Laldenga's decision to resume talks with New Delhi follows the Congress(I)'s coming to power in Mizoram for the first time and the defeat of his arch-rival, a retired Indian army brigadier, T. Sailo in the Assembly elections early this year. The talks broke down in 1982 as the government of India refused to accommodate Laldenga on his demands of immediate dismissal of the then Mizoram chief minister Brig Sailo and his installation as the chief minister without even holding an election. Laldenga contributed substantially to the Congress(I) victory at the polls by urging his people through pre-recorded cassettes to vote for the Congress(I) for stability and prosperity of Mizoram. The present Congress(I) chief minister, Lal Thanhawla has been a close associate of Laldenga for a long time and is one of the promoters of the 300-strong well-trained and highly motivated MNF guerrilla band. It is mainly due to his initiative and predominantly Christian Mizoram's church leaders that negotiations were reopened.

The church leaders succeeded after several attempts. The Mizoram Church Leaders' Council, a forum of nine denominations, in its first attempt wrote identical letters to Mrs Gandhi and Laldenga in June 1982 urging them to resume the talks. While Mrs Gandhi ignored the



Laldenga

appeal, Laldenga sent a polite thank-you note to the church leaders. Again, on the eve of the April 1984 Assembly elections, Rev. Lalswama, the secretary of the Mizo Presbyterian Synod, called on K.V. Panniker, the all India Congress(I) joint secretary, at the Aizawl circuit house pleading for the resumption of the talks. It was the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who set the ball rolling when she announced at a public meeting in Aizawl on 16 April that she was ready to resume talks if Laldenga agreed to a solution within the framework of the Indian Constitution and his guerrillas ceased armed hostilities.

In May, a 19-member Mizo choir group led by Rev. Lalswama and Rev. Zaithanga while on a tour of England visited Laldenga at Surrey. Laldenga told them he was ready and willing to accept Mrs Gandhi's terms for the talks. In July he wrote a letter to Mrs Gandhi formally accepting her terms. On 15 August, chief minister Lal Thanhawla got a call from the union home minister P.V. Narasimha Rao summoning him to New Delhi. There he had a series of meetings with the home minister, the Prime Minister and senior government officials and discussed the ground rules for the talks. Laldenga wanted an assurance from the government of India on his safe passage to India and suspension of all punitive action against his outlawed MNF followers. In return, he instructed his guerrillas to hold their fire.

The stage was thus set for a fresh round of truce talks in New Delhi. The talks, however, suffered a setback even before they started because of the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. She was to meet Laldenga on the day she was assassinated. The threads were, however, picked up soon by her son and successor Rajiv Gandhi and apparently enough progress has been made to encourage optimism in Laldenga of a peace agreement next month. The government of India also shares his optimism but is cautious about acknowledging it publicly because of past frustrations in dealing with Laldenga. The first time the hopes of peace were raised in February 1971 was when one of Laldenga's close aides, Zoramthanga, walked into the Shillong office of the Indian secret service agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) administered by the cabinet secretariat, carrying a peace proposal from Laldenga. By then Laldenga had deserted his camp in Bangladesh and settled down in Karachi. Zoramthanga again met the military attache posted at the Indian high commission in Kabul in 1973 with the same set of proposals. Two years later, in September 1975, the RAW agents smuggled Laldenga from his Karachi residence at Asghar Mall Chowk and sent him to Europe. The escape was planned when a joint director of RAW, Hasanwalia met him a Geneva hotel on 20 August where Laldenga typed out a letter on the Hotel du-Lac's letter head offering to settle the Mizo problem within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

After some hectic parleys with Indian officials at Cologne, West Germany, Laldenga agreed to come to New Delhi for further talks with the

representatives of the government of India. Laldenga arrived in Delhi on 24 January 1976 and was put up at a house rented from a *Times of India* columnist at Gulmohar Park. A cease-fire was announced after Laldenga met other underground leaders in a five-star hotel in Calcutta for nine days from 24 March. The negotiations with India government representatives, however, failed to make much progress and got bogged down on procedural wranglings. Finally, the talks were discontinued in March 1978 and Laldenga's followers renewed insurgency in Mizoram. In July 1979, Laldenga was arrested for violence by his followers and put in Tihar jail till his release by Mrs Gandhi on her return to power.

Mrs Gandhi again set the ball rolling. On 13 April 1980, Laldenga met Mrs Gandhi and offered to negotiate peace. On 2 June, an Indian airforce Mi-4 helicopter flew Laldenga's elder son, David, and two of his aides to the Mizoram border village Parva, from where they trekked to the underground MNF headquarters located in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh to seek the approval of the 12-member MNF executive council to Laldenga's peace proposals.

Laldenga himself made two trips to the MNF headquarters—first in March 1981 and again in September the same year—to finalise the truce terms.

But negotiations floundered again as Laldenga started raising demands which the Indian negotiator G. Parthasarathy refused to concede on the ground that they were of an extra-constitutional nature. A fresh spurt of violence in Mizoram finally sealed the fate of the negotiations which were terminated on 20 January 1982. Before the talks were called off, the Indian officials were so optimistic about the outcome that they even told newsmen that an accord had been reached with Laldenga. It is because of this that Indian officials are cautious this time.

A truce between Laldenga and New Delhi will also mean peace for another disturbed northeastern state, Tripura. The Tribal Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) guerrillas responsible for widespread disturbances in the state have been drawing sustenance from the MNF and sharing its base since the TNV's inception in 1978. Laldenga has now instructed his followers to dissociate themselves from the TNV. However, a section of the MNF is still not reconciled to the idea of signing a truce agreement with New Delhi.

Toosher Pandit, Calcutta and Suntanu Ghosh, Aizawl

"Much Will Depend On How Fast Parliament Can Act"

Laldenga tells SUNDAY

***Q**: You arrived for the third round of talks on the Mizo problem on 29 October. Were you able to meet Mrs Gandhi before her tragic death? Has Mrs Gandhi's death dislocated the process towards a final settlement?*

A: The day after my arrival I met Mr G. Parthasarthy who had been detailed to handle the government side of the negotiations. He has often played the role of a trouble shooter for Mrs Gandhi and was also in charge of the 1981-'82 negotiations. It was arranged that I would meet the Prime Minister on 31 October and as you know she was unfortunately assassinated on that very day. A new government was framed and although it was from mother to son it was nonetheless a different government. So I had to make sure whether it would continue the same policies. I contacted the home minister and Mr Narasimha Rao assured me that they would continue what the previous government had started. In fact, they stressed that they were committed to "conclude" in the way that Mrs Gandhi had wanted the problem to be settled.

Q: Did you have ay detailed discussions with Rajiv Gandhi? Was there any difference in his attitude from that of his mother towards the Mizo problem?

A: Sometime in mid-November I met the Prime Minister. I was accompanied by my delegation including the commander of the MNA (Mizo National Army), Brig. Tawnlui. Rajiv was assisted by Mr G. Parthasarthy. It was decided that irrespective of whatever transpired in their present talks, the final round would take place after the new government was formed. Rajiv told me that the pressure of elections would probably not permit him to meet me again till after the elections.

In any case, once an agreement is reached, legislation would have to be necessary and this will have to be done by the new Parliament. Rajiv was very positive and understanding in his approach. Of course his mother had been more firm during the talks, more certain of the issues involved but then she was aware of the intricacies of the Mizo problem. Rajiv had certainly been well-briefed on the subject but nonetheless it was a new field for him. But he was most attentive.

Q: After your meeting with Rajiv Gandhi were there any more talks with Mr Parthasarthy?

A: I continued to have a series of meetings with Mr G. Parthasarthy. We were able to come to an understanding on 14 points. A handful still remain to be settled but we have decided to refer these to the Prime Minister.

Q: What are the broad outlines of the understanding that you have reached? Is it different from that envisaged by you during the 1976 and 1981-'82 rounds of talks?

A: I do not want to elaborate on the understanding reached because it might appear that I am pressurising the government through the press. I have not forgotten that in 1976 the Indian government, or may be certain zealous bureaucrats went to the press and claimed that an accord had been reached when we had yet to make known our proposals. Subsequently the government acknowledged that no accord had been reached, rather it was a "deceit" practised upon us.

However, the accord that is now being worked out is very much along the lines of the one being negotiated in 1981-'82. Then it had been agreed that Mizoram would be upgraded to a state with autonomy in the line of Article 371A and not Article 370 which applies only to Jammu and Kashmir. It is Article 371A that provides for special provisions to be made for Nagaland.

(According to constitutional lawyer Gobinda Mukhoty, while the article does provide for special rights for the Naga people it also provides for special pow-

"The neighbouring states have a lot of Mizo areas. Of course when de-limitation takes place, the representatives of other states will have to be present"

ers to the district commissioner and the Governor. For example, it provides for regional councils but the chairman of these councils is always the deputy commissioner. Therefore, despite the existence of the Assembly, the centre exercises substantial control in this sensitive state. Mr Laldenga appears to be negotiating with the government for a more balanced relationship between the centre and the state in an area which he recognises as "sensitive".

Q: What are some of the special provisions that you feel would be necessary? Would they be similar to those existing in Nagaland, Manipur and Assam?

A: There are certain peculiarities of the Mizoram situation which have to be provided for. It is a sensitive area bordering Burma in the east, Bangladesh in the west, where there is the problem of the Chakma tribals, which has spilled over into Mizoram. There is a high rate of illegal immigration and there are thousandsof refugees in camps there. In such a situation there has to be absolute trust between the centre and the state. The Naga problem is a very different matter.

Q: What role would you expect the army to play in the area? Here I have in mind the situation in Nagaland where the army is extensively deployed.

A: There is no question of the army being deployed here (in Mizoram) to aid the civil authorities because wherever there has been a large army presence, friction between civilians and armed force personnel has developed. As regards the border, of course, the army must be there to protect them, but it must be strictly for border protection and not to aid the civil authority.

Q: In an earlier interview you had said that you were keen to ensure that the Sixth Schedule no longer apply to Mizoram. Has the government adapted this during the current negotiations?

A: The Sixth Schedule was meant for the protection of the Assamese tribals from the "plains people." Mizoram was then a tribal area of Assam. However, since then it has been made a union territory and will soon be granted statehood. We have therefore demanded that the Sixth Schedule no longer apply. The government has not yet conceded to this demand. At present the Sixth Schedule applies only in certain areas of Mizoram but we want it to be withdrawn altogether. It is still the subject of talks with the government. (The Sixth Schedule, framed under Article 224 and 275 of the Constitution provides for extraordinary powers to the Governor of the area. In effect, it is an enabling provision for virtual central rule despite the existence of the Assembly.)

Q: What are some of the other areas of understanding that you have been able to arrive at in the present round of talks?

A: Given the fact that we are a different ethnic group and indeed we feel alienated even in Delhi, special provisions have to be made to ensure adequate representation in the state and central services. It is a small place and politically and economically backward. We need some constitutional protection. If it (Mizoram) is completely opened up, the (Mizo) population will be like a drop in the ocean. Certain protection has therefore to be provided to trade and commerce within the state so that big traders do not take advantage of us. The land tenure system has to be safeguarded. To be good and happy Indians we need certain safeguards to feel secure. We also want that our Mizo language, spoken in the adjoining border regions as well, be recognised as one of the languages of India.

It has also been agreed that the underground Mizos will be rehabilitated and whatever cases were registered against them during the insurgency will be dropped. Understanding has also been reached on the delimitation of the state of Mizoram. The neighbouring states have a lot of Mizo areas. Of course, ultimately when delimitation actually takes place the representative of the other concerned state governments will have to be present.

Q: Regarding the points of differences still persisting, would you describe them as major or minor?

A: Well, it depends upon who interprets them. From my point of view they are all minor but it will depend upon the new government. Essentially, they have to do with constitutional matters and certain administrative problems. No, I cannot elaborate. But I do not believe that they will be a major stumbling block when negotiations are resumed next January. The points still remaining are but a handful

"There is no question of the army being deployed here..wherever there has been a large army presence, friction between civilians and armed force personnel has developed."

Q: When do you expect the agreement to be finalised and fresh elections held?

A: We hope that by January something can be accomplished. Much will of course, depend upon how fast Parliament can act. Legislation has to be brought before the Parliament. Constituencies will have to be delimited because the size of constituencies in a union territory are different. I do not think that it can all be done in less than six months or may be a year.

Q: Are you confident that whatever agreement you arrive at will be acceptable back home, especially by the MNA?

A: Certainly, I would otherwise not be negotiating on their behalf and the government would not take me seriously. I enjoy the support of every rank and file and not only of the MNF. It was on the basis of this proposed agreement that the village council elections were recently fought. We swept the polls with Brig Sailo and the combined opposition winning only 28 villages as against 309 won by us. There is not a single person in the MNF who is against the agreement. There are a few other people who have expressed reservations, but they are negligible.

Q: Are there any differences between the MNF and the MNA regarding the talks?

A: Firstly, there is no difference between the MNF and the MNA. Brig. Tawnlui is taking part in the negotiations but not as a representative of the MNA but as a representative of the underground government. Do you think that when the government of India enters into negotiations, the army represents itself?

Q: What progress have you made on the question of reciprocal ceasefire. Earlier, you had made a representation to the government that a cease-fire to be observed only by your side could not continue. Has the centre ordered a ceasefire on their side?

A: Yes, but just yesterday I got a report from Aizwal that the Indian army was not observing cease-fire orders. Some of them complain that they have not received any such orders. Recently an incident occurred somewhere between Aizwal and Lonk town. There were fortunately no casualties. So far, I have told my people not to retaliate but if there are casualties it will be most difficult. I have made this known to the home ministry.

Interviewed by Rita Manchanda

MOUNTAINEERING

Himalayan Stigma

Sherpas protest against "unfair" criticism

Matters seem to be hotting up in the cool climes of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) at Darjeeling, the training school for many a Sherpa who has accompanied expeditions to the Himalayas. A recent statement made by Dr Meena Agarwal, the team doctor of the 1984 Everest expedition, that the Sherpas who have traditionally accompanied expeditions to the Himalayas had become unreliable and were always after money, has raised a storm of protests from the Sherpas. Addressing the Bombay branch of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Dr Agarwal has said that the old world values of the Sherpas had changed; they were disloyal and not particularly helpful during crises. Retorted an indignant Sherpa Nawang Gombu, field director of the HMI and the first person in the world to scale Mt. Everest twice, "It is a Himalayan stigma.... this is the height of injustice." Gombu maintains that the experience of one person with the Sherpas does not reflect on the community as a whole.

Gombu goes on to say that the Sherpas in India are gradually giving up mountaineering as a profession; today, they are taking up less hazardous and more steady jobs. He recalled that the Sherpas in the early 1920s, when the idea of climbing the world's pinnacle had just dawned on the Everest pioneers, used to get a wage of 25 paise per day. Today, the average expenses involved in hiring a Sherpa for the entire duration of an Everest expedition is Rs 60,000. The circumstances have justifiably changed, Gombu maintains. After all, more Sherpas have died on the mountains than others. According to him, all but three or four of his 1963 colleague Sherpas have died, mostly on the mountains.



Gombu

It is a regrettable fact, says Gombu that some Indian mountaineers are getting into the habit of publicly criticising the Sherpas and then apologising privately for it.. A couple of years ago, Brig. Gyan Singh, an eminent mountaineer and former principal of the HMI had made scathing remarks in newspaper articles against its Sherpa instructors, even though he was then an executive council member of the mountaineering institute.

Gombu is determined not to let Dr Agarwal's remarks pass. He went to see the HMI principal, Col D.K. Khullar, leader of the 1984 Everest expedition. Col. Khullar has expressed regrets for the accusations. Col Khullar told SUNDAY, "Those are Dr Agarwal's personal views. She did not have my permission to say such things."

Tapas Mukherjee, Darjeeling

TAMIL NADU

Jayalalitha: MGR's Successor?

The ex-actress draws massive crowds

Jayalalitha has emerged as a surrogate MGR in the hinterlands of Tamil Nadu. The villagers were flocking to her public meetings with the belief that in the absence of MGR, she is their next best leader. The crowds that were attending the former film actress's meetings surpassed the ones at the meetings of other political leaders in the state, including the DMK stalwart M. Karunanidhi. Jayalalitha finds it advantageous not to emerge as a leader in her own right: she is MGR by proxy. Very subtly she deliberately mentions her association with MGR. By seeing her, people are automatically reminded of MGR. As far as the rural population is concerned, Jayalalitha is the "truest and most sincere representative" of MGR and his successor.

Jayalalitha chose to tour only ten districts: Tirunelveli, Salem, West Ramnad, Madurai, Coimbatore, Periyar, Tiruchy, Pudukottai, Thanjavur and South Arcot. Even at her wayside meetings, in remote villages and *taluk* headquarters the crowds which turned up to see and hear her were massive. One specific instance can be cited to prove that Jayalalitha commands bigger crowds than Karunanidhi. Even in a tiny village—Vellakoil, the crowds that attended her meeting was bigger than the one that were present at Karunanidhi's meeting in Perambular, a small town. As the DMK chief refuses to "stoop to the level" of treating Jayalalitha as a rival, the DMK propped up T. Rajendar as a foil to Jayalalitha. Rajendar, a popular Tamil film actor and director was effective in his role in the AIADMK byelections. But, in the rural areas, Jayalalitha remained unrivalled. At Dharmapuram, a crowd of about 10,000 waited for seven hours in the chill of the winter night to see and hear Jayalalitha.

Even more impressive than the size of the crowds that Jayalalitha attracts is the spontaneous enthusiasm she managed to arouse in the people. The milling crowds, particularly the women and youth talk excitedly about her. Though she takes great pains to reaffirm that she has come to them as MGR's emissary, Jayalalitha today has evolved a charisma of her own. Evidently, after Periyar, Kamaraj, Annadurai, Karunanidhi and MGR, Jayalalitha is going to be the next most charismatic leader in Tamil Nadu.

The size of the crowds reminded this correspondent of N.T. Ramarao's debut in politics in Andhra Pradesh in 1982. The scenario was similar except, perhaps, that it was on a slightly reduced scale. At that time people dismissed the crowds NTR attracted loftily pronouncing that it would not turn into votes. It did turn.

The same drama appeared to be unfolding this time in Tamil Nadu with Jayalalitha as the protagonist. Jayalalitha travelled around in her

well-equipped, year-old blue van that even has a toilet. As she neared a village, she emerged out of the trap door on the roof of the van. The lights were turned on and the star was framed dramatically in a warm soft orange glow. She was always clad in a white sari with a black, white and red border, the three AIADMK colours. As the waiting crowds spotted her, they ran forward, leaping and shouting, and threw garlands at her which she, like MGR and NTR threw back at them. Jayalalitha smiled, waved her hand, did *namaste* and repeatedly raised her hand with the 'V' sign denoting the two leaves symbol of the AIADMK emulating MGR. Intelligent and a keen observer that she is, Jayalalitha had made a study of the gestures and mannerisms that is part of the MGR legend.

Jayalalitha is a good orator. On the dais she was able to establish an instant rapport with the people. She spoke effortlessly and fluently using colloquial expressions well-understood by the crowds. As a speaker, she was infinitely superior to MGR who relied entirely on his face and appearance not on his speech, to arouse the people. She used a conversational tone, constantly ensuring mass participation by posing questions: "Don't you all want to hear the latest news about MGR ?" She asked. The crowds answered with an enthusiastic, "yes." To that she made the "happy announcement" that MGR would return in January. Making a jibe often at Karunanidhi, she asserted that the DMK chief was tailing her, "Isn't he coming here tomorrow?" she asked the crowd.

To understand why people waited in such numbers and over such long periods, this correspondent spoke to a number of villagers They said they were very curious to see the ex-actress because they had seen a number of her films and because she had acted with MGR. Now she was in his party following his policies. She was "the truest representative of MGR in the party," the only one who they were confident would faithfully follow the path chosen by MGR. Only she, like MGR, would give paramount importance to the poor and the downtrodden. To this correspondent's specific question, the villagers said they saw Jayalalitha as MGR's successor.

Kannan, the AIADMK Lok Sabha candidate for Tiruchengode told SUNDAY that people flocked to see Jayalalitha because of her "good personality." This was a local euphemism for her good looks. Jayalalitha was the beautiful girl of Tamil cinema for several years. She has not lost her looks and more than anything else her fair, unblemished complexion has the people gaping at her. Kannan pointed out the fact that she was known to be close to MGR added to her appeal. Moreover, as the propaganda secretary of the party, she had several opportunities to mingle with the masses.

Jayalalitha's political career graph has been quite erratic. Her rapid rise in the party hierarchy was offset by her equally rapid downfall when MGR was hospitalised. While MGR looked on benignly (or helplessly as some would put it), Jayalalitha rode roughshod over the party elders, earning the resentment of a sizable section of the party. She become so powerful at one stage that she was the *de facto* chief minister. The AIADMK partymen recoiled at the idea of tolerating such treatment from MGR's paramour. When MGR fell ill, these partymen lost no time in venting their anger against Jayalalitha by openly humiliating and in-



Jayalalitha

sulting her. She was pushed out of the limelight, and if the AIADMK high command had its own way, Jayalalitha would not even have been allowed to campaign this time. Fortunately for her, Rajiv Gandhi stepped in. He did not want any infighting in the AIADMK to interfere with the combine's victory at the hustings. Intelligence reports had reached him that next to MGR, Jayalalitha would be the biggest crowdpuller in the AIADMK. It was indicated to the state's finance minister V.R. Nedunchezian that Jayalalitha should be inducted for electioneering. The command was conveyed to P.U. Shunmugam AIADMK general secretary, who had little choice but to oblige. Thus, Jayalalitha was given the much-needed opportunity to demonstrate her popularity and mass appeal. Now that she is once again active in the party, Jayalalitha is doing everything in her power to consolidate her position. Her biggest hurdle is the animosity of the AIADMK ministers who lobbied to prevent her from campaigning in their home bases, afraid that she would threaten their hold over the locals.

Instead of going on a whirlwind tour all over the state which would entail only a superficial coverage, Jayalalitha chose to cover only ten districts intensively. This was an idea mooted by her friend and political adviser Mr Solai. Just as there are several prominent persons in the AIADMK who are against her there are others within the party who are supporting her. Jayalalitha's staunchest supporter was S. Thirunavukkarasu, the young and energetic commercial taxes minister in the MGR cabinet. He is also the secretary of the AIADMK youth wing. The AIADMK youth wing has done a commendable job mobilising people, making arrangements, ensuring publicity and so on.

Jayalalitha has to live down her past. Since she was a glamourous filmstar, people automatically assumed that she was neither intelligent nor shrewd. On her part, Jayalalitha selected her slogans with care. Her two main slogans were; "*Puratchi selvi* (revolutionary girl)," complementing MGR who is popularity called "*Puratchi Thalaivar* (revolutionary leader)." She is also called "*Chintanai selvi*" which roughly translated means "girl with brains and ideas."

Jayalalitha is going to find it an uphill task to realise her ambitions within the framework of the party. How she is going to mobilise the senior partymen and get them to accept her as MGR's successor remains to be seen. According to sources close to her, she is also toying with the idea of forming her own party should she find herself stifled in the AIADMK. In that case, just as in the Seventies one found both the DMK and the newly formed AIADMK, both raving about Anna, one would probably see in future the AIADMK and its splinter faction led by Jayalalitha (perhaps, named MGR-ANNA DMK) both hailing MGR.

Anita Pratap, Madras

An Interview With Jayalalitha



Jayalalitha waves to cheering crowds

Q. What do you have to say about the public response to you?

A: Wherever I've been I can say the response from the public, the turnout and the sheer magnitude of the masses is something that has created history. This is what people themselves say. I have been to all these districts (the ten districts where she campaigned) before two or three times, so it is not that I am new to the people or that they have not seen me before. In fact, I have covered these districts village by village. But the crowds this time have been unprecedented; it has set a new record.

Q: Do you feel that MGR's lack of physical presence for the election campaign is a severe setback to the AIADMK?

A: Well, I am there. But you must not take this in the wrong sense, because as far as the public are concerned they don't see any difference between MGR and me. When I come to them they think they are seeing him. To that extent I have made up for his absence—now don't get me wrong. I am not talking about the leadership or the administration of the party. I am only talking about the election campaign. You asked me about the setback because of MGR's absence. There is no setback because people don't think that MGR has not come. When they see Jayalalitha they don't see me as Jayalalitha. They think MGR has come.

Q: Your explanation for the large crowds at your meetings is that it is because people see MGR in you. But why would people equate you with MGR?

A: You are the political analyst. It is up to you to analyse why this is so. I can only give you facts. The meetings that have taken place were on my route; this time we have not been concentrating on public meetings. We keep stopping all along the route so that we can see the maximum number of people. We go through residential areas. Very often we have been told that people themselves were not aware that so many people lived in a particular area. From the time history has been recorded I can say that people have not seen such huge crowds. The reason for such a huge turnout is the sympathy for MGR. The whole of Tamil Nadu worships him as a god. They deify him. They do not come to see Jayalalitha. They are coming because they feel so many people are telling them lies, only Jayalalitha speaks the truth. They want to know how MGR is. Is he really recovering? Is he really going to come back? That is why there is such a massive turnout. The people believe what I tell them. They do not believe anyone else. Mr Karunanidhi is saying so many things. Other party people are saying so many things. But the people feel only I'll give them the true picture.

Q: What are the crucial issues for the Assembly and Parliament elections in Tamil Nadu?

A: There is no crucial issue as such because you see, the MGR government has given good administration, has initiated so many welfare schemes which no other government has even thought of doing. Hence the people don't want a different government. People are not bothered about promises or plans or anything like that. The people want to know whether MGR will come back. They want him as chief minister again. The people are not dissatisfied. They are happy with the meal schemes, free electricity for the poor farmers and all the other schemes that MGR has introduced.

Q: Will MGR come back fit enough to be chief minister again?

A: The American doctors who have been treating him have assured that he will be fit once again.

Q What is your reaction to the allegation made by a section of the AIADMK that the party high command has chosen a number of wrong candidates thereby undermining the chances of the party?

A: I can't comment on that because as far as I am concerned I am only an ordinary party member I had nothing to do with the choice of candidates. The parliamentary board has selected the candidates and as far as possible, as an ordinary member of the party, I am doing my duty by going around canvassing for votes for the AIADMK-Congress(I) candidates

Q: Do you think that the Congress(I) and the AIADMK are relying heavily on the sympathy factor.

A: We cannot ignore the sympathy factor...

Q But making that an issue...

A: We aren't making that an issue. It is the people who don't want us to talk about anything else The only question people ask is "Will MGR come back."

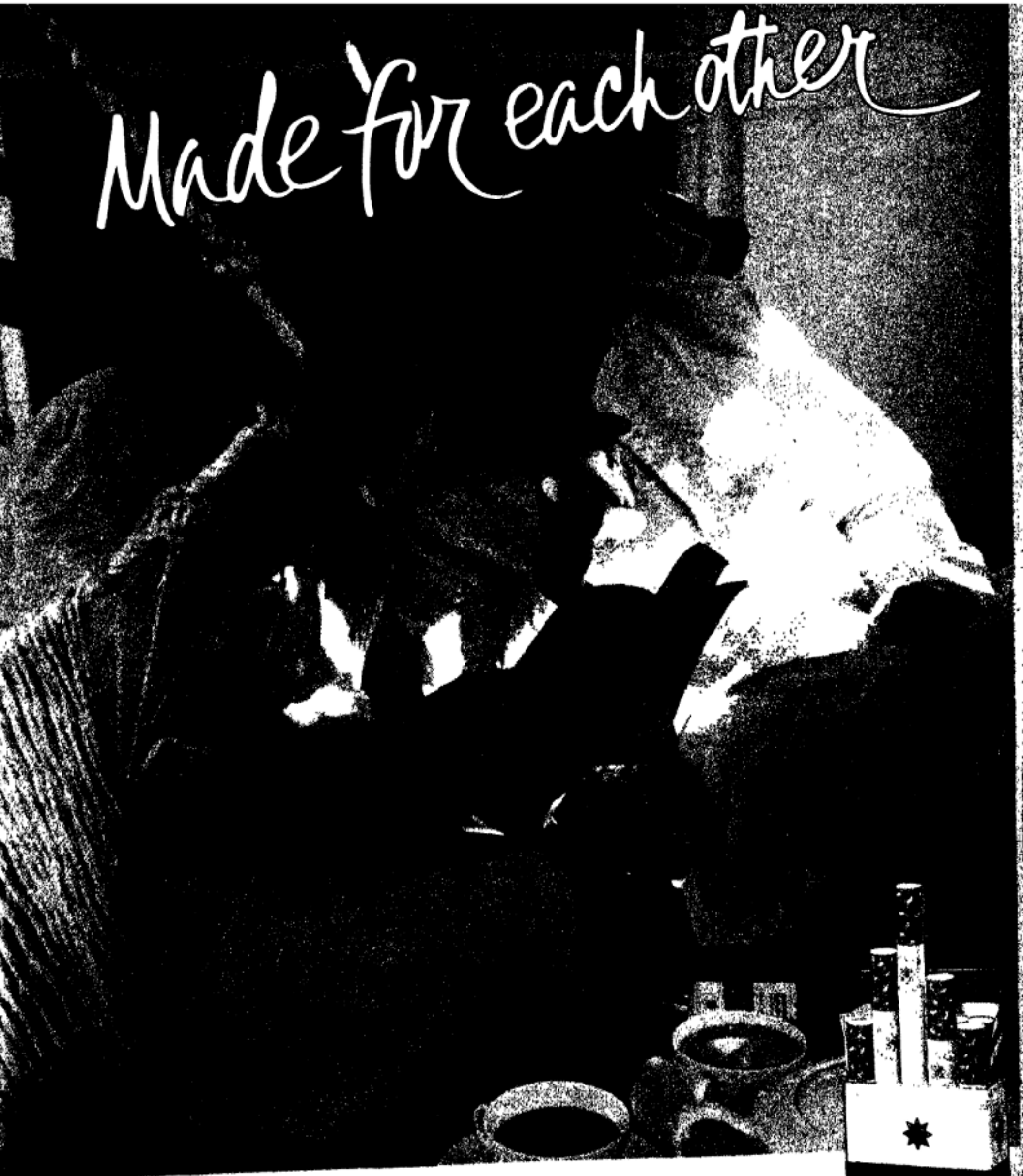
Q: What is your reaction to Mr Karunanidhi's plea to the electorate to forgive his sins and vote him back to power? At Madurai he even said that if he became CM and it MGR returned he would relinquish power to MGR.

A: *(laughs mockingly)* That only shows how desperate he is. No sensible politician could have said something like that. The chief minister can only be from the party that gets the majority. How can he relinquish power to someone from another party. It doesn't make sense. It is a very stupid statement.

Q: It is said that the AIADMK high command was forced to make you canvass for their candidates because you are a crowd puller in the party. But there is a lot of animosity towards you. Once the elections are over and you have served your purpose, it is felt that you will be sidelined again.

A: Look, I live for the day. I am doing my duty. God will take care of the rest.

Interviewed by Anita Pratap



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MANIPUR

NSCN's Terror Tactics

Muivah warns the Nagas

The security forces have spread a wide net in Manipur's Naga-inhabited East District to nab two leaders of the pro-Maoist trans-border Naga insurgent outfit, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). The two are believed to be the masterminds behind the abortive attempt to kill Manipur chief minister Rishang Keishing near Leishi village in the East District on 8 December 1984 in an ambush. In what is described as a breakthrough in the investigation into the daring ambush, sleuths have identified "Captain" Livingstone and his assistant Angelus Shimray, the foreign secretary of the NSCN as the kingpins in the plot to assassinate the CM.

The security drill to preempt such wayside ambushes as well as to round up the suspects was further strengthened as General Kanwar Chiman Singh, GOC-in-C of the Eastern Command conferred with top brass of the Eighth Mountain Division at Imphal on 12 December. According to sources in the security forces, 15 NSCN gunmen, hidden in a jungle-clad hillside, kept up a barrage of automatic fire on Keishing's motorcade of jeeps in the mid-noon ambush. That the guerrillas were in a hurry to finish the job was evident from their random shooting. They did not have the patience to identify the jeep in which the chief minister was travelling. One plausible reason for it was that Keishing, who set out from Imphal in his official Contessa car, switched vehicles in between. He moved into a Manipur Rifles jeep when the motorcade reached a vulnerable section of the Ukhrul road. Four Manipur Rifles men, drawn from its second and sixth battalions, were killed on the spot. With DIG (Hills) Chandra Bihari Singh injured and perplexed jawans merely returning the fire without even making the necessary forays into the adjacent hillside terraces, the rebels managed to make an easy getaway.



CM Rishang Keishing

The ambush is seen by counter-insurgency experts as a part of the terror campaign by Muivah, the Burma-based messiah of the NSCN, to instill fear among the rural people about the revolutionary movement and at the same time weaken their confidence in the centre's authority. With this intention, Muivah periodically updates a "hit list" with clear instructions to his sharp-shooters to eliminate those who figure in it. A top army source told SUNDAY that a few weeks ago, it stumbled upon an NSCN document which stated that Keishing had been placed on top of the "hit list." Keishing earlier disclosed to SUNDAY that 31 persons, who figured in a hit list containing 40 names, had already been liquidated by the NSCN. The former Manipur chief minister, Yangmasho Shaiza, also a Tangkhul Naga like Keishing and Muivah, who was slain in January last year in Imphal by two NSCN gunmen, figured prominently in one such list.

By such killings, Muivah also wants to put into practice a text-book guerrilla tactics, now well-known as disruptive terrorism. It is designed to provoke the authorities into taking harsh repressive measures, which are likely to result in alienating the local population from the administration. The NSCN scored a psychological victory when Tangkhuls in Ukhrul registered their protest against the alleged tortures on many of them by the Army after a grisly NSCN ambush on a Sikh Regiment convoy in February 1982, which left 21 infantrymen dead. The alleged death in army custody of a Tangkhul Naga hotel-owner, K.S. Esua, within 12 hours of his arrest by Assam Rifles following combing drives to mop up suspects involved in the ambush of Keishing's motorcade, led to a *bandh*



Angelus Shimray



Muivah



"Captain" Livingstone

in Ukhrul town on 11 December.

To neutralise the government's politico-military offensive, Muivah is now reportedly in favour of creating an overground political infrastructure, which will be in a position to whip up a favourable political climate for the rebels. A pro-underground outfit, the Peoples' Independent Block (PIB), which contested the District Council elections, forged links with a few independents, who took part in the last Assembly polls from three East District seats. The poll-eve ambush is seen as a subtle warning by Muivah against the Tangkhul's voting for the Congress(I). The Tangkhul, Sema and Konyak Nagas are the mainstays of the 1,500-strong NSCN active in Manipur's Ukhrul, Nagaland's Mon and Tuensang and Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap areas through selective killing and extortion of taxes. The NSCN, surprisingly, also has contradictory attitudes towards the Congress(I) governments in Nagaland and Manipur. While Nagaland chief minister S.C. Jamir is secretly in league with Muivah's men, the NSCN has no love lost for Keishing and his family. Keishing's younger brother Nambuting, a contractor, had a brush with death when two NSCN assassins attacked him at his Imphal residence two years ago.

There are indications that Muivah, in his next course of action, may engage his cohorts in running duels with pro-Phizo Naga Federal Government (NFG) elements, who are in favour of a constitutional settlement of the Nagaland issue. After its feelers to NFG leaders, sent in May last year in the form of an open letter to "surrender gracefully" had failed to evoke any response, the NSCN circulated in last June a seven-page Angami language document in Kohima, warning the NFG leadership with dire consequences.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is understandably concerned about the NSCN moves. He held a half-hour-long closed-door meeting with Major General V.K. Sood, commander of Manipur-Nagaland Area at Imphal's Rajniwas on 5 December. According to a top Manipur government source who does not wish to be named, Mr Gandhi is not averse to the idea of banning the NSCN under the Unlawful Activities Act, even as he has not scoffed at the idea of talking with the NSCN leaders if they throw in the towel and agree to solve their problems within the ambit of the Indian Constitution.

Santanu Ghosh, Silchar

SMUGGLING

The Trail Leads to Sangli

Associate of Maharashtra CM's son implicated

The mystery of the landing of contraband goods worth Rs 75 lakhs on the Raj Bhavan beach in Bombay in October and the unsuccessful attempt at taking the truck loaded with the contraband goods out of the sprawling premises of the Raj Bhavan still remains unsolved. The customs and excise officials at that time had told the metropolitan magistrate that very important people were involved and there were serious ramifications to the whole episode. Yet to date, neither the people of Maharashtra nor the rest of the country have been told who is behind this daring landing.



CM Patil: fears a scandal D V Jayner

Ten people including two police sub-inspectors and an SRP guard at Raj Bhavan were arrested by the customs and excise officials. The alleged kingpin, Mr Madhavrao Bhosale, a youth Congress(I) activist who had unsucessfully contested a municipal corporation election on the Congress(I) ticket was also arrested. Bhosale was released on bail but rearrested under the COFEPOSA. At that time it was thought that Mr Jambuwantrao Dhote was connected with the episode because Bhosale was allegedly arrested from the bungalow of former minister Nanabhau Embadwar, where he took refuge as Mr Embadwar was on tour.

However, in the second week of December the whole incident took yet another dramatic turn with a Congress(I) activist close to the chief minister Mr Vasantdada Patil being brought into the picture. It is very reliably learnt that the Governor Air Chief Marshal Latif fearing that the local authorities may not be in a position to handle the potentially explosive situation, got in touch with the union finance ministry people to follow up the matter. This resulted in a raid by the Pune customs and excise officers on a shop and residence of Mr Jaideo Nanwani. The customs authorities seized imported wristwatches, tape recorders and contraband worth Rs two lakhs. The officers had acted on information that some of the goods were being sent to Sangli from Bombay. This information was allegedly gathered from incriminating documents found in the possession of Bhosale. It is also pertinent that three packages were missing from the truck that was seized at Raj Bhavan.

Jaideo Nanwani is the vice-president of the "Vasant Prakash Vikas Pratisthan," a trust that was formed in Sangli on 6 April 1984. The president of the trust is Mr Prakash Vasantdada Patil, the son of the chief minister and his address is given as "Varsha," the residence of Maharashtra's chief minister. His shop, Asian Radio, which was raided, is a partnership concern with one Dilip Shinde and Pike. Mr Dilip Vasantrao Shinde is also the general secretary of the Vasant Prakash Vikas Pratisthan.

In fact, in Sangli these three and Prakash Patil, who is seeking election to the Lok Sabha from the Sangli constituency, are known as the 'Gang of Four.' They created a major controversy in April-May this year when they organised a "Shatrughan Sinha Night" for the benefit of the Vasant Prakash Vikas Pratisthan. They could not, however, account for Rs four lakhs collected on this occasion. The controversy raged for quite a while before dying down, though privately it is still the talk of the town. Added to this is the fact that two months later all the four bought four identical Hindusthan Contessa cars.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

NAXALITES

In the Wilderness

Splintered groups attempt to solve differences

The Naxalite movement in the country which has had an aimless and splintered existence is now at the crossroads following the death of two of its pioneers in quick succession: Satya Narain Singh on 21 October 1984 and Chandra Pulla Reddy on 9 November 1984. Even though Reddy and S.N. Singh were leading different groups, they had a standing among all the extremists and could have played a crucial role in the unification move among the various groups. Of the pioneers of the movement in the country during the Sixties, only Nagbhushan Pattanayak and Kanu Sanyal are alive today but they stopped spitting fire long time back.

S. N. Singh died a sad man seeing his group—the Provincial Central Committee (PCC)—on the verge of yet another split. A group in the PCC led by Bhaskar Nandi had started labelling Stalin as "fascist" and maintained that Stalin decimated the Bolshevik party, got 2.5 million people butchered, and that he was 70 per cent incorrect and might have been 30 per cent correct. This basically anti-Marxian line first surfaced in the party during a PCC meeting held in Calcutta in May 1983. Though the thought did not receive much backing, the Nandi group stuck to its stand. The anti-Nandi group maintains that Nandi and Santosh Rana (a former MLA) get foreign money. Nandi was for some time married to an American who has returned to her country, and visited India recently, according to top party sources.

In a confidential letter dated 25 September 1983, the late S.N. Singh asked Nandi to drop his anti-Stalin tirades. The stand, Mr Singh said in the letter, "is obviously an attempt to tear away the party from its ideological moorings. After jettisoning Stalin and making Mao stand on his head on the question of Stalin, how much remains of our ideology?" Mr Singh also requested Nandi to produce a document on Stalin. The document was not presented but at later meetings the Nandi group tried to backtrack. The bitterness remained. Result: the reported split in the Provisional Central Committee in September 1984.

If the PCC today is broken, the condition of the other groups is no better. Most of them are trapped in the ideological quagmire. The most radical among the groups—the Central Reorganising Committee (CRC)—based in Kerala and led by K. Venu, adopted basic changes in its outlook early this year. K. Venu was in hiding for a long time after he was wanted in connection with the Kumbalangi murder case, but surrendered in April this year before the Kerala High Court in which he, a few years back, did not have any faith. This correspondent had met him while he was "in hiding" but he did not then show any signs of "giving up the struggle." After taking bail for the case he told the "bourgeois" newsmen that class war should go hand in hand with the struggle for the development of independent national aspirations. The present



Ashim Chatterjee — Sujit Ghosh

concept of national unity was only "a false unity." Their main enemies, he added, were not after all the landed class but imperialist forces.

The union home ministry had in a document released early this year, said that there were 26 CPI(ML) groups in the country and that all groups except the Kondappalli Sitaramiah group, based in Andhra Pradesh, (known as the People's War Group) and the K.Venu group have dropped the annhilation theory. Venu's surrender and his changed outlook leaves only the Sitaramiah group in the "red list." Sitaramiah who was arrested recently in Hyderabad escaped dramatically from the hospital after shooting dead a sentry, allegedly with the help of a medical student.

Most of the other groups have faith in the elections. The PCC has fielded three candidates for the Lok Sabha elections—Bayas Tiwari in Jamshedpur, Bihar, Nityananda Murha in Jhargram, West Bengal and V.H. Master in Raichur, Andhra Pradesh more in the Olympic spirit of participating than winning. But once they manage to merge into the national political mainstream, how will they function?Will they be able to capture the imagination of the people from street-corner platforms rather than by taking arms for the underdog? This continues to be their dilemma.

Many Naxalite groups still function in the tribal belts and have managed to muster considerable support among the tribals in some areas of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In March this year, the police had to intervene to prevent a massive meeting organised by an extremist group, the Adivasi Ratuhuli Sangathana in Kamlapur in Maharashtra from taking place. In the forests of Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh—bigger than the state of Kerala—there are strong pockets of extremists working wholeheartedly for the spread of Marxism-Leninism. Most of the tribals go to them for redressal of their grievances and "immediate justice" is meted out.

The unity moves among the major groups of the CPI (M-L) had reached an advanced stage. On 19 August this year, S.N. Singh had stated that serious efforts were on to bring together the groups of Kanu Sanyal, Bolshevik Party of Kerala, the Kolla Venkataiah group C.P. Reddy and Ashim Chatterjee. The talks have been stalled after the death of Singh and Reddy but a senior leader of the PCC was optimistic about the unity, though he said it would take time. Nagabhushan Pattanayak now in his sick bed, was also striving for unity but had stated that the "ivory tower mentality" of some leaders was hampering the unity moves. Insiders feel that the stand of most of these groups against China's de-Maoification campaign could be a catalyst.

Among the new generation of Marxist-Leninist leaders only K. Venu and Ashim Chatterjee have the calibre and power to infuse new life into the dying movement. After many years in the wilderness (literally and metaphorically) the extremist leaders have realised that unity is the only factor that will ensure their continued existence. But as of now the "spring thunder" that once burst over India is a whimper.

Binoo K. John, Calcutta

WOMEN

Up in Arms

Feminists fight prejudice

The International Feminist Network (IFN) has given a solidarity call in support of the struggle in India against the Muslim personal law which discriminates against women. In December 1983, Shehnaz Sheikh, a young Sunni Muslim woman of Bombay had challenged the Constitutional validity of the Muslim personal law and in January 1984, the Supreme Court had issued a notice to the Union of India. Shehnaz's petition is being backed by the Women's Centre and Lawyer's Collective of Bombay and a nationwide signature campaign was launched in May to mobilise public opinion and support.

Shehnaz's petition in the Supreme Court has caught the attention of the world feminist movement. The IFN, whose campaigns are co-ordinated by the Geneva-based women's group, ISIS, has included Shehnaz's struggle in its latest list of campaigns round the world for which solidarity is being urged. Two other cases taken up by IFN will be of interest to Indian readers. One is the campaign by Pakistan's Women's Action Forum which is protesting against the new discriminatory laws passed by the Zia regime last August. The laws relate to compensation for murders and the value of a woman's evidence in court. The second is a call for letters of support for Shahila, a Sri Lankan house-maid in the United Arab Emirates, who has been sentenced to death by stoning for adultery with an Indian cook. At the time of the sentence she was pregnant and the execution is to be carried out after the birth of the baby or after she finishes breastfeeding.

IFN solidarity calls also relate to the slave trade in Thailand's houses of prostitution and repression of political activists in the Philippines, Chile and Peru. Included among its latest appeals are several of those sponsored recently by Amnesty International which had adopted *Women Prisoners* as its theme for the *1984 Prisoners of Conscience Week.*

Vimal Balasubrahmanyan,
Secunderabad

PORTS

New Port Management Institute

Madras is the controversial location

The maiden training course for leading port executives in the country by the prestigious National Institute of Port Management (NIPM), Madras, concluded on 5 December ending the controversy over the location of the National Ports Institute between the Madras Port Trust and the Indian Institute of Port Management (IIPM), Calcutta.

The 13-day training course on 'management of container terminal operations' was organised within just two days of the formal inauguration of the institute, at the borrowed premises of the Madras Port Trust, on 22 November. The course was co-ordinated by the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) representative and the Shipping Adviser, Mr Bala K. Subramaniam under the "Trainmar" (Training of Maritime Managers) project of the UN agency.

"The institute does not really belong to one port or the other. The facilities are common for all the major ten ports and the other 130 or so minor ports officers," assured Mr P.M. Abraham, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport at the valedictory function of the training programme. The IIPM, Calcutta had been staking a claim for the prestigious port management institute, arguing that it had the necessary infrastructure as well as proximity to the first container port in the country, Haldia. However, the Madras Port Trust claimed that because the port was located at a key point and had all the required facilities including an ultra-modern container handling facility set up at a total cost of Rs 40 crores in 1983, it should be given the priority in locating the port institute. The issue was finally clinched in favour, when the non-official UN study team on port training submitted its report at the beginning of this year. Interestingly, both the port cities were supported by UN bodies—the International Labour Organisation (ILO) supporting Calcutta's claim and the UNCTAD supporting Madras.

The union government has agreed to meet the entire capital cost of around Rs 6 crores for the institute. The recurring expenses estimated at between Rs. 50 lakhs and one crore is to be met by the respective user ports by pooling in their resources with the Indian Ports Association. The UNCTAD for its part has agreed to give away free of cost, equipment worth Rs 6 lakhs.

An estimated 2,600 executives are employed by all the ports in the country. Almost all of them would need to undergo some form of training or the other to keep up with the modernisation and sophistication of port techniques. The training facilities available in India are not comprehensive enough and every year at least 40 to 50 executives are sent abroad for lengthy periods involving huge expenditure. The NIPM is expected to solve such problems and save foreign exchange. The training courses which are being developed in the institute are based on the 'Trainmar' techniques being popularised by the United Nations Development Programme and UNCTAD. At present, work on seven courses covering various areas of port operations including port management information systems, materials management, equipment management techniques for engineering and non-engineering port officers is going on.

Trainmar activities had started in January 1980 in the form of a pilot project financed by the division for Global and Interregional projects of the UNDP and executed by the UNCTAD Secretariat. The Narottam Morarjee Institute, Bombay and the Management Training Centre at the Bombay Port Trust are signatories to this scheme. So far two 'Trainmar' projects, Trainmar 1 and II, have been completed and over 2,000 managers and supervisors have been given training.

'The NIPM's inauguration has come at the right time when the country is going ahead with ports modernisation, promotion of the containerisation concept and the inland container depots," says Mr. Bala K. Subramaniam, who has been the main driving force behind the scheme.

Movement of cargo through the major ten ports has gone up very

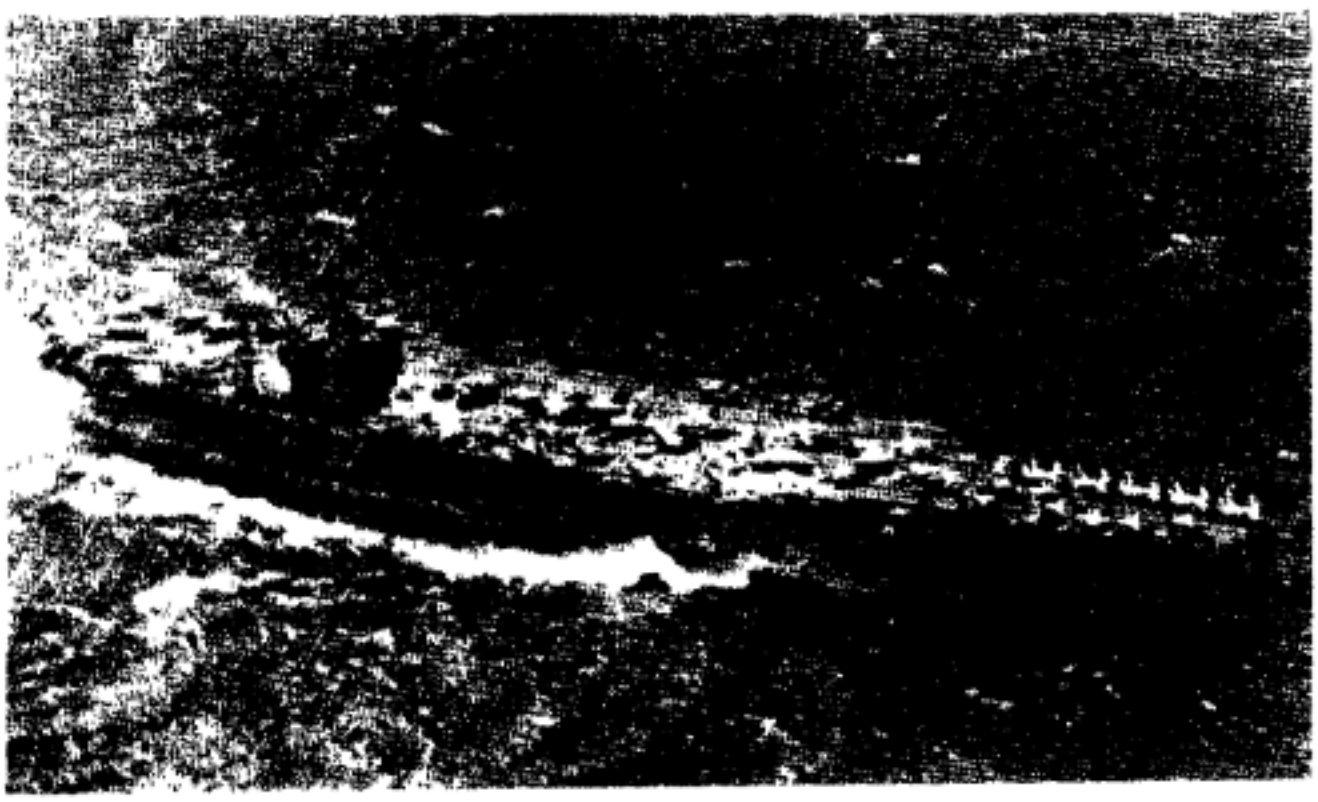
rapidly in the last three years. It went up from 101 million tonnes in 1983 to 114 million tonnes in 1984. The target for 1985 is 130 million tonnes. Of this, hardly 25 million tonnes would be containerised. "When the worldover containerisation is the 'in thing' in India it has been late in coming," says Mr Subramaniam. However, some pragmatic changes have taken place in the list of priorities within the Shipping Ministry and 22 inland container depots (ICDs) are being set up. Work on the fully containerised modern Nhava Sheva port (to be ready by 1988) is going on and purchase of more container handling equipment for the four container ports, Madras, Bombay, Haldia and Cochin has been decided upon. "Once all this comes into full operation, the training needs will be acute and NIPM would be a great help then," adds Subramaniam. Once the Institutestarts functioning from its ownpremises—there is some problem of acquiring land for it—it will go ahead offering consultancy services to user ports and companies and contribute greatly to management research, particularly in the maritime sector.

T. Raman, Madras

THE INDIAN OCEAN

No Zone of Peace

The superpowers are maintaining strong forces



A US aircraft carrier enters the Indian Ocean

The debate on making the Indian Ocean a "zone of peace" has been continuing since 1970, but the chances of a successful demilitarisation appear to be remote. The issue, first brought up at the 1970 Non aligned conference at Lusaka, is being ignored by the superpowers. It is now doubtful whether the thrice-postponed UN conference on the Indian Ocean will be held in Colombo in 1985.

Apart from superpower indifference, the UN has also been dragging its feet on the issue. Only 14 years ago the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proposed by Sri Lanka and supported by 11 other littoral countries demanding that the Indian Ocean "should be a zone of peace." That resolution, as well as other similar and commendable exercises, seems to have been forgotten.

Recent developments in the Indian Ocean area have not strengthened the cause of peace and international understanding. Instead, the region has become a victim of the nuclear arms race between the superpowers. Most of the coastal and hinterland Indian Ocean states view the military build-up at Diego Garcia as a dangerous development. Diego Garcia, a US naval complex about 1,100 miles south-west of Cape Comorin, poses a major challenge to the peace and security in the whole region.

Diego Garcia apart, the USA has followed a policy of girdling the entire ocean with a network of multi-purpose bases, staging-posts and rapid deployment centres capable of serving its strategic interests in the region. For the United States, the Indian Ocean bases are "strongholds" to check what Washington calls "Soviet expansionism."

The Soviet Union also maintains a strong presence in the area. The Russians have their own interests, both political and economic as well as their global aspirations to fulfil. They are as concerned about the strategic balance of power in this area as the Americans. It is difficult to dispute that the Russians, since Czarist times, have been keen on "opening up for themselves warm water ports in the Mediterranean and in the Indian Ocean." The Soviet flag-waving exercises first began in 1968 and Soviet warships regularly patrol the Indian Ocean. Despite not being as strong enough as the U.S. Seventh Fleet, it is an effective presence.

The naval build-up in the Indian Ocean has placed the super power rivalry at India's doorstep. According to some experts, India's efforts to keep the superpowers away from the Indian Ocean are not solely because of its efforts to maintain peace in the area. These experts believe that India is interested in becoming the dominant power in the region after the superpowers leave. Other experts claim that India's interest in making the ocean a zone of peace is in the interest of the Indo-Soviet friendship ties

However, it has to be remembered that the realisation of the "peace zone" concepts depends on a unanimity of interests. But not all Indian Ocean countries share a similar approach to the issue, and each country appears to have a different and unyielding view. Some countries look upon the Seventh Fleet as a bulwark against their potential enemies, while others feel that the Soviet Navy is a friend.

However, unless the all-powerful superpowers are persuaded to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, there is little the UN or the countries can do. At present, neither the superpowers are prepared to move from the Indian Ocean and if the USA is convinced that the Indian Ocean has "become the area with the potential to produce major shifts in the global power balance," it will make its presence stronger and more permanent. To maintain the balance of terror the Soviet Union will do the same and peace will be lost in the Indian Ocean for ever.

Bhola Chatterjee, Calcutta

St. Xavier's School and College (Calcutta) announces the inauguration of the 125 year celebrations at 30, Park Street, Calcutta-16, on January 16th 1985, by His Excellency, the President of India. School and College alumni who wish to participate may kindly write to us. The inaugural celebrations will cover four days.

On this occasion funds are being collected for (A) Endowments/Scholarships for meritorious/needy students (B) A new computer centre (C) Extension of our free medical clinic run by volunteer Xaverian doctors (D) Renovation of the Auditorium and (E) Life membership (US$100).

Endowments/Donations carry the Benefit of Section 80G of The Indian Income Tax Act. Cheques may be sent in favour of "Alumnorum Societas A/C. 125 year fund account number 5836" at the Hong Kong Bank, 31, B.B.D. Bagh, Calcutta-700 001, under advice to Tuhin Das, Hony, Secretary, St. Xavier's O.B.A. Calcutta, C/o. J. Thomas & Co., Nilhat House, 11, R.N. Mukherjee Road, Calcutta-700 001, India.

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A Refuge from Toil and Care

Various theories on sleep emerge



A man takes a nap: 'closing down for a while'

There are two kinds of sleep. Much of the night, you are in deep sleep: the brain is unresponsive, and long slow waves of electricity pulse through it, instead of the frantic scramble of signals found during wakefulness. But, from time to time, and especially towards morning, you switch to shallow sleep: the brain is active, the heart beats quickly and the eyes flicker about under their lids. People woken during such rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep report they have been dreaming.

There is general agreement that the two kinds of sleep serve different functions. If you deprive people of deep sleep, they become tired. If you deprive them of REM sleep, they do not feel sleepy but they gradually become neurotic. They will then indulge in extra REM sleep, which suggests that they need it as much as they need deep sleep. But why do they need either? Theories of sleep can be roughly divided into two classes. One says that sleep is a vital restorative for body and brain; the other that it spares animals the dangers of being up and about too much.

Most people assume that the body carries out physiological repair work during sleep. Yet it was not until the late Seventies that the first coherent theory of sleep's restorative powers was proposed. Professor Ian Oswald and his colleagues at Edinburgh university suggested that only during sleep can the body make proteins. Proteins, of which body tissue is made, consist of chains of amino acids. Prof. Oswald's group theorised that during the day the body builds up amino acids produced by the digestion of food. Only during sleep does the body have time to synthesise proteins from them.

This theory was wrecked by a single experiment. Dr Peter Garlick and his colleagues at London university plotted the progress of amino acids through the body. They found that amino acids do not accumulate during the day ready for protein synthesis at night; they are either broken down straight away or quickly converted to protein.

A more promising repair theory is that sleep restores the brain rather than the body. Your body can rest while you are wide awake, but the brain seems to be on call most of the time. Sleep deprivation appears to have little effect on bodily function, but strong effects on behaviour. People not only feel sleepy; they also become irritable and even paranoid or hallucinatory. The brain seems to shut down at night. Normally, a brief flash of light produces a change in the brain's electrical activity. These "evoked potentials" are not found in sleeping brains. It is not that messages from the eyes do not reach the brain, but that the brain does not respond. Dr Margaret Livingstone and Professor David Hubel of Harvard Medical School have shown that in cats the surface layers of the brain, where sensory information is first processed, are still active in sleep. But the messages never get through to the deep layers, where the high-level perceptual processing goes on.

It is this unresponsiveness that the second class of sleep theories focuses on. Professor Bernie Webb of the university of Florida and Dr Ray Meddis of Britain's Loughborough university theorise that sleep has no important physiological function. Instead, they suggest, sleep's purpose is simply to ensure that an animal is out of harm's way. Better that creatures like man, whose most important sense is sight, should tuck themselves away in a cosy cave for the night rather than blunder around in the dark. Dr Meddis points to the wide variations in sleeping times. Giraffes need only two hours of sleep, sloths 20. He also asks why; if sleep deprivation is so debilitating, a person who goes ten days without sleep needs only ten or 12 hours of extra sleep to make it up.

There are problems with the idea that sleep is just a way of closing down an animal for a while. Some animals go to surprising lengths to get sleep. Dr Jim Horne of Loughborough university points out that dolphins dare not sleep long because they would risk drowning. By the Meddis argument, they should not sleep at all. Instead, they have developed extraordinary ways of getting their sleep. Indus river dolphins catnap, for less than 90 seconds at a time, throughout the day. A bottlenose dolphin allows only half its brain to sleep at a time.

One of sleep's most mysterious elements gives rise to another theory: that you sleep in order to dream. Dreaming is a puzzle in itself. Some believe it has purely neurophysiological functions. One idea is that dreams cleanse the brain's information-processing apparatus of error-causing impressions recorded in waking hours—vaguely analogous to sophisticated computer software debugging itself. Others believe that dreams have psychological purposes: Dr Nick Humphrey of Cambridge university has suggested that they are used to explore and test imagined futures. Both of these theories claim support from the fact that new-born babies spend most of their sleeping hours in REM sleep, while adults dream for less than two hours a night. But nobody has begun to explain why the brain has to be asleep to perform such functions.

***By arrangement with* The Economist**

Wise Infants



Babies are much more intelligent than what we consider them to be. Research at Exeter university, England, shows that babies are born with the ability to differentiate between simple shapes, can recognise and remember objects in 3-D and even distinguish colours. According to Dr Alan Slater of the department of psychology, the aim of the research is "to explore in detail the extent to which the newborn baby can make sense of what he sees. The technique is known as habituation and is dependent on the baby remembering what he or she sees." In most tests—each test takes about five to ten minutes—astatic or changing visual pattern is shown to the baby until it no longer attracts his attention. At this point it is replaced by different patterns, one of which is similar in some respects to the one that he had previously seen. If the baby looks more at the new pattern it indicates that he can not only distinguish between the two but also remember some of its features.

More Clues to Leprosy Control

A research work going on in England could lead to clues to the control of leprosy in the Third World. The £23,805-research is being carried out by Dr Keith Manchester of Bradford university and could reinforce his theory that there is a direct link between the decline of leprosy in Britain from the 13th century and the subsequent growth in the incidence of tuberculosis. It should be noted here that the bacterium which causes leprosy is closely related to that which causes TB. Dr Manchester is analysing the disease history of leprosy by means of examining the skeletal changes of leprosy sufferers in Britain from the Roman period to the Middle Ages. Over 10,000 skeletons will be examined. A recent report issued by the World Health Organisation suggests that as many as 15-20 million people suffer from the disease in India, Pakistan, the Far East, Africa and some Mediterranean countries, and that the disease could be on the increase.

The Life-saver



In Scotland, an industrial wrapping material has turned out to be a life-saver. Doctors at the intensive care unit of the Queen Mother's Hospital, Glasgow, found that plastic bubble film, which is normally used to protect fragile goods, acts like a very light duvet, or continental quilt, and keeps premature babies warm and protected from draughts. Dr Tom Turner, consultant paediatrician, says: "It is warm, light and cheap and because it is transparent we can see what is happening to the baby. We used to tear the wrapping from parcels, wash it carefully and use it in the intensive care cots."Now it is manufactured in a sterile condition specially for the job.

Guinea Pigs: Rich in Proteins



Guinea pigs are a valuable protein source. In Peru alone, 70 million guinea pigs are eaten in a year. Such pocket-sized pigs, deer, tropical rats and miniature ruminants could provide an increasing protein for millions of people in the Third World. They are so much in demand that even in highrise apartments in Lima residents keep them in cardboard boxes under their beds. Two male and 20 female guinea pigs could feed a family of six with an adequate year-round diet of meat.

As Good as Concrete

If you combine cement and a synthetic material called polypropylene, you get a material which is as good as reinforced concrete. Moreover, it is lighter and also has insulating properties. It is thought that the researchers of Ulster's Polytechnic, Northern Ireland, who discovered polypropylene, may have also discovered the material for the cheap manufacture of pipes in developing countries. The material was used on some roads as an experiment and it was found that the road surface had withstood the pressure of heavy lorries.

A Mad March Hare?



It was May in wonderland, so Alice figured there would be no harm in visiting the mad March hare. Said she, "It won't be raving mad—at least not so mad as it was in March." Wait, say two British researchers Anthony Holley and Paul Greenwood. With apologies to Lewis Carroll they reported in *Nature* that the idea that hares are madder in March is nonsense. While studying brown hares in the fields southwest of Bristol, they found that although the animals do "go mad" in March, they do their frenzied chasing and pumelling with their forelegs through the January-to-August mating season. The scientists inferred that the battles are not fought between males competing for female favours, but by females fending off unwanted suitors.

Computer Project for Doctors

Hundreds of doctors are taking part in a project under way in London in which computers are being used to speed up diagnoses and the effects of prescribed drugs. Known as Sentinel, the project was devised by Prof. Paul Grob of the epidemiology and health cure unit at Surrey university in England. Dr Grob has recruited some 400 doctors in the southwest Thames health region of London and the neighbouring area into a network connected by micro-computers. A further stage has been achieved by means of the Harley Chip, where medical findings can be stored.

Illustrations: Prabir Sen

Malayalam actress *Seema*, now trying for a comeback into films egged on by her husband and director *I.V. Sasi*, has done the 'Dharmendra act' of beating up a film journalist. She did so on the sets of *Manyamahajanagalee* being shot in Cannanore, North Kerala. Those who witnessed the drama include *Prem Nazir*, whose slow reflexes could not



Seema: tit for tat

prevent the incident from happening. According to Seema, the freelance journalist Mohan Akkipalli, had tried to blackmail and threaten her mother. And Seema was for sometime on the lookout for him when he walked into the room in which the filmstars were relaxing. Seema cornered and slapped him till her fury abated. Mohan said that he did not retaliate because the attacker happened to be a lady and that he felt humiliated because it happened in front of Prem Nazir. The ferocity and agility with which Seema vent her fury might land her a few roles of the 'bad girl' type.

Many producers in the south have been trying to rope in *Sridevi's* younger sister *Srilatha*, who has got something of her elder sister's baby-faced "innocence." But Sridevi is opposed to it and is planning to get her sister married early next year. Sridevi surely knows the disadvantages of having an 'innocent' baby-face, yet having to play not-so-innocent roles.

The *numero uno* of Malayalam films *Mammuty*, recently requested a script-writer to let him die on the screen, instead of the heroine. "Too late," said the writer who promised to 'kill him' in his next movie. But his fans are not letting him die so soon.



Jeetendra: at the top

Prabhat Kumar

Though *Amitabh Bachchan's* political aspirations have plunged the industry into gloom, it has sent the fortunes of *Jeetendra* sky-rocketing. Bombay producers who had 'given him' up to South Indian producers are now running after him. His new position at the top has made him dizzy. "I don't know how I will be able to do justice to the faith they have put in me. Frankly, I am no great actor. I am confused," said Jeetendra.



Rohini Hattangady: ecstatic

Durgaprasad

The real test of *Jeetendra's* acting ability about which he also has expressed doubts will come in the film he is doing with *Dilip Kumar*. Says Jeetendra, "It was very terrifying to face the thespian who has mesmerised people for three generations but he put me at complete ease. I am dying to see the results." The producers had a lot of difficulty finding the right type of actress to match Dilip Kumar's personality. They thought of *Rekha* who had been teamed with him in *Aag ka darya*, then *Sharmila Tagore* and *Waheeda Rehman*, but dropped all three. They finally chose *Rohini Hattangady*, catapulting her to the front-line. Rohini is now dripping ecstasy, "Now I feel I have really arrived as an actress. Isn't it every actress's dream to work with that great actor?" But little does she know that it could also turn into a nightmare if she slips.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debasish Deb

MADRAS: Three policemen, who felt that four jail birds in hand were worth two in a bus have been placed under suspension. The three cops, attached to the Armed Reserve, were escorting six remand prisoners to the Central Jail from the metropolitan magistrate court, Egmore. But two of them gave the slip and boarded a fast-moving bus. The policemen decided to hold on to the remaining four. Now, other policemen are in search of the missing two—*Indian Express* (N. Chakraborty, Calcutta)

MACHILIPATNAM: Heard of the herbivorous cow turning carnivorous? This historic town can boast of such "non-vegetarian cows" roaming about in the local fish market and snatching away fish and meat. Another peculiar feature is that these cows refuse to eat grass or bran water. Unless they are fed with fish and other items, they refuse to yield milk. They don't even allow their owners to approach them for milking—*Indian Express* (V.R.N.Naidu, Hyderabad)

NEW DELHI: The elections have caused an acute shortage of coins. The lighter rupee coin has made supporters of various parties a nervous lot because they have to arrange for quite a lot of these to weigh their favourite leaders. Still, many leaders are being weighed against coins, a popular ritual during electioneering. Mr Madan Lal Khurana, the BJP nominee from the Sadar parliamentary constituency, was taken by surprise when residents of Madan Park handed him currency notes of about Rs 10,600. Mr Khurana was, however, weighed with ordinary cast-iron weights and 2,500 one-rupee coins—*Indian Express*(A.V.Ramamurthy, New Delhi)

ITANAGAR: The highly prized *mithuns*, a semi-domesticated species resembling bulls, are being slaughtered in droves in Arunachal Pradesh as part of the poll campaign by candidates to provide feats to woo the electorate. The animals are not only held for sacrifice during religious festivals, but their possession determines status. An affluent candidate has already killed 200 of the beasts for holding community feasts in his constituency. *Mithuns* cost about Rs 4,000 each—*The Hindu*(C.S.N.Murthy, Bangalore)

CHIKMAGALUR: After fake currency notes and certificates, tricksters appear to have turned to the fourth estate to come out with a fake newspaper. According to a complaint lodged by Mr H. V. Ramappa, the editor of a Kannada fortnightly, *Kadur Patrike*, published from Kadur town near here, the latest issue of his newspaper was a fake. He said it was scheduled to be published on 9 December but was surprised to find the fortnightly already in the readers' hands—*Deccan Herald* (R. M. Pillai, Chikmagalur)

THANJAVUR: With the airstrip in this town blocked by the overflowing bumper *kuruvai* crop of paddy, the authorities recently chopped down scores of fully grown trees and demolished a compound wall between a women's college campus and a government office here to prepare a helipad, on account of the proposed visit to the area by the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi. Over 20 tamarind and mango trees which were about 40 years old were cut down during the past two days on the Thanjavur Women's Art College campus in record time. About 100 metres of the compound wall separating the college campus and the revenue divisional office were also demolished—*The Hindu* (S. Murali Krishnan, Tanjore)

GUWAHATI: Believe it or not, in a government school in Nagaon town a student who later became a teacher retired from service even before his teacher did. In fact, the teacher under question who later became the headmistress of the school will retire only in 1989. As per records of her age she must have passed her matriculation at the age of eight and this position seems to have been accepted by the education department —*The Assam Tribune* (Gauri Prasad Sarma Bezbarah, Guwahati)

WITHOUT COMMENT

I stopped flogging them (the opposition). Once they are dead, it is no use flogging them—Rajiv Gandhi

The only experience he (Rajiv Gandhi) has is of flying and he is indulging in kite-flying in politics—Morarji Desai, quoted in *The Telegraph*

There is nothing like genuine non-alignment. Truth is truth, there is no genuine or non-genuine truth—H.N. Bahuguna in *Blitz*

The Arun Singhs and the Arun Nehrus do not know the difference between Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, or, for that matter, between socialism and capitalism—Jay Dubashi in *Organiser*

Some people say we are pro-West and some people say we are pro-East. Somebody may say you are Left, some say you are Right. Basically, we are pro-Indian—Arun Nehru in *Link*



I am what I am. Kindly don't compare me with Indira Gandhi—Ramakrishna Hegde, Karnataka CM, when newsmen asked him whether he was the Indira Gandhi of Karnataka, quoted in *The Hindu*

The presidential system is no substitute for national character. It does not offer any alternative to vision, knowledge and moral standards in political life—Nani Palkhivala, eminent constitutional lawyer, in *Gentleman*

If the world felt especially close to Bhopal...it may be because the world is Bhopal, a place where the occupational hazard is modern life—Roger Rosenblatt in *Time*

BEGINNING 30 DECEMBER 1984 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) A week of mixed fortunes. If you are in love, avoid arguments with your beloved minor tiffs may lead to an estranged relationship. On the financial front, you will incur heavy losses. Businessmen should check documents meticulously before signing them. Avoid speculative ventures and gambling. However, a friendship which will blossom this week will be of immense help to you

Good dates: 30, 31 and 1
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen and professionals Artists and sportsmen too, will gain rare recognition during this phase Lovers will also find this period favourable this is the right time to execute marriage plans On the domestic front, your children will do extremely well in their examinations However, your economic prospects look bleak this week avoid extravagance

Good dates: 2, 3 and 4
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) A week of hectic social activity lies ahead of you An unexpected visitor is likely to visit you during the weekend. Professionals and businessmen will make steady headway. At home, an elderly member of your family may fall ill Financially, this is not a bright period avoid gambling. Those above the age of 40 should keep a sharp eye on their health avoid spicy food

Good dates: 1, 2 and 3
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) The stars foretell a lucky week for all of you For those in business, this is the right time to go ahead with new deals and contracts. Professionals, a promotion is in the offing: some of you may even be posted to a place of your liking On the financial front, you may gain money through unexpected sources. The domestic front will remain peaceful. This is also a good time for love and marriage.

Good dates; 2, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



LEO (15 August—14 September) The prospects of businessmen and professionals look bright this week: new opportunities will come their way Lovers, this is the opportune time to get married For those of you who are still single, a member of the opposite sex will be very helpful to you On the financial front, you may incur losses if you gamble or indulge in speculative ventures The home front will be demanding

Good dates: 30, 1 and 3
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: West



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Students are advised to be more serious about their studies Professionals, especially those in government service, should be careful while dealing with their superiors. However, this is a good period for businessmen Lovers too will find their parents extremely compromising. You will be able to overcome most of your emotional problems this week Your health will also improve

Good dates: 31, 2 and 4
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South



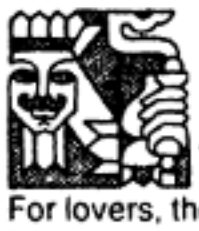
LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is a week of mixed fortunes However, on the professional front, be prepared for setbacks. Some of you may come in for severe criticism from your employers if you do not devote yourself to your work Businessmen should be wary of deception However, this is a good week for love and marriage negotiations This is also a favourable phase for students

Good dates: 2, 3 and 4
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Success in all your ventures is a certainty for most of you this week Push your efforts to the utmost and do not waste time on socialising Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business while a promotion is in store for professionals. On the economic front, you may gain money through an unexpected source Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans

Good dates: 31, 1 and 5
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: South-east



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a good week for businessmen do not squander away opportunities that come your way. For lovers, the period is equally favourable. However prospects look bleak for professionals. be diplomatic while dealing with your colleagues Financially, you are in for a bad phase you will have to borrow money to tide over this period The health of your children will add to your worries.

Good dates: 30, 3 and 5
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: South-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This week servicemen may come in for severe criticism from their employers: exercise restraint in dealing with such a situation. Try and avoid legal problems during this phase. But doctors and politicians will find this period favourable. At home, your children will do well in their examinations. Some of you may inherit property but do not be extravagant Keep a sharp eye on your health.

Good dates: 1, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: North-west



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) For those in love and intending to get married, this is the right time to do so. Those connected with the arts are likely to find the phase favourable. On the domestic front your children will come out with flying colours in competitions. On the professional front you may face opposition from your colleagues A close friend is likely to let you down. Your health too will worry you.

Good dates: 30, 1 and 5
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 5
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) If you are unemployed, there are chances that you will find a job this week. Those employed will get better opportunities. Businessmen, however, should be wary of deception. Lovers should refrain from taking hasty decisions. At home, your children will be demanding, but deal with them tactfully. The health of an elderly member of your family will cause concern. A letter will bring good tidings.

Good dates: 2, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: West

For those born on the 1st, 2nd or 3rd of any month:

Most of you are born leaders. You will do well if you join politics or take up the legal profession. You have a charming personality and your power of oratory is remarkable. Your benevolent nature will make you popular. Most of you are extravagant but a word of advice: do not squander away money. Females born during this period are extremely good-looking which at times will make you proud. Most women born during the period are emotional by nature.

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VARIETY

CHESS

White: Speelman. Black: Kudrin. Queen's Indian Defence. Hastings 1984.

1 N–KB3 P–QB4 2 P–QB4 N–KB3
3 N–QB3 P–QN3 4 P–K3 P–K3
5 P–Q4 PxP 6 PxP B–N2
7 B–N5 B–K2 8 B–Q3 O–O
9 P–KR4!?

An adventurous idea in a classical Queen's Indian position. Regardless of its objective merit, it certainly poses Black "uncomfortable problems at a moment when he is least likely to expect them.

9 . . . N–K1

Understandably nervous of 9 . . . P–Q4 (normal) 10 BxN BxB 11 BxP+ KxB 12 N–N5+, though it is unclear how White will continue after 12 . . . K–R3.

10 P–Q5! N–R3 11 Q–K2 P–KR3

An ugly move, but maybe not so bad.

12 R–Q1 N–B4 13 B–N1 PxB

Much criticised, but unfairly so. Black must take some action before his knight is evicted by P–QN4.

14 PxP DIAGRAM

A fascinating position. How does Black fend off the threats on the KR file? 14 . . . P–N3 fails cutely to 15 Q–K5 N–N2 16 Q–R2! etc, but he has other options.

14 . . . BxNP?

The wrong one. His chance lay in 14 . . . P–B4! leading to massive complications

Kudrin (Black) to move



Speelman (White)

after 15 N–K5 BxNP 16 PxP R–B3 (not 16 . . . NxP 17 RxQP) 17 PxP N–B2 (17 . . . N–Q3 18 RxN! RxR 19 R–R8+!) which I would prefer not to evaluate

15 B–R7+ K–R1 16 NxB QxN
17 B–B2+ K–N1

Black trusts that there is no more than perpetual check but his hopes are ill founded. White only has to drive the black queen off the QB1–KR6 diagonal to force mate thus.

18 R–R5! Q–B5 19 P–KN3 Q–B3
20 B–R7+ K–R1 21 B–N6+! Resigns.

It is mate in 3 after 21 . . . K–N1 22 R–R8+!

This year's Hastings Premier saw some splendid performances by the home players, in particular that of Andrew Martin, who completed his qualifications for the international master title with disarming ease. Even in the absence of the Soviet Russians, who preferred not to compete in the presence of the ex-Soviet Russians (Alburt, Kudrin, Ivanov and Gurevich), the tournament was amply strong, as can be evidenced by the fact that the *bottom* four places were all finally occupied by grandmasters who featured very prominently in the last Interzonal tournaments.

From the many fine games played it is difficult to select just one, but the following, which was awarded the brilliancy prize, shows Speelman at his most belligerent. Without knowing the names of the players one could easily attribute such a game to Alekhine.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Somehow one can always be caught by those hands where a suit has to be played in an unusual way. This one deceived a strong player:

Dealer South Love all

	♠ 7 4 2 ♥ Q J 10 8 ♦ K J 6 5 ♣ Q 10	
♠ 8 3 ♥ A 9 6 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 ♣ 7 5 4	N W E S	♠ A Q 10 9 5 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ 4 2 ♣ 8 6 3
	♠ K J 6 ♥ 5 3 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ A K J 9 2	

South played in 3NT after East had overcalled in spades. West's lead of the 8 of spades ran to the jack and at trick two South led a low diamond. West played a slightly deceptive 9, the jack won, and a diamond was returned. Judging the situation well, West did not play the expected spade but established a second trick in diamonds, which gave the defence two diamonds, two hearts and a spade.

It is a little odd that the queen of diamonds from hand at trick two is safe against any defence.



Hugh Kelsey's latest is called **Test Your Match Play** (Gollancz, £3.50). It is billed as a continuous match, but this is just by-play.

West	*East*
♠ A 6	♠ Q J 5 2
♥ A K 9 8 7 5 2	♥ J 4
♦ 7	♦ 8 6 5 3
♣ Q 9 5	♣ K 10 3

West plays in Four Hearts and North begins, in effect, with two top diamonds. Trumps break 2-2. What next? To make sure you have a chance for both finesses, you must run the 9 of clubs. If you lead the queen first it may be allowed to hold, and your chances are reduced.

A new book that I have written in partnership with Roger Trézel, **The Mistakes You Make At Bridge**, (Gollancz £7.95, £4.95 paperback), is divided, like Gaul, into three parts: The Worst Mistakes, The Commonest Mistakes, and Mistakes That May Be Forgiven.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What do Gregory, Pius, Leo, Benedict and John Paul have in common?

2 The Punic Wars were fought between which two great powers between 264 B C and 146 B C.?

3 What is the title given to someone who has learnt the *Koran* by heart?

4. *The Nutcracker Suite*, *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty* are ballets written by which well-known composer?

5. What was the religion of the Celtic peoples of Britain and Gaul (ancient France)?

6. The Asiatic Lion is found in only one wildlife sanctuary in India. Which one?

7 The Bessemer Process is used in the manufacture of which industrial product?

8. What is the study of plant and animal tissues called?

9 What is the warm and dust-laden southerly wind which originates in the Sahara Desert and blows across Southern Europe called?

10. Name the infectious disease known as "jail fever" which is carried from one person to another by lice.

11. The treaties of Purandhar in 1776 and Salbai in 1782 ended which wars?

12. What is ambergris?

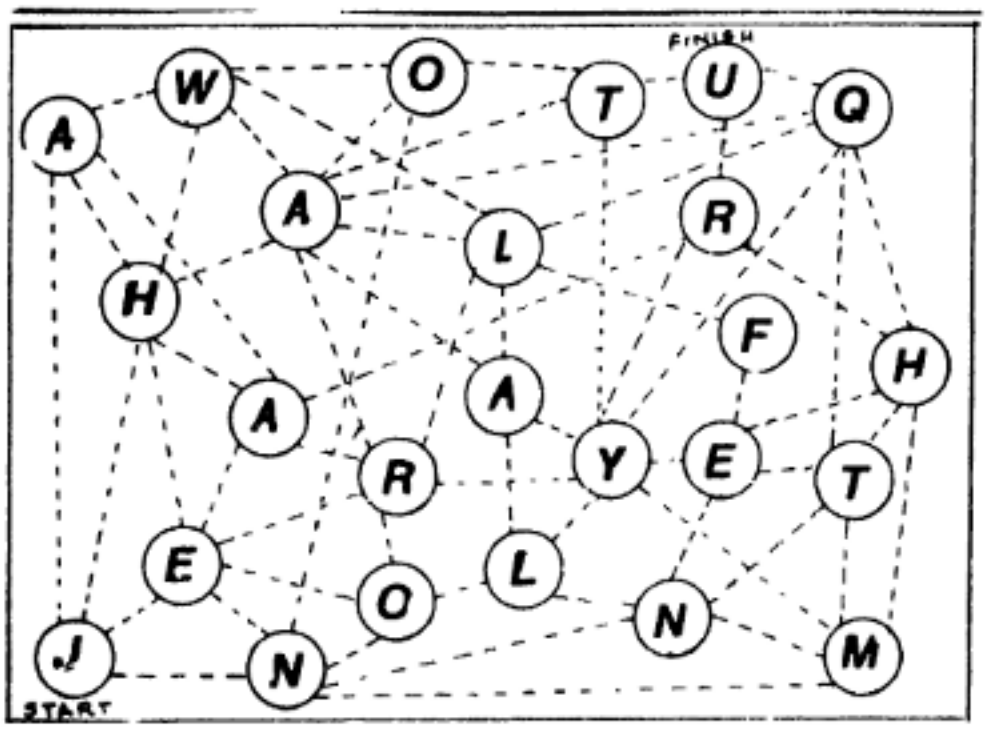
ANSWERS

1. They are all names of Popes.
2. Rome and Carthage
3. A *Hafiz*
4. Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
5. Druidism.
6. The Gir forest in Gujarat.
7. The production of steel
8. Histology
9. The Sirocco
10. Typhus
11. Wars between the Marathas and the British
12. A waxy substance produced in the intestines of the sperm whale. It is widely used in the manufacture of perfumes.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Personality Plus



The name of a famous person can be spelt out in the maze above by proceeding from the start and moving on to any adjacent letters without backtracking. The clues given below may help:

1. The colour of his favourite flower is a part of his name.
2. Two women very closely related to him were as well-known, internationally, as him.
3. A university has been named after him.
4. He died in 1964.
5. He was a freedom fighter for India and a close associate of Gandhiji.

Give yourself points according to the chart:

Without any clue (within a minute)	30
Without any clue (longer than a minute)	26—29
With first clue	21—25
With second clue	16—20
With third clue	11—15
With fourth clue	6—10
With fifth clue	1—5

Blankagrams

Limber up your vocabulary! Find a single word which is a synonym for both the words against each number. One word has been done for you.

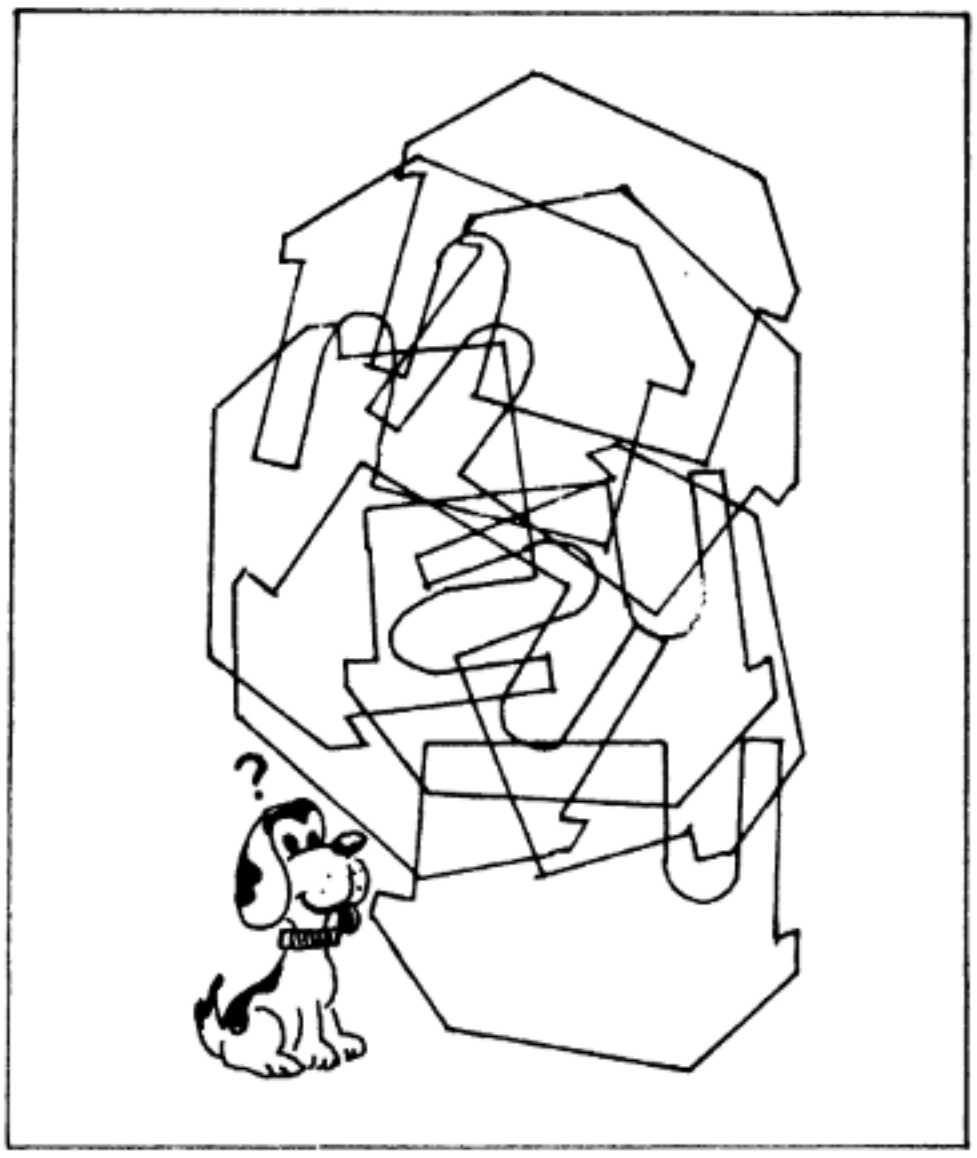
1. CLOTH BIRD DUCK
2. BEAK NOTE —
3. SKIN CONCEAL —
4. DRAMA SPORT —
5. FARMER POTHOLDERS —
6. INSECT FISHHOOK —
7. HILL HORSE —
8. MARK ARACHNID —
9. UNTIL CULTIVATE —
10. BOW DRAW —

Quizzbizz

Which of the following applies to light?

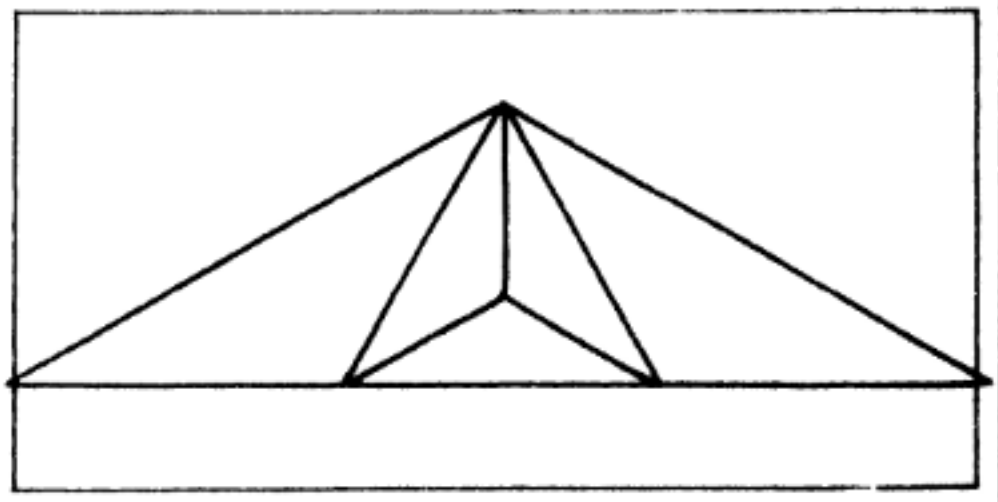
a) It always travels in straight lines.
b) It cannot travel through solids.
c) It can travel in vacuum
d) It can travel at infinite speed.

Quickthink



How long does it take you to count the number of kennels for this dog?

Shape Sleuth

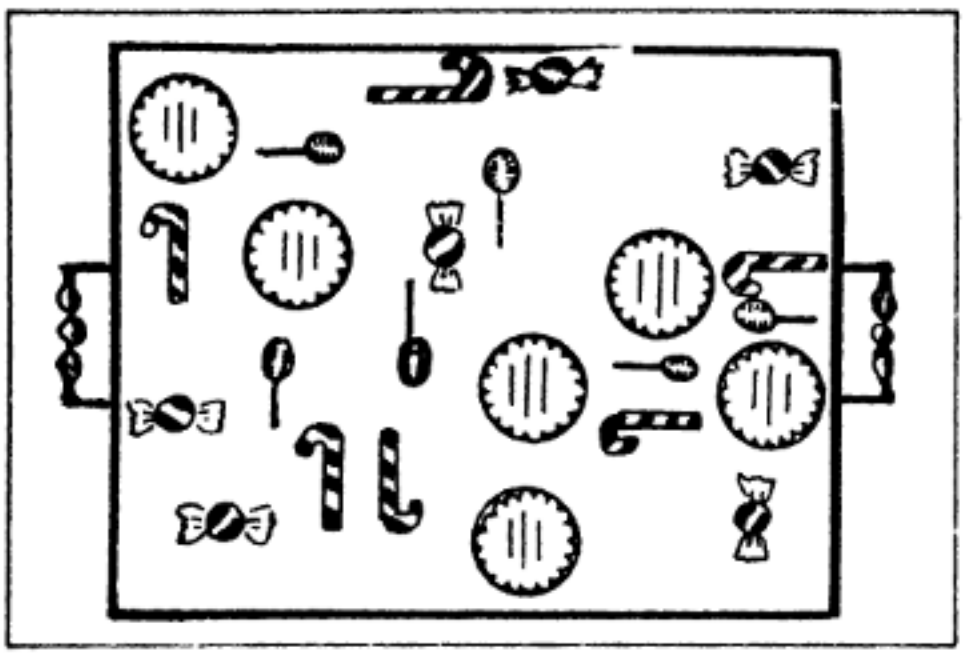


In this illustration, the large triangle is made up of five smaller triangles each one of which is similar to the large triangle (i.e. all the triangles have angles of the same size). Can you find another triangle which can be made up of five smaller triangles, each one similar to it?

What's in a Word

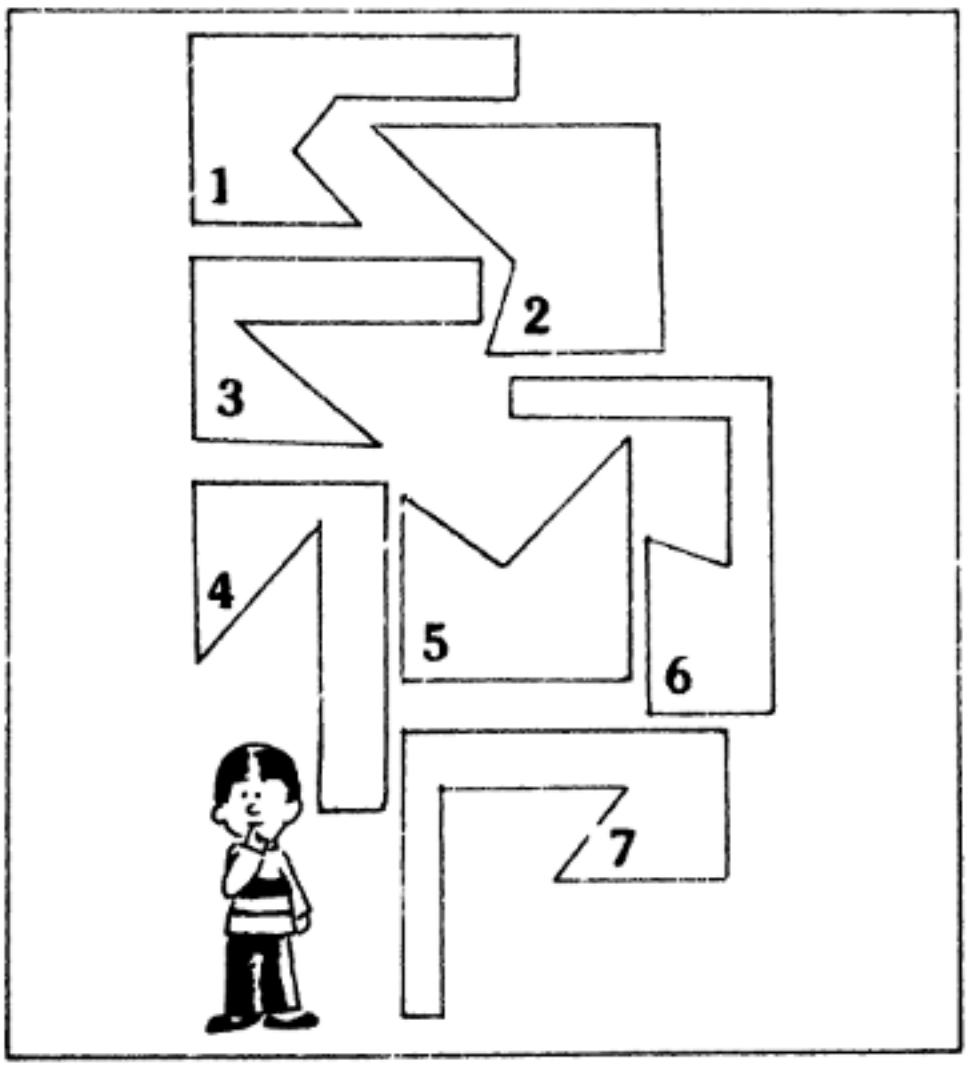
There exists in English language a common, everyday, five-letter word, the pronunciation of which is not changed by removing four of the five letters. Which word is it?

Mindbender



A tray is set for a birthday party with gifts which are to be shared between six children, equally. Can you divide the tray surface into six equal and identical sections so that each child receives the same gifts?

Shape Sleuth



Three pieces out of these six fit together to form a square. Can you figure out mentally which three these are?

Wordpower

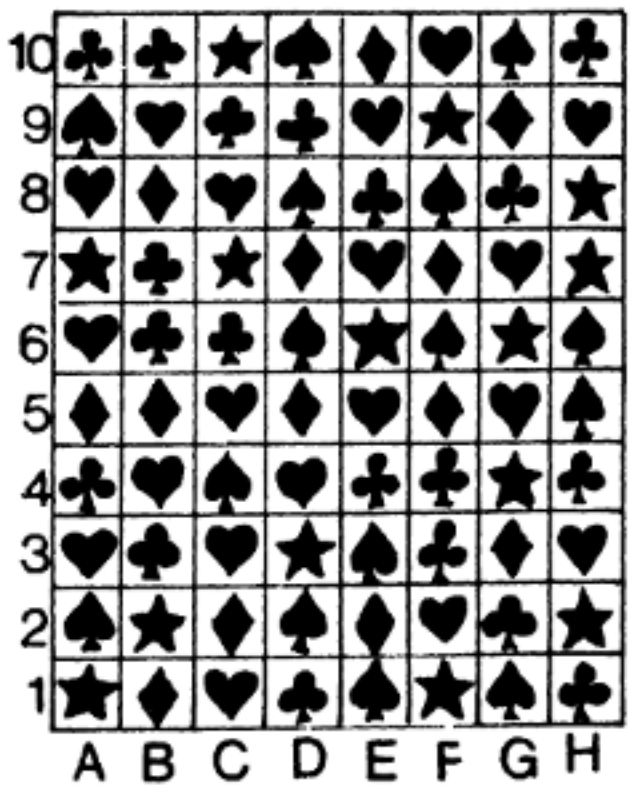
These nine letters spell a word:

M M I
U S E
H E P

Find this word, and make as many kangaroo words as you can out of these nine letters, e.g. mime, pie, me, etc.

A score of 20 words is excellent, in this case.

Think Again!



In this illustration, in which box is a Heart placed to the right of a Club, to the left of a Spade, above a Diamond and below a Spade?

Sharpen Your Wits

Here is a trick which can match Shakuntala Devi's wits! To square a two digit number, e.g. 85, instantly, work like this:

Add 1 to the ten's digit, i.e. 8+ 1 = 9
Multiply 8 and 9; i.e. 8 X 9 = 72
Attach 25 to 72; i.e. 7225.
Now, $85^2 \times 7225$.

Similarly, the square of 35 will be "(3 X 4) 25" or 1225; square of 105 will be "(10 X 11) 25" or 11025.

This trick works only when the unit digit is 5.

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Witsharpener:
Anju, Beena and Cathy went to the Tower of London, the Tate Gallery and to the play, but did not visit Madame Tussaud's.

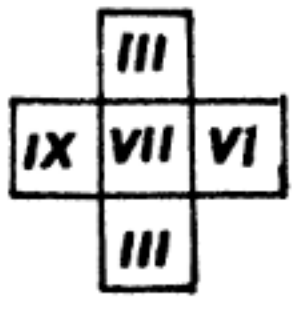
Blankagrams:
Birds of a feather flock together; curiosity killed the cat; don't count your chickens before they are hatched; too many cooks spoil the broth; silence is golden; familiarity breeds contempt; penny wise pound foolish; look before you leap.

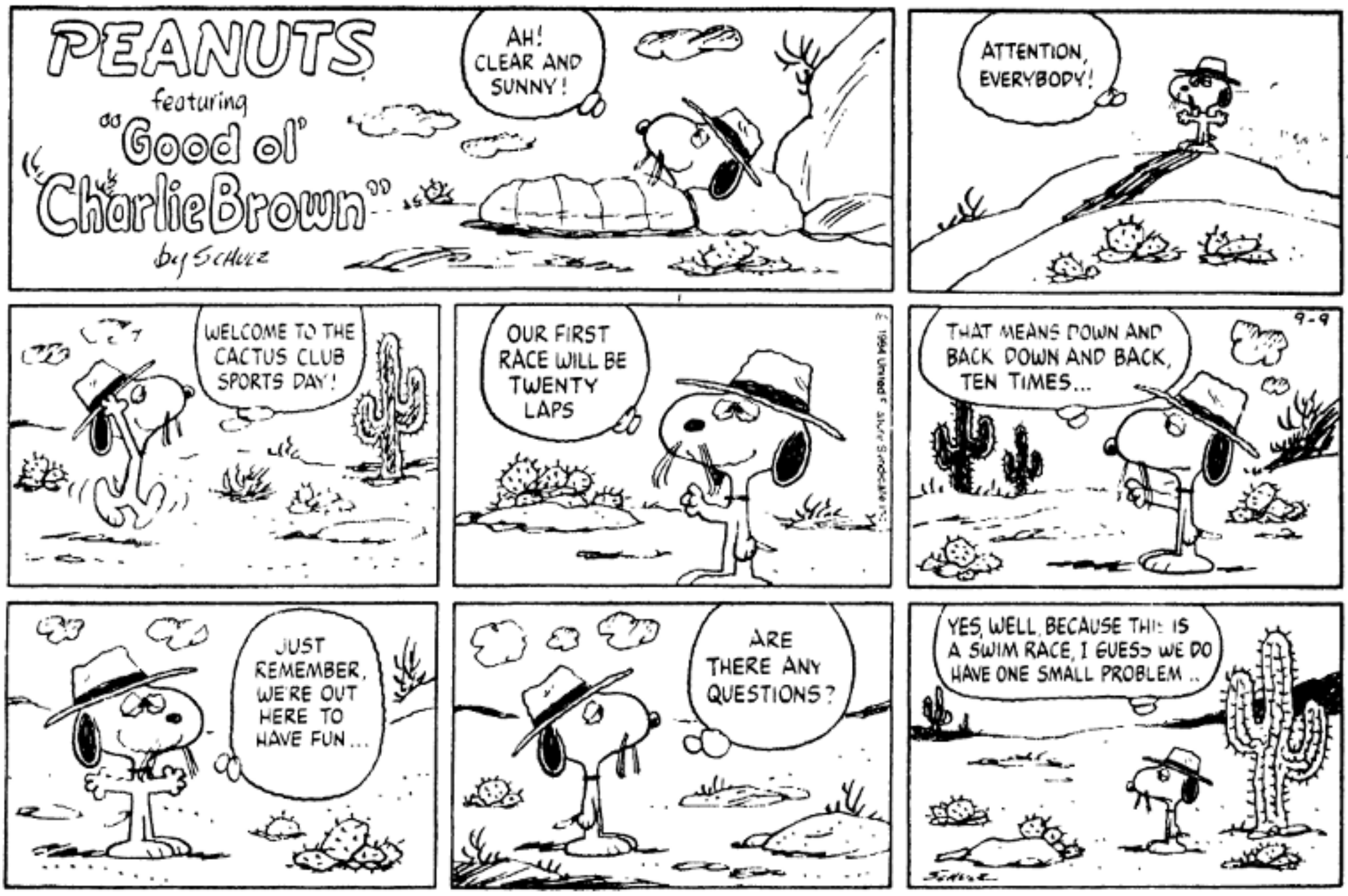
Figure it Out:
a) The Pelican (b) The Puffin (c)The Penguin. They are found on the covers of books published under the Penguin Books banner.

Missing Link:
i) 126 ii) 11

Personality Plus:
ALBERT EINSTEEN

Mind Bender:





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DELHI DIARY

Principal Posting

Presuming that Rajiv Gandhi will be the Prime Minister after the polls, who could be the new principal secretary to the PM? The term of Dr P.C. Alexander is to expire soon. An extension is unlikely. Finance secretary Pratap Krishna Kaul could be the next man. He has been the defence secretary and commerce secretary earlier and has held top posts like the chief controller of imports and exports previously. The appointment of a Kashmiri Pandit may raise some eyebrows, but opinion in the bureaucracy is that Kaul would be the fittest person for the post. He has the reputation of being an upright officer. One reason why Kaul's appointment may be hailed by the IAS lobby is that Dr Alexander has, of late, been reputed to be at loggerheads with senior secretaries. Recently, even the foreign service had him on the wrong side.



Dr P. C. Alexander (right)

The foreign secretary designate, Romesh Bhandari, had a heated argument with Dr Alexander on the eve of the Iranian foreign minister Vilayati's visit to Delhi. Bhandari, who had been the aide to a stalwart like V.K. Krishna Menon in his younger days, squarely told Dr Alexander to let the foreign service run the external affairs ministry.

Unreported

On 13 June, one of the personal security guards of a union cabinet minister disappeared from duty. No one in the security hierarchy took note of the sudden disappearance of Manjit Singh Jalbera, the guard of Jagannath Kaushal, the law minister. On the face of it, Kaushal, who had won the last Lok Sabha polls from Chandigarh, should have been on the top-security list after Operation Bluestar in the first week of June. The next time the authorities heard of Jalbera was when the Indian Airlines Airbus on a Srinagar-Delhi flight was hijacked and taken to Lahore on 5 July. The name of M.S. Jalbera in the hijackers' list set off the alarm. Enquiries revealed that it was none other than the missing bodyguard. But this report was suppressed. No one informed the Prime Minister or the members of the cabinet committee on political affairs about this major development. It is said that Mrs Gandhi had learnt about this incident sometime in late August and had soon afterwards changed the home minister, P.C. Sethi. One wonders how many such reports are there in the security cupboards. Soon after the Jalbera incident, a scrutiny of the ministerial bodyguards should have taken place. But in this country, leave alone ministers, even the Prime Minister's security was treated like a farce. The cost of ignoring the Jalbera incident is being borne by the nation today.

Police to Policy

The appointment of R.N. Kao as the member of the external affairs ministry's policy planning committee has surprised many. Only recently Kao, the doyen of Indian intelligence, had bid goodbye to service by resigning from the post of senior adviser to the cabinet secretariat. His presence in the committee is likely to be resented most by none other than the chairman, G. Parthasarathy.

Vijay, Not Victory

Vijay Shankar Tripathi, the bureaucrat-turned-political aide in the Prime Minister's office, is not a victorious man these days. He was being tipped for a Lok Sabha ticket initially. That did not come about. With the appointment of Arun Singh as the parliamentary secretary to the PM (who never faced Parliament in 1984), Tripathi was deprived of the prestigious room in the South Block, adjacent to the Prime Minister's office. The room beside the PM's is occupied by the special assistant, R.K. Dhawan. The room next to the PM's was Tripathi's till Arun Singh moved in. Now, Tripathi sits in a much smaller room, which till recently was occupied by a deputy secretary, K.L. Dang. (At the time of quitting the IAS in 1983, Tripathi was a joint secretary; the post of "Adviser" is equivalent to that of an additional secretary.) Not only this, even in his designation Tripathi has been demoted. In Mrs Gandhi's regime, he was the political adviser. Now he is the personal adviser in the PM's office. Politics in any case is personality-oriented, isn't it?

Computer Deductions

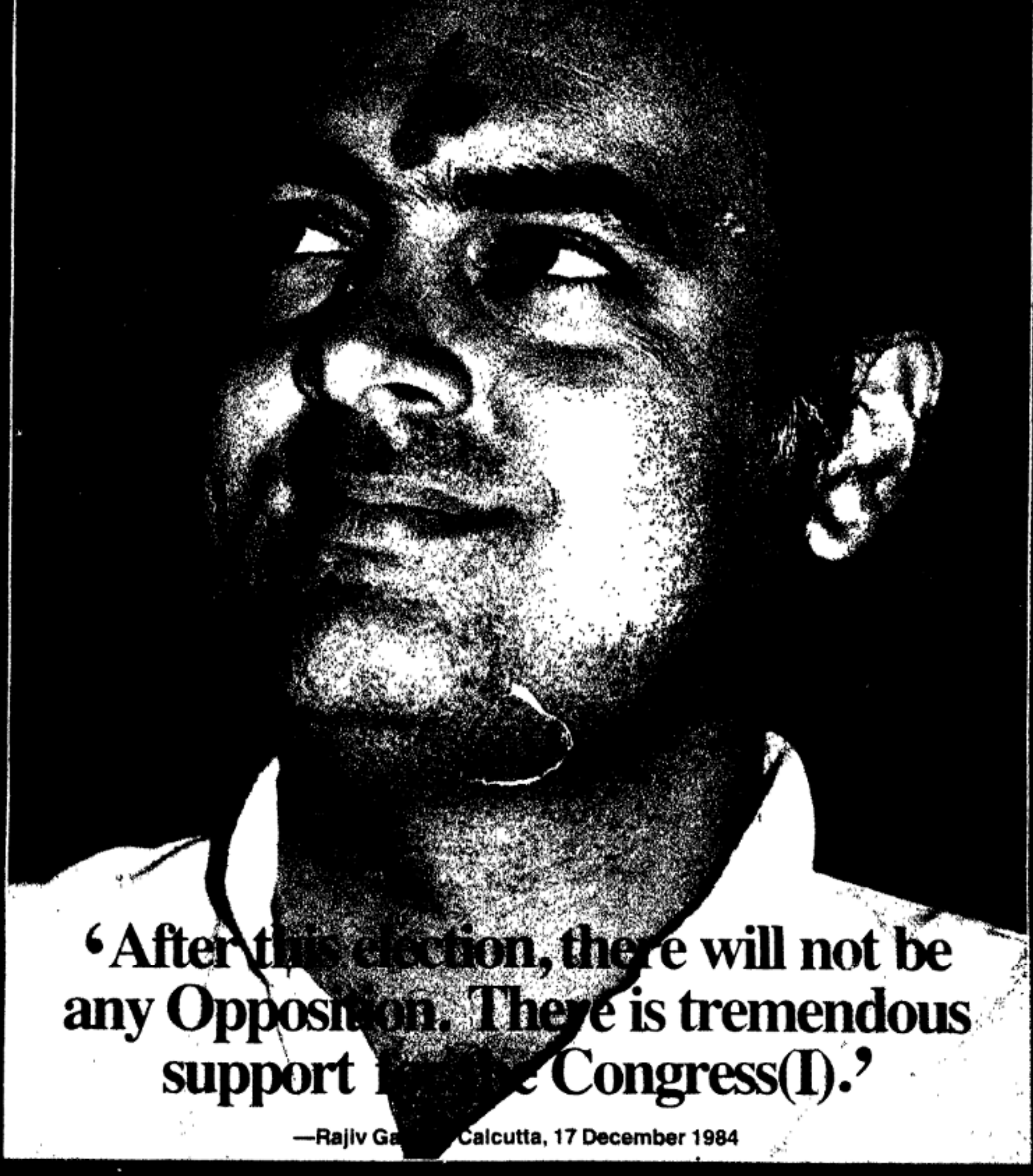
The control room set up in the AICC(I) office on 24 Akbar Road, which is monitoring the state-wise party reports, is manned by retired military personnel. These formerly uniformed gentlemen are good at taking orders and passing on information untainted by political thought. There is an array of telephones at their command and these receive reports from state capitals round-the-clock. By the time these lines appear in print, election results should start coming in. A joke which went round the capital during the campaign may not become stale by then. According to the grapevine, the reports of the control room were fed into a computer. The Congress(I) is contesting 494 seats (the rest have been left for parties like the AIADMK and other allies) out of the total of 515 at stake. Based on the control room data, the computer said that the total seats to be won by the Congress(I) would be 494 minus 74. If you know your arithmetic you can calculate the computer results yourself.

D.E. Nizamuddin

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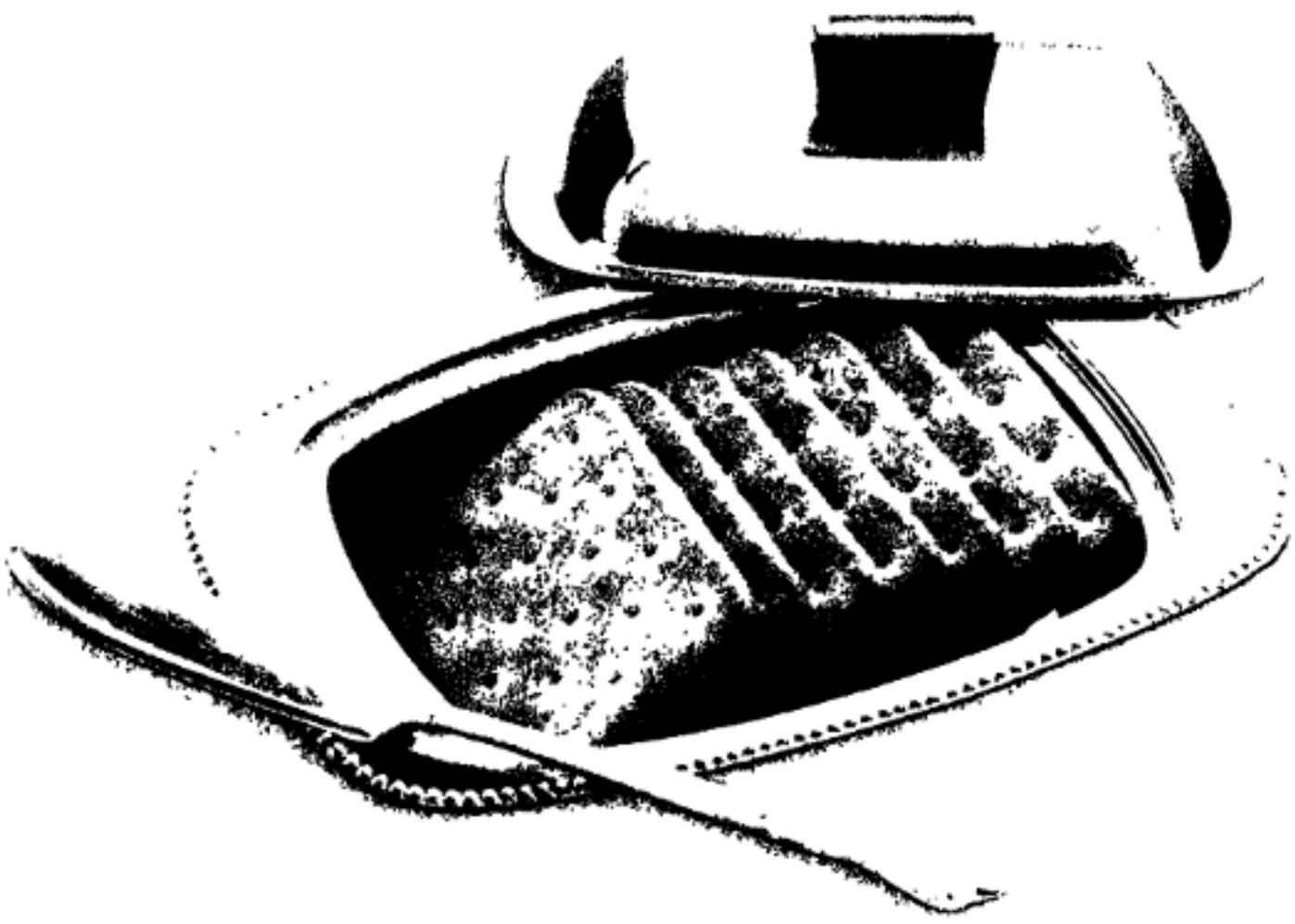
The New Wave Government

SUNDAY



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—Rajiv Gandhi, Calcutta, 17 December 1984



"Butterlicious"



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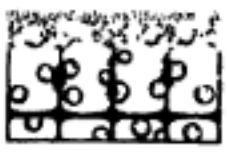
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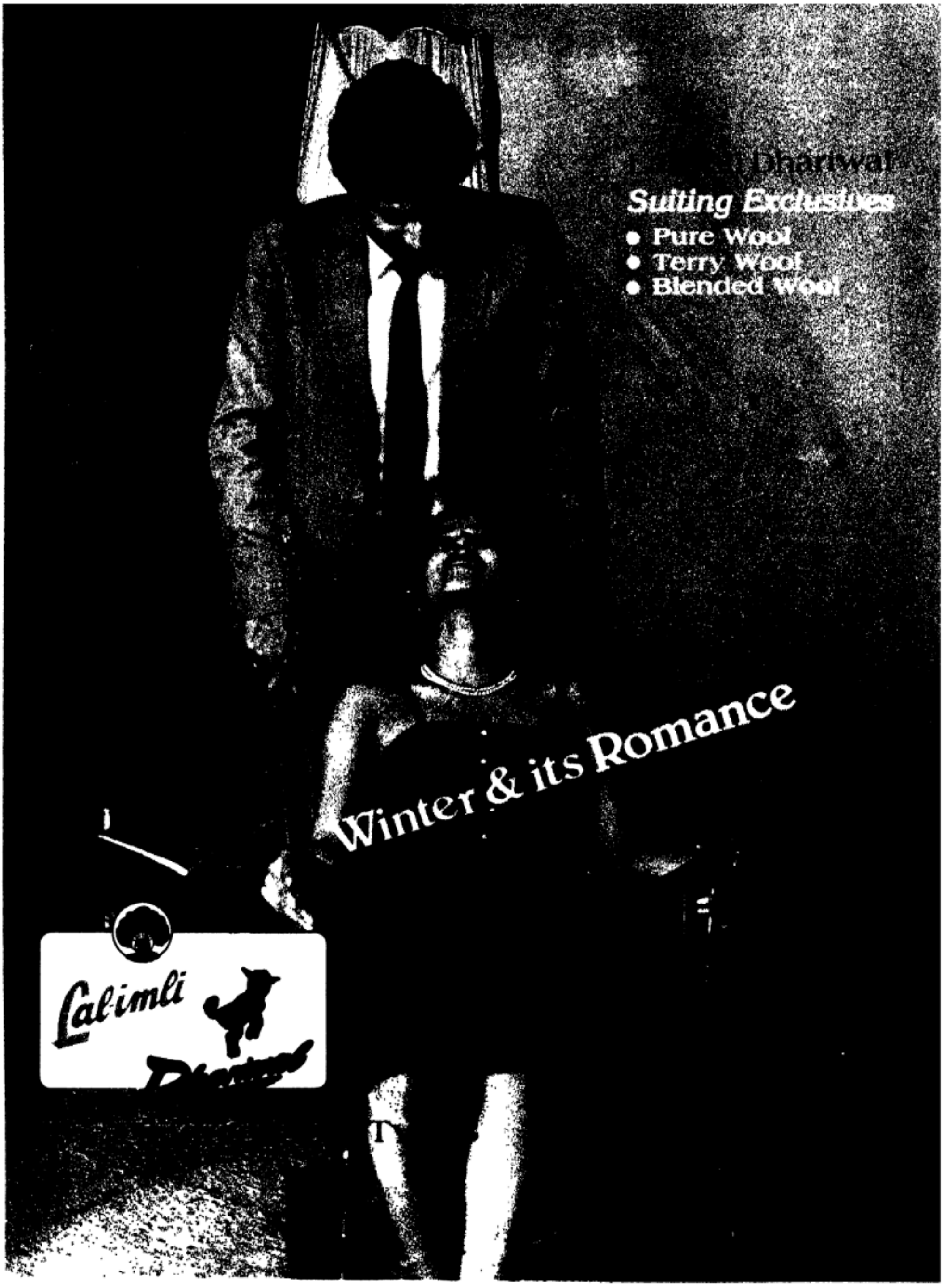
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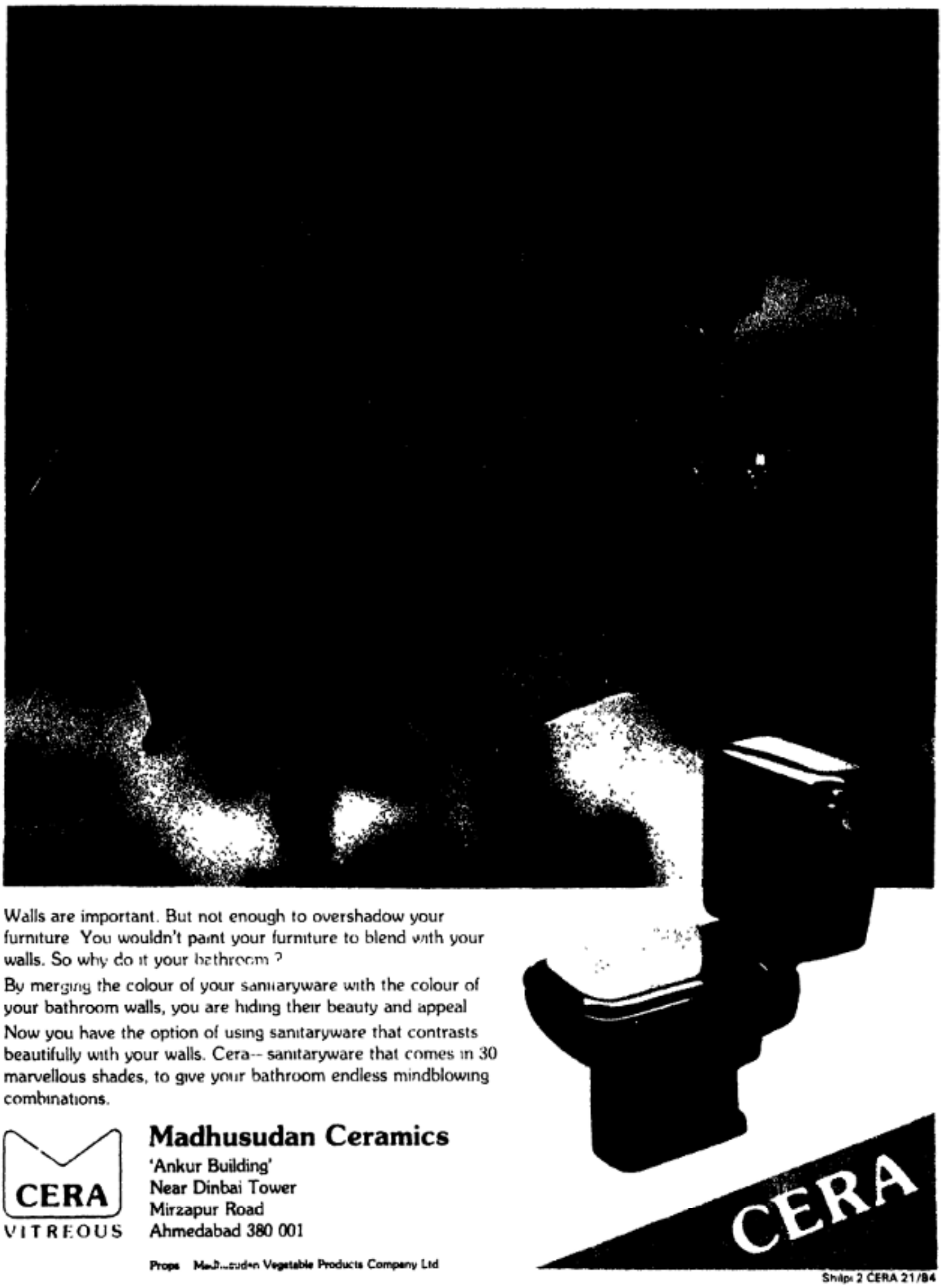


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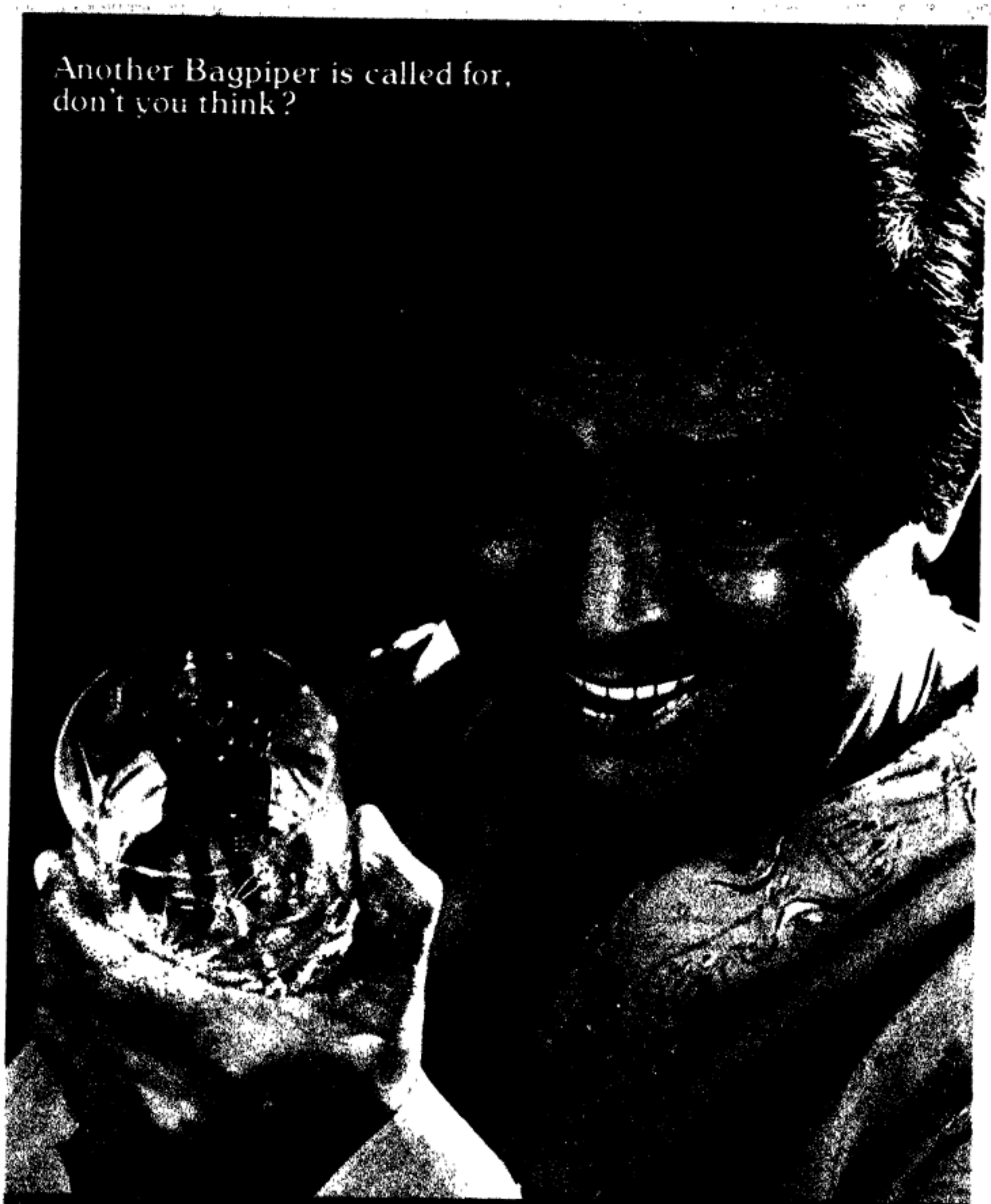
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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

New Delhi: There is nothing quite so desolate as the home of a defeated politician. The campaign bustle is replaced by an eerie despair, the posters mock from the walls, when illusions shatter they never make much noise. The only sound that one might hear from closed doors is the mumble of excuses: the people misunderstood, the media distorted, supporters took victory for granted and did not turn out to vote, opponents told lies. The band of loyalists, now suddenly shrunk to non-sycophantic levels, relives the descent from euphoria to confidence to despair. Anecdotes are exchanged; memory prodded to search for some solace in the debris of a lost adventure. The conversation has the touch of winter in it; there is no human to warm the heart. The bruise and scratch on the ego may be camouflaged in front of the world which still has to be faced, but here the wounds are left in the open. At best, time will heal only some of them. A general election is too big a milestone in a politician's life: he can hope to contest, at the most, half a dozen and defeat means half a decade if not more lost. For the opposition the results of 1984 mean that they will go through the Eighties without the sustenance of a spell in office. Survival becomes a hard business in the bleakness of defeat. Both money and friends, the two most inconstant possessions in life, run out quickly.

1980 of course was much better. The shock of defeat was greater, since both the Janata and the Janata (Secular)—remember that names?—had convinced themselves that they were on the brink of [illegible] the time, by poring over [illegible] enough indications to what was happening. The momentum towards Rajiv Gandhi (and it was his victory, not Mrs Indira Gandhi's) began to peak very late, in the last week of the campaign, but when it did, took on leviathan proportions. Mothers saw Rajiv as the son who had to be protected after this great tragedy, the young saw him as one of them and were determined to give him his chance. And who could blame the young since the alternatives that the opposition had to offer were men of the vintage of Chaudhury Charan Singh or Babu Jagjivan Ram, men who belong to the past, not the future. This is the problem: in 1980, the seats disappeared but hope survived; in 1985 hope too has taken a severe beating. In 1980 the various segments of the Janata mixture went their separate ways in an effort to separately capture power by 1985. The Bhartiya Janata Party was the most confident of the lot then. It has now been demolished. As for Chaudhury Charan Singh, hopefully his ambitions will finally be given a burial. If any party can claim some pretense of survival it is the Janata, but unless the party does something unexpectedly dramatic to revive its fortunes it too might end up soon as a small footnote in history rather than an institution created by a mighty popular movement in the Seventies. Strong doses of courage and ideology are needed. Those who have them will live to fight another day. Those who spend their time only waiting for Rajiv Gandhi to fail will find that the country has passed them by.

The new year's eve surprise of course was the dropping of Mr A B A Ghani Khan Chowdhury from the cabinet. It was generally known that Mr Pranab Mukherjee's days of influence were over, and if Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi did keep him it would be at the expense of a demotion. But Mr Chowdhury was expected, after his impressive victories in Bengal, to be at the top of the first list. Perhaps the man most shocked was Mr Chowdhury himself; he could not believe it, particularly since his supporters had begun distributing the champagne early. The parallel which comes to mind is that of Mr A R Antulay in 1980, who did so much in Mrs Gandhi's comeback effort between 1977 and 1980. He clearly expected to be a cabinet minister in Mrs Gandhi's government and was stunned when his name was not announced. His patience was rewarded when, against every prediction, he was named the chief minister of Maharashtra after the Assembly elections. No one imagined that a Muslim would be made chief minister of the land which fought Aurangzeb, but there he was. If Mr Choudhury feels in any mood to do so, he can console himself with the hope that he may get the big job in Bengal if the Congress wins the Assembly elections here.

Mr Ashoke Sen's expertise will be needed, I suspect, in passing some new legislation on Punjab. He was the minister who piloted the constitutional amendment in 1963 banning parties preaching secession from contesting the elections. Perhaps this time he will have to push through such legislation about communal parties.

Clearly Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has made a serious attempt, with the formation of his first government, to make the Congress once again the kind of party which it was in the Fifties, with a strong commitment to the minorities and the harijan. The number of Brahmins too has been brought down sharply since Mrs Gandhi the grandmother had become terribly Brahmin-heavy. It was most pleasant to see Chacha Vodai Ghatoor in the cabinet. He is one of the most delightful people in today's politics. And Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh has been given the job which should have been his long ago. I doubt if Rajiv Gandhi could have made a better start. However, conspicuous by its absence once again was the name of Srikant Verma, the poet who has a genius for slogans and who once again handled the Congress publicity with a political skill which advertising agencies and public school graduates are going to take some time to learn.

I think Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has a bit of wit too. Was Mr Arun Nehru made the minister of state for power because he had developed a reputation of being power hungry?

The momentum towards Rajiv Gandhi (and it was his victory, not Mrs Indira Gandhi's) began to peak very late, in the last week of the campaign, but when it did took on leviathan proportions. Mothers saw Rajiv as the son who had to be protected after this great tragedy; the young saw him as one of them and were determined to give him his chance.

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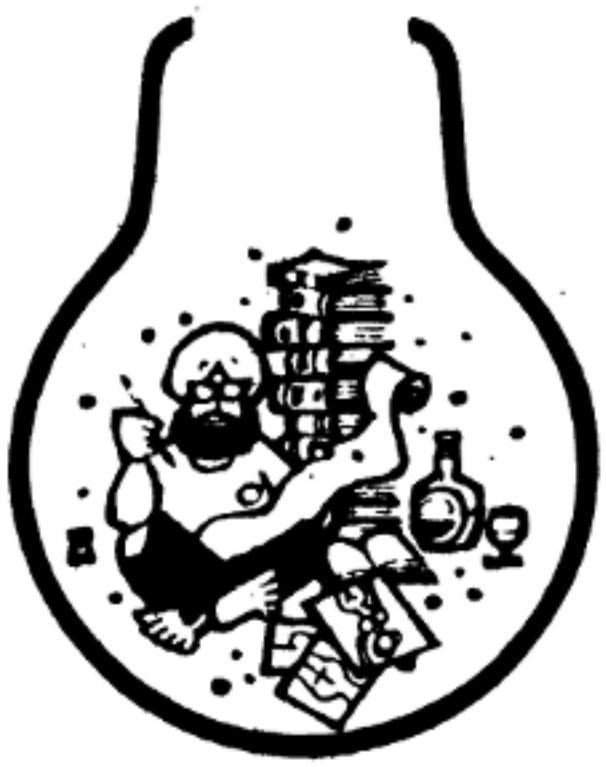
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Requiem for 1984

It's been India's worst year since Independence. And the worst ever for the Sikhs since they lost their kingdom 133 years ago. The fortunes of the two are closely interlinked; if one sinks, there is little hope of survival of the other. You may think that Sikhs are a miniscule minority of under two per cent of the population and what happens to them should not have much bearing on the fortunes of a country of 700 people. I wish that were so. But I know it to be otherwise. Let me elucidate from personal experience.

I spent some time visiting Sikh refugee camps in the city. Early November they had upwards of 50,000 inmates, mostly poor artisans of the Labana subcaste. Within a fortnight the administration ordered them to return to their homes or whatever was left of them. Most of them refused to go back to areas where they knew killers were still at large, and either moved to makeshift shelters provided by a few Sikh gurudwaras or migrated to Punjab where they had no roots (99 out of a hundred were refugees from Pakistan), no homes, no lands, only distant relatives. The same happened to Sikhs who fled from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, mainly Kanpur where killing, looting and arson was as savage as in Delhi. None of the assurances given by Rajiv Gandhi and the chief ministers of Bihar and UP created any confidence in them for the simple reason that they felt that if these people had wanted to prevent anti-Sikh riots and had acted in time, they would not have occurred in the first place.

Those who subscribe to the theory that Sikhs deserved to be taught a lesson should now feel satisfied that Sikhs have in fact learnt some kind of lesson. But it is not the lesson Sikh-baiters hoped to teach them. They should visit some refugee camps and ask any of the 900 or more widows who lost not only their bread-winning husbands but their young sons as well how they feel. They should talk to men with limbs in plaster, their long hair and beards forcibly shorn off and scores of young girls who were dishonoured whether or not they feel they deserved what they got. They could also derive satisfaction from the fact that the number of Sikhs seen on the roads of Delhi has visibly decreased; that the once ebullient and extrovert people



now look sullen and downcast; loudspeakers which blared forth from gurudwaras to the annoyance of their neighbours have fallen silent, attendance at gurudwaras like Sis Ganj and Bangla Sahib where one had to jostle one's way through the throng is very thin. The *Gurubani Keertan* is as mellifluous as ever but it floats across half-empty halls. I asked myself, "Have the Sikhs run their course in history and will they now like Indian Muslims become a community of hymn singers?" Allama Iqbal proclaimed on the rise and downfall of nations in the following words:

A tujh ko bataaoon main taqdeer e-umam kya hai!
Shamsheer-o-Sanaa avval, taoos-o-rabaab aakhir.

(Come let me tell you of the rise and fall of nations;/It is the sword and the dagger in the first phase/The viol and the lute in the last.)

What happens to the already communally surcharged atmosphere of Punjab when this cargo of bitterness is off-loaded and scattered in different towns and villages? Unless defused in time, it could be as lethal as the MIC gas that enveloped Bhopal. Can we afford to have the most sensitive border of our country and our only land-link to Jammu and Kashmir become permanently destabilised? Let all Indians ponder over this as the year ends. I would also like to suggest a few New Year's resolutions for 1985. For the Sikhs: make unequivocal reaffirmation of your Indianness, denounce Khalistan, ostracise Khalistanis and condemn people who argue with guns, bombs and pistols. Give assurances to your Punjabi Hindu brethren that as long as you live you will not allow a hair on their heads to be touched by evil-doers. For all other Indians: do not regard all Sikhs as Khalistanis, but fellow Indians; give back to the Sikhs the place of honour they had before their downfall in 1984. If you want to save your country from disintegration, you have no other choice. If the Sikhs sink, India will sink with them.

A Sikh family in a refugee camp



Khalistan Roadways

This Khalistani anecdote has been sent to me by Kanwaljit Kaur and Manohar Bhatia. A Khalistan Roadways bus plying between the state's major towns had a Nihang conductor. "Where to?" he asked a young Sikh passenger before issuing him a ticket. "Amritsar," replied the youngster. The Nihang conductor gave him a clout on the head and said, "It is Sri Amritsar Sahib." The youngster quickly corrected himself, "Yes, of course." One for Sri Amritsarji Sahib." The next passenger was a Hindu. "Where to?" asked the Nihang. "Sri Ludhianaji Sahib," replied the other timidly. He too was rewarded with a clout on the head. "Only Ludhiana, no Sri or Sahibji," admonished the Nihang before issuing him a ticket. The third passenger happened to be a wordly wise Marwari. When asked for his destination, he replied: "Nihangji, kindly give me a ticket for Sri Amritsarji Sahib; thereafter I will go on foot to my village." The Nihang was pleased. "If you are not completing your journey by this bus, no need for [illegible] replied the Nihang.

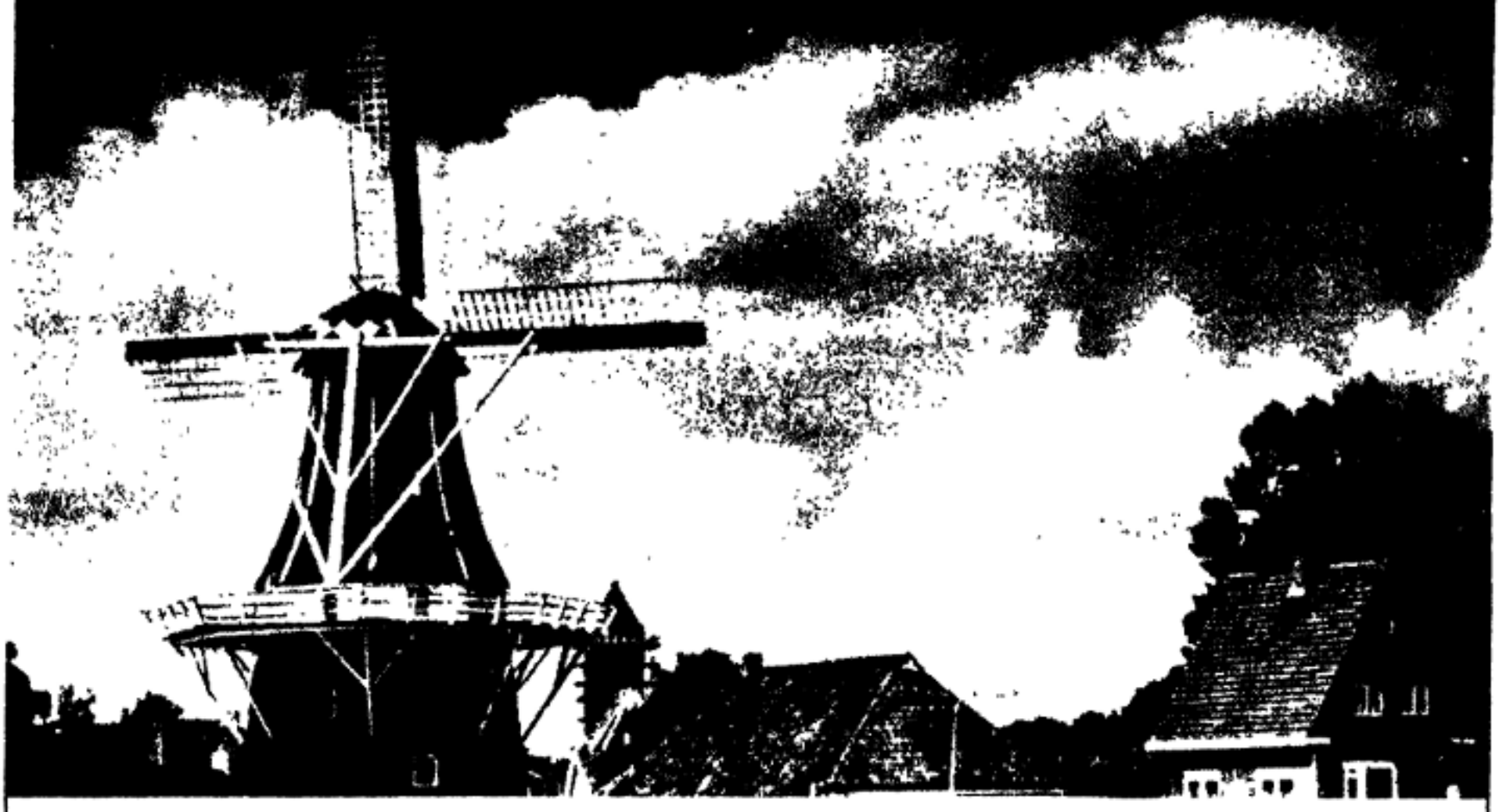
Ode to a Doctor

I came across this charming little doggerel [illegible], my brief sojourn in Hong Kong recently.

Please don't send me to the hospital
I know what will happen.
Hospital will grab my purse,
Switch me [illegible] nurse to nurse,
I'll go from bad to worse,
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CLARION D 386

EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Who is Rajiv's Deputy?

There is no number two or three in the union cabinet. All ministers have been listed alphabetically and they take their seats in cabinet meetings accordingly. This is a departure from the past. Indira Gandhi had designated Pranab Mukherjee, former finance minister, as number two and he presided over the cabinet and its sub committee on political affairs in her absence.

It was perhaps an indiscreet remark made by Pranab Mukherjee that put an end to the old practice and has also been responsible for his exit from the government. While returning in the same plane with Rajiv Gandhi on 31 October, soon after hearing about Indira Gandhi's assassination, Mr Mukherjee is reported to have observed that he would automatically be the interim Prime Minister because he was the seniormost and that the election of the party's leader would take place later. That remark has been seen as a betrayal of his ambition.

After Nehru's death, President Radhakrishnan had established the practice of the seniormost cabinet minister becoming an interim Prime Minister and then convening the ruling party's meeting for the election of the leader. Gulzarilal Nanda officiated as Prime Minister after the death of both Nehru and Shastri. However, this time, Rajiv Gandhi was appointed Prime Minister straightaway and the party gave its sanction later.

Nehru did not face the problem of making arrangements when abroad. Initially, Sardar Patel was there and he presided over the cabinet because he was the deputy Prime Minister. After his death, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad fit in ideally because alphabetically he was on the top, and otherwise too he was so well-known politically that everyone considered him next to Nehru

When Indira Gandhi came to power in 1966, she was politically weak and hence she followed the practice of the seniormost minister looking after her work during her trips abroad. This question did not arise between 1967 and 1969 when Morarji Desai was appointed deputy Prime Minister. However, after he quit, she did not designate either Jagjivan Ram nor Y.B. Chavan, the two stalwarts in her cabinet as the second-in-command. She thought they would sort out the matter between themselves. But this did not happen.

Being alphabetically above Jagjivan Ram, Chavan thought that he had precedence over him. But Jagjivan Ram did not accept it. When the former Prime Minister was abroad once, an urgent meeting of the political affairs committee of the cabinet had to be convened because of the threat by government servants to go on strike. Chavan thought he would preside over the meeting but Jagjivan Ram went around the problem by sitting on the sofa where Chavan was seated. During the entire discussion with other members of the cabinet committee, the two behaved as if both were equal.

When Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1971 after sweeping the polls, she was politically stronger and, therefore, did not adhere to the practice of seniority; she also did not want any of the ministers to be second in line of succession. This, she thought, would give unnecessary edge to one person. She introduced seniority on the basis of alphabetical order but in a different way so as to kill two birds with one stone.

The norm laid down was that the last word of a minister's name would be taken into consideration. Indira Gandhi did so purposely. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was the most dependable minister she had. Also, even if he were to serve as number two, she did not anticipate any danger from him. So, he presided over cabinet meetings in her absence. He justified her confidence in him, not only when he was a cabinet minister but also when he was the President during the Emergency. He was the one who signed the notification even before the cabinet's approval, as the Shah Commission's findings indicate.

In the second stint of Prime Ministership from 1980, Indira Gandhi reversed the practice only for Pranab Mukherjee. He had stood by her in the wilderness—Narasimha Rao was not then on the national scene—and though he lost in the 1980 polls, she summoned him from Calcutta to convene the Congress(I) Parliamentary Party meeting, help her form the government, and so on. He was the only defeated candidate who was made a cabinet minister and ultimately raised to the post of finance minister and the number two position.

Why was Pranab thus elevated? How could a person who was only a deputy minister become number two in the cabinet in about a decade? Probably one word explains his meteoric rise: loyalty. But he is no Buta Singh who too, has become cabinet minister by dint of his loyalty. Pranab Mukherjee has intelligence and can converse well, which the former Prime Minister was able to utilise in conducting affairs within the party and without.

It is yet too early to say whether Rajiv Gandhi would have a number two for presiding over urgent cabinet meetings when he goes out of India. But my hunch is that he will have someone, without formally designating him so. During Indira Gandhi's rule, it was felt, that certain matters required immediate attention and could not afford an inordinate delay which her busy itinerary would cause.

It is yet too early to say whether Rajiv Gandhi would have a number two for presiding over urgent cabinet meetings. But my hunch is that he will have someone, without formally designating him

OPINION

Buying Votes

The cover story, *The Selling of a Prime Minister* (9—15 December '84) made interesting reading. I was astonished at the astronomical sum spent by the Congress(I) to promote its image just before the elections. The Congress(I) usually speaks very highly of its achievements. But actually the contrary is true and hence the need to sell a Prime Minister.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• In a poor country like ours, the money spent by the ruling party for publicity campaigns is not only uncalled for, but it should come as a shock to every sensible citizen. In all their advertisements, the Congress(I) has sought the support of the people to build a strong and united India. Just before the elections the ruling party has once again raised the bogey of a foreign force trying to weaken India. May I remind our rulers that India in the past has overcome much more serious problems but has managed to survive. The government should stop raising false alarms.
Anshuman Tiwari, New Delhi

• With the announcement of the date for the general elections, the publicity gimmicks of the Congress(I) and other parties started. The politicians are out with their begging bowls. Here is a nursery rhyme that brings out the mood of the elections:
Hark! Hark! the dogs do bark,
The beggars have come to town
Some gave them black bread, some gave them brown
And some took a horsewhip and drove them out of town.
Lt. Col. S. K. Mushran (Retd), Lucknow

• Rajiv Gandhi's programme to appoint workers all over the country to report on the weaknesses of the party at the grassroots' level is certainly commendable. Nowadays political parties, once they have won an election, tend to forget the masses. The communication gap between a ruling party and the people can only be bridged by dedicated party workers. I am sure Rajiv Gandhi's plans will make the Congress(I) more popular.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan

• The report made interesting reading. It was alarming to learn that such a huge sum is being spent to buy votes.
N. Reddy, Hyderabad



Welcome, Amitabh

The *Dream Merchants* (16-22 December '84) made interesting reading. The people of Allahabad are fed up with dirty politics; they are eagerly waiting for a change. Some people are in the habit of criticising anyone who tries to do something good for the masses. I am sure that Amitabh Bachchan will gradually emerge as a seasoned political leader. What he needs most is encouragement. Let us not discourage him in his effort to serve the people of India.
Bibek Sen, Kalyan Nagar (West Bengal)

• The Congress(I) is inducting cinestars to counter the growing influence of the opposition. But political experience will finally prevail The profiles of the three filmstars contesting the elections were excellent.
Ranjan K. Talcher (Orissa)

• The cover story on filmstars with political ambitions was timely and thought-provoking. Amitabh Bachchan, the superhero of the silver screen, has many things in common with the veteran politician, H.N. Bahuguna. Mr Bahuguna switches from one political party to another with the same dexterity as Amitabh switches from one role to another. Moreover, both are veterans in their respective fields and are endowed with charismatic personalities. Amitabh may be a dwarf in politics but his chances should not be underrated.
Rana Zafar, Calcutta

Criminal Delay

Indira Gandhi was shot at 9.13 am, taken to the AIIMS at 9.43 am and finally to the operation theatre at 10.19 am Over an hour of precious time was lost before she was operated upon. It is quite possible that Indira Gandhi was already dead when the operation began. In comparison, the doctors who operated on President Reagan were amazingly efficient. According to *Time* magazine, within five minutes of Mr Reagan's arrival at the George Washington University Hospital, he was hooked onto an artificial breathing apparatus, and given intravenous fluids, and his clothes cut off. The doctors also operated his lung to prevent damage to the heart, lung and major blood vessels. Blood transfusion was begun immediately to make up for the loss of blood. All this in a matter of minutes. Mrs Gandhi's aides and the hospital staff could certainly have been a little more efficient.
Santokh Singh Khokhar, Mughalsarai

• Indira Gandhi's aides have been severely criticised for failing to inform the AIIMS of the unexpected arrival of Mrs Gandhi. The emergency section of any hospital, especially a pestigious one like the AIIMS, is expected to maintain a round-the-clock readiness. The criminal delay in operating on Indira Gandhi indicates the casual state of affairs in the hospital. A casualty victim is supposed to get immediate treatment in an emergency ward. One need not be a Prime Minister to draw medical attention.
Dr Ambuj Kamboj, Meerut

Healthy Coverage

Anita Pratap's coverage of the Tamil Nadu chief minister M. G. Ramachandran's illness (*A Beloved Hero's Fight for Life*, 4-11 November 1984) was exhaustive Her in-depth analysis gave a true picture of the CM's health.
N. Ellango, Tirunelveli, (Tamil Nadu)

Not Revealing

The report on Indira Gandhi's assassination, *The Conspiracy*, (25 November-1 December 1984) failed to reveal the hidden forces behind the plot.
A. N. Bhattacharya, Calcutta

The Killers of Bhopal



Victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy

Tooshar Pandit's investigation of the Bhopal tragedy (*Killer Gas, Callous Carbide*, 16—22 December '84) was impressive. The incident reminds me of Hitler's gas chambers or the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War. Instead of shedding crocodile tears, the government should take care of the affected people.
Faiz Ahmed Faizi, Calcutta

• The vivid narration of the Bhopal gas tragedy made painful reading. All such factories using toxic gases or substances should be immediately subjected to safety tests. Such checks should be a routine affair and not carried out only after a tragedy I hope the article serves as an eye-opener to all concerned.
Nirjhar Das Gupta, Calcutta

• The Bhopal tragedy has been rightly termed as the "worst environmental disaster" in the world. Over 3,000 people have lost their lives and the future of triple that number is uncertain. But I was shocked to see Amitabh Bachchan on the cover of that issue. The Bhopal incident certainly deserved a picture on the cover.
Laxmidhar Mohanty, Cuttack

• The government is as much responsible for the Bhopal tragedy as Union Carbide. Safety rules were ignored by the concerned company right under the nose of the government. The pictures with the article were really moving.
G. Panchapakesan, Thanjavur

• The report has left me terrified and stunned. It was astonishing to learn that security rules were flouted at the Bhopal plant of such a well-known company. The Madhya Pradesh government tried to put all the blame for the tragedy on Union Carbide. The MP administration would have come out unscathed but for the efforts of journalists like Tooshar Pandit who rightly pinpointed the MP government's responsibilities.
Surendra Prasad Tripathi, Santragachi (West Bengal)

• The Madhya Pradesh chief minister's behaviour immediately after the Bhopal incident was surprising. It left me wondering as to whether it was an election gimmick. Instead of providing relief to the victims, the CM was more bothered about taking the multinational firm to court Arjun Singh even started refusing help and donations from various agencies.
M. S. Narasimha Murthy, Bangalore

• The behaviour of the Madhya Pradesh chief minister during the incident in Bhopal is condemnable. In that hour of crisis, instead of providing relief to the victims, the CM went around arresting Union Carbide officials. He was more bothered about his chair than the sufferings of the poor.
Dr Antaryami Upadhyay, Singhbhum

• The Madhya Pradesh government was more responsible for the tragedy than Union Carbide. It is astonishing as to how a "killer" plant was allowed to function in a thickly populated area. In our country everything except human lives is costly.
V. N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

Prejudiced

M. J. Akbar's essay, *Religion, Life and Death* (11-24 November 1984), seemed to be motivated against the Hindus. In his attempt to malign the community, the author has forgotten the qualities of tolerance and mercy which marks out Hindus. Hinduism is secular and hence, fear of Hindu fanaticism is baseless.
Madan Lal, Ranaghat (West Bengal)

Commendable

All the articles about Indira Gandhi in the special issue of SUNDAY (*Martyr*, 11—24 November 1984) were good. Her last interview, especially, was excellent.
C. V. Geetha, Madras

• The special issue had an attractive cover, an excellent cover story and very good photographs. Unlike the other leading newsmagazines which are highly critical of the ruling party, your positive and objective approach is commendable. Please keep up the journalistic excellence.
Charles John, Trivandrum

Confusing

The *Khaas Baat* item (2—8 December 1984) regarding Kannada film star Vishnuvardhan being harassed by Rajkumar's fans is misleading. A detailed analysis of the issue would be more welcome than publishing such a short report. Moreover, calling Rajkumar a politician-film-star is absurd. Though his name is often misued by politicians, he has made it clear that he is not interested in politics
Y. G. Siddhartha, Kasibugga

Tewari or Pandey?

It has been disclosed that the columnist of *Delhi Diary*, D.E. Nizamuddin, is actually Mr Udayan Sharma (*Illustrated Weekly*, 15 December '84). What about you, Mr M.J. Akbar? Are you too some Tewari or Pandey?
A.H. Khan, Azamgarh

Letters which do not have the full names and addresses of the correspondents will not be considered for publication—Editor

Wanted: Articles With Malice Towards None

The violence after the assassination of Indira Gandhi was unbelievable and must be condemned Khushwant Singh claims that he has realised how the Jews must have felt in Nazi Germany, but has he realised how terror stricken the Hindus in Punjab were for three years?
Ashok Sahdev, New Delhi

• Whatever Khushwant Singh has written about the attack on the Sikh community by violent mobs after Mrs Gandhi's assassination is true and I sympathise with him But it is a matter of regret that instead of exposing the men who masterminded the assassination, Mr Singh has blamed only the two bodyguards
D N Rav, Puri

• Khushwant Singh claims that Mrs Gandhi's "assassination was on the cards after Operation Bluestar' and that "she brought it on her own head" In all his articles and his interviews including the one to the BBC, he has given the impression that he supports Sikh terrorists Such irresponsible statements are dangerous to the integrity of the nation
G Rama Krishna Jharsuguda (Orissa)

• Khushwant Singh writes that Indira Gandhi's assassination was on the cards after Operation Bluestar and that she brought it on her own head He also mentions that the entire community of 12 million Sikhs were branded as criminals for a crime committed by two people These statements are contradictory which only show the confusion that exists in the minds of the members of the Sikh community

First the killing was not an isolated event but a reaction against Operation Bluestar It is a fact that the entire nation, except a section of the Sikhs who were using the Golden Temple as an arsenal appreciated Indira Gandhi's decision to send the army inside the Temple

It is tragic that people like Mr Singh were silent when terrorists were misusing the Temple It only they had raised voices against the terrorists or those who financed them neither the army action, nor the assassination of the PM and its bloody aftermath would have occurred I am yet to see an organised body of Sikhs condemning the jubilation by the Sikhs in the UK or condemning the storage of arms in gurudwaras or the murder of innocent people

Mr Singh has deplored the fact that Sikhs have become second class citizens Till the assassination, the entire nation held the Sikhs in high esteem Even today only the secessionist terrorists are hated
B Ramachandran, Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu)

• On 2 November a Sikh celebrating Indira Gandhi's death presented me with a *laddoo* and two chocolates I returned the sweets and requested him to "export" them to Ethiopia Do the Sikhs still deserve any sympathy?
Ram Mohan Paliyath, Cochin

• I have gone through the anti Hindu outbursts by Khushwant Singh in two successive issues of SUNDAY (25 November 1 December and 2 December 8 December 1984) It is unfortunate that such provocative articles are allowed to be published Khushwant Singh has described in detail how innocent Sikhs were slaughtered after Indira Gandhi's death I wonder how such a celebrated columnist could have forgotten the plight of the Hindus in Punjab during the days of Bhindranwale This confirms my belief that Mr Singh reacts only when his life is in danger or his community is in trouble

All secular forces throughout the country have strongly condemned the violence perpetrated on innocent Sikhs, and Indian democracy survived only because of Hindu Sikh amity which even Bhindranwale could not break
B D Chatterjee, Pakhanjore (Madhya Pradesh)

• I fully agree with Khushwant Singh's views of the riots in Delhi Mr Singh and the Sikh community deserves our sympathy But his assessment of the situation is one sided Many Sikhs in Cuttack danced on the streets and shouted pro Khalistan slogans after Mrs Gandhi was assassinated
B Banerjee, Keonjhar (Orissa)

• Had Mr Khushwant Singh dared to condemn the genocide of the Hindus in Punjab, we could have appreciated his article on the killing of Sikhs But Mr Singh has been very partisan and not lived up to his duty as a journalist
A S N Murthy, Bangalore

• There is no doubt that only two Sikhs were responsible for the assassination of Indira Gandhi But there were Sikhs in England and the USA who celebrated the murder with champagne Will Khushwant Singh condemn their actions?
Hitlal Hazarika Majuli (Assam)

• It is surprising that Khushwant Singh has been writing articles full of malice and hatred However bitter he may feel after the anti Sikh riots, he should realise that thousands of patriotic Indians continue to support their Sikh brethren In recent years the Sikh community has alienated itself from the national mainstream for narrow sectarian causes. Even the Sikh moderates who are against extremism have been silent spectators The five head priests who did not preseve the sanctity of the Golden Temple are respected leaders today
Rohit Singh Bhopal

• The Sikhs feel that it is their birthright to kill Hindus indiscriminately and convert a shrine into an armoury Even intellectuals like Khushwant Singh did not raise their voices in protest against the killing of thousands of Hindus in Punjab He failed to understand the simple theory for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction
Barun Chakravarty, Calcutta

Want Help?

In April '84 after a three-year long struggle I won a case against the Bombay Housing Board which had asked me to vacate my house since I did not pay rent for two years I had argued in court, without any help from lawyers, that I did not pay the rent as the Board had not paid heed to my repeated requests for vital repairs of the house If any housing board tenant or their association anywhere in the country wishes to have a copy of the judgment or my advice, they are welcome to write to me
C Antony Louis, 18/528 Nehru Nagar, Bombay 24

Last Letter

If a workman dies on duty, his son is employed immediately on compassionate grounds So, what was the harm in Rajiv Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister after his mother's death?
Rudhra Dutta Satapathi, Rourkela.

"Will it bite?"



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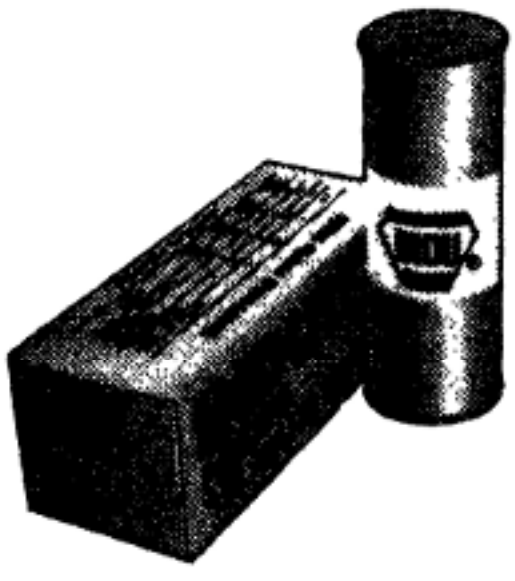
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Rajiv Gandhi being sworn in as the Prime Minister of India by President Zail Singh

The New Wave Government

The cabinet is a judicious blend of youth and experience

31 December in New Delhi is usually chilly. This year the New Year's eve was colder. The temperature was below normal. The glittering Ashoka Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan,, where the new council of ministers led by the triumphant young Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, was being sworn in, had one person sweating profusely. The joy of the large assemblage was not reflected on his face. Arun Kumar Nehru, the person who had been assumed by many to be the number two man in the Rajiv Gandhi hierarchy, had been sworn in as a minister of state, under the charge of a cabinet minister. Sheila Kaul, maternal aunt of Mrs Indira Gandhi, was not in the list. Pranab Kumar Mukherjee, the number two man in the Indira Gandhi team, had been dropped. The controversial railway minister of the outgoing cabinet, Abu Barkat Ataul Ghani Khan Choudhury, whose quarrels at the state politics level with Pranab Mukherjee and with minister of state C.K. Jaffer Sharief in the railway ministry were famous, too was not in the list. Jaffer Sharief, despite having defeated Janata Party stalwart George Fernandes in the elections, was also excluded, perhaps because his quarrels with Ghani Khan Choudhury were found embarrassing. The outgoing civil supplies minister, Bhagwad Jha Azad, in whose regime the supply price of wheat to the flour mills had been reduced but *maida, sooji* and bread prices had remained static, too was missing. The new wave government, which had been swept into power by a tidal bore, was being sworn in.

Many, including this correspondent, had voiced doubts about Rajiv Gandhi's ability to run a government. But the way in which the new council of ministers was constituted, made these doubts look not only unfounded but also frivolous. The Prime Minister had responded to the massive mandate of the people by giving the nation a clean and efficient cabinet as the New Year's gift. The ministry-making exercise had been undertaken by him quietly and the first strides as the newly elected Prime Minister were confident. The swearing-in was at 5.15 pm. The ministerial probables received phonecalls only at 4.45 pm and were asked to report to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Till he reached the Ashoka Hall, even Arun Nehru did not know what post he was getting. No portfolios were announced initially, with the new ministers being asked to assemble for a cabinet meeting at 6.45 pm. In the three quarters of an hour

which lapsed between the swearing-in cermony and the maiden cabinet meeting, numerous phonecalls poured in at the offices of the newspapers and news agencies, from aides of the new ministers, enquiring about the allocation of portfolios. Among those who telephoned the Press Trust of India was an aide of Arun Nehru. Even he was in the dark about the formation of the new wave government.

As the powerful AICC general secretary, Arun Nehru was Rajiv Gandhi's Achilles heel. His arrogant behaviour annoyed many partymen. Since the death of Mrs Indira Gandhi, after Rajiv Gandhi appointed Arun Nehru as party general secretary in his own place (when he became the Congress president), Arun Nehru had assumed the number two position in the new team. Some people had even started looking to Arun Nehru as an alternate leader. And a vast majority of partymen, aghast at the way this business executive-turned-political-manager was trying to dominate the party, turned to Rajiv Gandhi with helpless looks. Senior leaders like Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Narayan Dutt Tiwari sank their differences in Uttar Pradesh politics, albeit temporarily, to provide a joint front against the onslaught of Arun Nehru. By appointing Arun Nehru as a minister of state without independent charge (this is a third-level post, after cabinet ministers and ministers of state with independent charge), Rajiv Gandhi showed his partymen that he was not going to treat anyone as being more equal than the rest because of kinship.

The dropping of Sheila Kaul too was guided by this consideration, though she was an efficient minister and is known for her good behaviour. By Arun Nehru's appointment as a Union minister, many senior partymen were pleased. Even among the youth, many who were acting as surrogates to Arun Nehru because they thought he wielded the authority of Rajiv Gandhi, looked relieved. The son of a senior cabinet minister, who was sitting close to this correspondent during the Ashoka Hall ceremony, loudly whispered to a party leader, "So Arun Nehru will be under a cabinet minister!" When he was leaving the Ashoka Hall to join the tea party in the adjoining room, the sweat on Arun Nehru face was too visible. He was trying to force a smile now and then, but the message which Rajiv Gandhi wanted to convey by appointing him as a minister of state was loud and clear.

When the portfolios were allocated later that evening, Arun Nehru got power, under the overall charge of cabinet minister B Shankaranand, who will be the irrigation and power minister. Arun Nehru is bound to be the dominant minister, with Shankaranand toeing his line, but he will confine his powerful presence to the power ministry's office, Shram Shakti Bhavan, on Rafi Marg. The other magnificent buildings, which house the offices of the government of India, will not be within his bounds, as would have been the case if he were to remain as the dominant AICC general secretary. But while cutting Arun Nehru to size, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had taken his professional competence as a good manager, especially while working for Jenson and Nicholson, into account. Power is an overworked department and the government's performance will be dependent on the performance of the ministry of power in a big way in the days to come. Major projects are on the anvil. His competence as a minister may be useful to the government.

Like Arun Nehru, the new government has three other professionals-turned-politicians as ministers. Former ambassador to China and the USA, K.R. Narayanan (planning),



Rajiv Gandhi's council of ministers at the swearing-in ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. (From left): Buta Singh, H.K.L. Bhagat, K.C. Pant, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Rao Birendra Singh, S.B. Chavan, Mohsina Kidwai, Vasant Sathe and V.P. Singh

distinguished diplomat Kanwar Natwar Singh (steel) and Madhavrao Scindia (railways) have kindled high hopes of good performance in their respective ministries. Similarly, the appointment of a distinguished parliamentarian like Margaret Alva as the minister of state for parliamentary affairs shows that performance and ability have been taken into account in the process of ministry-making. Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister, T. Anjaiah, returns as the minister of state (independent charge) for labour, the post he held before he was sent to Hyderabad as chief minister. He began his career as a six-anna-a-day worker in the Hyderabad Allwyn Metal Works and later became a leading trade unionist.

His tenure as labour minister in Andhra had seen many revolutionary changes in the trade union field, like the introduction of secret ballots in the factory unions. As labour minister in the centre earlier, he had initiated many schemes, which he will now have to resurrect from the dusty shelves of the ministry. Datta Samant, the militant trade union leader of Maharashtra (who is now an independent member of the Lok Sabha) was firmly tackled by Anjaiah in his last tenure. When a team of industrialists and workers affected by Samant's high handedness had approached him, Anjaiah had asked the then chief minister of Maharashtra, A.R. Antulay, to use the National Security Act and arrest Samant. The eminent barrister, late Rajni Patel, had to go to the Esplanade Courts in Bombay to get Samant released then. Anjaiah as labour minister, therefore, holds out promise.



P.V. Narasimha Rao taking the oath of office and secrecy

The induction of the new cabinet ministers has been carefully planned. To begin with, by reverting back to the system of naming the ministers in the alphabetical order, the Prime Minister has discarded the system of having the leader of the party in the Rajya Sabha as the number two person in the cabinet. Pranab Mukherjee had been given this predominant position by Mrs Indira Gandhi after she made him the finance minister in 1982. Now, the leader of the Rajya Sabha, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, has been made the finance minister and a member of the all-powerful cabinet committee on political affairs (CCPA). But the job of presiding over cabinet meetings in the absence of the Prime Minister from the capital is being given to defence minister P.V. Narasimha Rao by virtue of the cabinet minister with the longest standing. Besides V.P. Singh and Narasimha Rao, home minister Shankarrao Chavan is the other member of the CCPA, presided over by the Prime Minister himself. Of these, only Narasimha Rao was in the last CCPA. Pranab Mukherjee has been altogether dropped. There is a likelihood of former CCPA member Shiv Shanker, who lost from Andhra Pradesh, being asked to contest the byelection from Chail (reserved) constituency near Allahabad. (The poll was countermanded due to the death of Congress-I candidate, Union minister of state Dharamveer.) After he wins a byelection, Shiv Shanker's induction into the cabinet and possibly again into the CCPA can be expected. (Already, in the appointment of Hans Raj Bhardwaj as minister of state for law, a triumph for Shiv Shanker is being noticed).

Vishwanath Pratap Singh as the union finance minister is bad news for the wheeler-dealers who abound the capital. He has the bad reputation of being a person who does not entertain individual requests. As union commerce minister earlier (before he was sent as president of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee) he had refused to meet any individual industrialist. He did not take even the official bungalow he was entitled to. Instead he lived in his own apartment in a multistoreyed building near Greater Kailash in South Delhi and refused to have official engagements at home. He took two modest rooms in the Vitthalbhai Patel House, and met people there for two hours after 7.30 am, before shifting to his office in the Udyog Bhavan.

Vitthalbhai Patel House is a hostel for junior members of Parliament and government officers. If anyone unsavoury had gone to meet commerce minister, V.P. Singh there, then it would have become the gossip of the town within minutes. The IENS building, which houses the offices of most outstation newspapers and is the meeting place for journalists round the day, is across the road from Vitthalbhai Patel House. No gossip reached IENS building about the goings-on in the visitors' room of the then commerce minister. The beef tallow scandal broke during V.P. Singh's tenure in the commerce ministry and he handled it gracefully. As chief minister of UP, the post which he took up in June 1980, V.P. Singh did not prove to be an able administrator. The anti-dacoity campaign saw many innocents being killed in false encounters staged by the police, who wanted to win laurels from a chief minister who was obsessed with anti-dacoity operations. The Moradabad riots and the Behmai massacre were the dark spots of his tenure in Lucknow. He resigned his post voluntarity after one such massacre and earned the admiration of the people. V.P. Singh's failure on the law and order front was totally offset by his clean image. He was accused of inefficient administration in UP, but not of corruption. To have selected such a man to be the finance minister certainly enhances the Prime Minister's prestige. V.P. Singh has a popular following among his partymen in UP. By Arun Singh's and V.P. Singh's respective appointments, in one stroke Rajiv Gandhi has pleased the majority of his partymen in UP, a state which has returned 82 members to the Lok Sabha.

The overuse of the army for civilian duties has become a problem for the government. The fourth pay commission has been receiving feelers from the services for better terms of service for the officers in uniform than civilians. There is also talk that the order of precedence should be changed so as to make the generals above the secretaries to the government. In such a juncture, an able civilian administrator is required in the defence ministry. P.V. Narasimha Rao fits the bill. While the army has to be used to the nation's advantage, the interests of the rest of the government employees and other sections of society cannot be overlooked. Narasimha Rao is one person who can use his diplomatic skills to do the kind of tightrope walking which the defence minister will now be expected to do. Unfortunately, no junior minister has been assigned to him. Since the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, defence production used to be under a minister of state, a practice discarded by the Janata regime. India's defence production base is vast and multifaceted. One wonders if the cabinet minister alone will be able to look after the large ministry which defence is.

S.B. Chavan as home minister has been a good choice. Like V.P. Singh and Narasimha Rao, he too has a clean image. He has been the chief minister of a large state like Maharashtra. His first priority would be to solve the difficult Punjab problem. Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab have to be viewed together. The mistake of removing Farooq Abdullah's government in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be overlooked now. The popular mandate in all the three seats of the Kashmir valley, which is the dominant part of the state, has gone in favour of Farooq Abdullah. There can be no stability in Punjab without normalcy in Kashmir. S.B. Chavan will have before him the option of letting Farooq rule again (by the Congress-I withdrawing support to Ghulam Mohammad Shah) or of holding fresh elections in the state, as demanded by the National Conference (Farooq). Holding elections in Punjab is being opposed by a powerful lobby, which has the opinion of the army topbrass lined up behind it. But Punjab without a popular government will continue to be a trouble-spot.

Elections in Assam too should be held. It is a shame that in the entire seventh Lok Sabha there was no popular representation from a large part of this state because some people, who apparently do not have faith in democracy or in national integrity, have been holding the government to ransom on the question of electoral rolls. If the Rajiv Gandhi regime wants to show its strength, then the problem of Assam has to be solved along with Punjab and the people there allowed to exercise their franchise. A government held to ransom by threats in a one state of the union cannot project a strong image in the rest of the country.

There has been some criticism in the press regarding the appointment of Bansi Lal as the railway minister. Suddenly the ghost of the Emergency is seen when a person like Bansi Lal is elevated. If the people accept the regime of Mrs Indira Gandhi, with Sanjay Gandhi as the dominant person next to her in the 1980 elections, then unnecessarily crying wolf at the sight of Bansi Lal cannot be justified. It is true that he was a hawk in the Emergency regime. But then he was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1980 and in 1984 he led the Congress(I) to a victory in all the seats in Haryana, considered to be stronghold of Devi Lal, presently in the DMKP, formerly of the Janata Party (a veteran of many defections). Bansi Lal as the chairman of the Parliamentary Estimates Committee in the years he was kept out of power (1980-85) made the committee produce more reports than any previous chairman. He may be rough, but he is efficient. If Haryana has progressed, Bansi Lal has a fair share of credit to corner. As the defence minister, he acquitted himself well. One incident would illustrate how efficient a minister he was when he held the defence portfolio.

SUNDAY had reported in 1982 how the Main Battle Tank (MBT) project of the army has been dragging along since the early Seventies, without any success. The then defence minister, R. Venkataraman, the present vice-president of India, made a commitment on the floor of Parliament that the indigenous Main Battle Tank would roll out by the end of 1982 and an offensive was launched against our report. Unsavoury suggestions about our motives were made in motivated reports in the press and in private conversations of the minister. But 1984 is over and the tank is nowhere in sight. A prototype, fitted with foreign components was praised by Venkataraman as the "indigenous tank." Way back in 1976, Bansi Lal, who may not be a suave and sophisticated as the elder statesmen from Tamil Nadu, had visited the establishment at Avadi where the project was on. When he had been shown mere drawings and no tangible results, he had chided the officers. Six years later, his successor, Venkatara-



Sondeep Shankar



Finance minister V.P. Singh (left) and defence minister S.B. Chavan

man, could not see through the game which the efficient Bansi Lal had detected in 1976.

As railway minister, Bansi Lal's efficiency combined with his firmness is bound to improve the government's image. It may be said that it was fascist Benito Mussolini who equated the performance of the government with the train timings. The common man notices the running of trains, which affects him and is not concerned with higher things. To this extent, the running of trains on time is important. The previous minister, Ghani Khan Choudhury, had improved the passenger services. At least in Delhi, the booking office was streamlined and tickets on trunk routes were available at short notice. But he carried on his fight against the bureaucracy to a personal ex-

tent. So much so that railway board chairman Raghavan, once Ghani Khan's blue-eyed person, became a villain on the election eve and the minister wanted him sacked. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had intervened and reversed the minister's orders. Perhaps one of the reasons which contributed to Ghani Khan's exclusion from the cabinet was the way in which he dealt with the officers. Bansi Lal's firmness combined with the imaginative approach of his minister of state, Madhavrao Scindia, can improve the functioning of the railways

Abdul Ghafoor, who by virtue of the alphabetical list, is placed next to the Prime Minister in the cabinet list, is a seasoned politician A former chief minister of Bihar, he had gone out of Mrs Indira Gandhi's party had returned two years back. He was made a general secretary of the AICC last year and his inclusion being projected as the party's Muslim leader.

Ghafoor, who was at his hotel, was summoned by Kesri over the telephone to the Shanmukhananda Hall and sent to the CWC meeting. On the day of the swearing-in of the new wave team, Kesri quietly sat in the last row of the distinguished gathering at the Ashoka Hall, flanked by AICC general secretary G. Karuppiah Moopanar, Bombay party chief Murli Deora and youth Congress general secretaries Anand Sharma and Debaprasad Roy. When Abdul Ghafoor's name was called out, Kesri beamed Why was Arun Nehru sitting in the last row of seats where the ministers designate sat, he was asked. "Let us see, everything would become clear soon," he replied.

In Abdul Ghafoor's selection, a portion of Rajiv Gandhi's maiden address to a Congress session became relevant At the Bombay AICC, some important task.

K.C. Pant has become the cabinet minister for education. Margaret Alva, who was largely responsible for the formation of the "Mahila Congress," has become a minister. Rajiv Gandhi would have liked former West Bengal chief minister, Siddhartha Shankar Ray to get a party ticket. But both Pranab Mukherjee and Ghani Khan Choudhury opposed this. Ray contested as an independent candidate from Darjeeling and finished a poor third. The results show that if Ray had been the Congress candidate, then the CPI(M) could not have wrested this seat. If that were so, then in West Bengal both the CPI(M) and the Congress would have won 17 seats each in the Lok Sabha (the Congress now has 16) and the psychological impact of this on the state's politics can be well-imagined. While Rajiv Gandhi had allowed his senior party colleagues



Minister of state for steel Natwar Singh (extreme left) with Congress(I) MPs Vyjayanthimala and Sunil Dutt

as the works and housing minister is a good choice While A.B.A Ghani Khan Choudhury is popular in Malda, West Bengal, he cannot be said to represent the Muslims. Abdul Ghafoor's stars had been on the ascendence since October 1983, when the AICC session was held at Bombay Abdur Rehman Antulay had suddenly been made an invitee to the working committee meetings There was resentment by some partymen, particularly Maharashtra chief minister Vasantdada Patil The wily treasurer of AICC, Sitaram Kesri, mooted the idea that Abdul Ghafoor be made an invitee as well, so that while Vasantdada Patil was pacified an impression would not grow that Antulay was

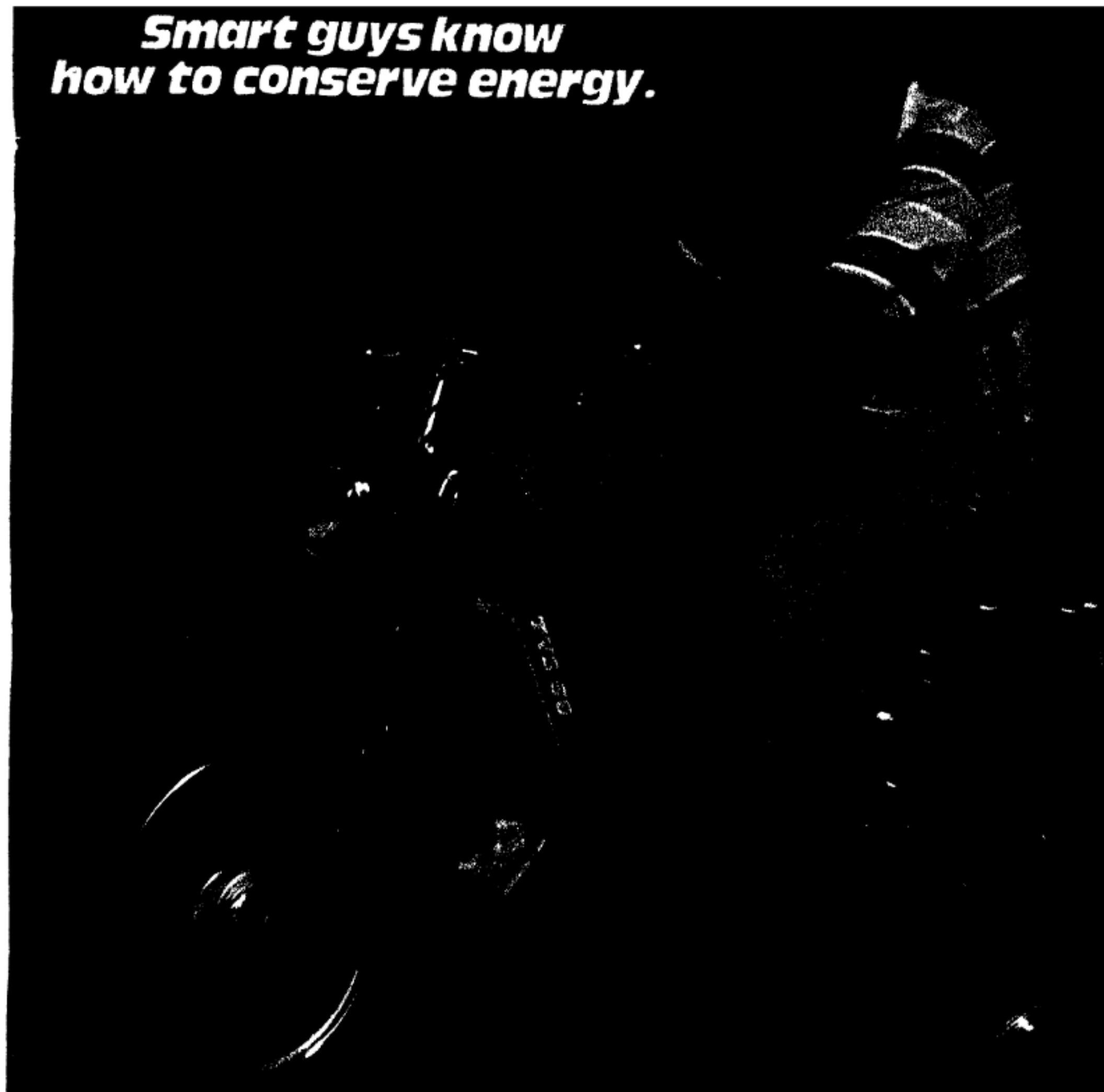
he had described the party as a banyan tree, which was about to be a hundred years old. Referring to those who had left the party over the years, he said the tree had shed many leaves and many branches had sprouted from its roots. With this indication by Rajiv Gandhi, a phase began when people who had left the Congress of Mrs Gandhi due to differences either with her or primarily with late Sanjay Gandhi, were given importance again. Besides Abdul Ghafoor, A.K Anthony was made an AICC general secretary last year. West Bengal'swell-known youth leader, Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, who has returned to Parliament after a lapse of seven years, is bound to get

to go against his wishes on the poll eve, he may also have remembered the Ray episode also while dropping Mukherjee and Choudhury from his cabinet.

Among the old organisational faces, a young lawyer from Madras, P. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, a former president of the National Students' Union of India and later a Youth Congress leader, has won from Salem. Son of former minister Mohan Kumaramangalam, Rangarajan has of late been active in the trade union field. He may be among the old hands which Rajiv Gandhi may like to put to work soon.

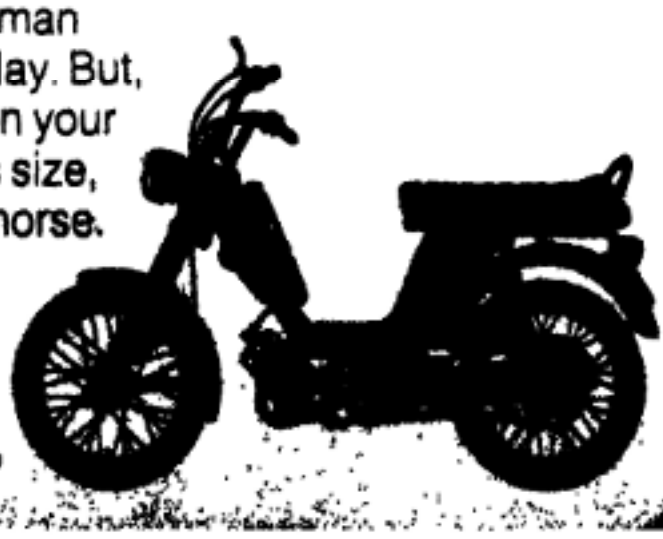
Of the Youth Congress leaders, both Arif Mohammad Khan and Ghu-

Smart guys know how to conserve energy.



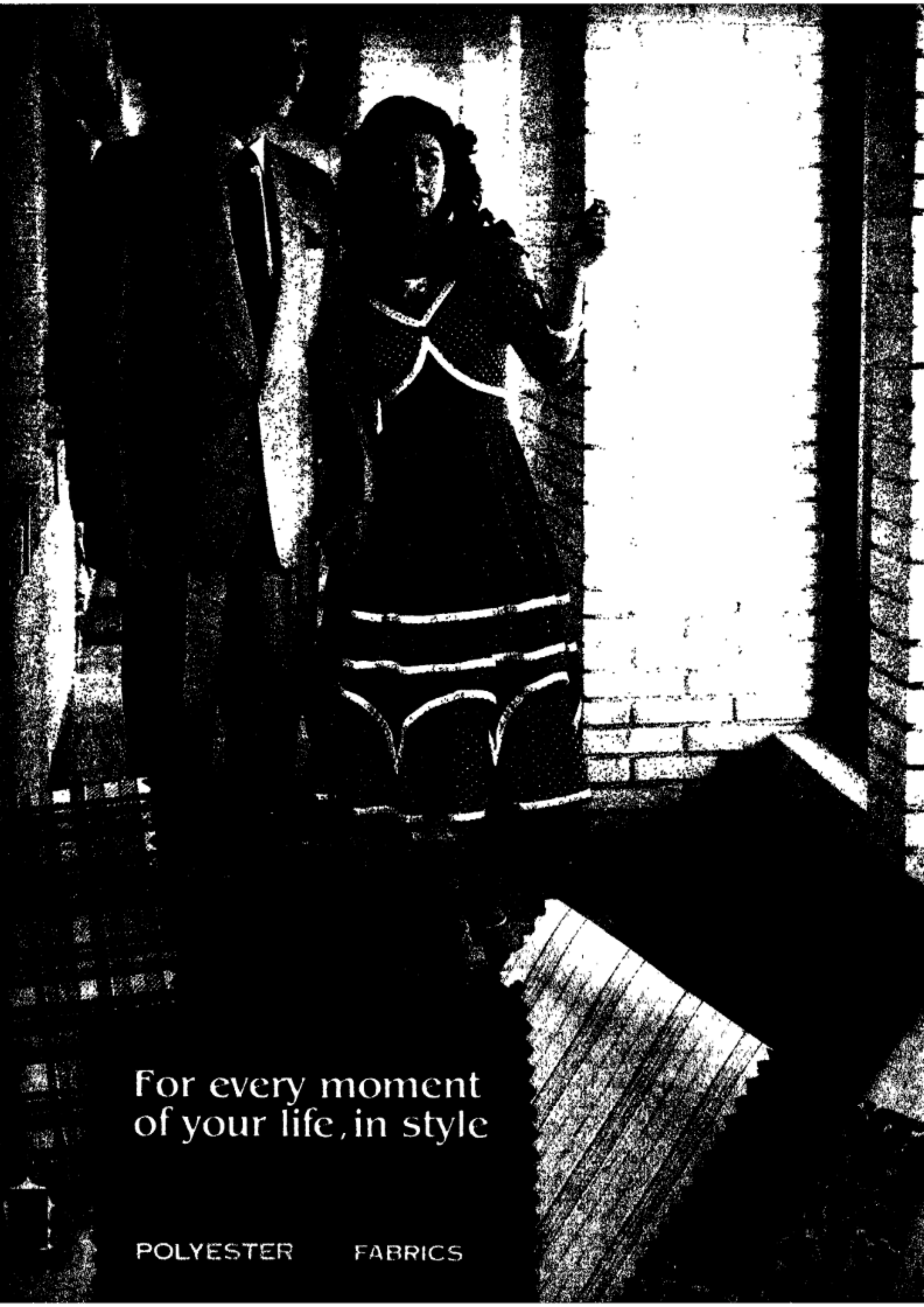
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lam Nabi Azad have been retained. Arif has been given the important portfolio of industry and company affairs. Ghulam Nabi is in parliamentary affairs. Two other youth leaders, Oscar Fernandes and Ahmed Patel, have become parliamentary secretaries. There are many Youth Congress MPs now. IYC president Tariq Anwar has been reelected from Katihar in Bihar. He might continue in the organisational post, unless inducted into the government. Himachal Pradesh does not have any ministers at present. The former Himachal tourism minister Chandresh Kumari, who has come to the Lok Sabha now or youth leader and youngest ever Rajya Sabha member Anand Sharma might figure in the race for a government position.

The return of Yogendra Makwana to the ministry will be welcomed. He proved his mettle in the days as the minister of state for home under Gyani Zail Singh in the 1980-81 period. Many problems of the home ministry began with his exit from the ministry. He has been assigned the portfolio of health. Mohsina Kidwai is the cabinet minister above him.

N.K.P. Salve's exclusion has surprised many. Perhaps he was devoting more time to the organisational matters in the Cricket Control Board than in the steel ministry. Vasant Sathe, the proponent of the presidential form of government, is being assisted by Natwar Singh in steel, mines and coal. Vasant Sathe has made it clear that steel would entirely be looked after by the junior minister. The bifurcation of the energy ministry, sending coal to steel and mines, linking power with his old department, irrigation and separating petroleum will make administration of these departments simple. Similarly, the delinking of company affairs from law and justice (now placed under the respected barrister and former law minister, Ashok Sen) and linking it with industry is a step towards streamlining the administration. The creation of a separate ministry for women and social welfare under Congress parliamentary board member Margathan Chandrashekhar and assigning sports to a junior minister (Joychandra Singh) may show that sports will not occupy the cabinet's time to the extent it did in the past few years (while no tangible results were produced apart from the cricket World Cup win).

The information and broadcasting portfolio has been given to V.N. Gadgil, minister of state with independent charge. Gadgil was a good parliamentarian till he became the minister for defence production in the Emergency (under Bansi Lal). He opposed Sanjay Gandhi after the 1977 debacle. "A 92-year-old party has been destroyed by a 29-year-old boy," Gadgil had thundered in the AICC session held in New Delhi's Mavlanker Hall in May 1977. He returned to the Congress(I) later and Mrs Gandhi had given him the communications portfolio. He has a clean image. His tenure in the information and broadcasting ministry may produce some good copy for journalists, as illustrated above.

What will be the direction of the new wave government? In his Bombay AICC speech, Rajiv Gandhi had said that he laid emphasis on the fact that 75 per cent of the country's population was below the age of 40. Sixtythree per cent of the electorate which elected him with the largest ever mandate for an Indian leader was of this age group. The hopes kindled, therefore, are not only great, but they have been kindled in young hearts. This is an age group where heartburning comes easily. Massive administrative reforms may be necessary before the government can move in a particular direction. The fact that K.P. Singh Deo has been assigned the department of personnel and administrative reforms shows that some major changes are on the cards. With the departure of R.K. Dhawan and the entire old team of Mrs Indira Gandhi's personal staff (including personal physician, Dr K.P. Mathur) Rajiv Gandhi seems to have decided to begin on a clean slate after making a clean sweep at the hustings.

The appointment of three parliamentary secretaries is significant. Now there is a political bureaucracy, with a clean image, which will exercise the powers of the Prime Minister. In the USA and in France the system is somewhat similar. Rajiv Gandhi, without changing into the presidential form of government for the present, seems to be moving away from the British administrative system, which is now in vogue, to the systems closer to the American and French ones. V. George, his personal aide, will take Dhawan's position, but the powers enjoyed by Dhawan may never be given to George. In the USA there must be some person holding the post of private secretary to the American President. But he becomes a controversial figure. In George, Rajiv Gandhi has an aide who can be efficient without getting into controversies. A new wave government has been launched with high hopes. But hopes are the biggest enemy of those who do not perform well. In his ministry-making, Rajiv Gandhi has shown that he is an able Prime Minister. The performance of this ministry is what will matter ultimately, not its initial, glittering, image.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, Delhi

The Secret List

How secret was the list of new ministers kept on 31 December? Though phone calls went out to ministerial probables around 4.45 pm that day, they were only told to come to the Ashoka Hall. At Rashtrapati Bhavan, the cabinet secretary Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib was heard exclaiming to the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr P.C. Alexander, "So, even you don't know?"

Two minutes before Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi reached the Ashoka Hall (the message must have been flashed as soon as his car entered Rashtrapati Bhavan) Dr Alexander took out some typed sheets from his pocket and beckoned to the ministerial probables asking them to move to the box meant for the ministers designate, to the left of the President's chair.

They all filed in one by one. When Arun Nehru reached the box, he was politely told to take a seat in the back rows, meant for the juniormost ministers.



Dungarpur

Arun Nehru

Why the Opposition Lost

It was a vote for the integrity of the country

"Whenever you see colour, think of us" This copyline was made famous for the paint firm, Jenson and Nicholson (which employed Arun Nehru till 1981), by the advertising agency, Rediffusion (which was hired by the Congress-I for the poll campaign). Ironically, this may well become the opposition's punchline in the eighth Lok Sabha. The leader of the largest opposition group, the Telugu Desam, N.T. Rama Rao, has directed his party MPs to don yellow clothes when they sit in Parliament. The 28 members in yellow clothes will form the largest section of the 106 member opposition and sit on the extreme left of the House. The next largest group will be the CPI-M, with 22 members. The former ruling party, Janata, with ten members would have the satisfaction of not being among the single-digit representations in the House. The CPI with six, the Congress(S) with four, the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party (DMKP) with three, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with two and the Congress(J) with its lone member, Babu Jagjivan Ram, will form a part of the opposition.

Farooq Abdullah's National Conference has won the same number of seats as the DMKP and one more than the BJP—the two national parties which had sabotaged opposition unity moves in 1983 by prematurely launching the National Democratic Alliance and thus tried to "dominate" the opposition scene by putting a self-styled *fait accompli* before the rest of the opposition parties. By some poetic justice, the DMKP has won three seats—to symbolise the *dalit*, the *mazdoor* and the *kisan* which this party wanted to represent. None of the Janata Party defectors who jumped on the Chaudhary Charan Singh bandwagon on 2 October last year and launched the DMKP have been returned. The Janata Party, which was considered as the "weakling" among opposition parties, has not only won ten seats, but has picked up seats from Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar and Orissa, thus reflecting a national character.

The Congress(S), the other "untouchable" in the eyes of the "dominant" leaders, has picked up seats from Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The BJP has been routed in its bastions, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The seat from Andhra Pradesh which the BJP has won is courtesy the Telugu Desam. Only from Gujarat has it picked up a seat on its own. The CPI(M) has fared poorly in its bastions, West Bengal and Kerala. In Kerala, the CPI(M)-led front has been almost routed, the party itself picking up only one seat. In West Bengal, the Left Front has faced humiliation, the Congress(I) having picked up 16 of the 42 seats. The non-CPI(M) partners of the Left Front, CPI, Forward Bloc and the Revolutionary Socialist Party have not fared poorly in West Bengal This perhaps shows that the vote was primarily against the CPI(M).



Illustration Bulbul Sharma

The opposition has been censured by the people. Whatever explanation one may try to provide now, the nation has with a resounding mandate said that it would not tolerate disintegration either of the country or of the political system. The opposition till today is paying the price for the failure of the Janata experiment. In 1977, the people had given the non-Congress parties a mandate to rule the country for a five year term. Due to the Janata split in July 1979 the people got an opportunity to change the government earlier than the constitutionally stipulated five year period. The reelection of Mrs Indira Gandhi in 1980 in effect meant acceptance of the role which she assigned to her sons, at first Sanjay Gandhi and later Rajiv Gandhi. In voting for the Congress, the people voted for stability. The failure of the opposition to provide a one-to-one fight, or even to put up candidates with the same manifesto in all the constituencies of this vast country, was seen by the people as a sign of weakness.

It would be wrong to say that the Congress(I) won because of a "Hindu backlash," as is being said by a large section of the press. Such a backlash would have been possible if the Hindus were communal per se. But Hinduism by its very nature is secular. Had it not been so, then India would not have been the only country outside the communist world which does not have a state religion. If India is secular, then it is because the majority wants it to remain so. And the majority in this country comprises Hindus. The backlash, if any, was national. When Hindus were being killed in Punjab, there was no backlash.

Only when the Prime Minister was assassinated did the nation stand up to the occasion.

The 1984 verdict is a verdict for national integration The opposition parties were unable to defend themselves when Rajiv Gandhi attacked them for their sympathy for the Akali Dal In a secular country one wonders if any political party can be guided by high priests, as is the case with the Akali Dal The references by Rajiv Gandhi to the Anandpur Sahib resolution in his speeches may not have been understood by the masses, but they understood one thing: the integrity of the nation was being imperilled by a particular section of the people in a sensitive border state. The verdict was given against the opposition because they could not explain why the Akali Dal had not been censured by them for having failed to stop Khalistan slogans being raised in Punjab The opposition itself started saying that it was going to provide a coalition government, if elected The Janata experience was such that the people could not accept this line either

That brings us to the question whether the opposition has realised its mistakes The Janata Party's firebrand general secretary, George Fernandes has said that with the parliamentary forum not available to the opposition extra parliamentary fora would be sought to represent people's grievances The opposition certainly has to keep the government under pressure But when the people give a parliamentary mandate, talk of extra parliamentary fora within a week of the results being declared may not be representing the mood of the people. The Karnataka chief minister, Ramakrishna Hegde, has said that unity efforts should be abandoned and the opposition parties should come together on a programmatic basis. This is a sane suggestion, coming from a person who has created high standards of political morality by resigning soon after the Janata Party fared badly in the Lok Sabha polls in his state. (Not only that, in the caretaker government, which he formed at the request of the Governor, he did not include any of the five ministers who had lost the Lok Sabha polls)

But will the opposition be able to unite on issues of ideology? Will the personality and ego problems be overcome? These are the problems of a generation of leaders who are octogenarians and septuagenarians. The 1984 mandate has ousted this generation. Only people like Hegde and Chandra Shekhar, who are in their late Fifties, can hope to offer a challenge to the young Prime Minister. The way the government is being run initially, for the first six months it may be prudent for the opposition to let Rajiv Gandhi exercise the might of the mandate he has received After six months, if there are lapses, the opposition would be within its rights to jump into the fray all over again and point out to the people the fallacy of their judgment.


Illustration: Bulbul Sharma

When trends of the results came in on 28 December, the first major opposition leader to win was K.P. Unnikrishnan of the Congress(S) from Badagara in Kerala. This was also a somewhat poetic verdict. Unnikrishnan had been fighting for opposition unity relentlessly. He advocated coalition politics. He wanted the Congress(S), which is a party of Congressmen who disagreed primarily with Sanjay Gandhi, to retain its identity. By being among the first 30 to win, not only did he keep the Congress(S) name alive, but also became a fourth term parliamentarian to grace the opposition benches. Along with Madhu Dandavate of the Janata and Indrajit Gupta of the CPI, he will have to now become the principal opposition spokesman in the Lok Sabha. All other stalwarts have lost. The young voices of Harikesh Bahadur and Ramvilas Paswan will not be heard in the zero hour of the Lok Sabha now. Satyasadhan Chakrabarty of the CPI(M) has lost. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Ram Jethmalani, Pramila Dandavate, Chitta Basu, Ramavtar Shastri and Dharam Bir Sinha have not been returned. Though the Telugu Desam has sent up a massive contingent, in all likelihood the effective opposition voice from Andhra Pradesh will be that of V Kishore Chandra Deo of the Congress(S), a former minister, who enters his third term now. The opposition will have to match the youthfulness of the new Congress(I) contingent as well as the maturity of the ministers appointed by the Prime Minister. The task ahead is arduous.

On the evening of 28 December, while trends showed that the opposition was being routed, this correspondent met Janata president, Chandra Shekhar. He was leading by a small margin then. He will win, his supporters said. "Even if I win, only this house given to me as an MP will remain," Chandra Shekhar remarked wryly. He lost the election eventually. The Karnataka party office kept him informed of the position in the state. Whether Hegde should resign or not was being debated. Chandra Shekhar seemed at that moment to fix his eyes not on the results which were coming in, but on the Assembly elections which are now round the corner in nine or ten states. If the mandate again goes with a massive swing in favour of the Congress(I), then a lot of rethinking will be called for.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

The Dance of Victory

Delhi celebrates the Congress(I)'s triumph

Friday, 28 December 1984 was not like any other normal winter day. The biting chill in the air was not sufficient to dampen the spirits of the Congress(I) followers. As the day rolled by and as news of Congress(I) candidates leading in most of the constituencies trickled in Congress(I) sympathisers went wild with joy. Except Rajiv Gandhi who maintained a serene composure even as news of Congress(I) victories started pouring in.

But the rest of the country, particularly Delhi exploded in an orgy of celebration. The Congress(I) victory had not just been a landslide as the optimists had predicted, it had assumed the proportions of an avalanche, burying deep the hopes of a stunned opposition. Riding high on the victory wave were the victors, some among them even a bit apprehensive of so overwhelming a success. Was the Congress(I) boat which Rajiv Gandhi had steered through uncertain seas now overloaded? This thought and many such apprehensions must have crossed the mind of India's youngest-ever Prime Minister—who is also the first Prime Minister from the post-Independent era—as he sat in number one Safdarjang Road on that historic Friday.

The marigold garlands kept piling up. By mid-afternoon, the groundswell of joy had manifested itself in boisterous *bhangras* throughout Delhi. The astute hawkers with *laddoos* and *pedas* made their little fortunes outside the city's seven counting centres. Young men on bicycles and motor cycles roamed the city triumphantly.

However, there was an air of restrained joy in the Prime Minister's house. Rajiv Gandhi's ascent to prime ministership had been free from violence and bloodshed. Moreover, Mr Gandhi does not publicly demonstrate his feelings. Even when the news came in that he was ahead of his sister-in-law, Menaka Gandhi, by a huge margin, his response was more akin to a happy shrug of the shoulder.

The enigmatic half-smile of Mr Rajiv Gandhi did, however, broaden into something like a grin when he addressed people on the afternoon of 29 December at Gol Methi Chowk, down the road from where he lives. Assembled on the ten feet high platform, hurriedly put together the day before, were Delhi's seven beaming victors and gloriously attired Buta Singh in pink and red Rajasthani *pugree*.

The Prime Minister's smiles that day were mostly directed towards the women supporters who could not restrain themselves from breaking into a *bhangra*: "*Aaj mere vira da...* (today is my brother's victory)," they sang. After his speech Rajiv Gandhi went to them and greeted them. Earlier, Mr Gandhi had given a special word of thanks to the women and youth of the country. He was probably one of the few people to realise that it would be the woman's vote which was going to propel him towards so big a victory. The Prime Minister had read the tiny writing on the wall which was invisible to so many—especially both astrological and political pundits.

Mr Gandhi, as everybody knows, is not a man of too many words. The one gesture which showed his joy at the results was when he went up for a joy ride over Delhi Perhaps, up there in the skies he is so familiar with, the half-smile realised its full potential It was not for nothing that Mr Vishwabandhu Gupta sent up the Felliniesque 80-ft high balloon in the shape of the Congress(I) hand from Safdarjang airport to loom large over the capital. Mr Gandhi's son, Rahul and friends watched this ascent of the white taffeta silk apparition with unconcealed glee. Never had there been such a balloon over Delhi, never had there been such a victory.

The rest of the Congressmen did not wait until Saturday to celebrate. The third round of counting was not yet over at the UPSC (Union Public



Bhangra outside the PM's house

Service Commission) counting booth for the New Delhi parliamentary constituency won by Mr K.C. Pant, when the *bhangra* dance began and the small group of BJP supporters began to leave.

Outside Bal Bhavan—the counting booth for the more difficult Chandni Chowk seat (contested by J.P. Aggarwal of the Congress(I) and Sikandar Bakht of the BJP) it was like a *mela*. Restraint had completely vanished by 3.30 pm. People were smuggling in *laddoos* into the counting booth. Young men danced in a frenzy, especially when the TV cameras were being focused on them. There were garlanded paper and metal 'hands'—the Congress(I) symbol—bobbing in the air, as were shimmering brocade party flags. The BJP workers had long fled, or rather had been made to flee. The young Congress(I) men, mostly in their late teens and sporting Amitabh Bachchan hair cuts, were chanting tauntingly, "*Atak gaya, kamal ke phool par latak gaya.*" They were referring to the losing BJP candidate, Sikandar Bakht who was not able to muster the considerable Muslim vote of the area.

People were jubilant by the time we reached Pusa Institute, the counting booth for the Karol Bagh constituency. "Why ask?" replied a young man on a bicycle outside the institute when we asked him where the booth was. "*Haath pe lag gayee...bas aur kya,*" he added. Teenagers dominated the scene. The BJP supporters had fled from here as well.



Rajiv Gandhi waves to the crowd

Meanwhile, as the results kept coming in, the opposition continued to sink further and further into gloom. The massive mandate for Rajiv Gandhi had hit them like a bolt of lightning. They had missed seeing the wave, and now they were nearly drowning in it. Among the opposition leaders the most inconsolable was Chaudhury Charan Singh. He made it to Parliament, but virtually without his party. All he could mutter was: "The world has changed...He (Rajiv Gandhi) is just a boy." He remarked that the Congress(I) had won the elections by *beimani* (dishonest means); otherwise, the Chaudhury reckoned, he would have won by a margin of over three lakhs and not the measly one lakh odd votes.

On the other hand, Vajpayee and Chandra Shekhar, who had not even made it to the Lok Sabha, were more sophisticated in their response. Chandra Shekhar said: "The sympathy wave was obviously there but we failed to read it right...The Congress(I) had won the elections the very day Mrs Indira Gandhi was assassinated." Vajpayee remarked. "We lost the elections, but we have not been defeated..." Mr Vajpayee also said that the "clean image of Rajiv Gandhi had something to do with the results. In 1971 it was us who rode on the crest of a wave, perhaps in 1984, it was true of the Congress(I)..." The BJP president's sense of humour does not abandon him, even in the bleakest of moments. When a reporter approached him for a comment while the results were coming in he said: "So you have come to put my photograph with the defeated.. "

For a day or two the offices of the opposition parties looked as if they had closed shop. The rooms wore a desolate look, even the faces of the peons were crestfallen. Slowly, they began to pick themselves up. The press conferences began. George Fernandes of the Janata Party said that the opposition denied as it was the forum of Parliament to agitate or redress its grievances, would have to turn to extra-parliamentary fora increasingly. The Janata Party was now going to prepare itself for the Assembly elections, and they would, Mr Fernandes said, go it alone. Mr R.K. Hegde, caretaker chief minister of Karnataka, was one of the few among the opposition leaders to call for a sincere evaluation of the reasons for their defeat. He had not been responsible for the debacle.

Mr Jagjivan Ram, like Mr Charan Singh talked of rigging and said that Mr Gandhi's charge that the opposition supported the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was also responsible to some extent for the Congress(I) victory.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi



Congress(I) supporters celebrate the party's victory

The Sweep

MAHARASHTRA

While the Congress(I) popular vote in the eighth Lok Sabha Elections in December last year went up in almost every state, including Andhra Pradesh, it went down in Maharashtra. Despite a higher turnout of voters this time, the Congress(I) polled 51.24 per cent of the votes in the 47 seats it contested, a drop of 1.56 per cent from its share in 1980, when it polled 52.98 per cent of the votes. Among the other parties, the Congress(S) which contested 15 seats polled 12.10 per cent of the votes against 11 86 per cent in 1980. The BJP which contested 20 seats polled 10.07 per cent of the votes as against 20 27 per cent in 1980. The Janata Party which contested 15 seats, polled 7 64 per cent of the votes as against its share of 1.06 per cent last time However, despite the drop in votes polled, the Congress(I) added three more seats to its 1980 tally of 40 seats, adding to the party's overwhelming presence in Parliament.

The region that let the Congress(I) down was Vidarbha, the cotton belt which has been seething with discontent and its backward areas crying for the institution of a Vidarbha Development Board. In the rural constituencies with a large population of Dalits and Muslims, like Buldhana, Akola, Washim, Amravati, Wardha and Yeotmal, the Congress(I) candidates had to struggle for victory and won with small margins. Unlike in the rest of India, caste and communal factors often worked to their disadvantage In Akola, for instance, the sitting MP, Madhusudan Vairale scraped through with the help of the Maratha votes and the votes of minority castes and women. His opponent, the new star of the scheduled castes, Prakash Ambedkar, the grandson of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, polled 1,65,064 votes against Mr Vairale's 1,78,874 votes. While the pattern of voting showed that Mr Ambedkar took the Muslim and Buddhist votes, the third candidate, the BJP's Pandurang Fundkar polled 1,48,909 votes primarily of the Mali, Kundhis and other Hindus. In Washim, the sitting MP and union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had to struggle against a political lightweight Gokuldas Rathod who be-



Sharad Pawar

longs to the Banjara community, in the majority there, and won by the lowest margin in the state: only 10,359 votes.

Despite propaganda by the Congress(I) about it being the only party capable of holding India together, and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi addressing no less than 21 meetings in Maharashtra's smallest towns, the margins of victory of other Congress(I) successful candidates in Chandrapur, Chimur, Bhandara, Nagpur and Ramtek were not large enough to offset the loss of votes. Local issues, the Sharad Pawar factor and the Sharad Joshi factor were fairly successful considering their relatively limited resources and reach.



Sunil Dutt campaigning

On the whole, the opposition parties were unable to meet the propaganda blitz of the ruling party. However, Sharad Pawar in Baramati was more than a match for the Congress(I) candidate Shankarrao Bajirao Patil. Mr Pawar's victory despite the last minute appearance of the Prime Minister on behalf of Mr Patil and A. T. Patil, the Congress(I) candidate from the Kolaba constituency who lost his deposit, has contributed to the debate on whether there was a "wave" of any sort in Maharashtra, excluding Bombay. In Bombay, particularly in Bombay city, there was a clear rejection of the Janata Party and the BJP. Dr Datta Samant's victory, the only opposition victory in Bombay, has established his party,the Kamagar Aghadi, as the party of the working class. Congress(I) sources have claimed that he won only because of the absence of the hand symbol on the ballot papers. But Dr Samant's other candidates, his elder brother P. N. Samant and T. S. Bhorade in the Bombay North-East constituency were able to poll a respectable amount of votes in their first attempts.

Vidarbha has produced two new power centres, one of Sharad Pawar representing the militant Maratha youths who campaigned with a vengence against the Congress(I) in several constituencies, even in Marathwada and Prakash Ambedkar who could rally the huge Dalit population round him. The Dalits have shown their disgust for all the traditional leaders like the Gavais and Khobragades. The Muslims, on whom the opposition were banking, voted in Bombay for the Congress(I) and in the rest of Maharashtra for Muslim candidates where there were strong candidates. In Bombay, Haji Mastan, who tried to impose himself as a leader of the poor and middle class Muslims got cold feet as the authorities played cat and mouse with him, locking him up one day and releasing him the next. He and Karim Lala, the other underworld leader, realised that discretion being the better part of valour decided not to contest. The result was a landslide victory for Murli Deora in South Bombay.

The polarisation of votes indicates a new trend in Maharashtra. Till recently, independents used to get a good number of votes, but this time nearly all of them lost their deposits. This polarisation gives hope to the opposition, particularly the Congress(S) in the coming Assembly elections. Already, cadres of both the Congress(S) and the BJP are straining to break away from the seat adjustment alliances.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

BIHAR

The Congress(I) won an unprecedented victory in Bihar securing 49 of the 54 seats in the state and upsetting the predictions of scribes and pollsters. The results were a reversal of the 1977 elections, when the Congress had got a drubbing at the hands of the Janata Party. In addition, the Congress(I) set a record for itself in this election by winning 57 per cent of the popular votes. In the 1980 elections the party had polled only 30 per cent of the votes while the Janata Party, its splinter parties and the Lok Dal together had polled 40 per cent of the votes Similarly, in south Bihar, especially in Santhal Parganas and Chotanagpur, considered to be the bastion of the Jharkhand Party and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Congress(I) won all the seats from the region, defeating veteran tribal leaders like Siboo Soren and N E Horo. Six Jharkhand candidates contesting from this region have lost their deposits Such has been the scale of victory that it has taken even Congress(I) members by surprise. For instance, chief minister Chandrashekhar Singh, just ten days before the elections, had not expected that his party would win more than 35 seats

Congress(I) leaders feel that this unexpected victory was the result of an outburst against the infighting in the opposition. Secondly, they feel that it was because the people wanted to see the nation's integrity untouched. Thirdly, the people did not want a coalition government at the centre And, above all, it was the faith reposed on the young Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by the people, who want him to decide the fate of the nation. They further argue that there was an undercurrent of sympathy following Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Rajiv Gandhi's capability to keep it alive helped the party.

Even the opposition knew of such a move to garner votes by exploiting Mrs Gandhi's assassination. But they hardly expected a near rout in the state which traditionally has remained an anti-Congress bastion.

What benefited the ruling party was the infighting in the opposition. For example, the CPI national council secretary, Mr Jagannath Sarker, announced that the CPI would work for the defeat of Karpoori Thakur, the DMKP leader, in Samastipur. Mr Thakur, who has an unbeaten past, lost to a Congress(I) lightweight, Ramdeo Rai, by a huge margin of over 1,80,000 votes. Mr Jagjivan Ram, who played his old election



Bihar CM C.S. Singh

game, spent a couple of days there and distributed money among his voters and luckily survived a defeat in Sasaram His margin of victory dwindled to 1,400 votes this time. The CPI, which rarely faced internal dissension during the elections, was divided on caste lines and its members even worked for the party candidate's defeat Out of its six sitting seats the party could retain just one, forfeiting the rest to the Congress(I). The BJP, alienated by its cadre, the RSS, drew a blank. The RSS volunteers actively fought for the Congress(I) in the elections The Janata Party, which won eight seats in 1980, was almost a truncated party following a series of defections and splits Among the winners in the opposition,



Jagjivan Ram: eight in a row

Mr Vijay Kumar Mishra, son of f. mer railway minister L.N. Mish: won the Darbhanga seat on a DMI ticket with the help of his uncle a Congress(I) leader, Jagannath M hra, defeating the Congress(I) lead and union minister Harinath Mish.

In Nalanda, the CPI won becau its candidate, Vijay Kumar Yad. had the sole benefit of the fig between the Congress(I)'s Pank Kumar Sinha and the BJP's S Vis wamohan Choudhury, both of who were *kurmis*. In Chapra, the Jana candidate Ram Bahadur Singh is Rajput and all his three oppone were Yadavas; hence the caste v in this Yadav-dominated constitue cy split. In Darbhanga, it was a fig between Brahmins. In Gopalganj, t fight between a Brahmin and a *bh mihar* is a frequent phenomenon. M Pandey leads the Brahmins while M Rai the *bhumihars*.

However, leaving local issu aside, the all-pervasive caste fact worked in an unusual way this tim The Rajputs, hitherto considered be the Janata Party's voteban switched their loyalty to the Congre s(I). The Yadavas, who are normal with the Lok Dal or the opposite parties, also voted by and large *bloc* for the ruling party. Accordi to a DMKP leader, the Yadavas d cided not to support any of t opposition leaders since they we non-Yadavas. The Rajputs and Yad vas joined the Congress(I) by an large and so did a majority of th harijans. The Bihar governmen aware of an erosion in the Musli support to the ruling par announced the inclusion of Ansa in the annexure of the schedul castes in the election year, whic would entitle them to avail of r servation facilities in governme jobs. Muslims constitute about 11 pe cent of the population in Bihar. Th Brahmins,as usual, stood behind th Congress(I).

Apart from this, the Congress(resorted to booth capturing as wel It became evident in Aurangaba where a minister of state himself no faces a charge of snatching the ball papers and stamping it in favour o the Congress(I). In Muzaffarpur,fro where Mr L.P. Sahi won, there wa large-scale rigging and booth captu ing while the presiding officers ope ly allowed it. At a booth Damachak, five people voted fro around 700 voters there. In many the other booths the Congress(I) su porters were seen virtually mannin the booths while the insecure presi ing and polling officers were ju silent spectators.

Yubaraj Ghimire, Patna

GUJARAT

It was a windfall. When by late night on 28 December 1984, it became clear that the Congress(I) was heading for a spectacular victory in the election for the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat, it momentarily left both the followers and opponents of the new Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, dumbstruck. Even after full 24 hours, the opposition leaders in the state who had forged an electoral accord to offer a straight contest to the Congress(I) in as many as 24 constituencies were still at sea as to how could it have happened. The Congress(I) finally bagged 24 of the 26 seats in the state.

Although it was not a carbon copy of the 1980 results when Indira Gandhi's party had won 25 of the 26 seats, the results this time were something clearly out of the dreams even for the most optimistic of Congressmen. In some respects the victory of 24 Congress(I) nominees could be termed as even more spectacular than in 1980, because this time they were facing the combined challenge of the Janata, the BJP and the DMKP in all but two seats. So hopeful were the opposition leaders of giving a tough fight to the ruling party that Makarand Desai, president of the Gujarat BJP had blandly forecast a repetition of the 1977 election results when the Congress had won only ten Lok Sabha seats from Gujarat. He was promptly supported by Chimanbhai Patel, former chief minister and Janata leader.

The opposition leaders were not alone in the prediction of bad times for the Congress(I). The dissidents within the Gujarat Congress(I), who were displeased with the high command for fielding most of the 1980 party nominess once more, were pessimistic about the party's chances in the polls. The anti-Solanki group had privately assessed that the Congress(I) would win between 14 and 18 seats. But the chief minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, had predicted that the party would do well, save in a couple of seats.

Most political *pundits* too, had been forecasting difficult times for the ruling party in at least seven seats in Saurashtra, one in Kutch and four in north Gujarat. They had predicted an erosion of votes compared to the 54.84 per cent votes polled by the Congress in 1980. The main reason of worry for the Congress(I) was the electoral adjustment among the three major opposition parties in at least 24 constituencies. Moreover, the renomination of all but three



Ashok Bose

Madhavsinh Solanki

sitting Congress(I) MPs was yet another cause for concern. The candidates who had won in 1980 were not rated as the best among the nominees available.

The intense bickering between the Solanki group and the dissidents led by the former political *guru* of the chief minister, Jinabhai Darji made even staunch supporters of the Congress pessimistic of the party's prospects at the hustings. Mr Darji had



Jinabhai Darji

recently said that he would work to ensure Mr Solanki did not become chief minister for another term.

The anti-Congress feeling was said to be gaining strength in many parts of the state like Saurashtra due to the tension between the Patels, alienated from the ruling party on the one hand and the Kshatriyas who form an important plank of Mr Solanki's mass base on the other. Since 1980, nine byelections to the state Assembly were held, of which five were lost by the Congress(I). In the Lok Sabha bypoll for the Porbandar seat, the birthplace of Gandhiji, the ruling party had won only because the opposition parties failed to put up a common candidate. Reinforcing the feeling that the Congress(I) was losing ground were reports of opinion polls conducted before the death of Indira Gandhi that the support for the Congress(I) in the state then stood at about 37 per cent.

The Congress(I) countered the combined opposition onslaught by a three-pronged strategy. Prodded by the Solanki group, the high command nominated the same people who had won in 1980. The caste factor was not ignored too. In 1980, candidates had been selected under what has now become known as the KHAM strategy, the nominees mostly belonged to the kshatriya, harijan, adivasi and Muslim communities—which together constitute some 70 per cent of the electorate However, three sitting MPs, Hiralal Parmar, a harijan leader from Patan (SC), Amrut Patel from Gandhinagar and Ramji Mavani from Rajkot were replaced by members from the same communities. Mr Parmar, who belonged to the dissident group, joined the BJP. Amrut Patel, a Bombay-based builder had incurred the displeasure of both the Solanki and the dissident factions and both were demanding his ouster. Mr Mavani had incurred the wrath of the dissidents. For only ten seats out of 26 the two groups recommended candidates unanimously, but in the rest of the seats the high command honoured the suggestions of the chief minister.

The second strategy of the Congress to win support was to please the poor and the young, including women. The state government has already implemented a free mid-day meal scheme for 50 lakh primary school children. It intends to provide cheaper foodgrains to the poor and free education at all levels, including university and technical, for women from June 1985. The first scheme involves a cost of Rs 110 crore a year and the other two would add to the burden of the exchequer by another



Babubhai Patel

Rs 77 crore a year. But many think that these three programmes may eventually cost about Rs 300 crore a year.

The third strategy of the ruling party was to make full use of the sympathy wave in the wake of the assassination of Indira Gandhi. She was very popular in the state and used to proudly call herself the daughter-in-law of Gujarat. Her husband, Feroze Gandhi, was a Parsi and Parsis first landed in Gujarat centuries ago after fleeing from Iran. Today they are considered as Gujaratis and many speak Parsi-Gujarati at home. In the days following her arrest during the Janata regime, Mrs Gandhi set off on a political comeback trail from South Gujarat. Rajiv Gandhi made three trips to the state, addressing poll rallies in ten constituencies. Over a lakh people greeted the PM in most places and like the mother, the son too strove to establish a rapport, declaring that coming to Gujarat was like coming home.

The unmeasured sympathy factor kept everyone guessing. The opposition parties kept up a concerted campaign to neutralise the sympathy factor and Congressmen themselves had doubts about sympathy votes. In hindsight, it is certain that the wave did come to sweep the ruling party to victory.

Despite the accord between the Janata, the BJP and the DMKP, it was more like an understanding of strange bedfellows than anything else. For the adjustment worked out through Babubhai Patel, former chief minister and president of the Lok Swaraj Manch, ran into trouble when the Janata claimed the Bhavnagar seat allotted to the Lok Swaraj Manch. Then, the BJP fielded former police commissioner of Baroda, Jaspal Singh, from Baroda, arguing that he was more likely to win than the Janata nominee, Manubhai Patel. The result was that the Janata workers, wielding considerable influence, dissociated themselves from electioneering in Surat where a BJP candidate was the joint opposition nominee In Ahmedabad, Maganbhai Barot, former deputy finance minister in the central government and sitting MP from the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch, had hoped to be the joint candidate against the Congress(I). But the BJP manipulated the seat in favour of its nominee, Ashok Bhatt. Result: Mr Barot kept the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch out of the opposition accord. A regional party, Jai Rama Rajya Party, fielded Prof. Balraj Madhok, former chief of the erstwhile Jana Sangh.

Such bickerings among the opposition led to a strange inactivity of workers of other parties where the candidate belonged to a different party On the positive side, the accord avoided contest among opposition candidates in 24 seats. However, the idea of avoiding a split of non-Congress votes was realised only partly since a record number of Independents jumped into the election fray. The number of candidates for the 26 Lok Sabha seats this time was 229, an all time high.

Despite the drama, the Gujarat contests did not attract national attention because of number of a reasons. With only 26 seats at stake the outcome did not matter much. Moreover, Gujarat is not included in either the Hindi belt. It is also not a non-Congress(I)-ruled state. To top it all this time there was no top leader, either from the Congress(I) or the



Digvijaysinh



D V Jayner

Maganbhai Barot

opposition in the fray. The highest ranking Congress(I) candidate was Digvijaysinh Jhala, deputy union minister for environment, while the top nominee of the opposition was H.M. Patel, former union finance minister in the Janata government.

Campaigning in the state this time was carried out on a very low key, although the opposition brought in leaders like Atal Behari Vajpayee, Chandra Shekhar and Morarji Desai, for hurried tours. The Congress(I) did not bother to bring in anybody from outside the state, save Rajiv Gandhi. A notable absentee was Pranab Mukherjee, union finance minister, who represents Gujarat in the Upper House. The ruling party feared that the closure of more than 18 textile mills in the state would adversely affect the party's election prospects. Thus the Prime Minister told an election rally that soon after the polls the government would initiate steps to revive the ailing textile industry so that "textiles of India can find world markets as they once did in the olden days." This was the only specific reference to a state issue by Mr Gandhi and it seemed to have done its magic. While the Congress(I) had put up candidates for all the 26 seats, the Janata fielded 12 candidates, the BJP 11, the DMKP two, the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch two, the CPI and CPI(M) one each and the Doordarshi Party contested 25 seats. The rest were Independents.

Besides the opposition, the dissidents in the Congress(I) have suffered a blow. Mr Solanki's stock would go up in the eyes of the high command and Mr Darji's wish to see him out of the office of chief minister after the next Assembly poll may remain a dream.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

ORISSA

The much publicised Patnaik versus Patnaik theory in Orissa did ot exactly work in the 1984 parmentary elections. That explains hy all forecasts based on traditional lculations failed in the face of a ong pro-Congress(I) swing. The ve in favour of the Congress(I) had so swept the party to a record l-out-of-21-seats victory in 1980. But is time it was presumed by political servers that the "absence of a ve" on either side would ensure a gh fight between Janata leader ju Patnaik and chief minister J.B. tnaik. But the strong undercurrent sympathy for the ruling party and leader Rajiv Gandhi following dira Gandhi's assassination upset calculations. The assumption that e sympathy wave had petered off th the passage of time was proved ong. Besides, the people exhibited e same feeling as in 1980 that a vided opposition with no leader ojected as the future Prime Minis- would not be able to maintain the ity and integrity of the nation.

Local issues were pushed into the ckground and the people, instead, re guided by national considerans such as the formation of a ong and stable government at the ntre in the face of a "threat to the tional unity and security." The vernment-controlled media like R and Doordarshan played a very fective role in motivating the peo-, the vast majority of whom do not ve any other means of knowing the tional and international develop-nts.



Biju Ray

The opposition parties were nowhere in the picture in the propaganda war. The ruling party had glossy posters and leaflets with Indira Gandhi's picture. Its main theme: the question of safeguarding the country's unity and security for which "Indira Gandhi gave her last drop of blood." J.B. Patnaik, followed by his partymen, propagated that the opposition was responsible for the assassination of Indira Gandhi, "whose last visit was to Orissa which she loved most." The message had a lasting effect on the minds of the people. As Kamaraj Patro of Chhatrapur in Ganjam district told SUNDAY, "They (the opposition) killed Indira Gandhi by hatching a conspiracy." The candidate's reputation was hardly of any consequence to the voters. Kamaraj Patro and many others in the Berhampur constituency were ignorant of who their sitting Congress(I) MP (Jagannath Rao) was, although he had been elected in the last six elections he had contested. Some of them were, on the other hand, aware of the young Janata candidate, Suryanarayan Patro, but preferred to vote for the "Indira Congress."

Contrary to the expectation of the opposition and political observers, the votes of the harijans, adivasis, people of the other backward classes and minority communities went in favour of the Congress(I) almost *en bloc*. Nabaghana Nayak of Godisahi village in the Banki Assembly segment of Cuttack constituency and other adivasi villagers said three weeks before the polling, "The Raja is after all the Raja. One Raja (Indira Gandhi) is dead, but another (Rajiv Gandhi) is there. He will get the votes even if he does not come to ask for it." Asked the reason for their loyality to the "Raja family," they said they had benefited from the loan assistance programmes and some other measures.



D V Jayner

K.P. Singh Deo

Opposition leaders also glossed over the sympathy of women voters towards Rajiv Gandhi which was translated into votes. The Janata leader and former chief minister Nilamani Routray said even two days after the polling that "at best two to three per cent" of the women's votes might have been swayed in favour of the Congress(I) because of the sympathy factor and that other women must have voted in accordance with the judgment of the male heads of their families. The political observers were also mistaken in their assumption that there was hardly any sympathy factor to sway the women voters substantially in favour of the ruling party. A number of cases of wives having voted for the Congress(I) against the counsel of their husbands were noticed. That the opposition parties, particularly the Janata, were fighting an unequal battle with the Congress(I) from the point of view of resources was evident from the very beginning. Despite this the Janata-CPI-CPI(M) combine bettered its performance compared to 1980, bringing down the margins of defeat in as many as ten of the state's 21 seats and keeping the margin unchanged in one constituency, Mayurbhanj. Biju Patnaik, the only opposition candidate who retained his seat, improved his victory margin from 5,000 to about 17,000 votes, which was a blow to J.B. Patnaik's principal lieutenant Basant Biswal who was the Congress(I) campaign manager in Kendrapara and had mobilised huge resources. Another Janata leader and former union minister Rabi Ray, who had lost to the Congress(I)'s Laxman Mallick by a margin of about 60,000 votes in Jagatsinghapur in 1980 was this time declared a loser by 1,087 votes. The suspicious manner in which the counting of votes in this seat was conducted continues to be a matter of dispute.

The influences of the royal families of Kalahandi and Bolangir are still prevalent as evidenced from the poll results from these two constituencies. The Janata nominee Pratap Keshari Deo, ex-ruler of Kalahandi, narrowed his margin of defeat from 45,627 votes in 1980 to 24,074, while Anang Uday Singh Deo, the Janata candidate and the son of the former ruler of Bolangir, brought down his margin from 79,000 to 34,000.

The other six constituencies where

the opposition candidates improved their performance are Bhubaneswar, Puri, Deogarh, Jajpur, Balasore and Bhadrak. In the prestigious battle for the Cuttack seat, the opposition candidate Dr Jogesh Rout (Janata) lost by a margin of about 79,000 votes which was a much reduced one compared to J.B. Patnaik's 1980 victory margin of 1,24,000 votes In the 1981 bypoll, however, Patnaik's wife, Jayanti Patnaik, had won by a smaller margin: 50,000.

Notwithstanding the electoral alliance between the Janata and the CPI, the latter seemed to have bet rayed the Janata candidates in some constituencies, particularly Aska, Berhampur and Jagatsinghapur. All the leading figures of the state CPI left for Deogarh leaving these constituencies, where they have sizable vote banks, under the specious plea of campaigning for their lone candidate Prasanna Panda there. The other smaller opposition parties, whose claims during the seat adjustment talks were rejected by Biju Patnaik, fielded their candidates in about a dozen constituencies, but were humiliated with the forfeiture of their deposits. They only contributed to the impression among the voters that the opposition is too split a force to govern the country. Despite J.B. Patnaik's earlier claim of repeating his party's 1980 feat of achieving all but one of the seats, if not also wresting the remaining one from Biju Patnaik, the Congress(I) leaders and workers were conceding "six to seven" seats to the opposition in private talks even after the polls. In view of the mild swing in favour of the Janata, particularly in the coas tal belt, Kalahandi and Bolangir, the Congress(I) men themselves were clearly amazed at the outcome of the polls.

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

TAMIL NADU

A frail, sick MGR, confined to a hospital bed in distant New York was able to do more for his party than a supercharged Karunanidhi who pulsated through Tamil Nadu, fervidly canvassing for votes for the DMK-led opposition front. In addition to the MGR charisma which has soared to higher realms, the most crucial outcome of the Parliament and Assembly elections that were held simultaneously in Tamul Nadu is that after a lapse of 17 years the Congress has once again become a force to reckon with in the state.

The partnership between the Congress(I) and the AIADMK turned out



MGR (extreme right) at a hospital in New York

to be pussant and symbiotic—the alliance benefited the AIADMK in the Lok Sabha and the Congress(I) in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. The dual sympathy factor—for the assassinated Prime Minister and for the ailing chief minister—played a pivotal role in making the combine invincible. Barring a few states, the Congress(I) avalanche that started from the foothills of the Himalayas swept right across to Kanyakumari. The spectacular results in Tamil Nadu were unprecedented—the Congress(I) won 25 Lok Sabha seats (and also the lone Pondicherry seat), the AIADMK 12, leaving the DMK with just one seat (Of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the state, election to North Madras was countermanded following the death of an independent candidate and will be held on 28 January. As for the Assembly results, the AIADMK won 133 seats, the Congress(I) 62, the DMK 20, the CPI(M) 5, Janata 3, Gandhi-Kamaraj National Congress 2, All India Forward Bloc 1, CPI and IUML 2 each, Republican Party and Hindu Munnani 1 each. The AIADMK achieved a hat-trick, having won an absolute majority in the Tamul Nadu Assembly for the third consecutive time. What was more, despite the absence of MGR from the campaign scene, the party managed to improve its performance in that it had won only 130 seats in 1977 and 129 seats in 1980.

Due to the alliance with the AIADMK, the Congress(I) was able to reap a rich harvest, succeeding in nearly doubling its strength—in the dissolved House it had 33 MLAs. The avalanche that swept the Congress(I) and AIADMK to power has ruthlessly uprooted parties and personalities, dealing a devastating blow to the DMK-led opposition front. Standing forlonly in the debris are 20 MLAs of the DMK, compared to the 32 MLAs the party had in the dissolved House. The CPI(M) has come down from 11 to five MLAs and the CPI from 10 to two. There is not a trace of the Tamil Nadu Kamaraj Congress in the Assembly this time with even the president of the party, P. Nedumaran, being defeated.

The defeat in the Assembly elec tions was far more crushing than the Parliament elections as past trend has established that the regional par ty which has an alliance with the Congress(I) benefits for the Lok Sabha polls. The DMK which had won 16 Lok Sabha seats in 1980 when it had an alliance with the Congres s(I) was axed to one. While a victory for the AIADMK-Congress(I) combine was very much on the cards (SUNDAY 23, December), the routing of the DMK-led opposition in the Assembly was unexpected. Even the most optimistic AIADMK leaders had not expected to win over 100 seats and had privately confided to this correspondent that they expected the DMK to win at least 60 Assembly seats.

A remarkable coincidence is that both the AIADMK and the Congress(I) scored identical percentages of success. Both secured cent per cent success in the Parliament elections in that the Congress(I) won all 25 seats it contested and the AIADMK all the 12 that it contested. In the Assembly elections, both enjoyed a whopping 86 per cent success, the

AIADMK won 133 of the 154 seats it contested and the Congress(I) 62 of the 72 seats it contested. Two Lok Sabha results that caused considerable heartburn to the DMK-led opposition front are Nagercoil and Nagapattinam In Nagercoil, the Janata candidate P. Vijayaraghavan was beaten by the sitting Congress(I) MP by a narrow margin of 12,000 votes. In Nagapattinam, the vetearn CPI leader K. Murugaiyyan who won the seat in 1977 was defeated by the AIADMK candidate by a wafer-thin margin of 2,000 votes.

In addition to the large number of seats, the sweep also enabled the combine to score handsome margins of victory. In the Lok Sabha elections, the combine managed to maintain a margin of over two lakh votes in eight constituencies—in 1980, the Congress(I)-DMK combine failed to maintain a margin of over two lakh votes in even one constituency. In 20 constituencies, the combine managed to get a margin of over one lakh votes whereas in 1980 the Congress(I)-DMK combine managed to do so only in 11 constituencies. Similarly, in the case of the Assembly elections, the combine won by comfortable, even huge margins. On the other hand, the battered DMK managed to win by the skin of its teeth in most of the 20 seats it won.

The Congress which ruled Tamil Nadu till 1967 has made a significant leap in this election by emerging as the strongest (in terms of the number of MLAs) opposition party in the state Assembly. With 62 MLAs, the party can today contemplate slowly doing away with one of the Kazhagam crutches that it always had to rely upon for elections since it was routed by the DMK in 1967. One striking aspect of the Assembly results is that ironically it was the Congress(I) and not the AIADMK candidates who defeated their rivals by massive margins To cite a few examples, the Congress(I) candidates in Krishnarayapuram, Thirumayam, Vasudevanallur, Perambalur and Thottiyam won by bigger margins than even M.G. Ramachandran The Congress(I) can carve out an oasis for itself positioned as it is between a paralysed DMK and a paralysed chief minister. The climate is so ideal that even without resorting to intrigue and treachery the Congress(I) can begin laying the foundation stone for its return to power in Tamil Nadu. For the moment it is put in the piquant situation of being the main opposition party to its electoral ally, the ruling AIADMK

The people of Tamil Nadu categorically want MGR as their chief minister They will settle for no one else. If the AIADMK is able to fulfil its promises and MGR is back in action, holding the reins of the party and government, all is well that ends well. If not, seething power struggles will rip the party apart. Starting a charade is easy enough, maintaining it will be tough There are senior leaders in the party who are trying to get MGR to nominate his successor. Once the euphoria of the spectacular success wanes, internal dissension will pose a serious threat to the integrity of the AIADMK.



Jayalalitha

Across the Palk Straits, the Sinhala leaders of Sri Lanka would be gladdened by the Assembly results in Tamil Nadu—all the outspoken Tamil leaders who had championed the cause of the Sri Lanka Tamils have been routed—C T·Dhandapani, Nedumaran and S D. Somasundaram who suffered the ignominy of losing his deposit. As far as the DMK is concerned, it has been humbled to its knees. TNCC(I) President M. Palaniyandi and AIADMK general secretary P. U. Shunmugam in exclusive interviews to SUNDAY had identical explanations for the DMK rout. According to them, the people have chosen to reject the DMK because the party was so "destructive in its approach" and indulged only in mudslinging and vituperative campaign against MGR and Mrs Gandhi. Despite being out of power for seven years the DMK party cadre had shown exemplary unity and discipline. Karunanidhi's supremacy was unquestioned. Today the party is completely demoralised. The prospect of being out of power for another five years seems to have broken the spirit of the party members. An erosion in its ranks is inevitable but it remains to be seen whether the AIADMK will accept any DMK members or MLAs primarily as they do not need them. Moreover, there would be the fear that the defectors could be the decoys of the DMK chief infiltrating the AIADMK. Karunanidhi today is a depressed man. Nevertheless it is doubtful whether he will give up in despair without a last ditch fight. But with 20 MLAs there is very little he can do. Like MGR, Karunanidhi has not allowed any other leader to flourish in his own right in the party. So, no leadership changes that could perhaps have had a salutary effect on the party can be effected. The DMK has suffered its worst reversal yet, so much so that today its election symbol, the rising sun appears more appropriately to be the setting sun.

Anita Pratap, Madras

UTTAR PRADESH

The election results in Uttar Pradesh—82 out of 85 parliamentary seats to the Congress(I) and only two to the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party (DMKP) (polling for the Chail seat having been countermanded due to the death of the Congress-I candidate, Dharam Veer)–have shattered the wildest of predictions. But though it is an outcome that was hardly foreseen, massive electoral mandates have usually followed political waves in the past, as in the elections of 1971 when the opposition got 11 seats, in 1977 when the Congress could not get any seat, and in 1980 when the Congress came back with 51 seats. In each of these polls an overriding national issue had largely decided the vote: in 1971, it was the *Garibi Hatao* call by the Congress, in 1977 the cry against the Emergency by a united opposition and in 1980, public disappointment with the Janata. The strength of the wave in 1984—underestimated grossly as a sympathy factor and which actually was an appeal to the voter to save the nation in the wake of Indira Gandhi's martyrdom—is comparable, perhaps, to that of 1977. Hence, the opposition's total rout.

In as many as 36 constituencies the Congress(I) candidates won by margins of over a lakh. Prominent among them are Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who beat his sister-in-law, Menaka Gandhi, in Amethi by 3,14,878 votes. Arun Nehru won from Rae Bareili by 2,57,553 votes while Dinesh Singh trounced his opponent in Pratapgarh by 2,32,507 votes. Amitabh Bachchan beat the DMKP leader H. N. Bahuguna in Allahabad by

1,87,795 votes. Chaudhary Charan Singh retained his Baghpat seat but with a considerably reduced margin. The only other success by the DMKP was in Etah where Mahfooz Ali Khan won by a margin of just 3,431 votes. Menaka Gandhi lost her deposit in Amethi, while Chandra Shekhar, the Janata Party president, lost his Ballia seat to the Congress(I) candidate, Jagannath Chaudhary, by 53,950 votes. Among the opposition parties, the DMKP had contested 67 of the 85 seats, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 56 seats, the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch (RSM) 51 seats and the Janata in 48 constituencies. Only the DMKP won two seats. This time the Congress(I) gained as many as 34 seats in the state, wresting 28 from the DMKP, three from the Janata, and one each from the CPI, BJP and RSM. It retained 48 of the seats it won in 1980 losing only one to the DMKP. Twenty-eight of its 30 sitting MPs were reelected, some of them with huge margins. In contrast, 27 of the 29 sitting opposition MPs were defeated. The prominent Congress(I) winners include five union ministers of the dissolved cabinet. Besides the PM,Rajiv Gandhi, they are: Mohsina Kidwai (Meerut), Khurshed Alam Khan (Farrukhabad), Arif Mohammad Khan (Bahraich), Ziaur Rehman Ansari (Unnao) and Sheila Kaul (Lucknow). The Congress(I) had also nominated four Rajya Sabha members, including the deputy chairman Shyam Lal Yadav, all of whom got elected. Among the other Congress(I) candidates who won, three were MLCs, 22 were MLAs, nine were state ministers, three were former union ministers and eight former UP ministers.

The Congress(I)'s victory was unforeseen even by senior party leaders. According to the state Janata president, "The Congress(I) had won with the help of money as also misusing official machinery and the publicity media." While reports had come in of booth-capturing all over the state by the Congress(I) with the help of the state machinery, whether the prevention of such incidents would have made a difference regarding the outcome of the elections remains doubtful. A spokesman of the DMKP maintained that the backward caste vote bank of the party had not been lost, regardless of the election result. "We have got as many votes as we wanted from the backward classes, but a number of factors came in the way of our defeat. The first of these, he alleged, was extensive booth-capturing by the Congress(I): around ten to 25 polling booths in every constituency were captured and an attempt was made to prevent the backward classes from voting in areas where the DMKP was strong. The second, he said, was the fact that the Congress(I) had very effectively capitalised on Indira Gandhi's assassination: its election campaign raised no other important issue except the former PM's death. "We thought that the sympathy over her death had ended; but the manner in which they conducted the campaign and evoked popular sympathy proved us wrong." Owing to this factor the DMKP lost a large chunk of its traditional votes. The party spokesman added, "But booth-capturing has made a difference. Had there not been so much rigging, I can safely say that we would have won in places where we lost by a margin of 25,000 or less votes. This would have given us a good 35 seats." But a scrutiny of the results shows that only in six constituencies the Congress(I) won by a margin in this region, and in only three were the margins below 10,000: Moradabad (7,113) Balrampur (8,656) and Azamgarh (1986). The Congress(I) nominees won by a margin of a lakh or more votes in 35 constituencies.



Chaudhary Charan Singh

Another major reason behind the opposition's poor showing was obviously its failure to offer the Congress(I) straight contests. The DMKP spokesman blamed "certain rigid and stubborn opposition leaders who came in the way of unity," according to him, Chaudhary Charan Singh was the most compromising of all the leaders and was willing to make concessions. However, the DMKP was being asked to come to an understanding with any and every opposition party, some of which had no popular character at all. "Even the Janwadi Party," the spokesman added, "which has two or three people in it was asking for seat adjustment with us. They wanted to contest eight seats. They have not even come third in any constituency. And, in how many places has the Janata Party come second?" The DMKP, on the other hand, had put up 67 candidates and in most constituencies they had come second. But since in most constituencies the Congress(I)) had won by margins exceeding 50,000, and in many cases outpolled all the opposition candidates put together, could an opposition unity prevent a Congress(I) landslide in the state?

"Yes, the opposition could put up a fight. There is the psychological reaction of the public to disunity among the opposition," the DMKP spokesman said. "This made the Congress(I) wave even more stronger."

If the backwards voted for the DMKP, whom did the Muslims vote for? From all indications, the Muslim vote went against the Congress(I) but got dispersed among varied opposition parties. Estimated to form about 16 to 17 per cent of the electorate in the state, Muslims had gone against

the Congress(I) ever since the communal incidents in Moradabad, Assam, Bhiwandi, Goandi and Azamgarh. The Muslim sympathy for the Sikhs in the wake of the recent communal attacks on the latter is also well-known. Unfortunately, the lack of unity among the opposition parties, left the Muslim voters confused and irresolute.

The lack of an understanding among the opposition had created a chaotic scene: almost every constituency witnessed multiple contests: there were 40 contestants in Lucknow, for example, 39 in Kanpur and 32 in Amethi. A number of opposition parties in the fray were mere groupings. Some parties, like the DMKP, had not even got recognition (it fought the election as the Lok Dal, its precursor). Like the Muslims, the scheduled castes who form the largest caste group in the state have no political party to represent them. A large chunk of scheduled caste votes are also said to have been lost to the Congress(I) for lack of any alternative before the voter.

To make things worse for the opposition, the Congress(I)'s stand on Punjab, Indira Gandhi's martyrdom at the hands of Sikh fanatics and Rajiv Gandhi's accusations against the opposition for supporting the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, assured the Congress(I) of the caste Hindu vote. The ruling party's election campaign—starting with full page advertisements in newspapers speaking of threats to national integrity and presenting the Congress(I) as the only patriotic party whose mission was to keep India strong and united and representing all other opposition groups as 'obstacles' in the way—caught the imagination of Hindus. The advertisement blitz also influenced a large section of the uncommitted, apolitical electorate. Besides, the Congress(I) was the only party that conducted its campaign methodically, having started well ahead of the opposition parties, who spent most of their time in endless abortive negotiations for seat adjustments at the state level. Most opposition party workers were for long unaware of what their leaders in Delhi were deciding and had to confine themselves to low-key campaigning.

With the Assembly elections approaching, the ruling party will obviously be keen to keep up the tempo of its triumph. The opposition will have to come together and fight the Congress(I) from a common platform. But have the opposition parties learnt their lessons yet?

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

MADHYA PRADESH

It will take a long time for the Bharatiya Janata Party to forget the eighth Lok Sabha elections—in a state once considered their stronghold, the party could not win a single seat. The only consolation for the BJP is that they finished second in 35 constituencies out of the 39 in Madhya Pradesh, all of which fell to the Congress(I) whirlwind that swept the opposition out of the Hindi belt.

The chief minister, Arjun Singh, had already created a massive vote bank for the party by allotting *pattas* (ownership deals) to lakhs of *jhuggi* dwellers, by scrapping old cooperative debts of over Rs 100 crores, by donating rickshaws to rickshaw pullers and by accepting, on the eve of the polls, the report of the Maha jan Commission on backward classes. The state PCC(I) chief, Motilal Vora, told SUNDAY that all sections had benefited by these reforms.

As elsewhere, it was disunity that



Madhavrao Scindia

went against the opposition. The state DMKP chief, Brijlal Verma, told SUNDAY that the opposition was paying the price for fighting against each other instead of standing on a common platform. Even some staunch BJP supporters worked for the Congress(I) for the failure of the opposition to forge a unity. Vithal Ballal, a prominent BJP worker from Raipur, joined the Congress(I) during the poll campaign period saying that it would be better to help the Congress(I) directly than indirectly.

But in Madhya Pradesh the BJP has only itself to blame as it was responsible for causing disunity among the opposition. The BJP secretary, Kusha Bhau Thakare, the president Kailash Joshi and the leader of the opposition in the Vidhan Sabha, Sunderlal Patwa, were firm that the BJP should fight the elections alone. The outcome proved the fallacy of the BJP's much publicised claim that they had a so called hold in the state. Both Kailash Joshi and Sunderlal Patwa have offered to step down from the central leadership of the party.

The brilliant performance of the Congress(I) in the state has also consolidated the position of Arjun Singh and the PCC chief, Motilal Vora, while stifling the dissidents in the party led by V C Shukla who also won the election from Mahasamud constituency. Shivendra Bahadur Singh, the ruling party's candidate from Rajnandgaon and Doon School mate of Rajiv Gandhi had in the midst of the polls demanded the expulsion of five Congress(I) MLAs including a minister Dr Tumanlal from the party for working against him. Even the AICC(I) general secretary, Chandulal Chandrakar, had complained that in his constituency, Durg followers of V.C Shukla were working against him. But the landslide victory has effectively silenced the dissidents.

Major opposition stalwarts who were swept off by the Rajiv wave are Atal Behari Vajpayee (Gwalior), Phoolchand Verma (Shajapur) and Satyanarayan Jatiya. Two BJP candidates, Baburao Parnjape (Jabalpur) and Prasad Ahirwar (Sagar) who had wrested the seats from the Congress(I) in the 1982 byelections, also lost. Other prominent losers include Purushottam Kaushik from Mahasamund (Janata), Yamuna Prasad Shastri, the state Janata Party chief from Rewa, Swami Agnivesh from Rajnandgaon (Janata) and Jagadish Joshi from Satna (Janata).

Among the 39 Congress(I) winners are Madhav Rao Scindia who defeated Vajpayee in Gwalior, P.C Sethi (Indore), Kamal Nath (Chhindwara) and Samaj Keyur Bhushan (Raipur), the renowned Sarvodaya leader and disciple of Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

An interesting feature of the elections was the emergence of many regional and minor parties in the Chattisgarh region, like the pro-Ananda Marg Chattisgarhi Samaj, whose demands include a separate Chattisgarh state; Bahujan Samaj, campaigning for the harijans, adivasis and the backwards and the Doordarshi Party of Baba Jay Gurudev which entered the electoral fray for the first time and managed to secure more votes than the Janata Party in most constituencies. Kankar Munjare, the young trade union leader of Krantikari Mazdoor Parishad, supported by the Chattisgarhi Samaj also secured over 72,000 votes in Balaghat, next only to the BJP.

M.V. Kher, Raipur

NORTH-EASTERN STATES

The outcome of the battle of ballots for the ten Lok Sabha seats from the north-east went along more or less on predictable lines. While the CPI(M), true to expectations annexed both the Tripura seats with vastly reduced margins, the Congress(I) fared well in the other north-eastern constituencies. The party registered its most spectacular victory in the lone Nagaland seat from where its sitting MP, Chingwang Konyak romped home with a staggering margin of over 1,30,000 votes.

The north-east, a political backwater with only ten seats in the Lok Sabha, does not hold much attraction for the national parties. The diversity of its multilingual and multireligious ethnic groups and the difficult communication in the sprawling region, seems to be the sole reasons why the national outfits stay clear of the north-eastern states. Till 1975 the Congress was also not very keen to improve its fortunes in this region. During the Emergency, the Congress set afoot a move to merge the myriad regional parties in the north-east and tone up its apparatus. The apparent reluctance of the national opposition parties to spread their tentacles in the north-east restricted the poll battles between the regional parties and the Congress(I) in the region, except in Tripura, where the electorate was polarised this time between the Congress(I) and the CPI(M).

A keen contest, helped by a feverish campaign, was witnessed in Tripura. The CPI(M), which held both the seats, came under a combined onslaught by the Congress(I) and the Tripura Upajati Juba Samity (TUJS). In 1980, the spectacular victory of the CPI(M) in the state came on the heels of a division of the anti-Marxist votes, with the Amra Bangali and the TUJS taking away 14.88 per cent and 13.47 per cent of the votes, respectively. This time the Congress(I) forged an alliance with the TUJS, giving the sectarian body a promise of help in the next District Council polls.

Though the alliance gave the impression of the Congress(I) being on a firm wicket, it, however, proved to be counter-productive, triggering off both a Bengali and a tribal backlash against the party. The Congress(I), perhaps, did not bother to read the writing on the wall. Its electoral adjustment with the TUJS during the 1983 Assembly polls resulted in the diversion of a sizable tribal ballots to



Bisheswar Singh

the CPI(M),TUJS share of votes in fact plummeted to 10.20 per cent that time in comparison to what they garnered in the seventh Lok Sabha elections. In the tribal psyche, Congress(I) is still a party of the Bengali refugees and hence it is considered by them as an anti-tribal entity.

An analysis of this year's voting trends in Tripura revealed that tribals, constituting 29 per cent of the total population, supported the CPI(M) candidate Bajubon Reand in the Tripura East seat, even as the ex-tribal ruler of the state, the Calcutta-based Kirit Bikram Manikya Bahadur, was pitted against him as a Congress(I) candidate.

Added to this was the severe infighting in the Tripura Congress(I), with PCC(I) president, Asoke Bhattacharjee not seeing eye to eye with Youth Congress(I) leaders. The party's organisational weakness at the grassroots' level also greatly neutralised the wave of sympathy for Indira Gandhi. The Assam minister, Jagadish Choudhury, who supervised the



P.K. Thungon

Congress(I) campaign in the Tripura East seat, told SUNDAY that he had to organise the booth-level committees himself as the local party activists, busy in feuding, were tardy in the campaigning.

Though the triumph for the third time of the union deputy minister for commerce, Purno Sangma from the Garo tribal-inhabited Tura seat in Meghalaya was a foregone conclusion as the Garos and a sizable Bengali population never flagged in their loyalty to the Congress(I), the victory of former Lok Sabha deputy speaker, G. G. Swell from the prestigious Shillong seat, the heartland of the Khasi tribals, as a Congress(I) nominee, gave a rude jolt to the Hill Peoples' Union (HPU), an electoral amalgam of the APHLC (All Party Hill Leaders Conference) and the HSPDP (Hill State Peoples Democratic Party). The prospect of the HPU was bright when the campaign got under way. The Khasi hills is a stronghold of both these regional parties, who in previous elections, rode to victory on the crest of regional chauvinism. The sporadic movements against the alleged infiltration of foreigners in this border state gave the idea of regionalism further acceptance.

In the 1983 bypoll for the Shillong Lok Sabha seat, the APHLC candidate, Dr Kharluki romped home even as the pro-regional party ballots were split up with a HSPDP aspirant walking away with over 70,000 votes. In the 1983 Assembly elections, the regional parties polled 49.39 per cent of the valid votes.

The sympathy wave for Indira Gandhi and the personal charisma of G. G. Swell, who reentered the political arena after resigning as India's Ambassador to Spain, helped the Congress(I) to swing the majority of Khasi voters in its favour. Said a Meghalaya PCC(I) leader, "Khasis who are the most cosmopolitan among the north-east's tribals know exactly when to rise above the sectarian interests and feel one with the rest of the nation." The expected support to Dr B. Pakem, the HPU candidate, also did not emanate from the seven Assembly segments in Jaintia Hills. Dr Pakem, a professor of political science in NEHU (North-Eastern Hill University), himself hails from the Jaintia Hills.

The heavy turnout of non-Naga voters, the traditional supporters of the Congress(I) in Dimapur, the bustling foothills town and overwhelming support from the Ao, Mon and Konyak tribes were the two main reasons for the heady victory of Chingwang Konyak, the sitting Congress(I) MP in the Lok Sabha from

Nagaland With this victory, Konyak did away with the belief that a sitting Lok Sabha MP from Nagaland cannot ensure his return for the second time to the House The failure of two regional opposition outfits—NNDP and NPP -to field a consensus candidate led to the suicidal splitting up of votes between Chalie Kevichusa, an Angami journalist and NNDP candidate and Huslka Sumi, a Sema and NPP nominee

The wave in favour of the ruling party which whipped through Arunachal Pradesh helped the party to have a clear sweep of the union territory's two Lok Sabha seats and achieve a two thirds majority in the Assembly The victory of the ruling party is attributed to the party's sway over at least 13 of the 20 major tribals in the union territory Moreover the Northeast Frontier Alliance (NFFA), a conglomeration of PPA and BJP, had a lacklustre campaign It was not even confident of its victory even from the initial stage out of a total of 30 Assembly seats it put up candidates only for 19 seats In West Lok Sabha seat Tomo Riba, PPA candidate and a former Arunachal chief minister, gave a fright to the diminutive union deputy minister for education, P K Thungon as he manouvered to rope in a majority of the Adi tribal voters in his favour. Thungon edged past Riba with a meagre 0.2 per cent lead in comparison to what they garnered in the seventh Lok Sabha elections.

A large bulk of the Manipur electorate once again expressed their disenchantment with both the Congress(I) and the organised opposition parties by opting for the Independents. Of the 193 Independents in the fray for the 60-member Manipur Assembly, 20 have been elected at the time of writing In the 1980 Assembly polls as many as 19 Independents won, setting the stage for a curious game of defections The Manipur Peoples Party (MPP), the CPI, and the Janata had failed to arrive at a consensus on the seat adjustments for the Assembly polls As a result, they could not cash in on the prevailing discontent among the urban populace, generated by the growing corruption among the high ups in Rishang Keishing's Congress (I) government and its denial of the civil rights to the people in the insurgency rocked state

The Independent winners include Congress (I) dissidents like I. D Dijuanang, Knurdinglien and J. Hoakip. Three former underground secessionist leaders, including the fabled PLA hero N Bisheswar Singh, who contested as Independents sailed effortlessly into the Assembly. They had no dearth of supporters among the women and the youth who hailed them for their clean and pro-poor people image Bisheswar, now in quest of an effective overground ancillary to link up with his underground outfit for creating a favourable political atmosphere conducive to the rebels, fought the elections from Imphal Central Jail Though the Congress (I) scraped through in both the Lok Sabha seats from the state, the result showed that the dissidents had managed to make dents into party votes and its (party's) support base among the Kuki and Hmar tribals.

Santanu Ghosh, Silchar

RAJASTHAN

Once Emperor Akbar asked Birbal whether his countrymen thought alike and worked in unison or took different stands on a particular question Birbal answered emphasising that all the countrymen would take the same stand The Emperor then asked him to prove his contention

Accordingly a huge tank was built and the residents of the capital city were ordered to pour a jug of milk each in the tank at night on an appointed date Aware that if someone put in water instead of milk, nobody would be able to know it, every citizen poured water into the tank In the morning Akbar and Birbal saw that the tank was filled with water and there was not a trace of milk When Akbar wanted to know how this had happened despite government orders to fill up the tank with milk pat came the reply from Birbal what he had said earlier had been proved Every citizen thought alike and acted accordingly This is the story a voter narrated when asked to comment on the landslide victory of the ruling Congress(I) at the hustings.

However, despite the Rajiv wave all over the country the results would have been different in Rajasthan had the opposition united and put up candidates in all the 25 constituencies An analysis of the poll results clearly indicates that had there been straight contests, the opposition parties could have won at least in Nagaur, Bharatpur, Pali, Banswara, Barmer and Jhunjhunu constituencies

In Nagaur, the union minister of state for foreign affairs Ramnivas Mirdha got 2 19,1961 votes. He was pitted in a triangular contest against the DMKP state unit chief and sitting MP Nathuram Mirdha and the state Janata Party president Kalyansingh Kalvi who together polled 2.93,520 votes This is 74,559 votes more than the votes polled by the ruling party candidate

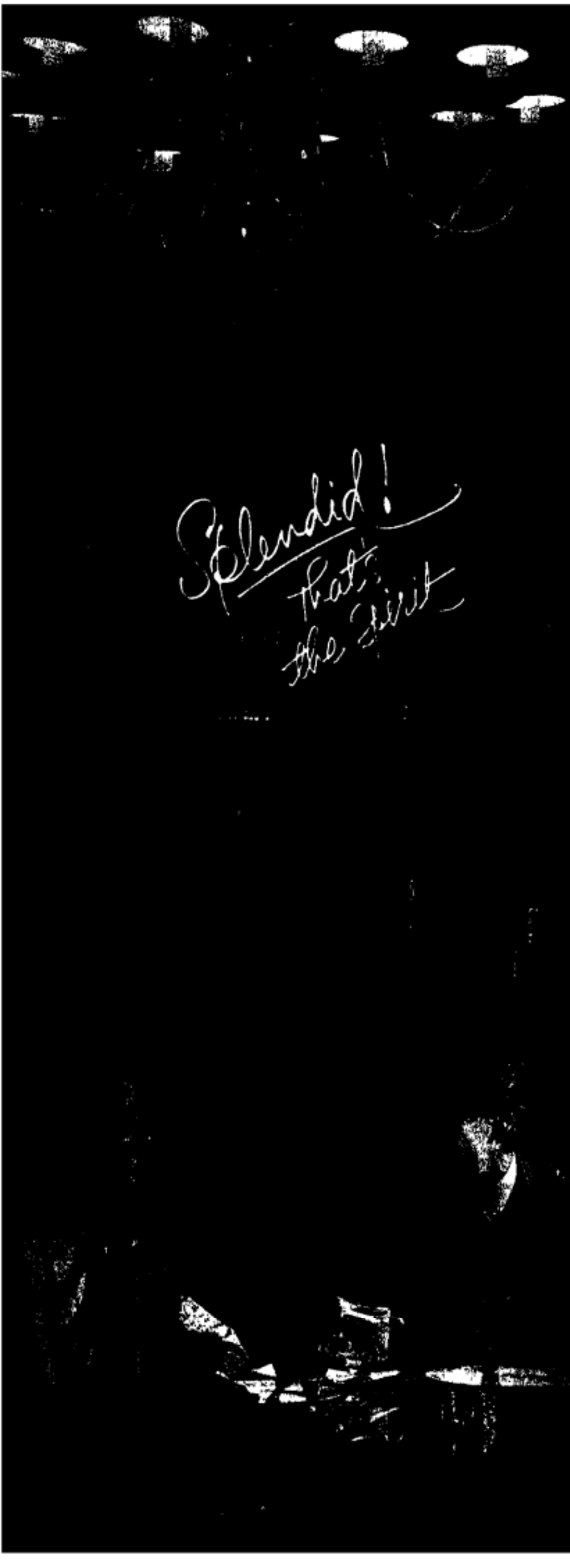


K Natwar Singh

In Bharatpur diplomat-turned politician K Natwar Singh won by a margin of 79,039 votes In the fray were the DMKP, the BJP and the Congress(I) candidates The three opposition candidates together polled 2,43,565 votes against the 1,87,305 votes received by Natwar Singh Thus the opposition together polled 56,260 more than the ruling party It would have been an uphill task for the Congress(I) candidate to defeat a joint opposition candidate in this constituency

In Jhunihunu, the DMKP, BJP and Janata Party candidates together polled 2,70,197 votes This was 9,045 votes more than the 2,61,152 votes polled by the Congress(I) candidate Mohammed Ayub Khan In Pali, sitting MP and ruling party candidate Moolchand Daga got 9,517 votes less than the opposition candidates. His nearest rival, Pushpa Jain, was defeated by a margin of 35,271 votes only. In the fray were the DMKP, the Janata and the Muslim League candidates. In Barmer, the DMKP and the BJP candidates together obtained 3,000 votes more than the ruling party candidate's the sitting MP Vriddhichand Jain. Similarly in Banswara, the Congress(I) candidate secured 4,000 votes less than the BJP, DMKP, Janata and an independent candidate. All this goes to prove that the failure of opposition parties to unite was mainly responsible for their debacle in Rajasthan.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur


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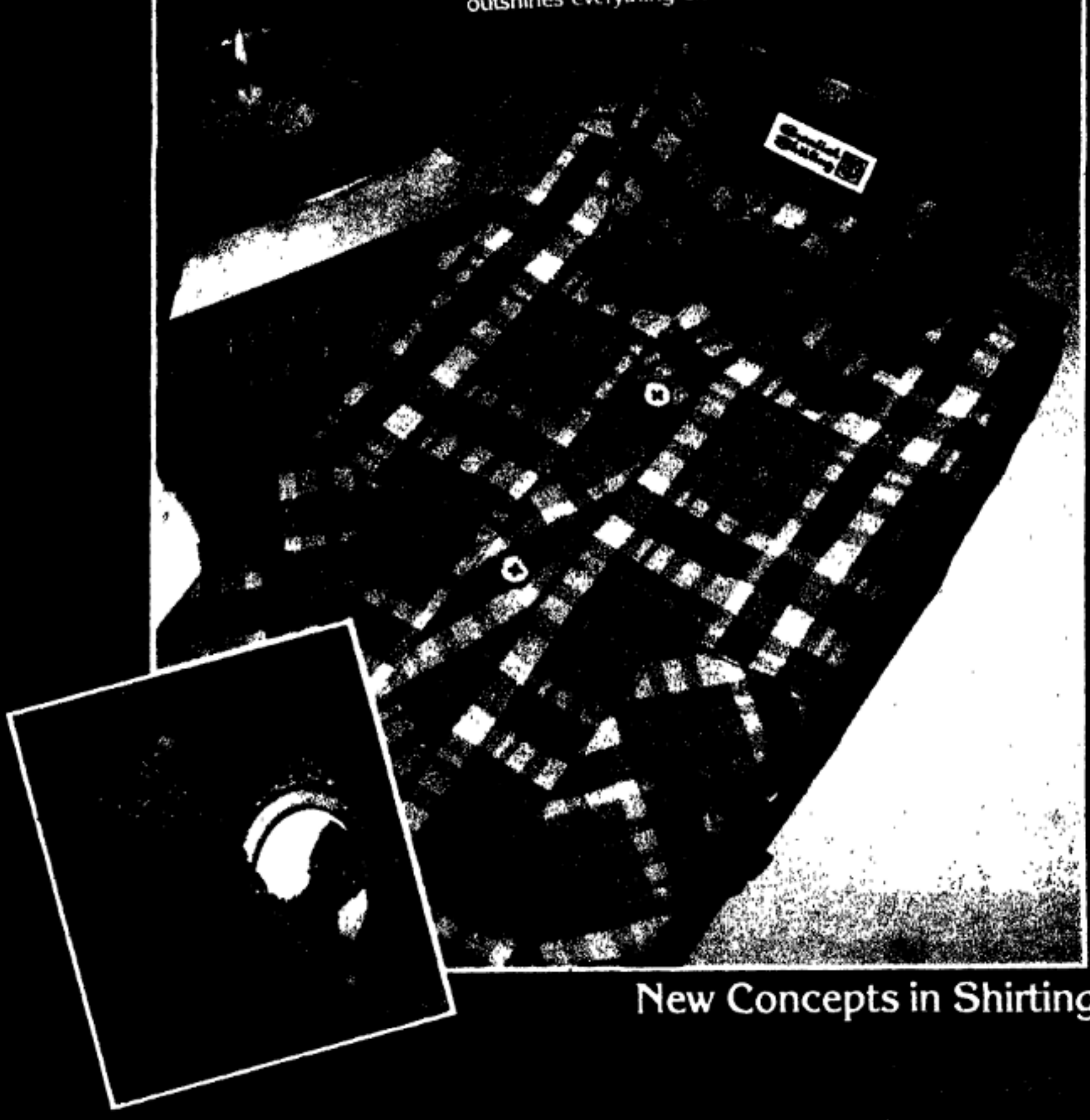
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KARNATAKA

Mark Twain once said that there are three kinds of lies: lies damn lies and statistics That may be a little harsh on statistics, but in the precise field of numbers, statistics is known to lend itself to mischief, especially with politicians For politicians, statistics is like putty, to be shaped into convenient figures to distort and deceive.

How frail statistics can be is best understood by the specious argument proposed by the former Karnataka chief minister Ramakrishna Hegde even before the Lok Sabha elections Of the 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state, 27 were held by the Congress(I) and only one by the Janata Party Therefore, said Mr Hegde, even if the Janata Party wins just two seats in the 1984 elections, it would represent a 100 per cent increase

The Janata Party won four of the 28 seats. But that was not enough to save the Janata government in Karnataka Mr Hegde had to resign even though his party registered a 300 per cent increase in the number of seats won The party needed something like a 1000 per cent increase to remain in power, but could not manage it in the face of the sympathy wave and Rajiv wave. Does this mean that the Janata Party has been routed? On the contrary, according to statistics, the voting pattern during the just-concluded elections reveals a strange conundrum. first, though the Congress(I) has won, the Janata Party has gained. Second, where the Janata has gained, the Congress(I) has lost.

In strictly numerical terms, the Janata Party has won three seats more in 1984 than in 1980, while the Congress(I) has won three less (1980: Congress(I) 27; Janata 1; 1984: Congress(I) 24; Janata 4). Beneath the superficial loss for the Congress(I) is the real loss. While the party polled 56.25 per cent of the votes polled in the 1980 election, the figure came down to 51.84 per cent in 1984: a drop of nearly 4.5 per cent. The Congress(I) loss in Karnataka stands out considering the fact that it has made amazing gains elsewhere in India, barring Andhra Pradesh.

There has also been a steady erosion of Congress(I) votes in Karnataka since 1971. From 70.87 per cent votes polled in 1971, it slid dramatically to about 56 per cent in 1977, remained steady in 1980, before a further slide to 51.84 per cent in 1984. The Congress(I) loss is the Janata's gain, to parrot the familiar line. In 1980, when the Janata Party won just one seat from the state, it polled a poor 22 per cent to the Congress(I)'s 56.25 per cent. This time, while winning four seats, the Janata Party has polled about 41 per cent (to the Congress I's 51 84 per cent) an increase of nearly 19 per cent The Janata Party also polled more votes than it did in the January 1983 Assembly election (33 08 per cent), when it came to power So, if anything, the Janata government has found approval

It must be noted that in 1984, the Janata Party tally includes the five seats given to its allies (four to the Bharatiya Janata Party and one to the CPI) But the allies have fared miserably Barring Bidar, the candidates put up by the allies in the other four constituencies lost by more than a one-lakh vote margin Not a single Janata candidate lost by a lakh plus margin, a regular feature in the past In 1980, the Congress(I) won 22 of the 28 seats by a lakh plus margin The stiff contest put up by the Janata Party is in sharp contrast to the display by its counterpart units in other states, and indeed all other opposition party, barring the Telugu Desam, the National Conference and the CPI(M) in West Bengal.

The Janata Party's gain is further accentuated when its performance in every constituency is taken In each of the 28 constituencies, including the five given to its allies, there has been a positive swing in its favour. This positive swing varies from more than 30 per cent in constituencies like Mandya, Koppal and Bellary, to just two per cent in the Janata stronghold of Bangalore South Simply put, the Janata Party has polled a larger percentage of votes in all constituencies than in the 1980 general elections.

The Congress(I) on the other hand, has registered a negative swing in 20 of the 28 constituencies i e polled less votes than in the 1980 elections. In four constituencies this negative swing is more than 10 per cent The conclusion is that though the Congress(I) won the 1984 Lok Sabha elections comfortably enough in Karnataka, its popularity is on the decline The Janata Party, on the other hand, has struck roots and is now a well-entrenched cadre-based party.

The election sprang surprises, with the Janata Party winning some unexpected seats, even as it lost some which it was tipped to win. By far, the most stunning loss was that of Abdul Nazeer Sab, who was defeated by the Congress(I) nominee, Aziz Sait, in Dharwad South constituency. Sab, as rural development minister in the Hegde cabinet, had done good work. He had everything going for him: his image, a fair name and charisma But in the face of the massive Congress(I) wave, he was a hapless victim and to many others including Congressmen, a tragic victim. His loss only reinforced what was suspected after Devraj Urs's miserable rout in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections; that people do not always vote for a government that works The theme of danger to unity and integrity which the Congress(I) contested on, carried more weight with the people.

Likewise, in Bangalore North constituency, the Janata Party general secretary, George Fernandes, fell to union minister Jaffer Sharief. This, inspite of the fact that seven of the eight Assembly segments in the constituency are held by Janata and its ally, the CPI(M). Once again, the sympathy wave, combined with the poor image of the opposition at the national level contributed to Fernandes's defeat. "I'm baffled," said George Fernandes after his defeat.

But while the Janata Party lost, it was certainly not routed as the percentage of votes polled by the party shows. In several constituencies, the Congress(I) candidates won by a narrow margin. In the Chikkodi reserved constituency, union minister B. Shankaranand won by a mere 3,000 votes. In a few of the constituencies, Janata candidates failed to win, thanks to some votepicking by unexpected candidates. In the Kanakapura constituency, P. G. R. Scindia, a minister in the Hegde cabinet lost by about 10,000 votes. A DMKP candidate in the field with no chance of winning had taken away 28,000



Jaffer Sharief: giant killer

'We Have Polled More Votes Than Ever Before'

Ramakrishna Hegde told SUNDAY

***Q**: What reason do you ascribe for your party's poor performance in the just concluded elections?*

A: I would credit it to the sense of discrimination by the electorate. They knew this election was for the Lok Sabha, and that it had nothing to do with the state government. They knew that as against Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister, there was no other viable, credible alternative. At the same time, here, our voters in Karnataka, did not want to let down the Janata government, which explains how we polled a high percentage—about 41 per cent—of the votes.

Q: Don't you think the results of this election give a fillip to the theory put forth when Devaraj Urs was routed in 1980 by Mrs Gandhi, that people need not necessarily vote for a government that performs well?

A: There is some justification in drawing such an inference. But I would still give credit to our people. They know the difference between the parliamentary poll and an Assembly election. You see, if the same results (of the 1984 Lok Sabha poll) are repeated in the coming Assembly elections I would say there is absolute justification in this conclusion. But let us see.

Q: But in the just concluded election, you did try to make the election a local issue. You told the people it was a referendum on the performance of the state government.

A: Yes, I did. I was afraid the opposition did not present a very credible picture and so I drew on the performance of the state government hoping it would fetch us the votes.

Q: And you failed?

A: No. We have polled more votes than ever before.

Q:Do you have a new plank to fight the Assembly elections?

A: The performance of my government.



Ramakrishna Hegde

Q: What about individuals? Gundu Rao...

A: Oh, they will be there campaigning. The contrast is there for all to see. We will not mention it.

Q: Have you given any thought to forming a new opposition party? A new front?

A: We have not discussed it so far. I don't say there is no such proposal. Many people have thought about it. But there has been no serious discussion yet. Now that the Assembly elections are coming up, there is no time. I think after the Assembly elections, we can give some time to the proposal.

Q: The other day you mentioned the good performance put up by Farooq Abdullah's National Conference and NTR's Telugu Desam. Have you considered going regional also?

A: No, not at all. It is all right for them. They had their reasons. But I am not going to ...

Q: What about a federation of such regional opposition parties at the national level as suggested by Minoo Masani?

A: Yes, the federation idea is worth considering. But not just a federation of regional parties. There have to be national opposition parties also.

Q: It appears there is a need for building up an opposition in the country anew, sifting out the deadwood. What thought have given to this matter?

A: What is first necessary is thorough and deep introspection to find out where we have gone wrong. It is no use finding faults with any individual. Perhaps our policy (about projecting a coalition) was not correct. More than anything, we failed to present a credible picture before the electorate

Q: Is introspection enough? Don't you think stronger measures are necessary?

A: Yes. After introspection whatever measures are necessary to improve our image, they must be taken.

Interviewed by Chidanand Rajghatta

votes, while a Raitha Sangha candidate polled 8,000 votes. Thousands of votes in the urban segment of the constituency were not registered. Scindia, who had nursed the constituency meticulously for over a year, was understandably crestfallen. But Hegde's gambit of throwing in six of his cabinet colleagues into the fray failed miserably. Five of them, including Sab and Scindia, lost. The lone winner was urban development minister V. S. Krishna Iyer from the traditional Janata stronghold of Bangalore South.

The biggest blow to the Congress(I) came in the Mandya constituency where the union minister, S. M. Krishna was routed by the octogenarian Janata nominee, K. V. Shankare Gowda. This was a strange case where the Congress(I) sympathy wave could not match the sympathy wave for Shankare Gowda, who has never won a direct election and who was fighting what was his last big election. In the Kolar reserved constituency, the Congress(I) suffered another setback when the sitting MP, G. Y. Krishnan, seeking a fifth term from the same constituency, was defeated by Dr Venkatesh, a practising physician and a newcomer to politics. The Kolar win for the Janata emphasised the importance of the NTR factor in Karnataka. Kolar has a large Telugu electorate and it was only one of the two constituencies where NTR campaigned for the Janata Party.

For the Congress(I), it was a victory to be savoured and later, mulled over. Clearly, it is not the same Congress of 1971, 1977 and 1980. There will be no more easy victories; the party had only four wins by lakh-plus margins. The halcyon days of the Congress are over and it is only up to Rajiv Gandhi to prevent this perceptible downhill slide.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

Stemming the Tide

ANDHRA PRADESH

The Lok Sabha election results were a rude shock to the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh, especially as Rajiv Gandhi's intensive three-day tour had given a tremendous boost to the morale of the Congressmen. In fact, some of the party leaders were boasting of bagging 25 seats. They claimed that Mr Gandhi's charisma would be successful in driving out NTR from the state But the Congress(I) hold of 41 out of 42 seats in both 1977 and 1980 Lok Sabha elections loosened and the party managed to win only six seats, half of which they managed to scrape through with a margin of less than 10,000 votes. The Congress(I) got nasty surprises when many of the party stalwarts including union home minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and one-time party president K. Brahmananda Reddy lost their seats to the Telugu Desam which Congress(I) leaders had referred to as "a regional party."

The Congress(I)'s expectations in the state had shot up because of the relatively low level of factional in fighting in the party and the large crowds which turned up at Rajiv Gandhi's public meetings. Congress leaders had gleefully accepted the three additional days of electioneering that the party had to its benefit with the polling date set for 27 December. The Congress(I) took the crowds to mean votes and thought that the sympathy wave which had not been evident earlier, was triggered off by Rajiv Gandhi's meetings. While in the rest of the country, the Congress(I) campaign highlighted issue like the unity and integrity of the country, in Andhra Pradesh the Prime Minister tried to brand the opposition conclaves as disruptive and divisive attempts of the opposition parties. He used a catchy slogan to end his speeches: "This is a vote not for Telugu Desam. Kashmir Desam or UP Desam," he said, "this is a vote for Bharat Desam." However, in Andhra Pradesh, there has been a heightened awareness of the political happenings in the state since August 1984 when N. Bhaskara Rao was forcibly installed as chief minister. Rajiv Gandhi questioning the morality of N.T. Ramarao remaining as caretaker chief minister for three months did not cut much ice among the people, especially when many of the MLAs owing allegiance to Bhaskara Rao joined the Congress(I) recently.

The election results came as a pleasant surprise to the Telugu Desam Party too. The party's optimistic estimates had not pegged their tally to more than 23 seats The sympathy factor as well as Rajiv Gandhi's personal impact was difficult to estimate. The united front that the Congress(I) presented after the election campaign gave the Congress supporters and party workers a lot of confidence. The Congress (I) workers had been forwarding the theory that the TDP should be elected to the state Assembly but the Congress for the centre. That the Congress(I) misread the mood of the people is obvious for, in the few days before polling, Congress(I) leaders in Hyderabad chortled—their bicycle is punctured now (cycle is the Telegu Desam election symbol).

All the six members of the union cabinet from Andhra Pradesh toppled in the face of the Telugu Desam onslaught. Even Vijayabhaskara Reddy who had withstood the NTR wave at Yemmiganur Assembly constituency in 1983 and had won his Kurnool Lok Sabha seat with a margin of over 2,00,000 votes in the 1977 and 1980 elections lost at Kurnool



N.T. Rama Rao campaigning in Andhra Pradesh

this time by 7,400 votes. Union home minister Narasimha Rao could retain his berth in Parliament only through the Ramtek seat in Maharashtra where he was elected by a margin of two lakh votes after losing his home constituency of Hanamkonda in Andhra Pradesh. P. Shiv Shankar, P. Venkatasubbaiah, M.S. Sanjeevi Rao, Vijayabhaskara Reddy and Mallikarjun resigned from the cabinet after losing their seats in the state. Even the frantic last-minute shift from Secunderabad to Medak by P. Shiv Shankar in search of a safe constituency (Medak having been Indira Gandhi's constituency, the Congress-I expected the sympathy factor to attract the votes) did not help.

There was no wave operating in the state, neither a sympathy wave nor an NTR wave, but the solid Telugu Desam support that NTR has carved out for himself remained with him. The Congress(I) had anticipated that the acute anti-Congress feeling in the state would have subsided after the death of Indira Gandhi, but Mr Rajiv Gandhi could not gain any goodwill in the state The Congress(I) enthusiasm, however, was not totally misplaced. The party gained eight per cent votes over the percentage of votes it had polled in the 1983 Assembly elections. Five per cent of this increase in votes came from the decrease in the votes of independent candidates. The Congress(I) could make only a marginal dent of three per cent in the votes cast in favour of the Telugu Desam Party and its allies in 1983 The largest increase in votes for the Congress(I) came in the Andhra region (12 per cent). The anticipated five per cent increase in the votes in Telengana which could have given the Congress(I) half the seats in the region did not come about; the Congress(I) gained only three per cent increase in the votes but this was offset by the combined opposition front. The opposition unity and seat adjustment in all constituencies except Khammam helped the parties to consolidate their support in the region.

The Congress(I) party made every effort to sway the people. A number of popular Telugu film personalites including Krishna and Jamuna, the latter a heroine of many NTR starrers, were roped in. The party mounted a high-level media blitz: there were video films of Indira Gandhi's funeral, a *burrakatha* (folk drama) on the life of the late Prime Minister, gigantic cutouts of Indira Gandhi, large hoardings in questionable taste depicting her assassination and audio cassettes of her speeches.

The Telugu Desam which had introduced a cassette of NTR's speeches, film dialogues and massive cutouts to the Andhra Pradesh election scene had to fall back on NTR and his personal appeal to the people through his tours in the Chaitanya Ratham. NTR and the party leaders brought home to the people the activity or rather the lack of it by the Congress(I) MPs, many of whom had not bothered to visit their constituencies. As a result, for the first time, sitting members were asked embarrassing questions on what they had done for their constituencies.

While Congressmen in the rest of the country are elated with the Lok Sabha results, in Andhra Pradesh where they worked together keeping the forthcoming Assembly elections in mind, they are in a totally shattered condition. On the other hand, the Telugu Desam has proved its relevance to the national opposition.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

"We Will Provide a Constructive Opposition"

NTR told SUNDAY

Q: *Your party and its allies have won 33 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh. What is the reason for this victory?*

A: It is the confidence that the people repose in us (the Telugu Desam Party) and it is due to the great dedication with which we are following our party's manifesto and implementing our policies in upholding the poorer sections of the society, not at all caring for the rich.

Q: While the rest of the country has fallen to the Congress(I) it is only in Andhra Pradesh that the Telugu Desam has held its own. What are the reasons for this?

A: It is our great concern for the common man, their (Congress-I's) approach is from the platform (while) we work for the poor and that is what affects the people.

Q: During his election meetings in Andhra Pradesh, Rajiv Gandhi questioned the morality of your caretaker government remaining in office for three months.

A: These were all election speeches. I have also given my replies in the public meetings.

Q: Why do you think the opposition parties failed at the national level?

A: The opposition leaders do not have a correct view for perfect understanding among themselves for which I was trying. We need to have coordination and cooperation. Only then will the people have confidence in us (opposition parties).

Q: Now that the Telugu Desam Party forms the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha, what will be your party's role in Parliament?

A: We will hold the opposition role tightly. We will project our party's policies. Our emphasis is on the common man. We will give (the nation) a constructive opposition.

Q: During the election campaign, the Congress(I) tried to brand the regional parties including the Telugu Desam Party as separatist (forces). What do you think?

A: They (Congress-I) can't say anything now. The people have given us a mandate on the national level also. They (the Congress-I) will be insulting my electorate if they speak like this.

Q: What are the issues your party MPs will take up in the Lok Sabha?

A: We are interested in equal rights for women in ancestral property; equal rights for women along with men. Don't you agree?

Q: Do you plan to bring in an anti-defection bill?

A: Yes. We want an anti-defection bill. We want politics to be free of corruption. If the Congress wants to remove corruption in politics, let them vote for the bill. If they want corruption to continue, let them not support the bill.

Q: You have extended fullest support and cooperation to Rajiv Gandhi in a message wishing him success in the future. Does this mean that you will soften your stand vis-a-vis the centre and the Congress(I)?

A: I am first an Indian, only after that do I belong to my state. It is my duty as an Indian to support the centre.

Interviewed by Shubha Singh

KASHMIR

The ruling National Conference with its ally the Congress(I) managed to secure only two seats out of the five in which elections were held. The National Conference (Opposition) led by the former chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah strengthened its claim to rule the state by checking the massive Rajiv wave that swept the country. The results in fact showed that the people of the state did not approve of the unfair means adopted by the Congress(I) to throw the Farooq Abdullah government out of power. Even the election commission recognised Dr Abdullah's faction as the real National Conference by granting it the plough symbol. Commented a victorious Farooq Abdullah: "Had the ruling party-Congress(I) combine not resorted to booth capturing and other malpractices their candidates would have even lost their deposits."

Even though the ruling party had lost the battle before the gong sounded, the Congress(I) tried its best to create an impact by vainly trying to woo Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq of Awami Action Committee and Abdul Gani Lone, leader of pro-autonomy People's Conference. Mirwaiz Farooq and Lone despite being unhappy about Dr Abdullah's attitude in not consulting his allies about the selection of candidates, appealed to the people to vote for the opposition National Conference.

In Baramulla things were made easy for the NC (Opposition) when Lone withdrew his nomination to work for them. The ruling NC even hobnobbed with the Jamaat-e-Islami and likeminded parties which have pockets of influence. The chief minister, Mr Shah, met Jamaat leaders including Qazi Saifuddin. Later Mr Shah said that in fact, Jamaat leaders had called on him to plead the case of their party colleague Syed Ali Geelani lodged in the Srinagar central jail for anti-India activities. However, the Jamaat called for a boycott of the elections to "register protest against India's occupation of Kashmir."

In Srinagar, the chief minister's son Muzaffar Shah was beaten by the sitting MP, Abdul Rashid Kabuli of NC (Opposition). Shah and his party expected that Kashmiri pandits and Shiites would vote for the ruling party. The CM had irked many Shiites by imposing restriction during the last Moharram celebrations. A section of the Shiites led by state Congress(I) legislature party leader Moulvi Iftekhar Hussain Ansari obviously backed the ruling party candidate while prominent Shiite leaders Moulvi Abbas Ansari and Aga Mahmood campaigned for the NC (Opposition). The Kashmiri pandits boycotted the election alleging discrimination against them.

In Anantnag, the NC (Opposition) candidate Begum Akbar Jahan Abdullah, mother of the two rival presidents of the National Conference had a smooth sailing. Such was the respect she commanded that even the chief minister and his wife Khalida Shah (Begum Abdullah's daughter) did not campaign against her. In desperation the ruling party resorted to rigging and booth-capturing and the election commission ordered repoll in 30 polling booths in two Kashmir valley constituencies Anantnag and Srinagar.

In Jammu-Poonch Dr Karan Singh who contested as an independent candidate finished a miserable third. Janak Raj Gupta of the Congress(I) won the seat defeating Shabir Ahmed Salaria of the NC (O). Karan Singh had tried to win over the Sikh electorate of the constituency and had visited the Sikh populated areas of the city and so the predominantly Hindu electorate voted against him. Karan Singh's "betrayal" of Mrs Gandhi was also an issue. Karan Singh had shifted from Udhampur from where he had been winning since 1967.

Yusuf Jameel



Farooq Abdullah addressing a meeting

'People Have Total Confidence In Me'

Farooq Abdullah told SUNDAY

***Q**: How did you stem the Rajiv Gandhi wave and win all the three seats in the Kashmir valley?*

A: My party National Conference, fought for the independence of the Kashmiris and it was this party which became instrumental in the state's accession to the Indian Union. It has a record of good deeds and always stood for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, irrespective of their caste, creed and other affiliations. The people also love this party and its principles and ideology. There is no denying that the Congress(I) is a national party, but the people of Jammu and Kashmir have their own problems and interests.

Q: But it is alleged that you as well as other opposition National Conference leaders resorted to arousing the religious and regional feelings of the people during your election campaign.

A: That is totally baseless and malicious. You know, not only did the Muslims of Kashmir vote for my party but other sections of people, including the Kashmiri pandits and Sikhs as well In Jammu division too which is a Hindu predominant belt, my party nominee has polled nearly one-and-a-half lakh votes and gave a tough fight to the Congress(I) candidate there.

Q: On the eve of the elections you had asserted that the Congress(I) headed by Mr Rajiv Gandhi was not the Congress which had fought for the country's independence. But after it returned to power through the elections, you have publicly praised this party and its leader. Is it an attempt to mend fences with the Prime Minister?

A: The countrymen have overwhelmingly voted for the Congress(I) in the recent elections. Facts are facts and you can hardly put them behind. One should accept the people's verdict gracefully. I'm for reconciliation and my efforts will be directed not at destroying the country but strengthening it.

Q: Does it mean that you have given up your alliance with the opposition ?

A: No, not at all. You know, my alliance with the opposition was not for personal gains. We had been saying that the Congress(I) had adopted some wrong and anti-people policies and asked the voters to vote it out of power. We wanted that the country should prosper. We have many problems to tackle, Punjab being the most sensitive one. I'm even prepared to sacrifice my life to see this most sensitive problem solved early.

Q: What were the main causes for the opposition's rout?

A: Disunity. The opposition failed to unite. Various opposition parties pitted their candidates against each other. After tasting a debacle, I hope the opposition parties will try to unite and reach a consensus on all national and regional issues.

Q: You have appealed to the Prime Minister to do justice to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. What kind of justice do you expect from him?

A: He should direct his party unit in Kashmir to withdraw its support to the Ghulam Mohammad Shah ministry, so that the way is paved for the dissolution of the state Assembly and fresh elections for the House are held. The resounding victory of my party in the elections has proved that the people have reposed total confidence in me and my party.

Q: Following your dismissal in July you had demanded the removal of the state Governor, Mr Jagmohan, accusing him of siding with the Congress(I) and its ally, the National Conference faction led by your estranged sister, Khalida Shah. But you have now praised him publicly for ensuring a free and fair poll in his state.

A: I'm a Muslim, so I believe only in the truth. You know, very few politicians speak the truth. But I must confess that it was the Governor who sternly rejected the suggestion to rig the elections in his state, for the benefit of the ruling party Congress(I) combine The role the Governor played and the impartiality the poll and law and order machinery maintained helped in restoring their trust. I'm happy over this.

Q: But soon after the polling was over you had, at a press conference, accused the Congress(I) and the ruling National Conference of resorting to large-scale rigging and had also demanded repoll in the Anantnag constituency.

A: They, of course, tried to rig the poll. Some polling booths were captured, particularly in the Anantnag constituency, by them. But our party supporters resisted it. The Election Commission had also reports on this. They, therefore, ordered repolling in many polling stations. This way their attempts were foiled to some extent. Had they not captured booths and resorted to other irregularities their candidates would have even lost their deposits.

Q: Is there any move to bridge the gulf between the Congress(I) leaders and you?

A: This boy (Rajiv) has guts and we should cooperate with him

Interviewed by Yusuf Jameel

WEST BENGAL

The CPI(M) has been rejected by the voters in Calcutta and the surrounding industrial belt. It has maintained only a toe-hold in the rural districts of Burdwan, Bankura, Midnapore, Purulia, and Coochbehar In the north, in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, the party has got through by the skin of its teeth. However, the voters have returned all the CPI candidates and most of the contestants belonging to the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Forward Bloc. To the discerning observer, the results appear to be a censure of the CPI(M).

The Congress(I) on the other hand, has swept Calcutta and the industrial belt by spectacular margins; it has increased its strength considerably in north Bengal, and has made inroads into the "red bastions" of Serampore, Hooghly and the 24 Parganas. The Congress's victory has forced the CPI(M) leaders to finally admit their failure to assess the mood of the voters. The Marxist leaders have tried to dismiss the "nightmare" results as a manifestation of the "Indira wave." In addition, both chief minister Jyoti Basu and the CPI(M) state secretary, Saroj Mukherjee, have held newspapers, AIR and TV guilty of misleading the voters about the true state of things.

The CPI(M)-dominated Left Front came to power in the wake of the Janata wave of 1977. At the 1980 hustings, the Front improved its posi-

tion. Now, there is no mistake about the fact that the CPI(M) is losing its support base among the middle classes, the urban industrial workers as well as the vast majority of the rural poor who live below the poverty line. Although the chips are down, there is no unanimity in the Front about the reasons for the debacle. Though the CPI(M) wants to forget the entire episode as just another manifestation of the Indira wave, the RSP and Forward Bloc think that the Front's loss of touch with the masses is at the root of the defeat.

The bells indicating a debacle were tolling long before the ignominous defeat came. It was evident from the Assembly by-election results in 1983 and this year (the Front lost in three of the five seats), as well as in from the *panchayat* elections. In the Howrah municipal elections this year, the Front narrowly defeated the Congress(I), but the Front leaders, instead of taking the proper lesson from the results, preferred to ignore it altogether.

In fact, during the past seven years in power, the CPI(M) and its partners have increasingly depended on the bureaucracy rather than on mass contact. At times, the approach has been totally insensitive to popular expectations. Take for example chief minister Jyoti Basu's trip to China when the state was reeling under the enterric epidemic which took more than a thousand lives. Or, for that matter the unseemly mudslinging the between the PWD minister, Jatin Chakravorty, and the urban dvelopment minister, Prasanta Sur, over condition of roads in the city and districts. People were bewildered when Mr Chakravorty started giving sermons on such subjects as culture, music and the arts during his squabbles with the well-known singer, Ms Usha Uthup.

The Left Front, in fact, failed to live upto the expectations it generated among the people. The much publicised "operation Barga," which was instituted to give sharecropping rights to landless peasants, was dropped as soon as the rural gentry resisted it. Strikes organised by trade unions often led to lockouts and closures and ultimately unemployment. The employment curve took a downward trend and the Front leaders did nothing more than issuing statements about future investments in the state, which, however, never materialised.



Law minister Ashoke Sen at the Calcutta airport

Mrs Gandhi's return to power in 1980 upset the Front's applecart. The CPI(M) as well as the Front leaders miscalculated her intentions and assumed that she might topple the West Bengal government. Accordingly, the state government adopted a bunch of welfare measures which ultimately boomeranged. The Front exchequer went bankrupt. Measures like unemployment dole, disbursement of dearness allowance at central rates, and increased payscales for teachers, municipal employees etc, were taken. This increased the burden on the exchequer at a time when revenue collections were falling. Plan expenditure had to be diverted to non-plan heads creating a "Catch 22" situation where the state had to depend on overdrafts.

As the financial situation deteriorated further, the CPI(M)-dominated Front tried to take the easy way out. It tried to shift the blame on the centre and raised the non-Marxist bogey of the centre's stepmotherly attitude towards the state. During the election campaign, the Left Front raised national issues like unity and integrity trying to gloss over its nonperformance. And this approach suited the Congress as it, almost with a vengeance, capitalised on the Front's acts of commission and ommission in the past seven years. Nonplussed, the CPI(M) brought Dr Farooq Abdullah for campaigning in Muslim-majority areas, but interestingly enough none of the central leaders of the party were asked to campaign in West Bengal. At the same time the party did not hesitate to mount a campaign against the railway minister, A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chaudhury, in Malda, which was nothing short of character assassination.

The smugness of the CPI(M) leadership is evident from the fact that ever after polling was over, they could not gauge the erosion of their strength. Saroj Mukherjee, who glibly dismissed the results as a manifestation of the Indira wave after the final results came in, had only a couple of days back said that there was no Indira wave. The realisation of the defeat, however, is dawning on the CPI(M) and its Front partners now. Benoy Chaudhury, the state land reforms minister, has admitted that over-bureaucratisation of *panchayats* had alienated the rural masses from the party. The RSP and Forward Bloc leaders now admit with uncanny hindsight that after all the vote might have been "an anti-Left Front wave." The erosion of the Left Front's strength may be gauged from the fact that while the Front had a margin of 35 lakh votes in 1980, this time it is less than a lakh. The defeat of the CPI(M) politburo member, Samar Mukherjee, by a margin of about a lakh votes by Priya Ranjan Das Munshi (Congress-I) in Howrah, only highlights the magnitude of the erosion of the CPI(M)'s strength in an area where the lower middle classes, factory workers, rural poor and the rich live cheek by jowl.

The CPI(M) has to make up its mind now about whether to stick to power or to go for a fresh mandate. There are divisions over the issue both in the CPI(M) as well as in the Front. The voters, at least in this state, have made it clear that no party, not even the CPI(M) or the Left Front, can take them for granted.

Tarun Ganguly, Calcutta

How We Won the Elections

Srikant Verma, AICC(I) spokesman, analyses the Congress(I) victory

The issues in this election were simple. The people really made up their minds the day Mrs Gandhi was assassinated. It was also—if we analyse the problem—a way to avenge the death of Mrs Gandhi The forces which were responsible for the assassination of Mrs Gandhi have been taught a lesson. By forces, I do not mean the opposition; I am referring to the forces which were for the destabilisation of the country The people of India want, through their vote, to say that this country cannot be destabilised

But I would still say that it was a positive vote During the campaign Mr Chandra Shekhar began to say that unity and national integrity were not the issues This I think was an insult to the feelings of the people It showed an utter lack of concern on the part of the opposition. People began to reconsider whether the country could be safe in the hands of people who do not respect their feelings. So, I feel that they were punished. If they had not uttered such sentences, some of them might not have lost the elections



Jubilant Congress(I) supporters rejoicing on the streets of Delhi

This was not a complex election; there were not too many issues involved either. The opposition parties were unnecessarily raising issues which were peripheral and minor. There was only one issue: the unity and the indivisibility of India. The Congress(I) rightly understood the mood of the people. The Congress party had already lost its leader for the cause of unity and integrity of the country. I think that it was on this issue that we won the election.

To some extent, the victory was also a vote against the opposition.

Day in and day out, during my press briefings, I reminded the opposition leaders through the press to read the writing on the wall. The people were concerned about the unity of the nation, but all the time the opposition accused us of raising the bogey of unity. They have been punished, but by and large it is a positive vote for the unity and integrity of the country. The people have given a big mandate to Rajiv Gandhi so that he does not have to depend on anyone. He is free to act: to make the choices, to provide the stability in India.

The votes of the women have been very important in the elections. They were very aggrieved, they felt deeply hurt when Mrs Gandhi was murdered. This country, although it has a great intellectual tradition, is basically emotional. Indians respond to things emotionally. There is deep compassion, kindness among the people. That, at least, has been the message of our philosophy and religion Our women were, therefore, deeply hurt when Mrs Gandhi was assassinated. That is why, as I said earlier, they decided that very day to vote for Rajiv Gandhi It was not a sympathy wave, although it is being called thus. The word in itself seems to me to be very odd It is not sympathy, it is a decision: Mrs Gandhi died for a cause and let us uphold that cause.

I would also like to mention that a lot of canards were spread by the BJP and other parties that there was a Hindu backlash, that only the Hindus would vote for the Congress(I) while the Muslims and Sikhs would not. But the results have proved once again that all communities and religions voted for the Congress(I). The Muslims and the Sikhs living outside Punjab have voted for the Congress(I). So, the cause of national integration has been upheld. This is the first time the cause of national integration has been upheld through the ballot.

In the last two Lok Sabha elections, the north voted differently from the south. With a few minor differences here and there, the north and south have behaved in the same pattern if you see the results in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The world should learn a lesson from the results of this election. The Indian people are deeply in love with their country, they will resist and fight any attempt to divide the country.

The caste factor did not work at all. That is why the DMKP which is a caste-based party proved to be insignificant. In Parliament, they will not even have a bench. This time the people rose above caste considerations. These people were expecting a caste vote, especially in the north, but they were wiped out. The BJP has been completely liquidated. The trader class and certain castes used to vote for them; they did not do so in December. We had to reach the con-

clusion that the votes were for national integration.

The victory has also been a vote for the youth: an important factor. One should not ignore the youth. Today, Rajiv Gandhi is a young man: although I would personally see his role as a link between the young and old. People also thought that since they were electing a young Prime Minister, his team in Parliament and in his cabinet should also be young. As I often said in my press briefings, our opponents are forgetting the fact that this time 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the voters belong to the younger generation. They would naturally like to vote for a younger Prime Minister. But, at the same time I would say that the older generation has also voted for the younger generation. They thought: let us also give a chance to the young man; we have seen enough of the old men. A possible reason for the victories of Jagjivan Ram and Charan Singh is that both supported the army action in the Golden Temple and both justified the government's attitude throughout, even before the army action. Thus, they also won on the issue.

To say that Hindus used to vote for the BJP is to brand all Hindus as communalists. The Hindus who voted for the Congress (as well as the others who voted for the Congress-I) did so because they believed it to be the national party. It has its roots all over India. So, they did not vote for the BJP. The issue was *Akhand Bharat*. They thought that this *Akhand Bharat* could only be visualised through a party which has an All-India character and roots everywhere. The BJP has become irrelevant.

The Congress(I) victory was also a vote for change in the sense that Rajiv Gandhi's assurances that he would provide a clean government worked. People have somehow come to believe that Rajiv Gandhi is a man who does what he says. When he says that he will provide a clean government, he will really provide it, and root out corruption.

The opposition was eliminated because of their role during the last two or three years. Punjab had become a national issue. The opposition should have helped the government to solve the problem. Instead, it created obstacles. They did not exert any pressure on the Akali Dal. Naturally, people were annoyed with the leaders. As far as Madhav Rao Scindia and Amitabh Bachchan and the younger generation are concerned, they won because people had begun to think that they had had enough of professional politicians. Let politics also be done by those who have not made politics their *dhanda* (means of living). That is why they voted for Amitabh Bachchan, Sunil Dutt, Vyjayanthimala, Natwar Singh, K.R. Narayanan and non-professionals in the belief that the newly-elected people might deliver the goods because they do not have a vested interest in politics. It is also true that somebody who has something else to do—like writers, intellectuals, sportsmen, scientists—would behave differently. He would not make politics a means of living. There would be less corruption, insecurity. Politics would be raised to a higher level.

The country has shown to the world its inner strength. It was being said that this country was being fragmented. People had begun to believe outside that India would be divided very soon. The country in December 1984 wanted to demonstrate that it was one

As told to Madhu Jain

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WEST BENGAL

The Fall of Pranab and Ghani

Strong resentment in state against their exclusion from cabinet

The first hints of their decline came quite early, even while Mrs Gandhi lay in state. Suddenly the state-controlled TV and radio appeared to be losing the interest that they had been showing all these years in Mrs Gandhi's finance minister and the number two man in her cabinet, Pranab Mukherjee. References to him became fewer and far between and finally he could no longer be seen or heard in the official media. The signs of Mrs Gandhi's railway minister, Ghani Khan Choudhury's decline were evident when Rajiv Gandhi reinstated the Railway Board chairman K.T. Raghavan, whom the railway minister had sacked after holding him responsible for a train accident in Bombay.

If they had the eyes to recognise the signals they would not have been as surprised as they were when Rajiv Gandhi dropped them from his cabinet after the elections. Although Pranab Mukherjee, because of his seniority and since he was a member of the Congress(I) parliamentary board and the working committee was given a seat on the dais besides Rajiv Gandhi at the Congress parliamentary party meeting convened to elect the party leader for the Lok Sabha, he was neither asked to propose nor second Rajiv Gandhi's name. The two hardly spoke to each other. In 1980, though Pranab Mukherjee lost in the polls, Mrs Gandhi summoned him from Calcutta to convene the Congress(I) parliamentary party meeting and propose her name as the party leader. The contrast should have made it clear to Pranab Mukherjee that he had reached the end of the road.

Yet, he was hoping against hope. Returning to his Jantar Mantar Road bungalow he stayed near the telephone till 5 pm expecting a call from Rajiv Gandhi or any of his aides saying he had been included in the cabinet. The call did not materialise and Pranab Mukherjee, sensing that the inevitable axe had fallen on him, sent a letter to the works and housing minister requesting him for a smaller bungalow which he was entitled to as an MP. He also relieved his personal staff immediately.

The sword was hanging over his head for quite some time but it came down only when he had been rendered most vulnerable. Had he been given the Congress(I) nomination to contest from West Bengal as he had wanted, he would probably have won a seat in the Lok Sabha (he is a Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat) and been on a firmer ground. But Rajiv Gandhi refused him a ticket while another of Mr Mukherjee's colleagues, then the home minister and now the defence minister, P.V Narasimha Rao, had the rare privilege of



Ghani Khan Choudhury

contesting from two constituencies. As it is Pranab Mukherjee has never won a direct election although he rose from obscurity to be among the most powerful persons in the country. A college teacher, he entered politics as an office secretary of the Bangla Congress in 1966 following a split in the West Bengal Congress. After the fall of the United Front government in West Bengal he switched over to Mrs Gandhi's party in 1970 and was appointed a deputy minister for industrial development in her cabinet in 1973. A year later he was shifted to the finance ministry and later on given independent charge of banking and revenue during the Emergency. After Mrs Gandhi returned to power in 1980, she rewarded him even more amply, although he had lost the elections, by appointing him as her finance minister, for standing by her during her days in the wilderness. And gradually over the years Pranab Mukherjee became one of the very few people Mrs Gandhi trusted, sitting with her in all the important party and the government committees. If his fall was abrupt it was even more uncermonious.

More grace was shown to Pranab Mukherjee's colleague and political rival in West Bengal, Barkat Ghani Khan Choudhury. Shortly before Rajiv Gandhi and his cabinet had been sworn in on Monday 31 December, Ghani Khan Choudhury was summoned to the Prime Minister's 1 Safdarjang Road residence. There Rajiv Gandhi informed Ghani Khan that he was being dropped from the cabinet but was being considered for the AICC(I)'s general secretary's post as three of the general secretaries—Arun Nehru, Chandulal Chandrakar and Abdul Ghafoor—were joining the cabinet. But Ghani Khan Choudhury was so agitated at his exclusion from the cabinet that he, instead of accepting the offer, wanted some time to talk to his followers on the subject. When Mr Choudhury returned to his 12 Akbar Road residence, he found most of 16 Congress(I) MPs elected from West Bengal gathered there and were greatly agitated. They generally felt that West Bengal had been let down and they said it in so many words to West Bengal Governor Umashankar Dixit, a family friend of the Nehru-Gandhis, who was also in the Capital. Mr Dixit met Rajiv Gandhi twice during the day to convey the feelings of the party MPs from West Bengal.

On Wednesday Choudhury in a letter informed Rajiv Gandhi that he wanted another round of discussions with him before accepting the party position which he had offered. The next morning he met Arun Nehru and told him that he had decided to accept the offer. It was to be formalised after a meeting with Rajiv Gan-

dhi on Friday. Ghani Khan Choudhury was asked to be near his telephone to answer the summons from the Prime Minister whenever it came. He waited for the whole day but the summons never came. It is yet premature to draw any conclusion from this but the possibility of Rajiv Gandhi having second thoughts about Ghani Khan Choudhury is not altogether ruled out.

Pranab Mukherjee's alleged claim for interim-Prime Ministership after Mrs Gandhi's assassination is widely believed as a possible reason for his eclipse. Rajiv Gandhi was on a campaign tour in West Bengal when he received the news of Mrs Gandhi's assassination from a BBC broadcast. It was while flying with Rajiv Gandhi to New Delhi that Pranab Mukherjee is said to have dropped subtle hints to other senior party leaders, the Lok Sabha speaker Balaram Jakhar, Ghani Khan Choudhury, AICC(I) joint secretary Panicker and West Bengal Governor Umashankar Dixit who were also travelling by the same flight, drawing their attention to two previous occasions when the number two in the cabinet had become an interim Prime Minister. The reference was to Gulzarilal Nanda who became the interim Prime Minister after Nehru's death and again after Lal Bahadur Shastri's death. Pranab Mukherjee however denies that he had ever made such a claim. Says he: "I am not a fool to be so ambitious as to behave like that."

More likely, he was dropped because he had outlived his utility. If Mrs Gandhi needed persons whom she could trust absolutely, her son Rajiv Gandhi has no such compulsions. Mrs Gandhi, in her final years, had around her people who were politically weak so that they could not become a threat to Rajiv Gandhi whom she had certainly been grooming to succeed her. Now that Rajiv Gandhi has become the Prime Minister he does not need to have Mr Mukherjee around. Besides, Pranab Mukherjee was not pulling on well with some powerful aides of the new Prime Minister. Some of his actions, whether or not done at the behest of Mrs Gandhi, never received Rajiv Gandhi's approval. With the new leaders have emerged some new equations in which Pranab Mukherjee hardly fits. And so he had to go.

Ghani Khan Choudhury, on the other hand, has become a victim of his style. In an attempt to project himself as a person who could get things done the way he wished, he made enemies with powerful bureaucrats and even his colleagues. In both the ministries that he had been in during Mrs Gandhi's tenure—energy and railways—he quarrelled with senior and powerful officers, often publicly, by summararily sacking or transferring them without assigning any credible explanation. He could not get along with his junior minister in the railways, C.K. Jaffar Sharief. But what must have irritated Rajiv Gandhi most were the unseemly quarrels between Pranab Mukherjee and Ghani Khan Choudhury which manifested itself in an alarming way leading to a delay in nominating party candidates for West Bengal. Their quarrels for recognition as the supreme Congress(I) leader in West Bengal was increasingly getting out of hand and had clearly divided the state unit of the party into two warring camps. It is no secret that the two former ministers have been running the West Bengal party by proxy through their respective proteges, reducing party's state unit's executives to mere decorations.



Pranab Mukherjee

What Rajiv Gandhi may not have foreseen is the widespread resentment that surfaced in West Bengal for excluding Pranab Mukherjee and Ghani Khan Choudhury from his cabinet. It was the Bengali pride that was hurt. For only twice before had a Bengali been considered for any important portfolio in the union cabinet—Sachin Chaudhury, who was finance minister in Mrs Gandhi's cabinet for a term and before him Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, who was the commerce and industries minister in Nehru's cabinet. Barring them, representatives from West Bengal have always been allotted either the law or the education portfolio at the centre, till two important cabinet posts came West Bengal's way after 1980.

Ghani Khan Choudhury's exclusion more than that of Pranab Mukherjee's, especially after the Congress(I)'s spectacular gains in West Bengal, a Marxist citadel, dismayed not only the state unit of the Congress(I) but also greatly upset people in the state. Ghani Khan had earned a name for himself in West Bengal as a go-getter by pushing through and initiating numerous central projects both as energy minister and as railway minister including the Calcutta Metro and a super thermal plant in West Bengal. Many feared that with his exit several of these projects promising employment for a large number of people would either be stalled or even be abandoned. The fears came true, soon enough, when thousands of people employed in the railways on temporary basis during Choudhury's tenure were sacked by his successor although he had promised not to.

It is the Marxist-led Left Front, still nursing its wounds after its electoral setback, which has benefitted the most by Rajiv Gandhi's actions. It was like a windfall for them as a vast section of state's population which had put in its trust in the Congress(I) suddenly beginning to believe that their trust had been misplaced. The prevalent feeling is that the two ministers have been unfairly dropped and their exit is against West Bengal's interests. This was clearly reflected in a lukewarm response to the Congress(I)'s victory celebrations in Calcutta on Saturday 5 January. Not only were the two dropped ministers—Ghani Khan Chowdhury and Pranab Mukherjee—absent from the celebrations but many important Congress(I) activists kept themselves away from it.

Tooshar Pandit, Calcutta

KARNATAKA

Hegde Resigns

Asks for a fresh mandate

The Congress(I)'s sweeping victory in the elections, besides annihilating the major opposition parties, knocked out the Janata government in Karnataka. In one stroke the Congress(I) achieved what its puny state leaders had attempted to do all the while in an unsavoury manner. Just a week short of two years in office, Ramakrishna Hegde resigned following an adverse verdict in the Lok Sabha elections.

Set to win at least 14 of the 28 Lok Sabha seats from Karnataka to stay in office, the Janata Party notched up a meagre tally of four. Immediately, the chorus went up from the Congress(I) asking for the resignation of the Janata government. Hegde obliged. But he was not going to allow the Congress(I) to hold the reins of the state so easily. Even as he resigned from office, the wily chief minister got his cabinet to recommend dissolution of the Assembly. The Governor, and the new government at the centre, could do little else than oblige. And so, Hegde set up the stage for a rematch: an Assembly poll in March. The outgoing chief minister's argument that the Congress(I) victory in the Lok Sabha election is not really a verdict on the Janata government, will be put to test.

Hegde's exit from office was not without drama. On 28 December 1984, even as the counting of votes reached the half-way stage, it became clear that the Janata was going to lose. With desires of coming back to office, Congress(I) leaders, Gundu Rao and Bangarappa, immediately began a clamour for Hegde's ouster. But Hegde refused to oblige and, in fact, flatly refused to quit, saying that the results of the Lok Sabha polls could not annul the Assembly verdict which had brought the Janata to power. But there were subtle undercurrents to the chief minister's stance. By alluding that he would stay on in spite of the poor show in the Lok Sabha polls, Hegde hoped to be dismissed by the centre just as the Congress(I) did to the Janata-led state governments after its win in the 1980 Lok Sabha polls. But the answer to Hegde's ploy came the very next day. Despite the memorable win, PM Rajiv Gandhi made it clear he was not going to dismiss Mr Hegde. In fact, he disapproved of the 1980 precedent. If Mr Hegde wished, he could resign.

So, the next day, after some rethinking, Hegde resigned from office. But he recommended dissolution of the Assembly to seek a fresh poll. The day after he resigned, Hegde addressed a public meeting attended by nearly 50,000 people who listened to him in pouring rain. The adulation and affection he found is normally associated with NTR in Andhra Pradesh and MGR in Tamil Nadu. The sympathy wave, it seemed, was rolling back.

Faced with this situation, the Congress(I) fumbled badly. There was no question of the Congress(I) forming a government, not only because it lacked the majority, but more due to the adverse opinion it would create. So, the recommendation for dissolution had to be accepted and fresh polls ordered. But, if Hegde was relieved of his post he was certain to capitalise on the already growing sympathy. And if he was asked to continue as caretaker chief minister (which Hegde had already declined to do) it would be advantageous to the Janata Party while facing the Assembly polls. Hegde's statesmanship also succeeded in bringing out the differences within the Congress(I) into the open. While the Congress(I) leaders reacted with confusion to Hegde's moves, only former chief minister, R. Gundu Rao, was categorical in welcoming the chief minister's resignation and move to dissolve the Assembly. Gundu Rao's objective was two-pronged: he would get a chance to be elected to the Assembly (he is not a member having lost in 1983), and he would show to the party high command that he was still the undisputed Congress(I) leader in Karnataka, at least in terms of support among Congressmen.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

PARIS OPERA BALLET

A Study in Perfection

Rudolph Nureyev captivates Delhi audiences

The performance of the Paris Opera Ballet in Delhi on 31 December, as a part of a cultural exchange between the governments of India and France to mark 1985 as the Year of India in France left ballet enthusiasts and lovers of spectacle in the capital spellbound. The scintillating troupe, led by the celebrated Rudolph Nureyev, also the artistic director of the Paris Opera Ballet, included the superb ballerina Claude de Va Vulpian, and Francoise Legree, Jean Guizerix, Fanmy Gaida, and Yannick Stephant.

Much of the attention and adulation however, was reserved for Nureyev, the Russian-born superstar of ballet, who's mesmeric grace had caused a sensation even as a student at the Vaganova School in Leningrad. Nureyev danced his way to international fame after his Convent Garden debut when he partnered Margot Fonteyn in *Giselle*.

Nureyev, however, was not at his magnificent best in the opening piece *Apollon* (he later complained about the faulty lighting which made him lose his balance once or twice), where he as master of the Muses inspires the three Muses of poetry, rhyme and dance, came into his own towards the end. The final ballet,



Claude de Vulpian

Nureyev: "Ballet has not evolved in USSR"

On ballet in the Soviet Union (Rudolph Nureyev defected from the USSR in a rather dramatic fashion in 1961. The leap to freedom took place at Paris's Le Bourget airport when he refused to return to the Soviet Union from Paris from where he was to go to London): Ballet has not evolved in the USSR. It has stultified. They look, but they do not see. Everything is fossilised.

On innate musicality and change in ballet forms:

Dance is also a union of different arts and poetry. George Balanchine tried to dispense with the story but had the music, Merce Cunningham dispensed with music as well. Ours is a tolerant society. George Balanchine made a fantastic marriage between music and movement. Cunningham made movement speak for itself...choreographers like these will survive a long time. They discovered forms which have become classical. My advice to choreographers would be to go directly to Merce Graham and directly study her style. This would be a point of departure.

On his short-lived career as an actor (he played Rudolph Valentino):

I am a dancer. Films were a diversion, although not very successful...were i to make a film on a ballet I would like to film "Sleeping Beauty" or "Don Quixote"

On his training:

The choreography came from France. The basis of the training came from the Paris Opera and it was transferred to the Bolshoi. I grew up on this. It seems to me to be the same school.

On Leningrad:

(He compares Rome with Leningrad) Look at Rome, the squares have such beautiful proportions. The Italians, even the people who sweep the streets wear the best designed clothes. They wear their hair well. They talk, they move so gracefully....It all has to do with the place, the surroundings...

Interviewed by Madhu Jain



Ruuolph Nurevev

Yannick Stephant



Songs of a Wayfarer, a piece created by Maurice Bejart to Gustav Mahler's music especially for Nureyev, left the audience enthralled. This melancholic *pas de deux*, performed with Jean Guizerix is about a romantic student who rages against himself and the world until fate helps him to come to terms with himself. Guizerix plays fate with a controlled intensity but it is Nureyev's performance, especially his gestures of impossible pathos and impotent rage that makes the number unforgettable.

The most talked about ballet was Bhakti 111, also by Maurice Bejart. The performers Marie-Claude Pietragalla and Wilfried Romoli, bathed in shades of saffron and pink presented a stunningly performed series of scenes reminiscent of tantric poses. But despite the fact that east and west do not meet all that well here, the result, something like the Bolshoi Ballet's *Indian Poem*, remains electrifying.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

AFGHAN REFUGEES

Delhi's Little Kabul

The Afghan refugees are unwanted guests

Five years of Soviet occupation in Afghanistan has changed not only Kabul, but also Delhi. The large influx of rich refugees from Afghanistan has pushed up rents and prices of essential commodities in the capital. According to the foreign registration office, about 6,000 Afghan nationals have entered India legally. The Afghans residing in Delhi come mainly from the urban areas of their country and belong to the educated upper class. It is easy to spot them anywhere in Delhi; in elite shopping arcades, in fashionable shops, in the crowded *bazaars* of Paharganj or in the posh colonies of south Delhi.

Their increasing presence is so conspicuous that the Delhi shopkeepers have started displaying products which attract the extravagant Afghan buyer. For instance, a few years ago, most butchers in south Delhi sold only *jhatka* meat which Hindus and Sikhs eat. Now many shops selling *halal* meat have come up in south Delhi. Even the grocers display in large quantities the golden *sela* rice used for making *biryani*. The textile shops are full of colourful material used for making Pathan costumes, popular among the Afghans. Most of the Afghan refugees stay in posh south Delhi colonies or other localities like Paharganj and Ballimaran, or in the Trans Yamuna colonies in east Delhi. Many of them come to India for medical treatment as the Indian embassy in Kabul prefers to issue visas on health grounds or to rich Afghans. Once the Afghan refugee reaches New Delhi he uses his stay to seek political asylum in Western countries. Unlike Pakistan, which is a breeding ground for rebels, India does not allow any political activity by foreign nationals.

The Indian government has also not permitted the United Nations Refugee Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to open an office in Delhi for the Afghan refugees. The UNRRA at present operates through the UN Development Project (UNDP) for giving subsistence allowances to the refugees who have fled their country. The UNRRA has spent two million dollars to help the refugees. The controversy regarding granting of permission to UNRRA surfaced when the UNDP acting on behalf of UNRRA granted political protection to three Afghan soccer players who defected and sought refuge in India. The players seeking refugee status had approached the UNDP after arriving from Beijing. Earlier, UNRRA had granted refugee status to three Afghan Airline officials on Indian soil without the consent of the government. After these two incidents, the government of India has warned the UNO that in future the UNDP would not be permitted to act independently regarding the refugee problem.

Their affluence a thing of the past, the Afghan refugees talk of the comforts back home and the harsh realities they have to face here. When they came to Delhi, many of them had brought large sums of money; now they have only their entitled allowance from UNRRA to live on. Their refugee status entitles the Afghan national to Rs 600 a month to the head of the family, Rs 300 each to other members in order of age and Rs 150 each to minor dependants. The UNRRA also gives educational and medical assistance. However, the high cost of living in Delhi has made it difficult to maintain a family on such meagre allowances. Large families live in small rooms, and as many as seven or eight people live crammed in a single *barsati*, and face acute shortages of water.

Nostalgia for the comforts and concern about the grave situation back home has restrained many Afghans from establishing social contacts with the locals. Unlike their introvert elders, the young generation have made themselves at home and are quite comfortable in India and speak fluent Hindi. Many of them deal in narcotics and smuggle foreign goods. The dealers operate mainly from Paharganj. Quartz watches, German cameras and Japanese electronics goods are now easily available at some shops in Old Delhi. The actual dealing is done in cheap hotels and guest houses in Paharganj and Ballimaran. The crime department has recorded 103 cases of theft and drug trafficking involving Afghan nationals this year. "That is why we are so apathetic to their conditions," said Mr Aggarwal, a resident of Defence Colony, where many Afghans live. The locals blame the Afghans for the rise in house rents and daily necessities.

The long wait for immigration visas to the US and European countries has further frustrated their hopes. It takes at least three to four years after registration at the immigration office to acquire a visa. Thus, many Afghans have illegally migrated with forged passports. Some Afghan nationals pay up to Rs 30,000 for passports which they buy from hippies or for passports that are smuggled from Pakistan and other Muslim countries. The travel agent or the tout manipulates only the first two pages, changing names, photographs and other important details.

A senior official of an international airline company said that the changes in the passport were done so expertly that it was difficult to detect a forgery. The travel agent responsible for buying the ticket gives the airline officials the impression that the concerned passenger is an American or European returning home. Once the Afghan boards the aircraft he destroys the forged passport and presents his original after reaching his destination and claims political asylum. Before the immigration authorities at the airport can take any action to deport the individual, he is met by a lawyer who presents his



The Afghan soccer stars who defected and sought refuge in India

case for hearing before the magistrate. This was the *modus operandi* used by more than 50 Afghan nationals to gain political asylum in Europe and United States this year However, airline officials are beginning to screen passports and request the embassy official-in-charge to examine it

Pakistan faces a graver refugee problem than India. An estimated 4 million refugees of Afghan origin are staying in Pakistani refugee camps situated along its border. On an average it receives over 2,500 refugees per month mainly from the rural and backward areas of Afghanistan. The United Nations and Pakistan had signed an agreement early this year regarding the launching of a 20 million dollar project to create jobs for the refugees. In 1983-84, the cost of maintaining 3.8 million refugees was Rs 400 crores. Beside the financial expenditure, the influx has proved to be difficult for Pakistan economically, socially and politically

Frequent air raids by the Afghanistan airforce on the North-West Frontier border towns of Terimangle, Herat and Peshawar that are inhabited by Afghani refugees have caused many civilian casualties. Pakistan officials feel that after the war is over, the Afghans might opt to stay permanently in Pakistan as the country offers more economic opportunities The presence of Afghan refugees has increased social tensions in the Pakistan border towns. They compete for jobs at low wages causing labour displacements, and since they come under the refugee status, they are exempted from paying taxes. As the refugee traffic has made it easier for drug operations across the border, it has increased the number of heroin addicts in Pakistan The Afghan elders are seriously concerned about the growing strength of Soviet intervention They are no less worried about the problem of the young who cannot find anything better than to deal in drugs and smuggling

As Afghanistan prepares itself to face the sixth year of its hopeless struggle there seem to be few signs of any real success and fewer chances of a quick settlement. The recent Geneva talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan held under the auspices of the UN representative Mr Deigo Cordovous were recessed after an agreement to meet again in February 1985 after the swearing-in of the US President. Till then, a political solution to the Afghan problem remains an illusion and the miseries of Afghan refugees seem destined to increase.

Falguni Talwar, New Delhi

ENERGY

New Sources are Uneconomical

The government policy lacks direction

Despite spiralling costs of conventional energy sources and the government's interest in the development of alternative sources of energy, no integrated policy has been developed as yet. The plans to tap energy from bio-gas, bio-mass or solar energy, wind energy, geo-thermal and ocean energy in the near future are either too far-fetched and optimistic or uneconomical. The Department of Non-conventional Energy Sources (DNES) under the union energy ministry is yet to draw up a comprehensive plan and apart from extensive media coverage to inaugurations of a few bio-gas plants and solar photovoltaic technology-based electricity systems for "remote and inaccessible" villages, little has been done so far

The department's plan to electrify 10,000 villages using solar energy is hardly feasible considering the department's own performance against projections made for the current financial year. So far, only 15 villages have been identified using solar energy against a target of 220 villages and at a heavy cost. According to Maheshwar Dayal, the secretary of the DNES a system to work a village pump and keep the street lights burning for just three hours a day costs around Rs two lakh.

Mr Dayal said that 15 villages in the country have been electrified (using solar energy). Street lighting in five villages in Tamil Nadu and three in Andhra Pradesh has been arranged. Mr Dayal claimed that lighting units for at least another 30 villages will be supplied by the end of 1984.

Even if 30 villages are electrified in the next three months, the figure will not be even half of the target fixed for the current financial year. The reason for such a poor performance is due to faulty planning in the production of photovoltaic systems and its prohibitively high cost. The cost per unit of electricity produced under a photovoltaic system is nearly eight times that of electricity from thermal plants. However, Mr Dayal claims that "if we consider investment on new transmission lines, high transmission and distribution losses and poor load factors in certain rural areas, the cost of electricity actually consumed can be as high as Rs eight per unit at a distance of 10 km from the existing grids at least in the initial phase of load development. If we take a photovoltaic system of one to two kilowatt load, cost of power can be competitive to that from a thermal plant."

Unfortunately, the photovoltaic cells are being manufactured only by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and the Central Electronics Limited (CEL), Sahibabad (UP), despite demands by the private sector to produce them.

According to Suresh Krishna, chairman of the Association of Indian Engineering Industry, AIEI (southern region), and the chief executive of Sundaram Fasteners of the TVS group of companies, "the government has taken an important step by encouraging BHEL and CEL in the manufacture of photovoltaic cells. However, given the vast potential within the country, there appears to be enough scope for both the public sector and private sector companies to join hands in this effort."

Discussing the DNES plan to electrify 10,000 villages, Mr Dayal estimated that "an initial programme of electrification of these villages involving 'minimum' energy requirements such as street lighting, community centre and school lighting, a community TV set, a pump for drinking water, lighting and power for a small medical centre including a refrigerator and one or two micro-irrigation pumps can add up to a requirement of 25 megawatt using



A windmill to generate power

photovoltaic electricity systems." It is, however, doubtful whether such equipment can be supplied.

"If costs can be brought down to about half the current level, the country can even absorb 30 megawatt of photovoltaic system per year by 1990," said Mr Dayal But Dr T. K. Bhattacharya, of CEL observes that "the economies of using solar photovoltaic cells, as a viable supplementary source of electrical energy, are as yet not within the reach of common man. There have been extremely rosy forecasts made during 1974-81 about drastic cost reductions in that area, which have not materialised in practice. The present international approach is based on cautious optimism supported by intensive in-depth research."

Solar technology is still in its infancy even in the western countries. Below a certain level, cost reduction on the conventional photovoltaic technology in use now will not be possible Newer technologies like polycrystalline silicon, ribbon silicon and amorphous silicon solar cells are being experimented. Polycrystalline cells are already being manufactured by several companies abroad. Amorphous cells are presently being made on a commercial basis for calculators and other indoor applications It is almost certain that lower cost amorphous cells suitable for outdoor application may become abundantly available by 1990. In India, "pilot production plants" are likely to be established during the seventh Five Year Plan to do integrated research and development in this area.

But overambitious schemes have led to crippling losses. Hundreds of windmills on the Madras Mahabalipuram coast built to tap windmill power in the late Seventies have been failures.

The best surviving non-conventional energy idea is the gobar gas plants using animal waste, probably due to their low cost. Even here, the implementation has been so tardy that the government had to subsidise 50 per cent of the cost of erection of the plant and give Rs 5,000 towards feasibility studies. Still there are not many takers.

T. Raman, Madras

PAKISTAN

General Zia's Hollow Victory

Large numbers boycott referendum

As expected Pakistan President General Zia-ul Haq has won the national referendum hands down. He secured 97.7 per cent of the votes polled, according to the Pakistan chief election commissioner, Mr Justice S. A. Nusrat. As many as 27,758,901 voters or nearly 60 per cent of the electorate exercised their right of franchise Though there were very few districts where the turnout was less than 40 per cent, one of the lowest was in Larkana (30.6 per cent) in Sind, Bhutto's hometown

Most large cities, notably Karachi, Rawalpindi and even Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, gave the referendum a cold shoulder. In Islamabad, out of an electorate of 1,48,565, 69,546 voted "yes," while 2,213 voted "no." Nearly 76,000 voters abstained despite pressure on civil servants to vote.

Most voters in PakistanfacedaHobson's choice because a "yes" for Gen Zia was tagged with a "yes" for the Islamic structure in Pakistan. No voter could separate the two. Thus a "no" for one meant a "no" for the other Moreover, troops were stationed all over the country.

It is surprising that the results, which were to be announced three days after the polling, were available informally, within a few hours after polling ended. And strangely, the Election Commission declared the results of far-flung areas in Baluchistan before that of Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Quetta and metropolitan Karachi. The absence of 40 per cent of the electorate is enormous



General Zia-ul Haq

considering the official threats against a boycott. Also, at the last moment, the production of identity cards by voters—a "must"—was waived aside. Still more than 11 million voters decided to stay away from the polls.

Gen. Zia's speeches—opposition parties boycotted the referendum—invoked not only the name of Islam but also raised fears about the "enemy". He said at Quetta, on the eve of the polls, that "to avoid intrigues by foreign powers, future uncertainty and political confusion, he had adopted the path of referendum, "which would consolidate the basis of the country on the one hand and give impetus to the Islamisation process on the other." However, all this did not convince at least 40 per cent of electorate to go to the polling booth. (Interestingly, the first news on the polling was that Gen. Zia had "suffered a set-back with a strikingly low turnout in the referendum.")

Miss Benazir Bhutto, the acting chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) said in London, that despite the frantic efforts of the regime, polling remained dismal. "Malik Qasam, leader of the Opposition Movement for Restoration of Democracy(MRD), has alleged that there was extensive coercion of voters. *The Muslim*, an independent English daily from Islamabad has said in an editorial that "the mechanics of the referendum left a lot to be desired and these reflected bureaucratic bungling and confusion on a wide scale."

Many foreign newsmen, who have been covering the elections on both sides of the border, have compared the atmosphere in the two countries. They have said that in India it was an *election* and in Pakistan a *selection*. Significantly, the Pakistan Election Commission has directed the press in the country to refrain from relying upon the stories released by the foreign media regarding the Commission or referendum.

Against this backdrop and the allegations that Gen. Zia's rule "is neither more or less legitimate now than it was before the referendum," the announcement to hold a partyless election in Pakistan on 23 March next year has lost much of its importance. It appears that the country is in for a regimented rule for many years to come; at least for the next five years because that is the term for which Gen. Zia has been "elected."

Kuldip Nayar, New Delhi

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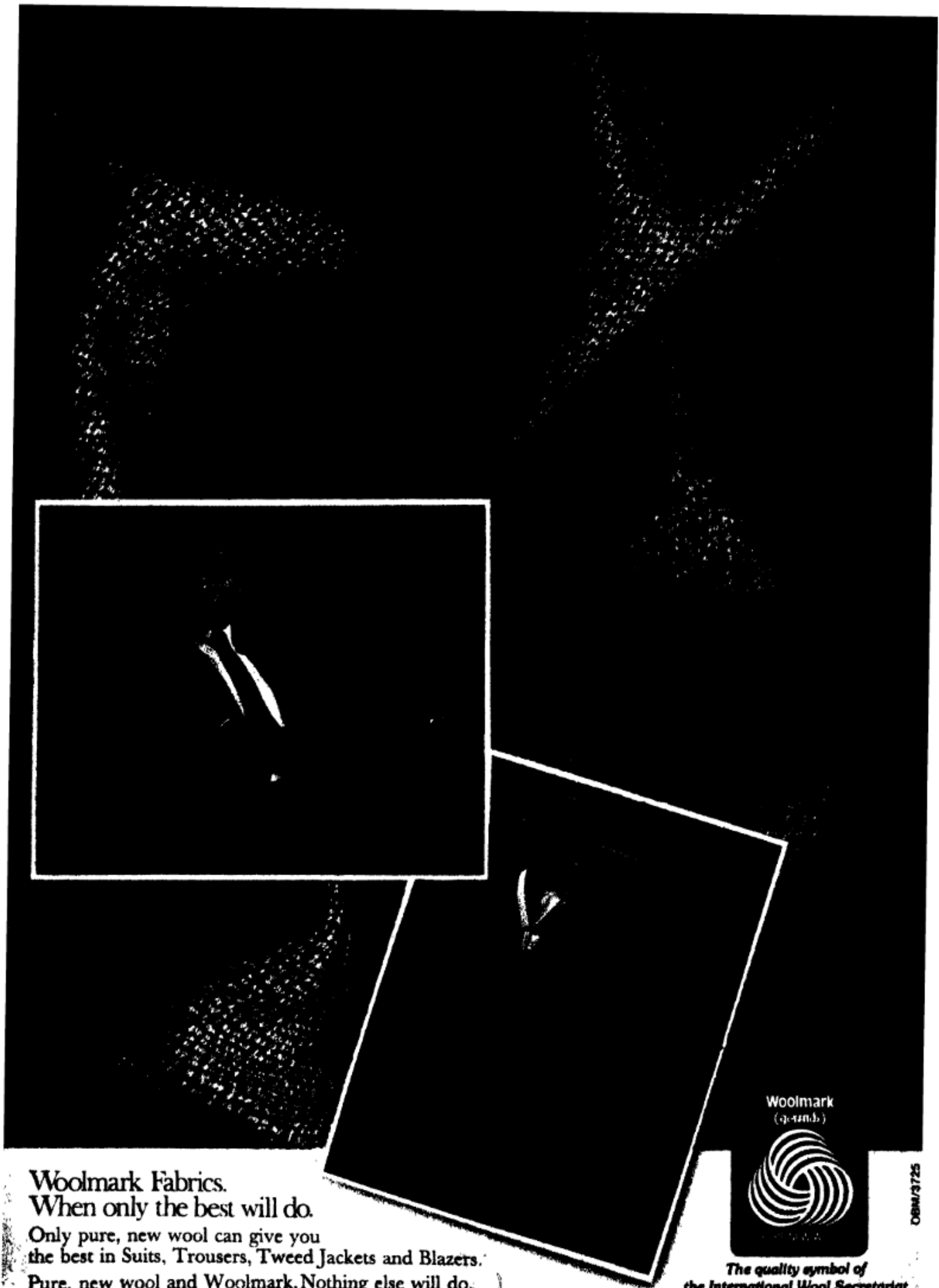
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CHINA

Bamboo Curtain Lifts

Tibet is more accessible today

A major change in China's Tibetan policy has been noticed after the recent pact between Britain and China over Hongkong. In an effort to quickly integrate Tibet with the rest of China, the once-forbidden land has been made more accessible to outsiders. Sweeping socio-economic reforms are also being carried out and in an unprecedented gesture, the Chinese have lifted the former agricultural policy of rigid state control and marketing in Tibet. Most China-watchers believe that the recent reforms in Tibet are an effort to soothe the fears of the people of Hongkong and Taiwan and convince them of the flexibility of the Chinese economic system.

The Chinese claim that the relaxation in Tibet is aimed at boosting production in order to reduce its dependence on Beijing's subsidy. However, Hongkong-based Sinologists feel that the Chinese move in Tibet is politically motivated. According to *Tibetan Review*, a magazine on Tibetan affairs, the recent decision to underwrite the expenses of the government and party workers living in Tibet by the central government, relieving the Tibetan production units of the responsibility would further add to the amount of central subsidy to Tibet instead of reducing it. The reports add that Tibet's poverty has been a burden for Beijing, forcing it to subsidise 98 per cent of the region's public spending. During the last 32 years of Chinese occupation, the central government has spent an equivalent of about 2.75 billion US dollars on Tibet. In 1981, the average annual income for Tibet's 1.8 million people was equivalent to 92 US dollars as against the national average of 189 US dollars. The agriculture and industrial output in Tibet is the lowest among China's 30 provinces, autonomous regions and cities.

The new economic policy enables the Tibetan peasants and herdsmen to select the agricultural goods they wish to produce, fix their own prices and carry on trade. They enjoy tax exempt status at least until 1990 so that their incomes double within three to five years. Till recently, the peasants and herdsmen were given fixed production quotas by the state which also bought the produce at controlled prices, though they could privately sell any surplus produce.

According to some observers, the new economic policy in Tibet is a bait to lure the self-exiled Tibetans to return home. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) authorities have been instructed by Beijing to treat new arrivals cordially. Meanwhile, Tibetans in India have reacted sharply to Beijing's decision to induct 50,000 Chinese workers from other underdeveloped and overpopulated regions of the country into Tibet. The new arrivals were supposed to begin work on 16 major construction projects last year in Lhasa including multistoried guest houses, hotels, and a stadium. Another 42 major development projects are being planned in Tibet this year.

Tibetans allege that over 30,000 Chinese have been made to settle down in Tibet and even intermarry with Tibetans to destroy the Tibetan nationalist identity and make Lhasa a socialist city. The Chinese are particularly adept at this and have been successful in Inner Mongolia where the native population has been reduced to a small minority.

Tapas Mukherjee, Darjeeling

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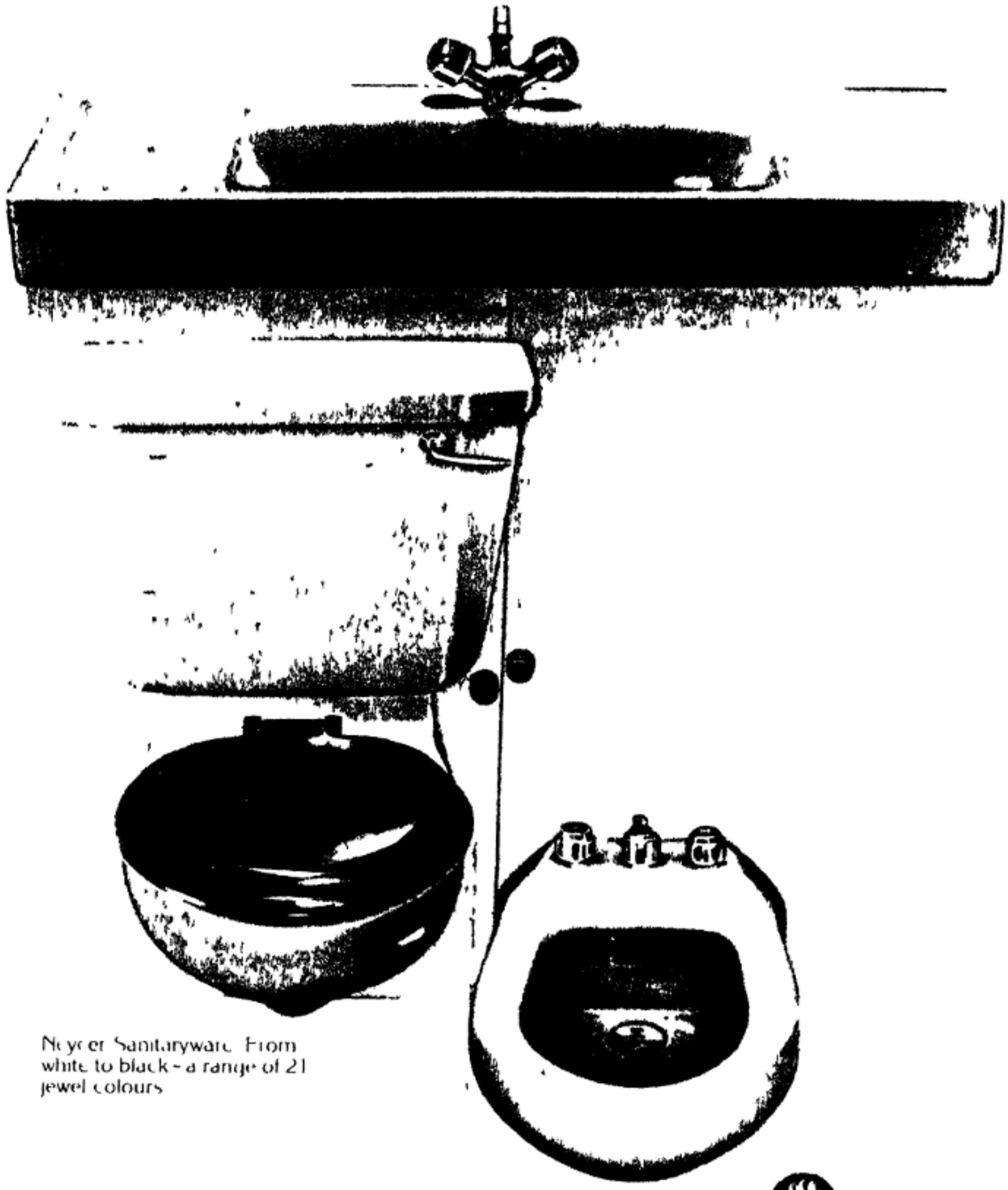
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A New Operation



A new method for sparking cancer is sure to prove a boon to researchers trying to learn how oncogenes do their dirty work. Recently, a US team of researchers achieved, in a matter of hours, what is known as 'malign transformation'. Using a needle-fine tool, the scientists injected rat, mouse and human cells with *h-ras* protein, which is produced under the direction of an oncogene, or cancer agent, first found in cells from a human bladder tumour. Within hours, the rodent cells changed shape and began dividing energetically, growing unmindfully over neighbouring cells (the human cells were not affected). No one knows yet precisely how either the gene or the protein interferes with normal cell mechanics.

Analysing the Split Personality



Behavioural scientists in the US and elsewhere have begun identifying signs in children that may eventually predict which of them will eventually have schizophrenia, or split personality, a kind of mental disease where the patient is an introvert, suffers from dissociation and is unable to distinguish between reality and unreality. The approach is based on the assumption that some people inherit a susceptibility to schizophrenia but how they weather the stresses of life determines whether they will contract the disease.

Many of the children studied had schizophrenic parents and hence were more likely to inherit the disorder. A distinctive feature of the parents was that they habitually gave their children confusing and negative messages. When showing disapproval, the parents tended to attack the child rather than to criticise the things he had done, told the child what his feelings and thoughts were rather than listening to what the child said, and often spoke ambiguously. More than two million Americans suffer from this split personality.

Among the important differences between children who become schizophrenic and those who have not are that:

- Their mother's schizophrenia was more chronic and severe than that of others, had an earlier onset, lasted longer and involved more pronounced symptoms. The mother also showed poor social and personal adjustment.
- These children were more likely to have had complications at delivery, such as abnormal birth positions.
- They had more often been raised in institutions, or by foster parents.
- In school they often created disturbances, being anxious, easily angered and aggressive.

One of the more promising lines of this research focuses on the way families communicate. Some researchers believe that teaching social skills to children may help.

More Cornea Transplants



The cornea of the eye, one of the first human tissues to be transplanted successfully, is being used now much more than ever before to restore sight to the blind. More than 20,000 corneal transplants are now being performed in the United States. Such transplants have been done since the Forties.

Originally, corneal tissues were removed from the donor's eyes in square sheets and were cut to fit the recipient. Now a surgical device is used to take a circular piece of cornea. It is sewn into place in the patient's eye with sutures much finer than human hair.

Escaping the Mood Swings

An American team of scientists has come out with a drug that shuts off sex hormone production by the ovaries, which appears to be the first effective treatment for premenstrual syndrome. In spite of the risk of contracting uterine cancer and developing brittle bones, the scientists believe that some women may be willing to take the drug to escape the mood swings and other disturbing consequences of the monthly cycle.

Live Longer with Dynorphin

One of the body's natural opiates, dynorphin, may help people suffering from strokes. An experiment conducted by the university of California medical school on cats showed that those who suffered strokes had a prolonged life: dynorphin prolonged the survival of six out of ten feline stroke victims given a synthetic version of the opiate.

No Antibiotics in Beef



If you buy beef or hamburger meat from the supermarket and it has been laced with antibiotics, then you are likely to catch nausea, cramps, fever and diarrhoea. Scientists at the Centres for Disease Control in Atlanta (USA), together with health officials in Minnesota, have traced the infections of the *salmonella* bacteria in hamburger meat, which was bought from the same feed-lot which routinely added an antibiotic to the animal feed.

According to the CDC, 12 of the 18 victims that they eventually found in four mid-Western states contracted the infection because they took the antibiotics for other illnesses. Most of these people probably were affected first by the *salmonella* in the beef, but remained well because the bacteria that normally inhabit human intestines competed with the *salmonella* for nutrients and kept it in check—until they took antibiotics. Then the drugs quickly killed the normal bacteria, allowing an explosive growth of the salmonella bacteria from the hamburger meat.

Illustrations: Prabir Sen

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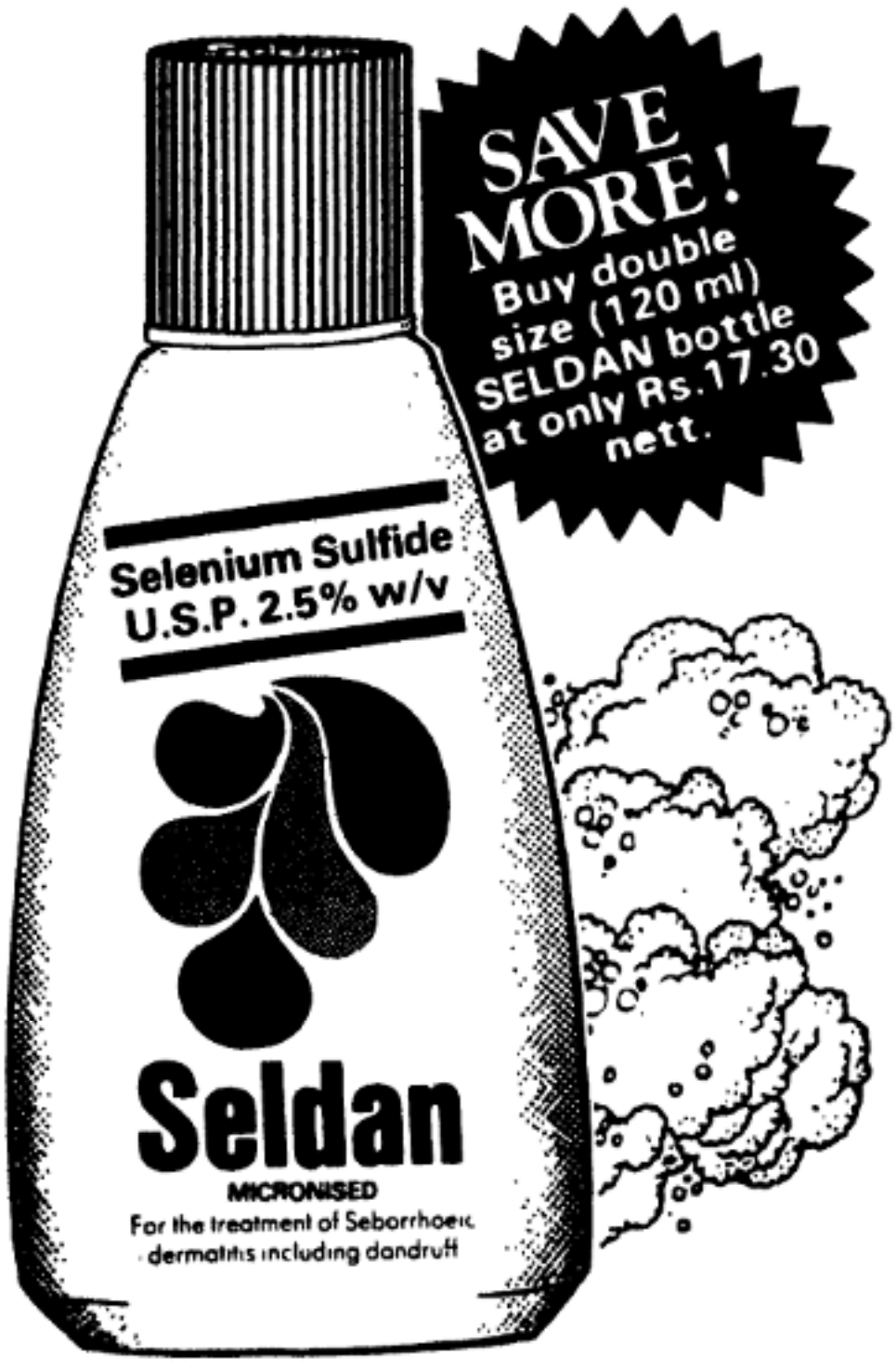
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Three days before *Kumar Gaurav* married *Namrata*, the sister of his bosom friend *Sunjay Dutt*, a noted astrologer had predicted a bright new era for him. The good times would begin with his first film after marriage, which according to the astrologer would be a hit. The film, *Hum Hain Lajwat*, on which much depended, failed to evoke any response. Meanwhile they have left for their honeymoon. But his honeymoon with stardom has ended all too soon.

The *Namrata-Kumar Gaurav* marriage has left *Vijaveta Pandit*, Gaurav's first heroine and first love, confused, sad and bitter. According to sources very close to the Pandit family, Vijaveta has threatened to release some of his juicy love letters to her, to a film magazine. Her elder sister *Sulakshana* is believed to be the inspiration behind the move. The intention is obviously to create rancour between Kumar Gaurav and Namrata. A jilted girl can be very dangerous, especially if she happens to be Vijayeta Pandit.

And pray, what is *Sulakshana Pandit* up to these days? Nothing. She has not been getting offers either for singing or acting. *Sanjeev Kumar*, who once showed interest in her (as a woman, not as an actress), has, it seems, stopped thinking about marriage. She spends her time singing for 'B' grade movies and giving concerts in the Gulf countries, "where there is more money and fun than in films."

When *Suresh Oberoi* first talked about playing lead roles, he was not taken seriously. But he had faith in himself and managed to get a role opposite *Swapna* and then with Deepti Naval in *Kanoon Kya Karega* which flopped. Now he has a row of films: *Surkhiyaan*, *Aitbaar*, *Satta*, *Thikaana* and *Badla* with *Moon Moon Sen*, *Dimple Kapadia*, *Zeenat Aman*, *Smita Patil* and *Anita Raj*. "I am still to be linked with any of them because I keep my profession and my personal life on two different planes," he says. Or is it because the heroines are not interested?



Prabhat Kumar

Sulakshana Pandit: no songs, no dances



Durgaprasad

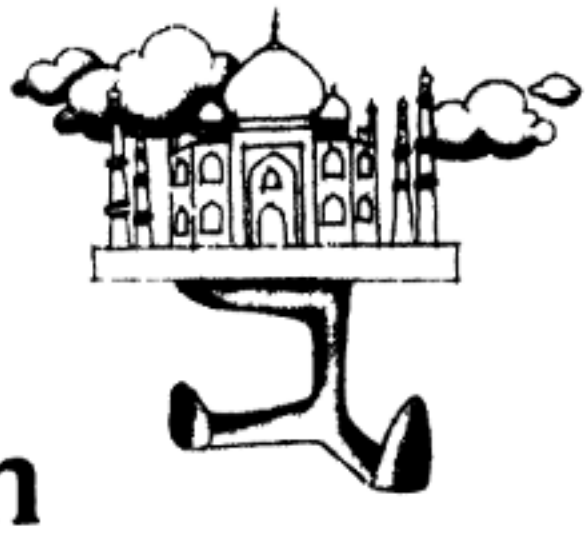
Kumar Gaurav marries Namrata Dutt

Vijayeta Pandit: jilted



A new sex-symbol has descended on Madras from no less a place than Gujarat. *Kuyili*, who acted as heroine in *K Balachander's Puyilangu*, is actually the screen name of *Miss Gulnardi* from Gujarat. Balachander liked her so much that she has been signed for his next movie, *Kalyana Agathikal*. She has also signed a Hindi and Malayalam film.

Hollywood is often cruel and Kabir Bedi it seems has realised it. At one stage it almost seemed that he would make it, especially after the role in *Octopussy*. The film was not a hit by James Bond standards. And so Bedi was forgotten. But he keeps trying and he was recently in Bombay to drop word that he was afterall, available to act in Hind movies.



The shoemakers of Agra thank Shah Jahan for building the Taj.



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THIS INDIA



MADURAI: An independent candidate at Usilampatti in Madurai district, Mr Raju Thevar, was allowed to take out a procession of six donkeys on 17 December 1984 in his constituency, with a view to impressing on the electorate that he would carry their burden, if elected, just as the donkeys carried their burden—*The Hindu* (M Govindarajan, Madras)

NEW DELHI: The 120-odd Sikh refugees at the Subzi Mandi police station did not cast their votes and travel by the government-arranged DTC buses in protest against the refusal of the "government to pay for their tickets," the police commissioner, S S. Jog said here. Mr Jog said as the government was firm that each one must pay for his own ticket the Sikh refugees, some of whom were on a hunger strike demanding their proper rehabilitation, refused to go and cast their votes—*The Hindustan Times* (Ajay Mehra, New Delhi)

SHILLONG: Mr Endro Iawphaniaw, the forest minister in the last coalition government of Meghalaya, was arrested last month in Assam with four others for allegedly attempting to pilfer timber. Mr Iawphaniaw and Mr Bombar Lyngdoh Kharnaior, former district council member, were released on personal bonds on 4 December, three days after their arrest in Umang forest area in the state's Karbi Anglong district—*The Times of India* (R. Suriya Narayanan, Gauhati)

HOSHIARPUR: The shopkeepers of the Kashmiri Bazar in Hoshiarpur adopted a novel method to get a pile of debris removed from the market. The debris was left after the repair of a sewerage manhole. When their repeated requests to the municipal authorities to remove the dump proved futile, they covered it with a red cloth and put some coins and flowers on it When the municipal authorities came to know about it they thought it was an attempt to establish a *mazar* and promptly removed it—*The Times of India* (Harshvardhan Kher, Gwalior)

SIMLA. The Simla municipal corporation has launched a vigorous drive to catch monkeys and transport them to distant places. Monkeys, who had become a source of nuisance and harassment here, are being caught in traps set by five "specialists" especially requisitioned from Uttar Pradesh. So far, they have been able to catch about 400 monkeys The corporation has transported these monkeys to places more than 25 km from here—*Indian Express* (B.K. Salwan, 99 APO)

RAJKOT The timely closing of a series of level crossing gates and the presence of mind of the railway staff helped avert a major disaster as a "ghost" train hurtled down the track between Ranavav and Porbandar in Gujarat's Junagadh district on 16 December 1984. Railway sources said that the 15-minute drama began when 14 wagons of a goods train carrying limestone broke away from the engine while shunting at Ranavav station and began rolling towards Porbandar, soon picking up a speed of about 100 km an hour on the steep incline. The station authorities immediately relayed an emergency message to Adityana and Porbandar stations, and the driver of a diesel engine standing on the same track at Adityana began rushing towards Porbandar, keeping just ahead of the oncoming wagons. On a dead-end track, the driver braked hard and jumped out to safety just before the loose rack at the seashore. The engine rammed the rail at the end of the track followed by the pursuing wagons—four of which derailed on impact—*The Statesman* (V Satyamurti, New Delhi)

NEW DELHI: In a major advance of plant tissue culture, geneticists at Haryana Agricultural University at Hissar have grown date palms in test tubes for the first time in India. The HAU achievement closely follows test-tube coconuts grown by agricultural scientists at Kasargod, in Kerala, and the test tube oil palms by scientists at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Bombay. The date palm project at HAU was financed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. It will enable rapid multiplication of thousands of plantlets of date palm, starting from a single-leaf bud—*Statesman* (Ranjan Gupta, Durgapur)

WITHOUT COMMENT



The people have voted overwhelmingly for us because they are looking for a future for the country...we were always confident of winning—Rajiv Gandhi, after the Congress(I)'s landslide victory in the recent Lok Sabha elections, quoted in *The Hindustan Times*

I am not deterred by the defeat. It is not the first time I have been defeated—H N. Bahuguna, quoted in *The Statesman*

The maharajah's (Madhav Rao Scindia's) victory has in no small measure been due to money power, muscle power and ministerial power—A.B. Vajpayee

If there is anything called a Rajiv wave then God save this country—Jyoti Basu, West Bengal CM, quoted in *The Telegraph*

Parliament? What are you talking about? Just shoot all politicians. Yes, you, me, everyone—Charan Singh, when asked what the eighth Parliament would be like, quoted in *Indian Express*

A giant landslide it is, if there ever there was one. This is unmistakably Mr Rajiv Gandhi's victory—Editorial comment in *Indian Express*

The Indian voter has wiped the political slate as clean as he possibly could. He has given Rajiv Gandhi a mandate to inaugurate a new era in the country's political life—Girilal Jain in *The Times of India*

The results of the poll have clearly shown the will of the Indian people to carry out to the fullest extent Mrs Indira Gandhi's political and spiritual message—Francois Mitterand, President of France

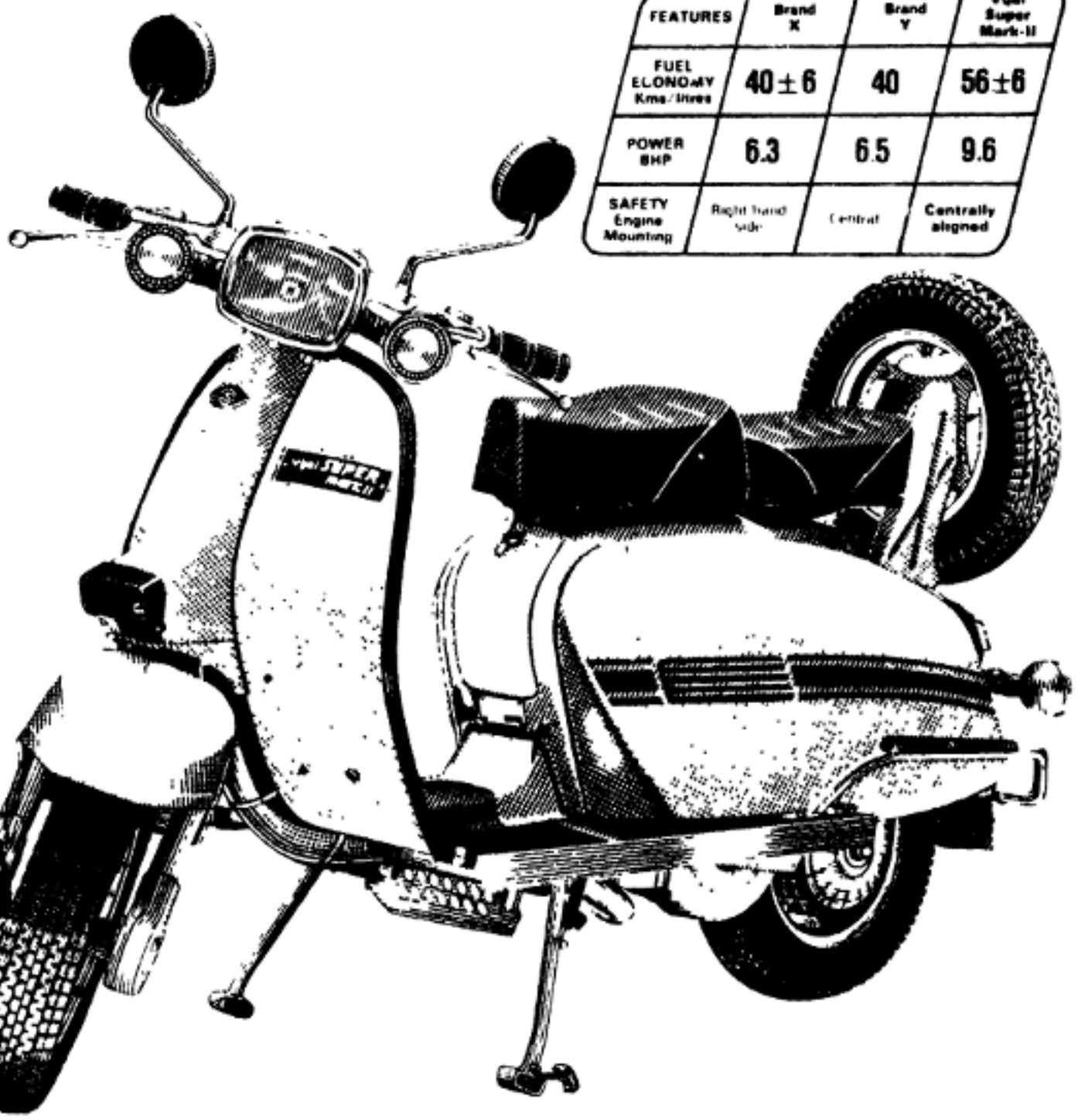
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BEGINNING 6 JANUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) Success as well as setbacks are in store for you this week. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. Financially, this is a good period. you can make investments. The domestic front will remain peaceful. However, this is not a favourable week for lovers: try and avoid unnecessary arguments. Your health too will bother you throughout this phase
Good dates: 7, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: North



LEO (15 August—14 September) If you have legal problems it is best to solve them during this period. Disputes relating to property will be solved in your favour This is also a good period for lovers misunderstandings will end. At home your children will be a source of joy to you. Financially, this is a good phase for most of you However, your health will bother you this week.
Good dates: 10, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This week you will have to draw upon your savings or borrow money to tide over this lean period. At home, one of your relatives may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden If you wish to change your job, consult your elders. Lovers are advised to steer clear of all controversies. Your health will add to your worries during this period.
Good dates: 7, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: West



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Businessmen will be able to repay most of their debts this week. The prospects are also bright for gamblers and speculators. For those in service a promotion or a posting to a better place is in the offing. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans However, your children will be a source of worry to you this week. Keep a vigilant eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 6, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: South-east



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is a good week for professionals but if some of you are thinking in terms of changing your career, do so after consulting your elders. The period is equally favourable for those in business' utilise every opportunity that comes your way. The last two days of the week are particularly favourable for artists. Lovers should avoid adventurous plans this week
Good dates: 6, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 8
Favourable direction: North



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is a week of mixed fortunes. On the financial front some of you will suffer reverses. A word of advice. try not to borrow money and keep your expenditure to a minimum. On the domestic front your wife may suddenly fall sick. However, this is a favourable period for those in love and intending to get married.
Good dates: 7, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The week ahead is not good for those in love postpone marriage plans On the domestic front, your relationship with someone close to you will be strained. Financially, this is a bright phase and you may gain money from an unexpected source. An old friend with whom you had broken off relations will be particularly helpful to you. Your health will improve.
Good dates: 9, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) At the slightest indication of illness consult a physician. Negligency may lead to serious complications. Lovers should avoid unnecessary arguments this week But this is a favourable period for students' some of you may get a chance to study in prestigious institutions. Those unemployed may find a job Friends and relatives will be helpful to you this week.
Good dates: 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South-west



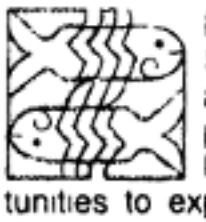
AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Sportsmen will come out with flying colours in competitions this week. For businessmen, any deal struck during this period will prove to be lucrative. However, professionals are advised to deal with their superiors carefully. The domestic front will remain inspiring. This is also a good time for love and matrimonial alliances But do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 6, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 3, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) On the economic front the stars are favourable to you this week: some of you may even win a lottery. The period is also favourable for creative artists and sportsmen. However, professionals are likely to come in for criticism from their employers. Businessmen should also be wary of deception. A letter towards the end of the week will bring unexpected good tidings.
Good dates: 6, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This week you will be busy with social engagements but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health. Professionals will not be in the good books of their superiors while businessmen are likely to suffer a setback. This is also not the opportune time to get married. However, your health will improve markedly this week.
Good dates: 6, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Stellar influences make this an extremely favourable period for all of you. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business while a promotion cannot be ruled out for those in service. At home, your children will be a source of joy to you. Friends and relatives will be very helpful Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. But do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South

For those born on the 6th, 7th or 8th of any month:

Most of you do not possess artistic temperament. You are practical and down-to-earth in all your dealings. Avoid the creative arts and join any administrative job if you want to prosper in life. Some of you are endowed with a rare sense of correctly analysing an incident. Friends and relatives look upon you for advice. Women born during this period are usually very intelligent and passionate.

21ST JANUARY '85 MAY BE A RED LETTER DAY IN YOUR LIFE

ANDHRA LAXMI

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VARIETY

CHESS

International master Dimitar Donchev achieved the unusual feat in 1983 of becoming national champion of two different countries, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. This was made possible by the fact that the Czechs opened up their championship to invited players from other Eastern Bloc countries, but it was nonetheless surprising that a little-known Bulgarian could eclipse grandmasters of the stature of Smejkal Ftachnik and Jansac on their home ground. Donchev's play is direct but refined and reveals more than an inkling of a sense of humour, as the following game from his victory in the Bulgarian championship demonstrates.

White: Kolev. Black. Donchev. King's Indian Defence Bulgarian Championship 1983.

1 P–Q4	**N–KB3**	**2 P–QB4**	**P–Q3**
3 N–QB3	**QN–Q2**	**4 P–K4**	**P–K4**
5 N–B3	**P–KN3**	**6 B–K2**	**B-N2**
7 O–O	**O–O**	**8 R–K1**	**P–B3**
9 B–B1	**P–QR3**	**10 P–Q5**	**P–B4**
11 P–QR3	**N–K1**	**12 P–QN4?!**	

Superficial. Correct is 12 P–KN3 to meet 12 . . . P–KR3 with 13 N–KR4 restraining . P–KB4

Donchev (Black) to move



Kolev (White)

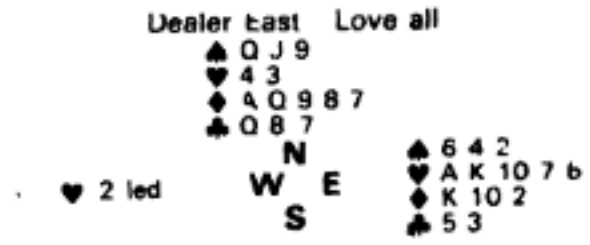
12 . . . P–KR3
A necessary preliminary to . . P–KB4, else the reply N–N5 is unpleasant.
13 N–Q2 P–B4 14 N–N3 P–N3
15 R–N1 N(Q2)–B3 16 B–Q3 P–B5
17 PxP NPxP 18 B–Q2 P–B6!
A fine stroke. If 19 QxP N–N5 or 19 PxP N –R4, in either case initiating a powerful attack
19 P–N3 N–N5 20 B–KB1 P–KR4
21 P–KR3? DIAGRAM
Really asking for trouble
21 . . . P–R5!. 22 PxN PxP
23 P–N5
Trying hard to keep the queen out, but she is not to be denied.
23 . . Q–Q2 24 PxP
Else Black plays P–N7 and . . Q–R6
24 . . . P–B7+ 25 K–R2 B–R1!
A deft and rather amusing death-blow. There is no defence to Q–R2+
26 Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Players who have come to watch a tournament sometimes say afterwards 'I watched So-and-so for an hour and a half, but I didn't see anything special'. Perhaps, but would they always have recognised a good play if they had seen it? Study this deal from a tournament in France

Dealer East Love all



The bidding goes:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	—	—	No
1♠	No	2♦	2♥
2♠	3♣	4♠	No
No	No		

West leads the 2 of hearts to the king and you follow with the ace South plays the 5 and the 9 on these two tricks What do you play next?

A club, I am sure, hoping in time to make a club and a diamond But Chemla led a third round of hearts. Can you even see why?

The point is that partner, not knowing that you hold the king of diamonds, may take the ace of clubs and attempt to give you a ruff. Which will be disastrous if the hand is





What is liable to happen – and did happen at some tables – is that West, not placing his partner with the king of diamonds, may win a club lead and return a club, thinking that the best chance is to find partner with a singleton. Then South's losing diamond will go away on the queen of clubs

It appears that Chemla could have indicated a singleton elsewhere by playing ace and king of hearts, in that order. But why trust partner to remember?

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1 What is alopecia the medical term for?
2. The saying "once in a blue moon"—meaning a rare happening—is a fairly common one. Why does the moon look blue?
3. How is d-Lysergic Acid Diethylamide tartrate better known as?
4. Which film personality has won the maximum number of "Oscars," awarded by the U.S. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences?
5. What are marsupials?
6. Which state in India has the highest literacy rate?
7. What do Strahov, Maracana, Azteca, Brabourne and Wembley have in common?
8 China is the most populous country in the world. Name the least populous country?
9. In India, the national anthem is *Jana, Gana, Mana;* in Britain it is *God Save the Queen*; what is the national anthem of France called?
10. Which well-known painting is also called *La Gioconda*?
11. The word "tycoon" originates from a title which was once awarded to whom?
12. Which river is known as Bengal's Sorrow?

ANSWERS

1. Baldness.
2. The presence of sulphur particles in the atmosphere after a forest fire or a volcanic explosion can make the moon look blue.
3. L.S.D., the powerful drug.
4. Walt Disney—29 Oscars.
5. Animals with pouches, like the kangaroo. Most marsupials are found in Australia.
6. Kerala, where nearly 70 per cent of the population is literate.
7. They are all famous stadiums in Prague, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Bombay and London respectively.
8. Vatican City.
9. *La Marseillaise*, written in 1792 by Rouget de L'Isle.
10. The *Mona Lisa*.
11. The Japanese commander-in-chief was called *Taikun*.
12. The Damodar.

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Don't you think your car deserves one?

Technology you can trust

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

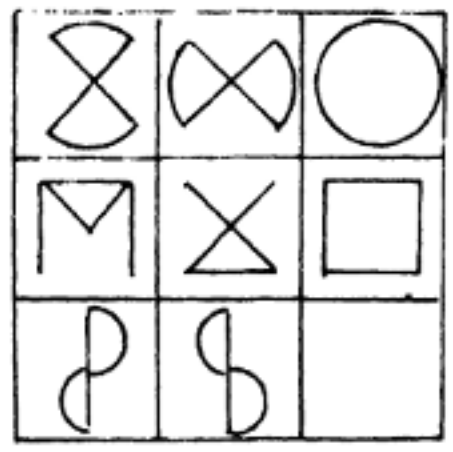
Cryptocross

5	8	21	13	4	■	12	5	6	2	13	20	19
■	20	■	20	■	■	25	■	6	■	19	■	
1	19	5	16	4	■	5	3	24	2	19	5	14
■	5	■	4	3	24	■	4	■	13	■	13	■
1	3	5	6	16	4	13	■	7	2	25	4	6
■	11	■	■	■	14	■	11	■	5	■	15	■
■	■	11	17	5	19	2	6	26	3	10	■	■
■	5	■	5	■	10	■	20	■	■	■	17	■
5	22	21	19	4	■	11	9	2	6	15	3	4
■	5	■	23	■	9	■	11	■	20	■	5	■
5	8	3	21	15	4	15	■	5	7	20	2	15
■	4	■	4	■	5	■	■	■	4	■	8	■
19	5	11	13	2	6	26	■	18	3	2	4	11

1	2	3	4	A 5	6
7	8	9	10	S 11	12
13	14	15	16	P 17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26				

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start, three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Shape Sleuth



Choose one of the squares numbered 1 to 5 to complete the blank in the large square.

Quick Think

Every one knows that families in India are close and large, but at a party the other day there were from the same family, one grandmother, one grandfather, two fathers, two mothers, four children, three grandchildren, one father-in-law, one mother-in-law and one daughter-in-law. An enormous number from just one family, you might say, and rather hard on the hostess. But was it really? Count carefully and see what the minimum is that you can reduce the family to.

Witsharpener

Three children whose surnames are Mukherjee, Bose and Sen live on the same road but use a different form of transport to come to school each morning. Their ages are 12, 13 and 14 years. We know that:

a) Ram is 14 years old
b) The 12 year old comes in a rickshaw
c) Barun does not cycle to school
d) Mukherjee takes the bus
e) Sisir's surname is not Bose nor is he 13 years old

Given these facts, can you work out each child's surname, his age and the transport he uses to come to school?

Scrambles



PENALTIES

CHAIN

TANGERINE

ENEMY

RUMBAED

ANALOG

SERIAL

answer

Feel like a trip around the world? Just unscramble these words and see where you get. And if that is not enough of arm chair travel, take the circled letters and rearrange them for one more journey!

What's in a Word?

In the following arrangement of letters— —R— — I S E you could replace both pairs of blanks with the same letters to form the word PORPOISE.

Can you complete the words given below in the same manner?

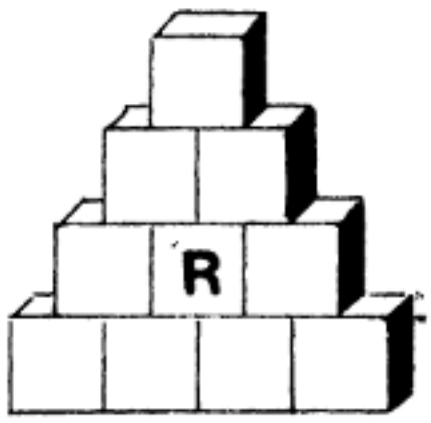
a) — —I N — I L L A
b) ——S — S I N
c) ——O——I E T Y
d) ——S——R I S M
e) C L — G — G

Mindbender

Can you work out this well-known puzzle?

There was once a Bedouin who had three sons. When he died, he left his property consisting of 17 camels to his sons, the oldest to have one halt of them, the second son to have one third, and the youngest one ninth. As 17 was a number not divisible by either 2, 3, 9, the camels could not be divided and the sons were in a dilemma. Finally, they remembered a sheik who was known for his wisdom and consulted him. What was his advice?

Blockbuster



D, N, M, P, R, E, I, T, E, A

Fill in the ten letters given below into the squares of the blank pyramid so that these those form eight four-letter words reading downwards.

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Personality Plus:
Jawaharlal Nehru

Blankagrams:
1. Duck 2. Bill 3. Hide 4 Play 5. Planter 6. Fly 7. Mount 8 Tick 9. Till 10. Tie

Quizzbizz:
c) Light can travel in vacuum.

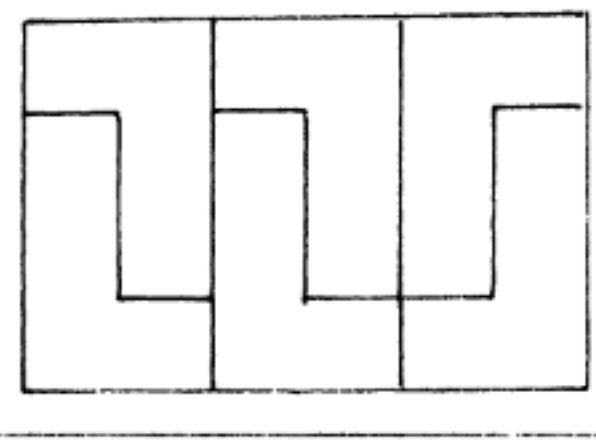
Quickthink:
There are 8 kennels.

What's in a Word:
Q(UEUE)

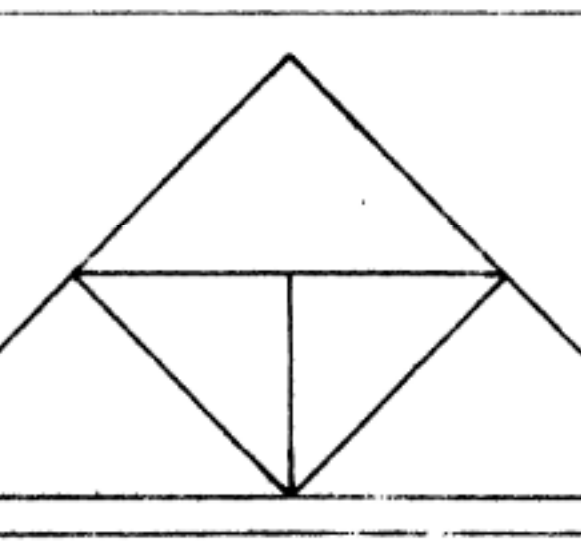
Shape Sleuth (Page 71):
The pieces marked 4, 5, and 7 complete a square.

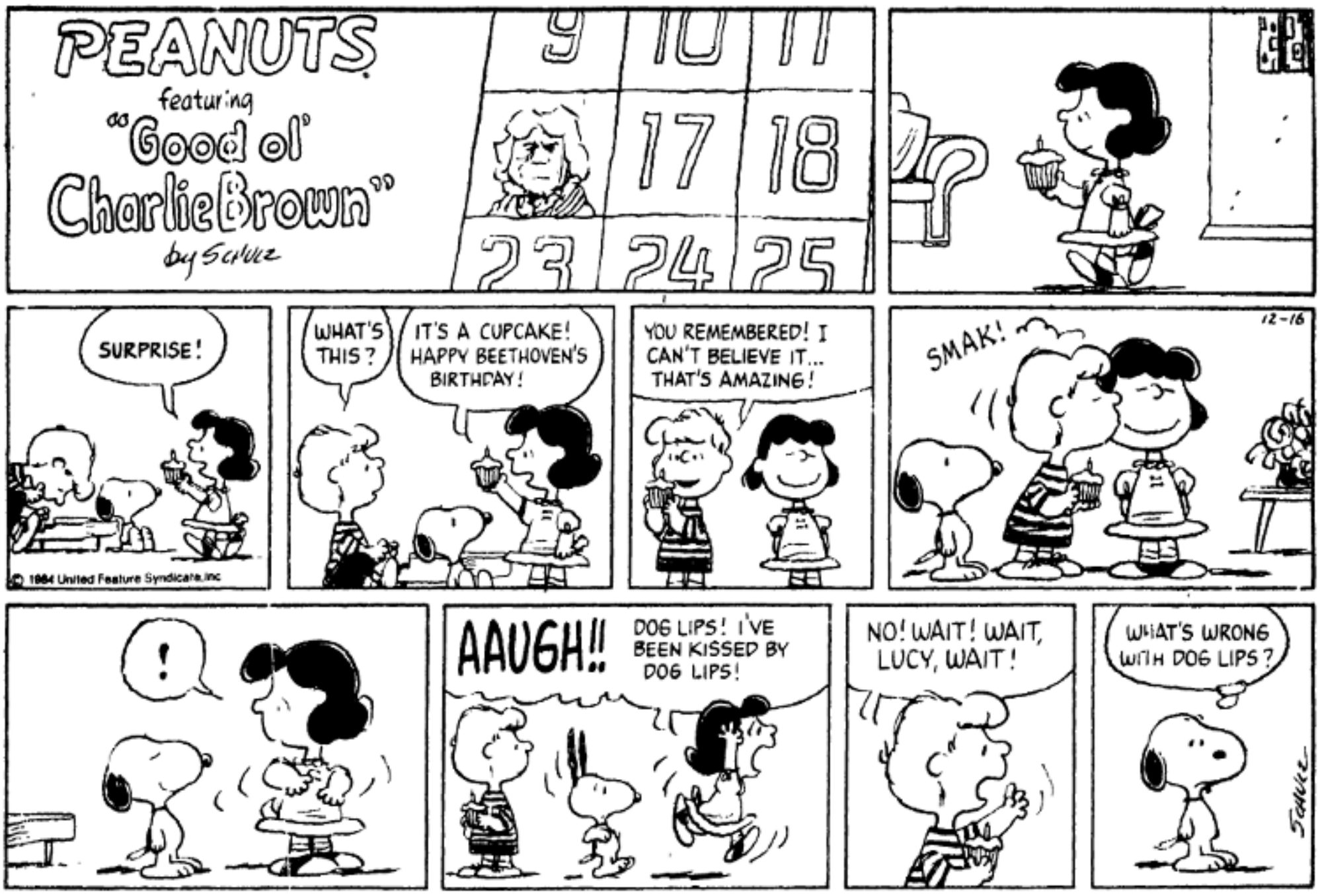
Think Again:
Box C-3.

Mindbender:



Shape Sleuth:



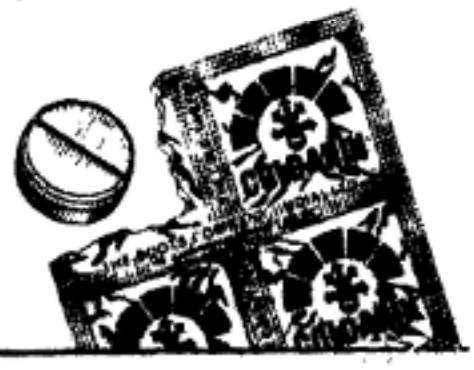


DON'T SNEEZE YOUR DAY AWAY.

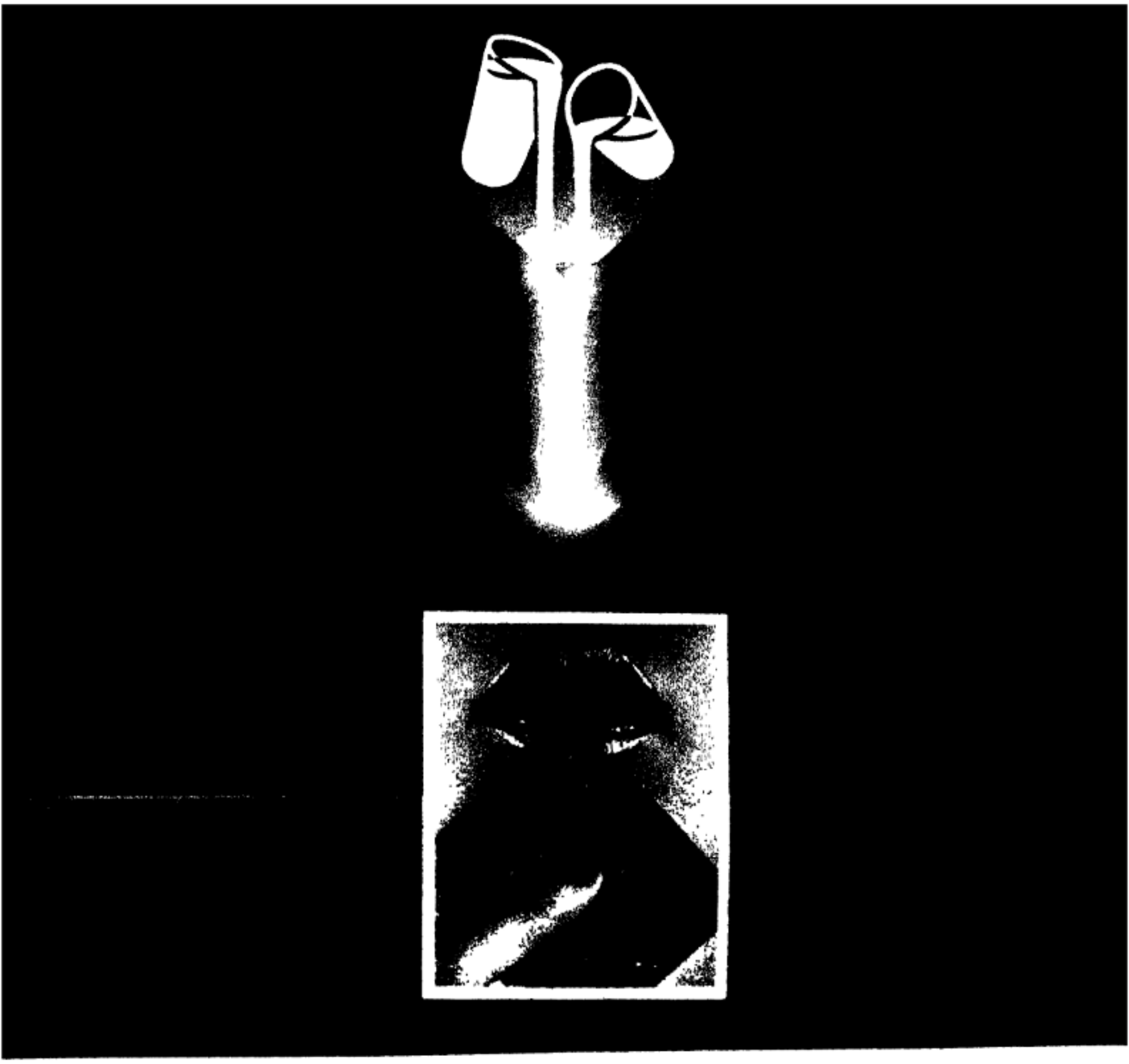


Don't let a cold ruin your day. *Runny nose, congestion and a heavy head. Typical symptoms of a cold. You suffer. Your day suffers. Why not do the sensible thing? Try Coldarin. It's a specially formulated tablet for colds. So convenient. Such a relief!*

Why have a cold? Have a Coldarin.



CASBC 111-124



Now! Bite into the international taste of chocolate

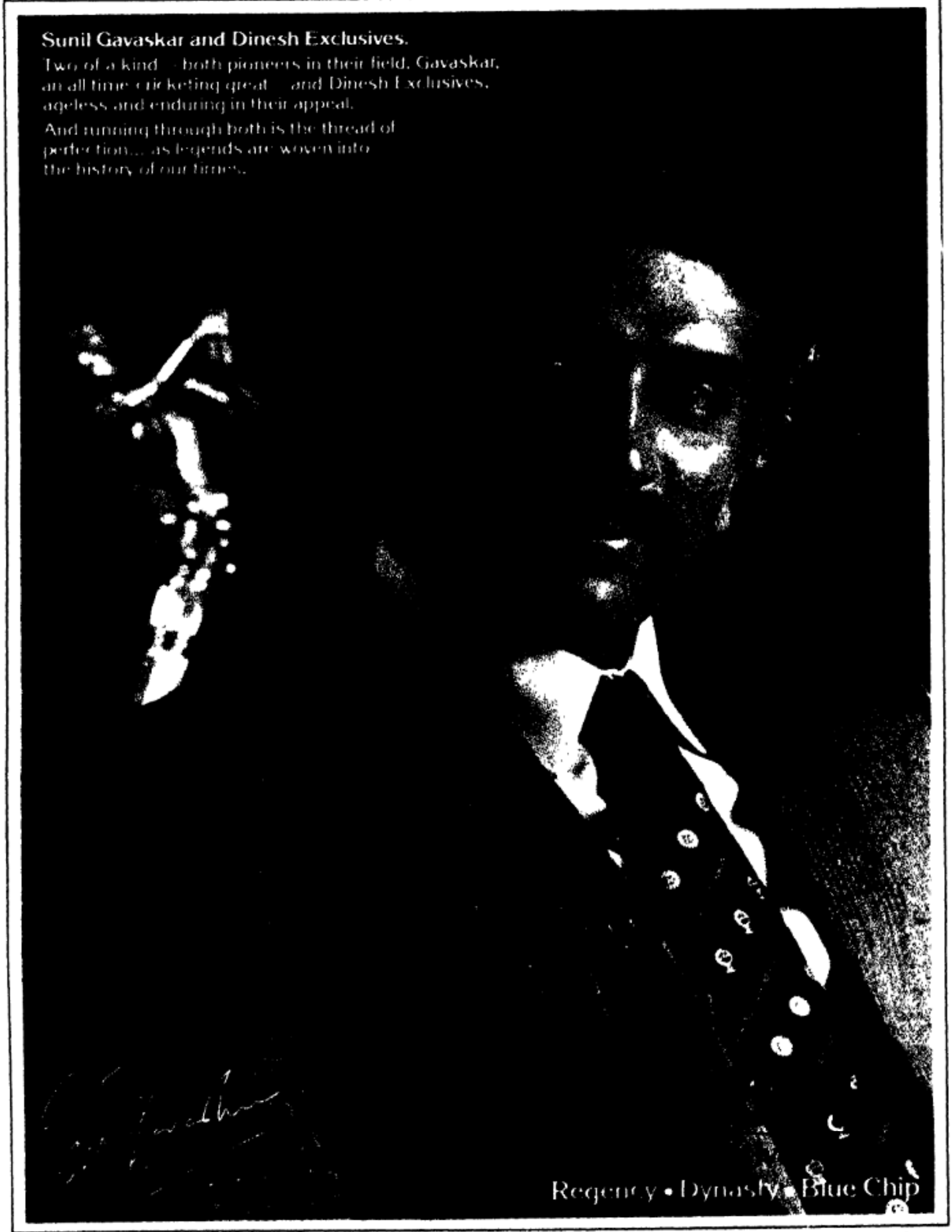
Take a bite and get an altogether new experience. A rich, creamy experience that only a chocolate made by Cadbury's from dairy-fresh milk, can offer. New Cadbury's Dairy Milk is just that. Just like the one that's made Cadbury's the international standard in chocolate.



New Cadbury's Dairy Milk

OBM/4156

Portrait of two legends.



everest/84/SDM/259

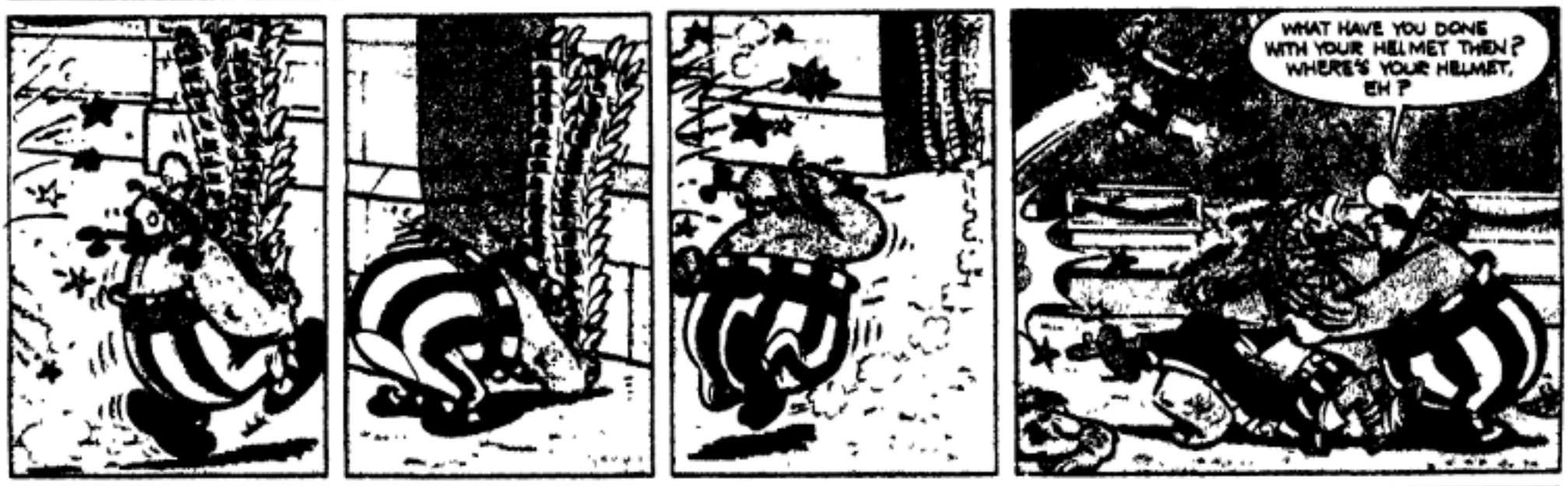
Decades later... still the leader.

COMICS

Asterix

THE GLADIATOR BY GOSCINNY AND UDERZO







DELHI DIARY

Whose Survival?



Sandeep Shankar

Pranab Mukherjee

Pranab Mukherjee's magnum opus, *Beyond Survival*, suddenly increased its sales in December 1984. Senior officers of the public sector banks were seen selling these books to people who called on them for business. The book is priced at Rs 95 and dishing out a hundred rupee note to the bank official who sanctions loans was not much of a bother for the businessmen. But many of them ended up buying five or six copies of the book, as they were dealing with as many banks. Now they are in a fix—to whom can they palm off the extra books? One wonders if the honourable union finance and commerce minister was aware of these happenings. By some coincidence, apart from the banks, the officers of the agencies like the State Trading Corporation and other such commerce ministry outfits were also seen displaying this book in their offices

Rajiv's Brigade

The development centre of the Indian Youth Congress(I), headed by the bearded Rajya Sabha member from West Bengal, Debaprasad Roy, has become the trusted cadre centre of the Congress(I) since the Rajiv Gandhi era set in. This became evident during the election campaign. Initially, the control room set up at the AICC(I) office at 24 Akbar Road was manned by the personnel of the ex-servicemen's cell of the party. Vishwajeet Singh, who belongs to the erstwhile ruling family of Kapurthala, who has come to the Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra, was in overall command. Retired Brigadier Rai Singh and a former naval officer, Commander Sood, were the political adjutants. There were many complaints from the PCC(I) offices about the rude behaviour of the formerly uniformed men. One day, the party's treasurer Sitaram Kesri had to tell the ex-servicemen to remember that they were working for a democratic political party now and they should be reverential to their political seniors. After this, the development centre boys were asked to "assist" the control room commanders. Not only this, at the railway stations, when the parcels containing publicity material were loaded, Dr Roy's boys supervised the operations. Some trucks carrying the AICC(I) material to the states were accompanied by the developmentcentre cadre. Rajiv Gandhi's brigade oversaw the ex-servicemen's cell in the last days of the campaign.

Escape to Victory

In the third week of December 1984, the penultimate week before the polling day in the eighth general elections, the movie distributors in Uttar Pradesh seem to have chipped in their bit in the campaign for Amitabh Bachchan. As many as eight Amitabh starrers were running in the movie halls of Allahabad this week, as compared to only one in the neighbouring metropolis of Kanpur. *Sharabi* was being shown in Kanpur, while Allahabad was regaled with *Zanjeer*, *Mahaan*, *Ganga ki Saugandh*, *Naseeb*, *Coolie*, *Suhaag*, *Nastik* and of course, *Sharabi*. Two English movies were also being exhibited in Allahabad: *House of Wax* and *Escape to Victory*. The question is: whose victory?



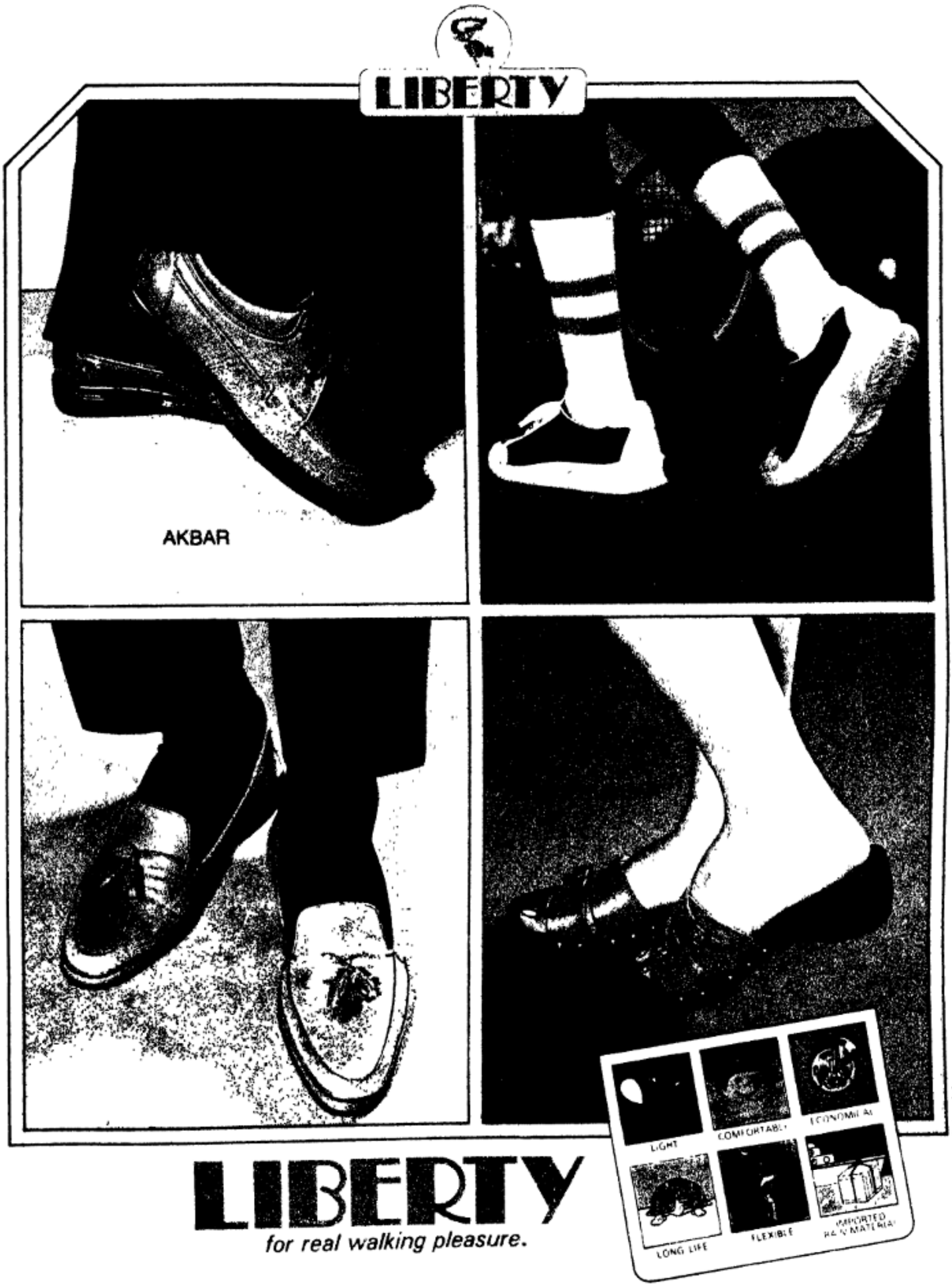
K M Kiran

Amitabh Bachchan

Beg Your Pardon?

Is campaigning for a candidate a political or an intellectual exercise? Former Chief Justice of India, Justice M. H. Beg, addressed a meeting of "intellectuals" at the residence of an Allahabad lawyer, Swamy Dayal, on the eve of the elections. Amitabh Bachchan's poet father, Harivansh Rai Bachchan was the other speaker at this meeting. The purpose of this intellectual exercise was to mobilise support for the Congress(I) candidate from Allahabad, Amitabh Bachchan. Senior Bachchan harped on his past association with the city's intelligentsia (he taught at the Allahabad university) and said that it was not necessary that the new MP should be a person who stayed in Allahabad. (He pointed out that Rajiv Gandhi did not stay at Amethi nor was Arun Kumar Nehru, a resident of Rae Bareili—thereby equating his actor-turned-politician son with these gentlemen.) Justice Beg said that only the Congress(I) could ensure stability in the country. This value judgment was questioned by Justice Shashi Kant Verma, a former Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, from where M. H. Beg at one stage practised law and where he first came to the bench. The elderly retired judge mildly questioned Justice Beg by saying, "How can you say that?" Immediately, the former Chief Justice of India said that as Justice Verma was his senior, he was withdrawing his statement. This judicious withdrawal apart, one wonders at the propriety of the chairman of the minorities commission to address an election campaign meeting, even if it be held under the guise of an "intellectuals' meet." Justice M.H. Beg is not only the former Chief Justice of India, but the sitting chairman of the minorities commission. Despite his views, the Muslims in Allahabad seemed bent upon supporting a politician

D.E. Nizamuddin



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BAJAJ 4 2416

Bajaj Automatically

If someone asked you to name India's largest scooter manufacturer, whose name would come to mind first?

If you were told there is a plant in India which turns out one scooter every minute, who would you think of first? Bajaj Auto, automatically.

But the waiting list for Bajaj scooters is too long even for such a plant; though it is as big as any single scooter plant in the world.

So, Bajaj Auto is setting up two new plants which will help us to produce over 700,000 vehicles a year.



Normally, it takes years to commission such an operation. But with our experience, we plan to start production at Aurangabad by 1985 and Agra by 1986.

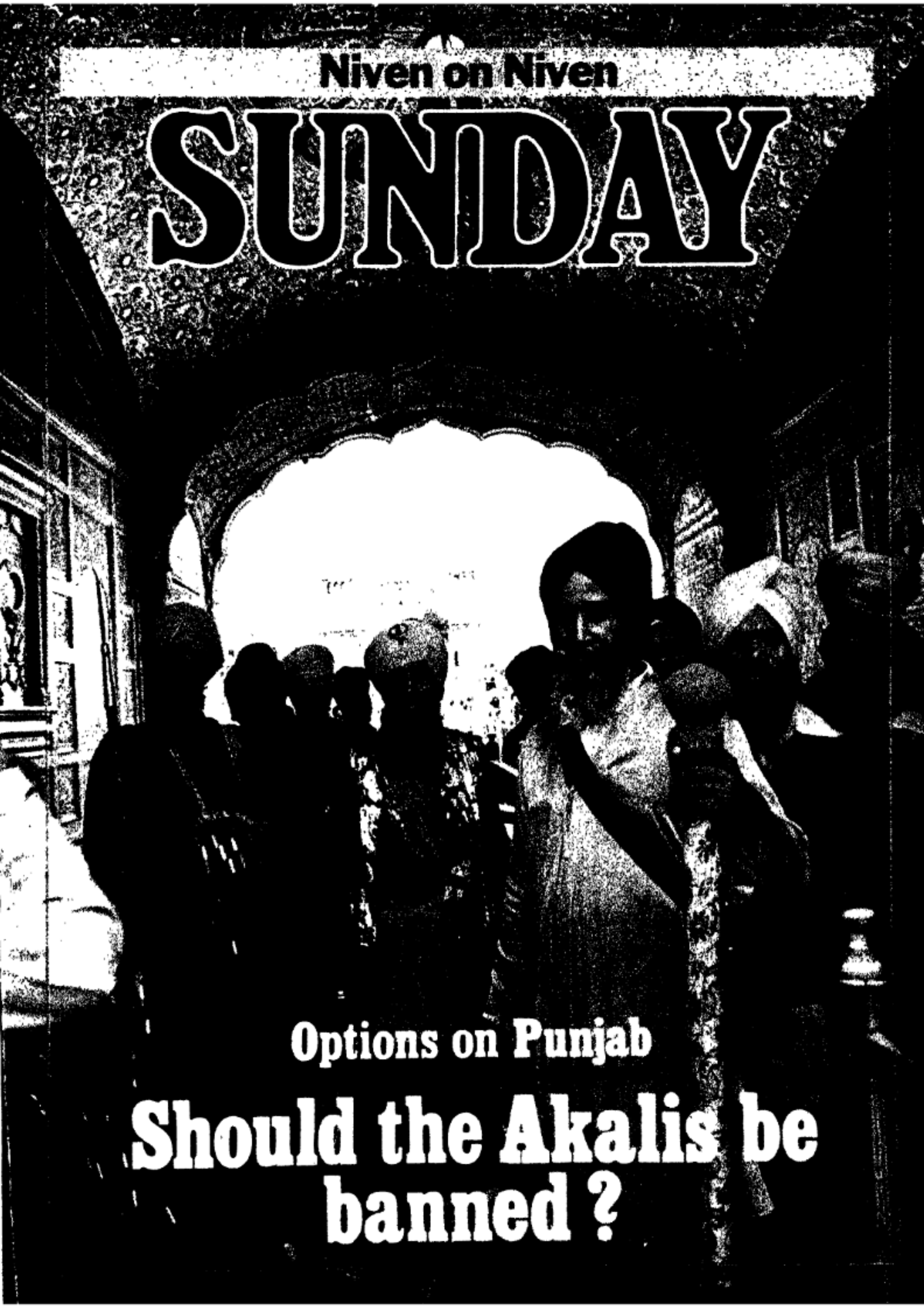
Which should keep Bajaj Auto the leader for years to come; automatically.

bajaj auto ltd

Value for money, for years

Niven on Niven

SUNDAY



Options on Punjab

Should the Akalis be banned ?

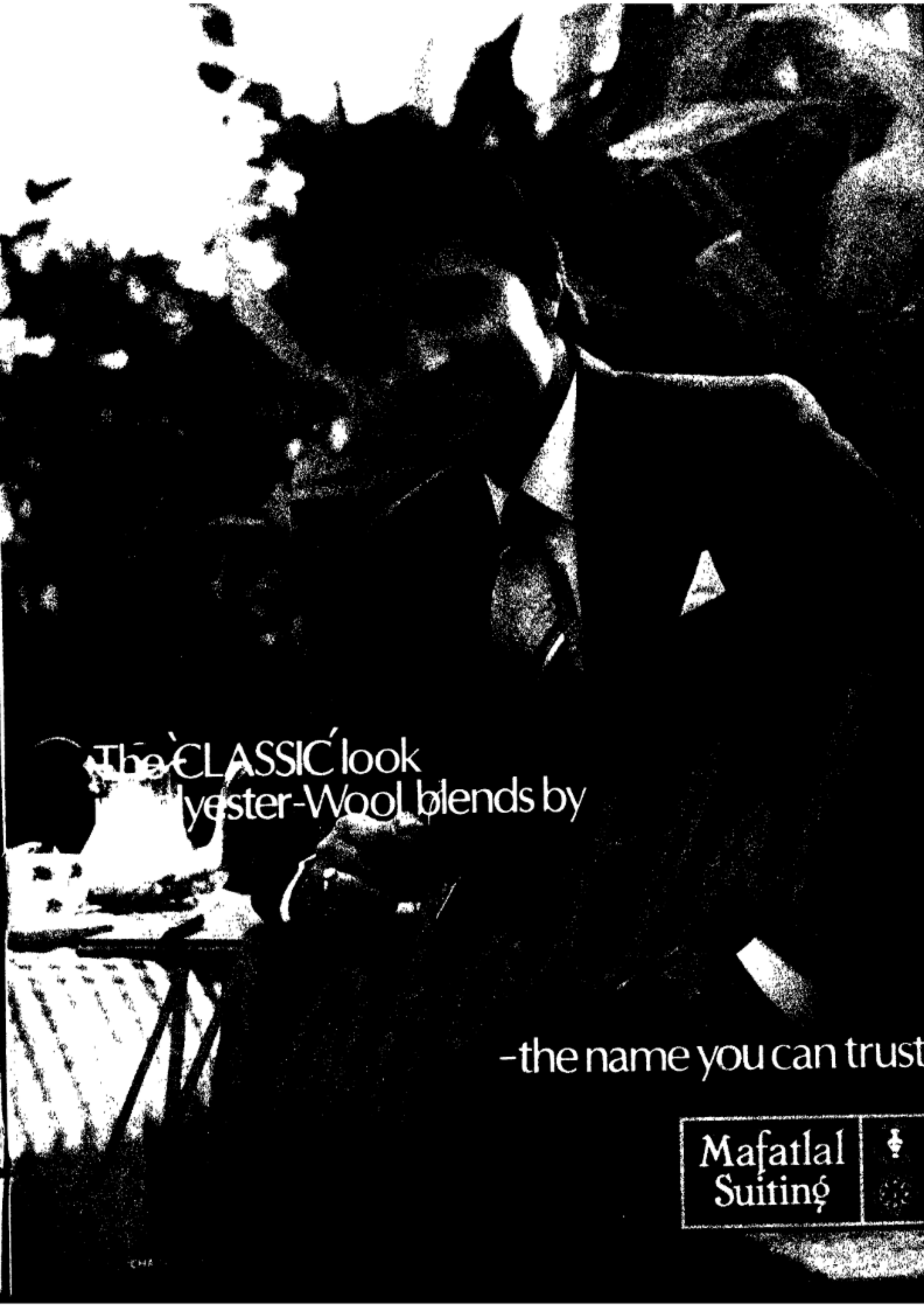


The tinkle of crystal,
the sparkle of talk and laughter...
and Gold Flake.
Great quality...
For the gracious
people.



GOLD FLAKE
KINGS
Quality that's forever

STATUTORY WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH


The CLASSIC look
of Polyester-Wool blends by
-the name you can trust
Mafatlal
Suiting

It's a hard day's night
I've been walkin' the town
Makin' a living
And I'm feelin' down
I've been on the move
'Cos I got money to make
But after it's all over
A man needs a break
So here's to the good times
It's gotta be said
I'm ready for a kip
I'm lookin' for the bed

Yeah, I'm lookin'
for the Red

WHEN
YOU'RE LOOKIN'
FOR A LIFT

IRON BED

20—26 JANUARY 1985

SUNDAY

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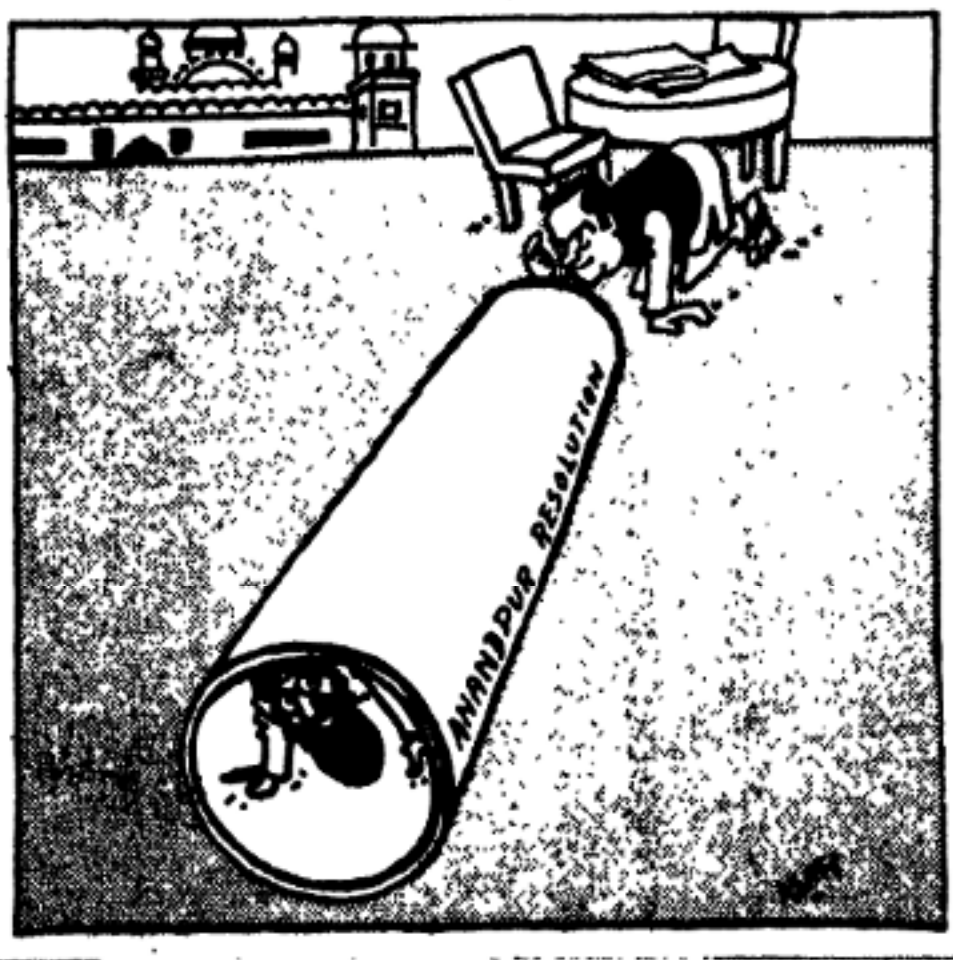
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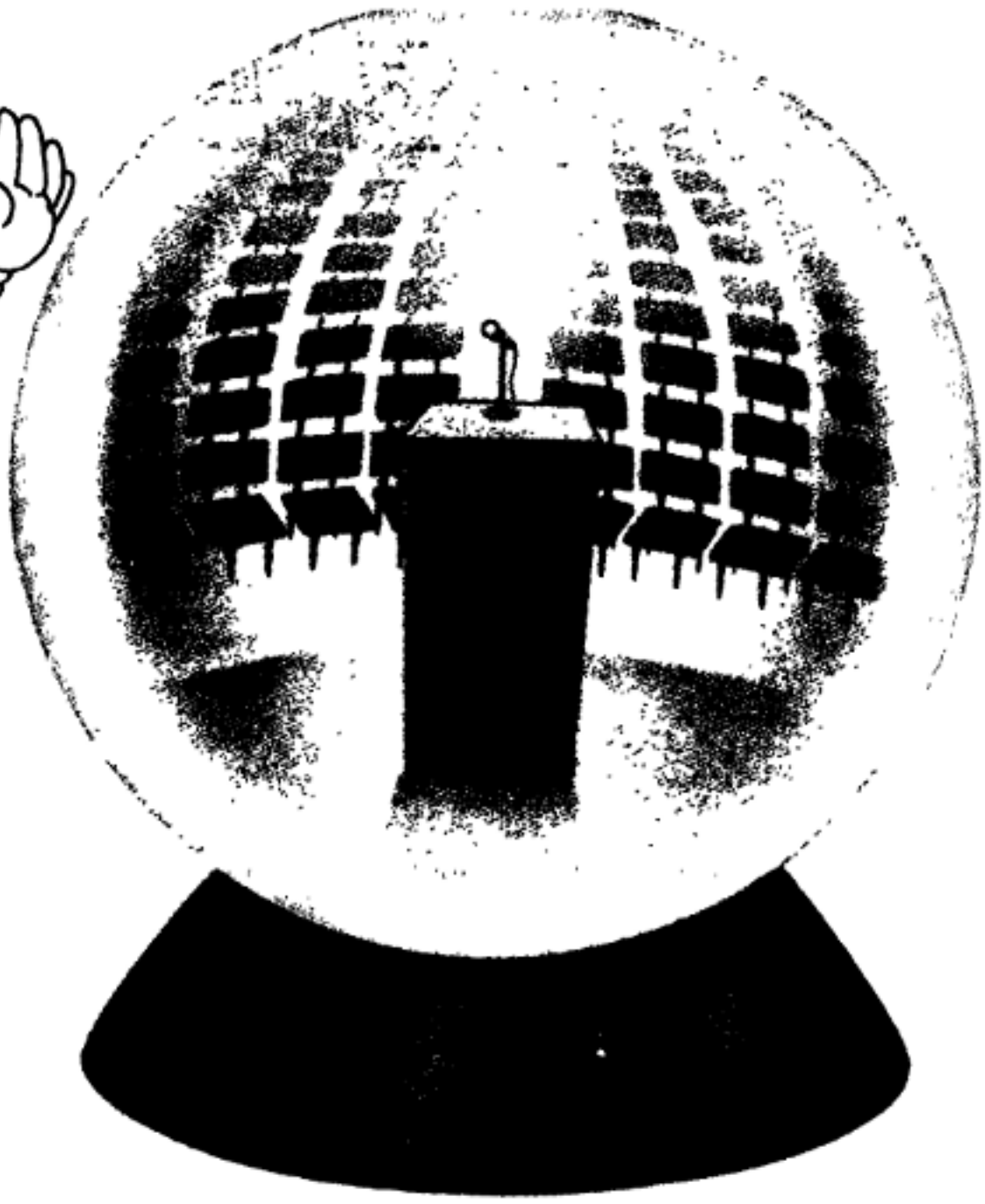
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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Calcutta: It was terribly brilliant of me not to have gone to Bombay to cover the Ram Jethmalani versus Sunil Dutt election, otherwise I might have got three out of three wrong instead of only two out of three. The pie I am currently gorging myself on is so humble that even a Middle Ages serf would not deign to touch it. The stardust that I thought would become ash in Allahabad and, Madras has now been sprinkled over the House of the People: and the first lesson of democracy is, don't argue with the people, they are right. Part of the reason why one got it wrong was because, in the early days, there were enough voluble protests in the constituencies at being handed out a celluloid champion instead of a political one. But the truth is one tends to hear what one wants to hear. When the winner gets the support of three hundred thousand voices and the loser two hundred thousand, it is quite possible to confuse the signals: after all, two hundred thousand people can also create their share of noise at least until they get drowned out towards the end of the shouting match. It was only by the end that one began to get an accurate inkling of what was coming, but the scale of the victory surprised even Congressmen. Bihar's chief minister Mr Chandra Shekhar Singh was making what he must have thought was his most optimistic prediction when, during the lull between polling day and counting, he said the Congress would get 39 seats out of 54 in the state. It got 50; and even a veteran like Jagjivan Ram, against whom the ruling party put up only token resistence, scraped through by a pitiful few hundred votes. But the excuses don't really wash. An apology, therefore, to our readers, and ungrudging congratulations to the winners.

But what should the opposition do about the star influx that is becoming such a dread factor in our politics? The charismatic Ramakrishna Hegde, I notice, has strengthened his persuasion team for the Assembly elections by recruiting the Nag brothers. A nod to the inevitable, presumably. Maybe the CPI(M) should woo Mithun Chakravarty to save itself in Bengal, except that the star's disco and karate routine may not find favour with the Left Front minister Jatin Chakravarty, who found even poor Usha Uthup terribly decadent. And Dev Anand could be persuaded to campaign for the opposition in the north; but then he is almost as old as some of the opposition leaders and what the market wants is youth, so that might boomerang. In Punjab, the Akalis would need nothing short of a Dara Singh to help them onto their feet.

But I have one suggestion for Allahabad, on which at least all the opposition parties should agree. In the next elections, they should put up Rekha against Amitabh. I also have an idea for her main campaign theme:

Yeh kahaan aa gaye ham
Tere saath chalte chalte.

Bengal put up an impressive display of wounded pride after its two powerful ministers of the Mrs Gandhi era were found missing from the Rajiv Gandhi cabinet. I personally could not quite understand this great sense of outrage. Mrs Gandhi had given two of the most important portfolios to a state which had given her just four seats in Parliament, and she must have had her reasons, both personal and political, for doing so. Mr Pranab Mukherjee presumably came in on the loyalty-efficiency ticket, while Mr A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury served a dual purpose by being both Bengali and Muslim. But surely Bengal does not expect this kind of ratio to become the norm? One cabinet minister for 16 MPs is perfectly fair; indeed by this token Bihar should have had three, which it doesn't. The fact is that too much mathematics is not possible in government formation, and the Prime Minister needs to find an equation between political expediency and personal trust. Very obviously he does not have the personal rapport with either Mr Mukherjee or Mr Chowdhury, or they would not have been subjected to such embarrassment. And since it is quite unlikely that there will be a Congress party without Mr Rajiv Gandhi at the head of it, and for decades to come, they might begin wondering about their future in this party. Mr Mukherjee, it is said by Those Who Know, waited calmly (doubtless smoking his familiar pipe) till five in the evening on the day the cabinet was to be announced and when the telephone did not ring equally calmly accepted his fate, asked the new government for a smaller bungalow, said goodbye to his staff and told a few people who came to console that he might attempt to find solace in writing a little poetry. But retirement at so young an age? No more serving the people? No more playing the croupier at the power roulette? We who are paid to observe shall wait and see.

Mr Chowdhury, far less stoic a person, was livid at being dropped after what was clearly the biggest political victory of his life. After the strong reaction in Bengal to their hero's tragic demotion, Rajiv Gandhi did unbend a little and gave Mr Chowdhury a consolation prize, but from railway minister to general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa is descent in any language. Mr Chowdhury is putting on a brave face by saying that he has been given charge of selecting the candidates for the Assembly elections but cosmetic surgery in politics does not save much face. More to the point will be if Mr Chowdhury can regain his place in the central cabinet by April or May, which he privately sounds confident about. Hope lies eternal in the human breast, but it could become a case of once-bitten-twice-bitten. Maybe both Mr Chowdhury and Mr Mukherjee should join the Janata Party. It has a lot of vacancies all over the country, but is particularly empty in Bengal.

One gets the feeling that Mr Jyoti Basu is a little bit regretful that he did not think of the Hegde Plan for Political Survival (also known as How To Organise A Sympathy Wave For Yourself). There was Ramakrishna Hegde beaten fair and square, and by a stroke of genius he had ensured that the Janata stood a good chance of winning the Assembly elections. The simple truth of course is that Hegde's decision to resign was as much a product of his own character and morality as of good politics. Mr Basu on the other hand, even if he had wanted to resign and start some sympathy wavelet in his direction, would not have been able to do so without a laborious debate within the CPI(M). And stories of the internal squabbles on this issue would have soured the whole effort. Anyway, Mr Basu has some time ahead in which to think of new plans. If 24 hours is a long time in politics, what happens in a year can only be a matter of conjecture.



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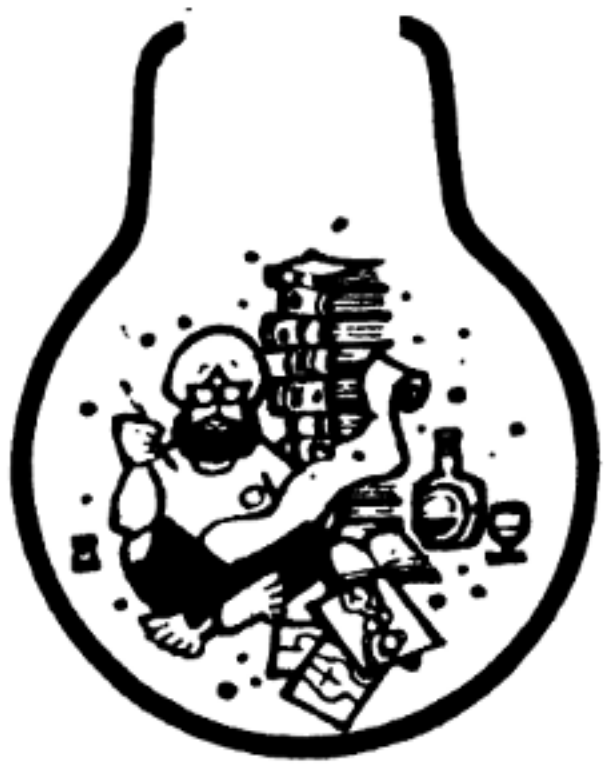
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Why English

One good reason why English has scored over all other languages and become the world's *lingua franca* is that it ignores purists and accepts as many words as it can from other languages. Some years ago G. Subba Rao gave a list of Telugu words in his *Dictionary of Indian Words in English*. Now R. E. Hawkins in his *Common Indian Words in English* (Oxford University Press) has listed another 2000 Indian words which in the last three centuries have found their way into the larger Oxford English Dictionary. Many have been mutilated to make it easy for the English to pronounce: Bunnow from *bannao* to make; chubarrow from *chup raho* for shut up; coggage from the Bengali *kagoj* for newspaper; crab bat from *kharaab baat* for bad language; Dick from the Urdu *dickut* for trouble; *johukum* for yesman; *kuchparwani* for a careless person; *namkewaste* for nominal; *nimukwallah* for a loyal person; *puckarow* to catch; *samjhow* to warn. More amusing are Indian words of abuse that have found acceptability in the *sahib*'s lingo. We have *chalu, chamcha, charsaubis*, and *lafanga*. And there is one whose Indian origin I have no doubt about but I dare not translate lest it should offend the straight-laced who are forever accusing me of vulgarity. This is *barn soot* for a despicable person. Any guesses about its origin?

Punjab Problem

Rajiv Gandhi made an excellent impression as Prime Minister in his broadcast to the nation over All India Radio and Doordarshan. It was not great oratory but his speech was coherent, lucid and had a ring of sincerity about it. It is obvious that he is a more gifted speaker than either his mother or his grandfather, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. His masculine good looks as well as the gift of the gab are inherited from his father, Feroze Gandhi, who made quite a mark in the Lok Sabha as a forceful debater. I have little doubt that in due course he will become a spell-binder. However, it will take more than spell-binding oratory to keep the mustangs in his chariot in running order. At the moment none of his partymen left out of the ministry are likely to show disaffection for the simple reason that they have no one to defect to. But no sooner crises come, as they are bound to, he will



need all the cunning he can muster and all the muscle-power he has to keep a grip on the reins.

Rajiv has given Punjab and Assam top priority. I am more familiar with the Punjab problem than I am with the Assamese and will confine my observations to its possible solutions. The issues are no longer restricted to Chandigarh and distribution of river waters. They now include the rise and fall of Bhindranwale, Operation Blue Star, military activity in the Punjab countryside, special courts, the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, the massacre of Sikhs in towns of northern India and migration of large numbers to the Punjab. The main trouble is that we still do not know the full facts. The government's attempt to whitewash events leading to Operation Blue Star and its aftermath by the issue of the White Paper have been discredited by the Prime Minister himself. An even more important pre-condition to a settlement will be the government's amoral slithering over organised killings of innocent Sikhs in the first week of November 1984 and exonerating its partymen whose names have been published amongst the guilty. It must overcome its reluctance to institute a judicial enquiry which will identify the culprits and punish them. Unless these hurdles are overcome, there can be no lasting settlement in the Punjab.

To Fit The Crime

Some time ago a Delhi judge sentenced a rapist to life imprisonment. At the time I had suggested that the more appropriate sentence could have been to give the convicted man option between spending the rest of his life in prison (in India a life sentence may mean no more than 10 years in jail) or undergo surgery which would forever deprive him of the power to indulge in sex. A doctor friend tells me that there is no need to resort to such drastic measures as castration as there are drugs available which substantially reduce man's sex urge. Their only side-effect is enlargement of male breasts to female sizes—no great calamity. The chief difficulty in imposing these more rational forms of punishments is the absence of sanction of the law. Framers of the Indian Penal Code could not think of punishments other than fine, imprisonment or hanging. It would not be a bad idea if we re-evaluated the equation between crime and punishment and took advantage of modern medicine to rationalise their relationship. I have no doubt it would reduce the incidence of certain kinds of crime without resorting to brutality such as amputation of limbs practised in some Muslim countries as well as substantially reduce expense incurred inkeeping convicts in jail for long periods. To start a public debate on the subject I recommend the following: First; punishment for murder should not be death but imprisonment with hard labour over a period of years with the convict's earnings going to the family of the deceased as well as confiscation of his personal property which should also be passed on to the family of the victim. Second; punishment for crimes of which do not result in death but grievous bodily injury should also entail forfeiture of property and earnings while in jail (which should not exceed three years) which should go to the injured person. Corporal punishment like lashing in public should be introduced. Three; crimes of sex, child abuse and attempted rape should be punished by compulsory administration of drugs that reduce sex drive and actual rape by castration. Four; for crimes of violence and recklessness caused by excessive and habitual intake of liquor, punishment should include compulsory administration of drugs like Antabuse which produce very unpleasant reactions if followed by alcohol. A person who takes a drink after Antabuse can get violently sick and get hangover of an intensity which would make him swear never to touch it again. I can recommend it to wives who have to suffer humiliation and violence at the hands of hard drinking husbands.

Readers' reactions to these suggestions will be welcomed.



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Our Repressive Acts

During the first World War, when India was a British colony, the government of India appointed a commission under Mr Justice Rowlatt, an English judge, to report on sedition. The commission issued its report in July 1918 and recommended, among other things, "extreme and vigorous" measures to combat "political violence."

The recommendations were incorporated in a legislative measure in March 1919 which came to be known as the Rowlatt Act. What it laid down was that anyone engaged in political violence would be tried by a special tribunal sitting in camera. Mahatma Gandhi raised his voice against the Rowlatt Bill and asked the people to observe a general *hartal* accompanied by a fast. They responded to his call and observed the *hartal* and the fast on 6 April 1919, the second Sunday after the Viceroy gave his assent to the Bill.

Alas, the nation's mood has changed since; it does not have the stamina it once had. It has become too 'security-conscious.' Therefore, it is no surprise that the country has accepted without demur the Terrorists Affected Areas (Special Courts) Act, which is almost an exact copy of the Rowlatt Act. The Special Courts Act also defines a terrorist as a person who indulges in "violence" disrupts "service or means of communication" and so on.

Like the Rowlatt Act, the Special Courts Act says that "all proceedings before Special Court shall be conducted in camera." The Rowlatt Act said that "reports of the proceedings" would not be published while the Special Courts Act says that a Special Court may pass orders for "avoiding of the mention of the names and addresses of the witnesses in its orders or judgments or in any records of the case accessible to the public..."

One may feel horrified but the fact remains that one of the victims of this act is a forthright, conscientious journalist, Brahma Chellaney, the Associated Press correspondent, who reported on the military action in the Golden Temple at Amritsar The whole thing smacks of the administration's vendetta against him and it is a sad reflection on the state of freedom of the press in India.

Unlimited powers to the executive only increases the temptation to use them for all kinds of purposes and the system becomes dictatorial.

True, the terrorists should not be given any quarter and there is justified horror over the happenings in Punjab. But the act is mostly misused in Punjab. The main purpose of the Act seems to pick up persons who are anti-establishment or come in the way of the government while doing a spot of honest work. Of course, the Naxalites are a target. This is apparent from the case the Intelligence Bureau made for more stringent provisions against them. It said that "the National Security Act (NSA) had not proved effective in containing extremists' activities or violence," and the Intelligence Bureau specifically mentioned "the continuing violent activities in the Bihar-West Bengal border."

Why should the government arm itself with such stringent powers like the NSA, the Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act and the many "special acts," apart from regular provisions under the criminal procedure code? Why yet another Act? Unlimited powers to the executive only increases the temptation to use them for all kinds of purposes and the system becomes dictatorial. In the Special Courts Act the onus to prove that a terrorist is not a terrorist is on the suspect. If it is "shown" that the person concerned was in an area where "the forces charged with the maintenance of public order in the discharge of their duties" have been resisted, "it shall be presumed, unless the contrary is shown, that such person had committed such offence."

In a country where fake encounters between police and a wide variety of offenders are frequent, the authorities can go to the extent of charging any opponent or critic with terrorism He has not only to prove his innocence but also stand trial in any part of the country where the government may establish a Special Court.

Curiously, appeal against a Special Court's judgment can be made only to the Supreme Court, not the High Court under whose jurisdiction the judge of a Special Court will be. In fact, the Act says. "A Special Court shall be presided over by a judge to be appointed by the central government with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court."

Experience from the days of the Emergency shows how highhanded and arbitrary actions were carried out by the executive with impunity. The nation was unable to realise the directions and the full implications of the actions of the government and its functionaries. Ethical considerations inherent in public behaviour became dim and in many cases beyond the mental grasp of many of the public functionaries. What is the guarantee that the Draconian laws with which the government has armed itself will not be used by civil servants on orders from those in power?

In the agitation against the Rowlatt Bill an active participant was Swami Shardhanand, a venerable teacher, whose ashram near Hardwar was as famous as Tagore's school at Shantiniketan. He was invited to speak at the Jama Masjid, Delhi. This invitation was extraordinary for no Hindu scholar had been invited to speak in a mosque, as far as one can remember. This showed a secular approach. Can we not mould secular opinion in the same way against increasing repressive laws? Without the awareness of what is right and a desire to act for what is right, there may be no realisation of what is wrong.

The Sant's Jokes

M. J. Akbar has logically brought out the contradictions within Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale (*The High Priest of Low Ambition*, 23—29 December '84). Some of the theories propounded by the Sant read like a joke. Of special mention is his theory that all human beings are born as Sikhs.
C.V. Radhakrishnan, Calcutta

• M.J. Akbar has deliberately or inadvertently indulged in distortion of sequence of events in order to prove that the breakdown of tripartite talks in February '84 was the outcome of belligerency by Hindu revivalists culminating in atrocities on Sikhs in Haryana. But this is not true. As far as I remember, the tripartite talks in Delhi came to an abrupt end as a sequel to heavy firing on BSF personnel from within the Golden Temple resulting in the death of over half-a-dozen jawans. The author has conveniently ignored the killings of innocent Hindus in Punjab or the orgy of violence let loose by Sikh extremists. May I remind Mr Akbar that the Hindu Suraksha Samiti is not an organisation of Hindu revivalists but it is an organisation born out of the natural instinct of self preservation.

The disturbances in Haryana in February '84 were a spontaneous outburst of anger of the Hindus. But what happened in Haryana is nothing in comparison to what has been happening in Punjab for the last two years. The chief minister of Haryana, Bhajan Lal, deserves to be congratulated for his administrative acumen and foresight.
R.G. Bansal, Delhi

Effective Device

In *Life-saver* (*Science*, 30 December—5 January) it has been mentioned that Scottish doctors have invented a plastic film to keep babies warm in winter. May I point out that a Christian father residing near Calcutta was the first to use plastic film as a blanket for keeping people warm. Known as the 'Goodnight *Garibi* Blanket,' the device consists of two layers of polythene sheet, with a few sheets of newspaper between them. The polythene sheets have holes punched on them to allow transmission of moisture. It is a simple device but very effective
Debashis Ray, Waltair



Wide Off the Target

24 December '84 (27 December at places) was really *The Day of the Voter* (23—29 December '84). Most Indian magazines, including SUNDAY, failed to judge the pulse of the Indian electorate. The outcome of the election may have surprised those in SUNDAY, but to the common man on the street, the results were expected.
Sayed Shahjahan, Dhaka (Bangladesh)

• The cover story successfully brought out the mood of a general election. Time and again our leaders refer to the fact that caste and religion are destroying the unity and integrity of India. But it is they who exploit religious and caste feelings to secure votes during an election. Such double standards are the hallmarks of all political leaders. The electorate should be wary of them. Indian democracy has survived only because the people of this country are far too politically conscious to be guided by such irresponsible leaders.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah (Bihar)

• Our Parliament is adorned by two filmy heroes and a heroine. What we need now is a villain and a comedian. What about nominating 'Gabbar Singh' and 'Bhoopali?'
Chiranjeeb, Hailakandi (Silchar)

• It was surprising to note that the entire cross-section of the electorate interviewed by SUNDAY (*Voices*) voiced anti-Congress(I) feelings.
Ajay Pant, Moradabad

How Right

Tooshar Pandit's article on the opinion polls was well written and comprehensive (*Opinion Polls: Do They Count?*, 23—29 December '84). I hope the article will go a long way to dispel many unfounded doubts about opinion polls that exist in the minds of even educated people in our country who equate such surveys with forecasts made by astrologers. However, the article suffers from one deficiency: it is infested with too much statistical jargon. The writer could have explained the intricacies of such surveys in layman's terms. Very few readers are expected to know what is meant by 'random sample' or the 'semantic differential technique.' Another point which has not been touched upon is the factor of deliberately falsifying the response by the respondent that the pollster has to guard against while conducting a poll. To minimise such chances, some 'honesty sieve' questions should also be framed while preparing the questionnaire that will detect deliberate falsification.
Madhumita Lahiry, Muzaffarpur

• The opinion poll conducted by SUNDAY and IMRB indicated a swing in favour of the Congress(I) throughout the country. Inspite of that, most of SUNDAY's predictions regarding the outcome of the poll were off the mark.
M.A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

A Clarification

Chanchal Sarkar had named seven persons as members of the Citizen's Commission headed by the former Chief Justice of India, S.M. Sikri (*Civil Rights in a Democracy*, 30 December '84). In fact, there are only five members: Gurbachan Singh and I are not members of the Commission.
Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, DFC (Retd), New Delhi

Wise man

Charan Singh's answers to some of the questions of M. J. Akbar (*'Elections for Politicians is a Game'*, 2—8 December 1984) prove that he is an autocrat who thinks that he is the only wise man in the country.
C. B. Sahai, New Delhi

Off the Mark



Amitabh Bachchan campaigning in Allahabad during the Lok Sabha elections

All the predictions in *Dream Merchants* (16-22 December '84) turned out to be wrong. Amitabh not only drew the crowds but he also got the votes.
Anup Sarkar, Calcutta

• The people of Allahabad pulled off a big surprise. Amitabh Bachchan's voice will soon be heard in the corridors of power. It is a pity that no one could read the minds of the electorate in Allahabad.
Gour Ghosh, Sindri (Bihar)

• I was surprised to see Amitabh Bachchan on the cover of SUNDAY. Whatever be his status, he does not deserve a place in so reputed a weekly. The film magazines are there to give him publicity.
Neeraj Nayan, Rairangapur

Biased

Khushwant Singh's *At The Receiving End* and *Brahma Chellany (Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 25 December '84) were thought-provoking. However, in the articles, Mr Singh harbours feelings of an orthodox Sikh, showing scanty reasoning power.

True, what followed Indira Gandhi's gruesome assassination was inhuman, horrifying and condemnable. But was the death of Indira Gandhi an occasion to rejoice? When the entire world was plunged in sorrow, most of the Sikhs were rejoicing. Some were celebrating the occasion by distributing sweets while others displayed their ecstasy by dancing. I have been informed by eye witnesses that the entire Sikh community in Asansol, Dhanbad and Bokaro started *bhangra* on hearing that Mrs Gandhi was dead. Mr Singh should not forget that the people at large are not saints. Retaliation, therefore, was natural. Nevertheless, it would be a crime against humanity to support the killing of the Sikhs. Many of Mr Singh's articles reflect his support for the Sikh extremists. He has not even condemned the murder of Indira Gandhi. But I am not surprised. History is full of instances where Sikhs have shown their disloyalty. Their stand during the Quit India movement is well known. Yet Pandit Nehru and his daughter trusted them. Ultimately, she paid the price.
N.K. Shah, Sheikhpura (Bihar)

Are We Serving as Guinea Pigs for the Rich Multinationals?

The investigative report, *Killer Gas, Callous Carbide* (16—22 December '84) was superb. One wonders how the Union Carbide factory functioned all these years without adequate safety measures. The government is to blame for permitting the multi-national to function within the city.
C.V. Radhakrishnan, Calcutta

• One cannot but feel distressed at the heavy toll of life due to poison gas leak in Bhopal.
Altaf Andrabi, Srinagar

• It is actually the chief minister, Arjun Singh, who should have been arrested and not the chairman of Union Carbide. What compensations do our governments pay when people die in train collision or when mines get flooded and many workers die?
G. Helmut, Vishakhapatnam

• Union Carbide has tarnished civilised history by its negligence and callousness. The state government should also share the blame for the unprecedented tragedy. The union government must take steps to see that such accidents do not recur.
Kurban Ukani, Calcutta

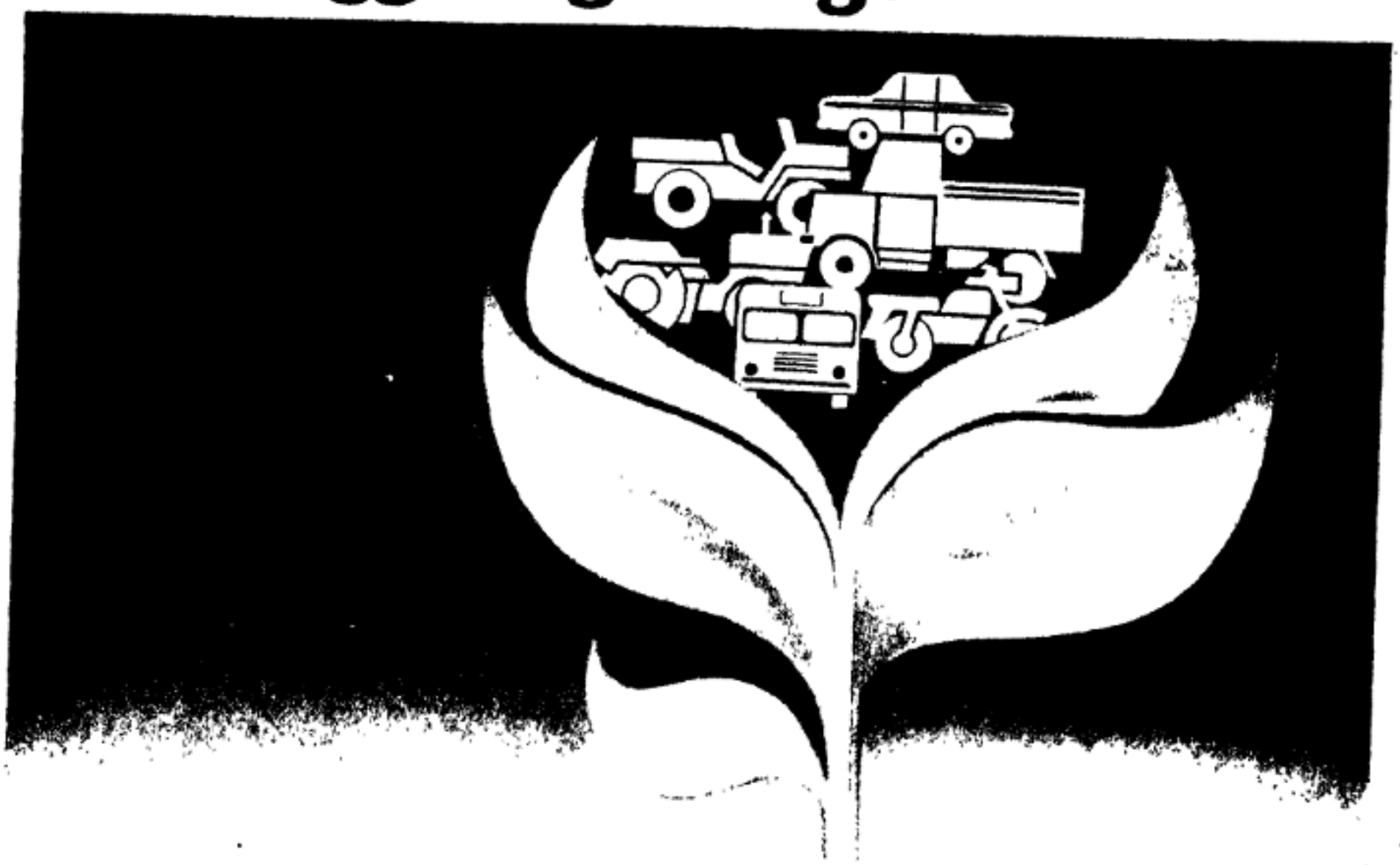
• The new slogan of Union Carbide—'Eveready to kill.'
K. Chandru, Madras

• Tooshar Pandit deserves praise for his investigative report on the Bhopal gas tragedy. It was shocking to learn that inspite of warnings the government did not take any steps to inform the people living near the factory. The arrest of the chairman of Union Carbide or suing them for compensation will not absolve the Madhya Pradesh government of its criminal lapse.
P.P. Beeran, Hafr-al-Batin (Saudi Arabia)

• We have heard of monkeys being exported from India to the USA for experiments. The Bhopal tragedy was a typical case of an American firm using Indians as guinea pigs. The release of the Union Carbide chairman, Mr Anderson, confirms the popular fear that the lives of aristocrats and people in power are more valuable than the ordinary people who died in thousands. The government, it seems, does not bother about the lives of the common people.
Chagla Mahapatra, Polasara (Orissa)

• The government is equally to blame for the tragedy. In most factories in the country safety measures are not observed.
Jabina, Nalanda, (Bihar)

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No More Predictions, Please



Congress(I) MP Vyjayanthimala

M. J. Akbar's *Dateline* is a very popular column. But I would advise him not to make political forecasts. His write-up on Vyjayanthimala (23 December '84) was superb but his predictions regarding her fate at the hustings proved disastrous.
Shyama Purkayastha, Hailakandi

• All the three filmstars have won by comfortable margins. M.J. Akbar was particularly harsh on Vyjayanthimala. But it was the latter who had the last laugh.
Salman Yusuf, Patna

• Amitabh Bachchan, Sunil Dutt and Vyjayanthimala have won the elections. It is a pity that SUNDAY's predictions regarding their poll prospects were off the mark.
Subhas Dutta, Ranchi

• In *Dateline* Mr Akbar writes: "One cannot but be astonished by the sheer audacity of these filmstars who think that their prancing on the screen gives them the right to represent the people in Parliament." I do not agree with the author's statement. If a lawyer, Ram Jethmalani, can represent the people, if a trade union leader, Datta Samant, can aspire to go to the Parliament and if an old, insane man like Charan Singh can represent the people's aspirations, then I think that filmstars too can represent the people.
S.R. Iyengar, Bombay

• M.J. Akbar's statement in *Dateline* (23 December '84) that the attempt by MGR's supporters to sell their sick and incapacitated leader to the electorate is a "deception" to an inhuman extent is apt. Most of the English dailies in Tamil Nadu, one of which is more than a century old and enjoys a sound credibility, have been silent on the issue. Most periodicals and dailies in Tamil Nadu are owned and staffed by persons of a particular community which MGR has wooed. These publications do not give a true picture of MGR's health. Inspite of the fact that pictures of MGR at Brooklyn Hospital in New York were taken to convince the voters that he was looking hale and hearty and a documentary on MGR screened in most of the cinema halls before the polls, the people of Tamil Nadu are well aware that MGR cannot talk and walk like a normal person. He is even undertaking speech therapy and there are serious doubts about whether he will ever regain his speaking powers. Under such circumstances, he has contested the Assembly elections by proxy and won. But contesting elections under such a state of health isundemocratic. A *tamasha* of this sort can take place only in our country where the vast majority are still illiterate and ignorant.
P. Padmanabhan, Coimbatore

Unfounded Fears

I was surprised to note the contents of Mr Rias Ahmad's letter (*Opinion*, 23-29 December '84). Mr Ahmad states that Muslims in India are persecuted and that the spirit of secularism hardly prevails in this country. But the author had not cited a single incident to substantiate his argument. The fact that India had two Muslim Presidents and a vice president goes to prove that secularism does exist in India. Moreover, there are many chief ministers and union cabinet ministers who are followers of Islam. Where then does the question of persecution and discrimination come in? Mr Ahmad also mentions in his letter that Muslims in Pakistan are all well off, which is far from true. The Muslim community, on the other hand, have time and again proved disloyal to their country. There are many Muslims in India who nurse hatred towards their motherland.
S.P. Diwakar, Channarayapatna

• I was appalled by the sentiments voiced by Mr Rias Ahmad in his letter. Among other things he mentions that Muslims in India are treated as foreigners and traitors since the partition. The author adds that their forefathers made a wrong decision to stay on in India.

Mr Ahmad is perhaps unaware of the situation in Pakistan. Or why else would he think that Muslims are better off in Pakistan? In India Muslims, like all other communities, enjoy much more freedom than their counterparts in Pakistan. If a similar letter, as the one written by Mr Ahmad, would have been written by a Hindu in Pakistan and sent to a newspaper organisation for publication, it would never have been published
Bijay Kumar Dash, Madras

An Appeal

This has reference to the article, *No Glasses, Please* (*Science*, 16 – 22 December '84) where it has been mentioned that Dr Svyatoslav successfully treats patients suffering from mild to acute myopia. In India there are thousands of myopic patients who lose their eyesight due to lack of proper treatment. Indians would be grateful to Dr Svyatoslav if he visits this country regularly to help fellow doctors working on the subject.
R.D. Satapathi, Rourkela

OPTIONS ON PUNJAB

Should the Akalis Be Banned?

The government is going to test out a three-pronged approach on Punjab composed of one carrot and two sticks



Militant Sikhs raise the Khalistan flag at the Shahidi Baba Deep Singh Gurudwara in Amritsar

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi knows, as much as anyone else, that the credibility of his government will depend a great deal on how he tackles the enormous problem called Punjab. If the last general election was indeed a referendum on Punjab, the integrity of the country and a mandate to Rajiv Gandhi to solve a problem which had taken so many lives including the most precious one of Mrs Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has to announce some plan before he goes to the people once again. And since that is scheduled for March, the urgency for a new Punjab policy can be easily appreciated. When Rajiv Gandhi returns to the campaign trail for the Assembly elections in ten states or more within a few weeks, he can hardly go back with the same refrain. The task of finding an answer to the questions raised by the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and the Akali agitation (with its extremist-secessionist fringe) is now his. And, judging by the statements emanating from Delhi, the new Prime Minister of India is quite aware of this.

The government is going to test out a three-pronged approach on Punjab composed of one carrot and two sticks. Obviously, the carrot is being dangled first. Delhi is full of talk of reconciliations with the Sikhs in general and the Akalis in particular. Arrests have been made of those suspected to have led the riots against the Sikhs in the wake of the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, and one presumes they will not be let off as easily as they were the first time around. There is a feeling too that the grounds are being made for talks with the Akalis, though this might not prove as easy as it sounds. It is unlikely that the government will enter the process of negotiations until it gains some confidence that the Akalis will be prepared to give ground. Since Rajiv Gandhi has made the Anandpur Sahib Resolution into a secessionist document in the popular eye, he will need an Akali "withdrawal" on some of the terms of the resolution before he comes to any agreement with the Akalis. If there is a private understanding that a gesture of such a kind could be made at the end of formal negotiations, then the Akali leaders could be released from jail for talks, and after the agreement the cases of secession made against some of them will be withdrawn. But just in case the Akalis seem to feel that they still have a few cards left in their hand,



Violent mood: a demonstration by Akalis in New Delhi



Prakash Singh Badal (right) burning the Constitution

the government is also beginning to send two messages which could finally end all hope of any return to power by the Akalis.

The obvious way to do this of course would be by a simple ban on communal parties. Since the Akalis make no pretense of representing any community other than the Sikhs, they are clearly a communal party (even, that is, if they do not actively participate in divisive communal politics, as they claim). Such a proposal was, in fact, mooted in the wake of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi but, either out of expediency or error, both Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel did not make the effort to pursue it. The logic of course is unarguable. While communal parties or groups or societies have the constitutional right to propagate the welfare of their communities in the areas of education and religion, they have little place in the electoral politics of a secular state. In fact, the moral position of this argument is so strong that it is a wonder why the proposal was not given a constitutional force while the Constituent Assembly was still in session Nehru and Patel could well have solved many of our subsequent problems, even if they would have had to face the anger of the communalists (whether in the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha or the Akali Dal). But it was not done.

Indications that Rajiv Gandhi might have such an idea were strengthened by the appointment of Ashoke Sen as law minister. Surprising as it may seem, before 1963 a party advocating secession from the union of India had the full right to participate in elections. The DMK in Tamil Nadu, for instance, did manage to win a few seats on such a platform The loophole was closed by an amendment to the Constitution in 1963 (in the wave of patriotic emotion that flooded the country after the war with China), and this amendment was piloted through the House by none other than Ashoke Sen, who was then law minister. On that occasion, Mr Sen managed to get support from across the House even the DMK leader C.N. Annadurai found it difficult to argue against it, though formally his party abstained from voting. If the option of conciliation fails, Ashoke Sen could be asked to bring a similar amendment this time. And it would be difficult to see how any opposition party could vote against this amendment. The Akalis would then be relegated to simply the management of the gurdwaras—the role, in fact, for which they were originally intended.

The other idea which would equal

ly finish the Akalis as a political force has just been tested upon the public through an excellent decoy, Bhajan Lal (a man with no reputation to lose among the Sikhs and, therefore, whose statements could easily be disowned by the Prime Minister). This proposes that Punjab be restored to its original status: that is, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh be remerged. If that happened, the Sikhs, instead of being a small majority of 52 per cent would become a minority of about 35 per cent and the chances of an Akali becoming chief minister of the state through an Akali majority in the Assembly would be finished. The whole battle which the Akalis led in the late Fifties and the Sixties for the creation of a Sikh-majority Punjab would have been negated by this single decision. The irony of course would be that the present Punjab had been created by Mrs Gandhi within weeks after she took over as Prime Minister; that Punjab would be over within months of her death.

The mood, however, is one of reconciliation with the Sikhs and the Akalis. One of the steps which could bring an end to the tangle would be the restoration of popular rule in the state. This is no longer just an option on a complicated political and social chessboard; it has become a compulsion now. The union government is convinced that President's rule in the state should end soon (it is due to expire, unless further renewed, in early April). Moreover, the army, which has been administering what should really be a civilian fort since last year has to decide how long servicemen can be exposed to civilian duties. The use of the army to quell disturbances is often necessary, but the troops cannot be kept out of the barracks for too long. Civilian duty has fallouts which are not conducive to the discipline of the army. For the army top brass, therefore, restoration of a popular rule in Punjab has also become a virtual necessity.

The Congress(I) leaders in the state have been clamouring for the reversion of power into their hands for some time now. The party had a clear majority when the Darbara Singh government was dismissed in October 1983 but the June 1980 mandate will expire soon. Holding fresh elections in the state along with the other state Assemblies is a political option which is clearly better than restoring the Congress(I) to power before holding the elections.

The Akali Dal, on its part, can find a way out of the impasse by agreeing to take part in the elections. Being in a minority in the dismissed government, a number of Akalis have been in favour of holding elections for the last two years.

But the question is: will elections be held? The hitch is not from the side of the government, the army or the Congress(I). The Akali moderates, too, are not a problem. The main threat remains from the extremists.

The centre's major problem is that the Akali Dal and Sikh religious leaders are under arrest (nearly 400 cases of sedition have been registered against them). The release of the Akali Dal leaders Harchand Singh Longowal, Surjit Singh Barnala and Prakash Singh Badal along with theShiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee chief Gurcharan Singh Tohra, has become a political option which the government will have to decide on before the elections are held. But even if it does decide to release the leaders, the government will still be faced with a problem: since sedition is a criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, there is no provision for political considerations.

The government can release the four top leaders to pave the way for normalcy. While this may pose administrative problems, due to the criminal charges against the leaders, they can contest elections from jail if they so wish. George Fernandes contested the 1977 Lok Sabha elections when he was in jail and won. Communist leaders like P. Rammurthi have contested elections from jail. If elections are held without the release of Longowal, Badal, Barnala and Tohra, the Sikh leaders can certainly be allowed to file their nominations. A predominant section of opinion in the government and the



Inside Guru Ram Das Niwas: Sikh refugees waiting to be given shelter

ruling party seems to favour this option.

The Akali leaders who are held only under the NSA, may be released before the polls, if this option is accepted by the government. Under this formula, the acting president of the Akali Dal, Surjan Singh Thekedar, should be allowed to meet the arrested leaders in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh where they are under detention, and discuss the political strategy before the elections. Thekedar, before the Lok Sabha polls, had been giving the impression that he was a hardliner. But after the election results were announced in late December, he is believed to have changed his attitude. Today, he does not seem totally averse to a dialogue with the government and may even agree to meet the four leaders in jail on the eve of the polls.

After the election dates are decided, a precondition for the elections should be the withdrawal of the army from Punjab. Polling held in the state while it is under the charge of the armed forces may not be deemed to be free and fair.

Besides, the Akali Dal and the Congress(I) should not hinder the functioning of any party which comes to power after elections are held in the state. If the Akalis win, they must not be stopped from taking over the reins of power. If the Congress receives the mandate, as it has done almost all over the country in the recent Lok Sabha elections, then the Akalis must accept the defeat gracefully and allow the elected government to function. If the politicians of Punjab have the good of the people in their hearts, they should not allow the elections in the state to be turned into a farce. If the demand is for the restoration of popular rule then the verdict of the electorate has to be respected. Any disregard for the consensus would have disastrous effects. Already the apathy of the politicians of Punjab, who failed to stand up to the threats posed by the extremists, has made the state, which was a leader in agriculture and industry in the country, suffer economically. If Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale had been challenged politically, then Punjab would not have come to its present pitiable state. Instead of countering extremism politically, the leaders wanted to reap the rewards of such adventurism and the price the country has paid is colossal. Secularism has never been under such a strain in India as it has been ever since extremist activity, under religious tutelage, began in Punjab.

The Punjab tangle is no longer confined to the Chandigarh problem or the river waters dispute. The Anadpur Sahib resolution, which has been more widely discussed than actually read, is also not a major obstruction to a solution. What is most important in Punjab today is the restoration of communal harmony. Both Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab are feeling insecure; and this has to be eradicated. This is not going to be a simple task. The mutual trust between communities will take some time to be restored. The newspapers in Punjab have been regularly carrying advertisements of people willing to sell their property in exchange for property in Delhi or Haryana. There have been some cases of Sikhs living in Panchkula, a suburb of Chandigarh which falls in Haryana, shifting to Mohali, also a suburb of Chandigarh, which falls in Punjab. The government has been alarmed at the way Sikh families from outside Punjab have been moving over to the state. One of the first tasks undertaken by the government of Rajiv Gandhi has been to summon the chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and ask the union home minister S. B. Chavan to direct them to go to Punjab and persuade the Sikh families to return to their homes in the three states. The lieutenant-governor of Delhi and the chief executive councillor of the union territory of Delhi were also involved in this exercise.

In his first address to the nation after the elections, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had unequivocally assured the Sikhs that they would be protected. In almost every election speech made by him in the last phase of the campaign in December, he made it a point to reassure the Sikh community about their security. The



Jagdish Yadav

Sikh refugees inside Gurudwara Rakab Ganj in New Delhi

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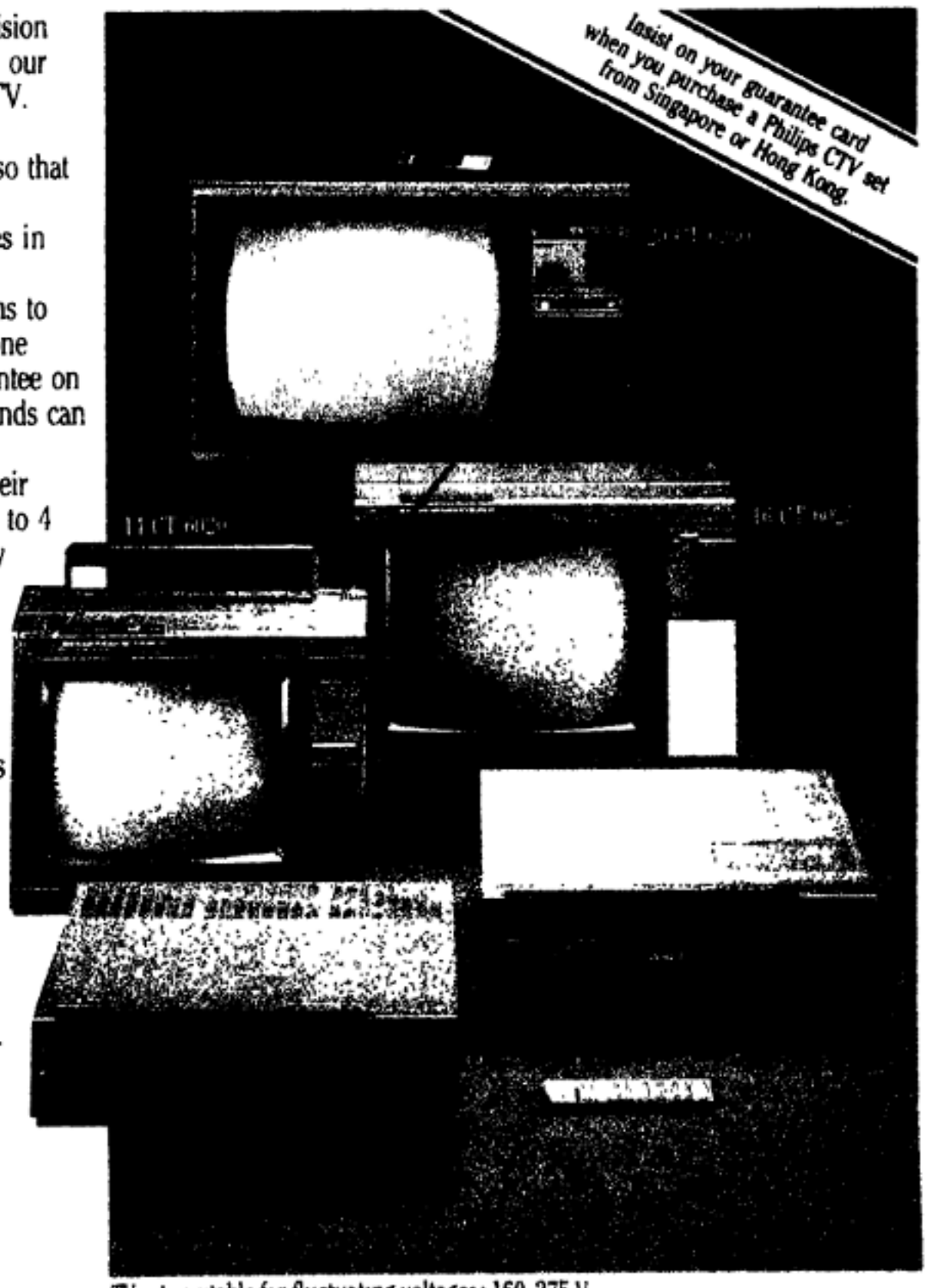
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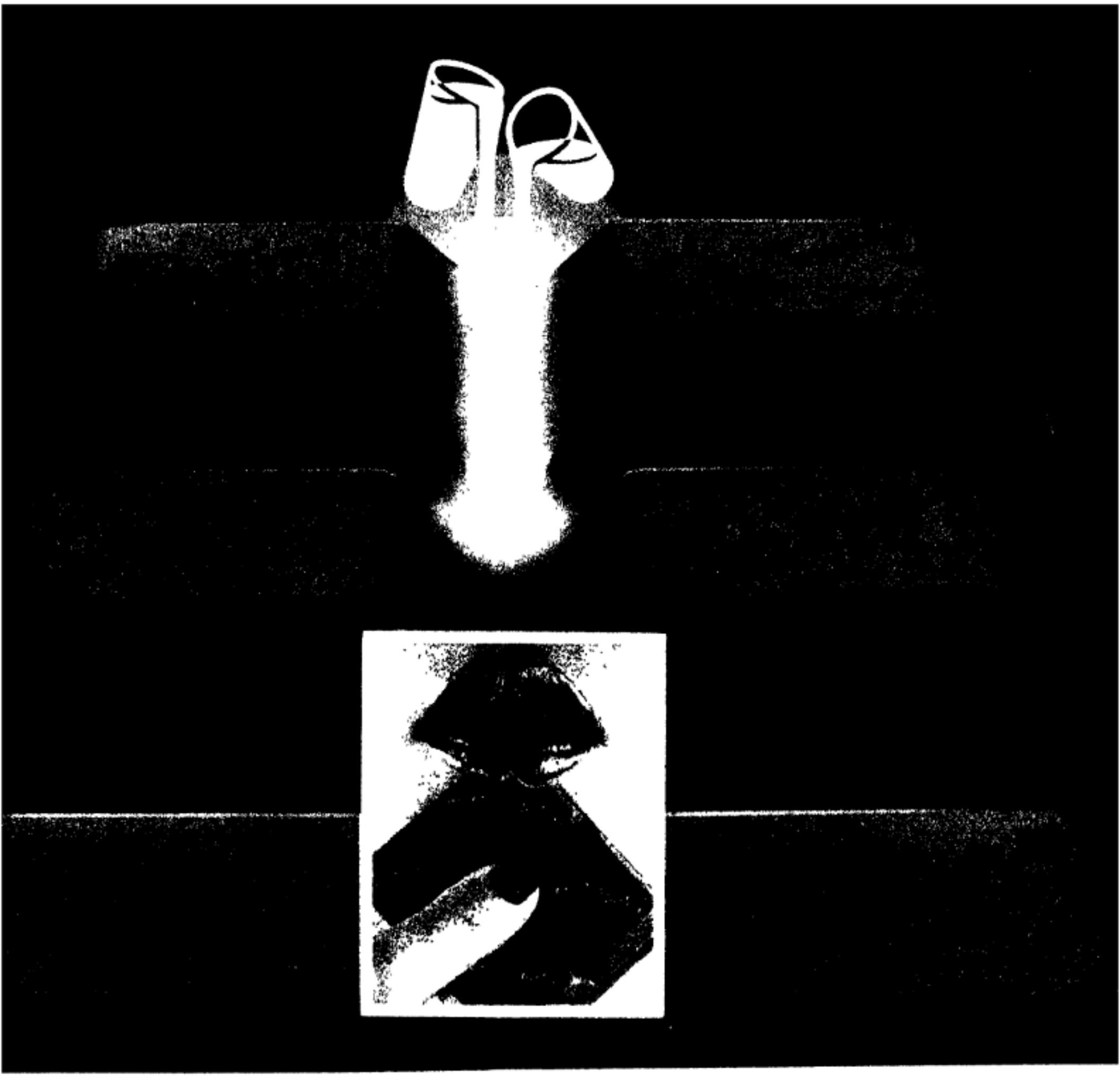
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intelligence reports, which indicated that the Sikhs were migrating to Punjab from other states were taken seriously by the Prime Minister and his timely action may go a long way in creating an atmosphere which will help this sensitive state return to normalcy.

The tragedy of Punjab is that while religious bigots played havoc, the riots which broke out simultaneously in many parts of the country in the first week of November, affected many poor people. The Sikhs who are settled in places outside Punjab are mainly those who migrated to India when Pakistan was created. They do not own land or property in Punjab and much of what they had created out of their sweat and toil was lost in the riots. Today, the same people are looking to Punjab as a place where they can be safe. One does not know if they can earn a livelihood there. Gurudwarascanprovide shelter for a while, but they cannot become permanent refugee camps. In dealing with the Punjab crisis, it has to be borne in mind that a floating Sikh population can pose a threat if effective steps are not taken soon to rehabilitate them.

The apathy of the state machinery in the early days of Rajiv Gandhi's rule is responsible for the present impasse. If the riots in early November had been effectively handled and those guilty of indulging in the communal orgy booked, then the feeling of insecurity among the Sikhs would not have grown. The first positive step from the government came on 9 January 1985, when the additional commissioner of Delhi police, Ved Marwah, told the press that 1,900 people had been arrested for their role in the November riots in the capital.

Should the Akali Dal be banned? Freedom of expression and religion in this country are subject to the Indian people's fundamental commitment to secularism. The Akali Dal is one party where the high priests sitting in the Akal Takht at Amritsar call the shots. It is a shame that the high priests, who owe their existence to the Shiromani GurudwaraPrabhandhak Committee (SGPC) Act, which is a creature of the statute book, dared to declare the President of India as a *tankhaiya* (ostracised from the Sikh community) after Operation Bluestar in June. The President of India cannot be brought to ridicule by a bunch of religious leaders. It is true that Giani Zail Singh is a Sikh. But he is not the President of India by virtue of his religion. It is unfortunate that the President gave undue importance to the high priests by seeking the removal of this order. The high priests obliged. But, at what cost? In the presence of the President, they ridiculed the armed forces of which he is the supreme commander. Such acts are certainly not in consonance with the mood of secular India.

Giving Chandigarh to Punjab and referring the river waters dispute to a tribunal are no longer solutions to the Punjab crisis. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is facing trouble from his own partymen on Chandigarh. The former law minister, Jagannath Kaushal, who won the Chandigarh seat for the ruling party, has promised that Chandigarh would remain a union territory and most people in Chandigarh want it to retain its present status. But the Congress(I) must evolve a national policy on the Chandigarh question. Indira Gandhi had promised Chandigarh to Punjab. However, the stand of Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal is different. He had confused the issues two years earlier, by staking Haryana's claim to Chandigarh. Now, when the Prime Minister and the three-member cabinet panel comprising S.B. Chavan, K.C. Pant and Narasimha Rao have been grappling with the Punjab problem, Bhajan Lal has suddenly dug out nineteenth century revenue records to prove that Abohar and Fazilka were part of Sirsa district (now in Haryana). But Punjab may not want to give up these two tehsils.

In the next two months, much of the efforts of the new wave government of Rajiv Gandhi will have to concentrate on Punjab. The AICC general secretary, Srikant Verma, has rightly pointed out to the Akalis that the verdict of the 1984 polls has been against separatism and, therefore, insistence on the Anandpur Sahib resolution will not be in line with the massive mandate which the people all over the country have given last month. The image of the new wave government is good. Its performance will be on test in Punjab, to begin with.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi



Paramilitary personnel patrol inside the Golden Temple complex

Wanted: Action Against Extremists

While the confidence of the rest of the Sikhs is restored

The Congress(I) and its leader Mr Rajiv Gandhi have been returned with a thumping mandate The assassination of Indira Gandhi and the Punjab imbroglio which gave new meaning to the ruling party's 'unity of the country' slogan are two of the factors that have given the party 400 seats in the eighth Lok Sabha. In keeping with this the Prime Minister, in his first address to the nation, has declared Punjab to be the first on the new government's list of priorities. Earlier he had set up a high-powered panel comprising the home minister Mr S B. Chavan, the defence minister Mr P V. Narasimha Rao and the education minister K.C. Pant Mr Pant had flirted with Punjab for a short period last year when he was sent as one of the many government emissaries to Punjab. Mr Rao, of course, was actively involved with the problem as the home minister and Mr S.B. Chavan today is being briefed on the subject.

The former Punjab chief minister Mr Darbara Singh and the agriculture minister Mr Buta Singh are very actively involved with the Prime Minister in resolving the tangle and have become almost daily visitors to his residence

Mr Rajiv Gandhi has come out strongly against the Anandpur Sahib resolution in interviews and in his address to the nation. He has made it clear that this will not be taken as a precondition for any settlement as the government is positive that separatism will not be tolerated. The unity of the country, as Mr Gandhi asserted, is paramount. But in saying so he has not said anything new, although most political pundits in the press and outside are hailing his words as if they had not heard these assertions before. This is exactly what his mother had been saying for over a year before her death. Mrs Indira Gandhi had made it clear that while discussion on the other pending demands of the Akali Dal could be initiated, the government would not compromise on the Anandpur Sahib resolution at all.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi while equally categorical about the resolution, has not made his mind known on the other pending demands of the Akali Dal, namely the river waters issue, the demand for transferring Chandigarh to Punjab and the religious demands of the Akali Dal that Mrs Gandhi had accepted but not implemented. Will he continue pandering to religiosity or will he make a clean break? Will he begin negotiations and if so, with whom? Or will he announce a unilateral decision and clamp down on the Akali Dal as an organisation? There is no doubt that in resolving the Punjab tangle, or at least in attempting to solve it, the young Prime Minister can very easily make his first political and, in all probability, very costly blunder.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi in the past has always appeared very confused about the Punjab issue. He had never

been able to come to grips with the problem and after his damaging certificate to Bhindranwale as a "religious leader" in April last, he kept very much out of the scene as far as this state was concerned. Earlier he had blundered in trying to oust Darbara Singh as the chief minister by supporting his close friend at that time, Mr Amarender Singh. Mr Amarender Singh had with the full blessings of Mr Rajiv Gandhi worked to destabilise the Darbara government in Punjab, creating more confusion than even the centre could handle.

But that is the past and very likely Mr Rajiv Gandhi has learnt from his mistakes. One indication of this is that Mr Darbara Singh is amongst those now advising him on Punjab. But the Punjab scenario is not very encouraging for a fruitful settlement at present. The five high priests have become the spokesmen for the Sikh extremists. The so-called moderate leaders are in jail. This raises the question as to whom the government will negotiate with. Prakash Singh Badal comes to mind as the most moderate leader but even he had been compelled to succumb to pressures when in Delhi he set fire to a copy of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution. The army is deployed in the state in full strength and in the wake of Operation Bluestar and the attacks on innocent Sikhs following Mrs Gandhi's assassination most of this community has become alienated. They have to be won over and this can only be done by assuring them, in action and not just in words, that they are not second class citizens in the eyes of the government.

The real problem in Punjab is not the acceptance of the demands. The government can very easily make a unilateral announcement and then ensure that there are no reprisals by keeping the army posted in the state. Or it can restore popular rule with the Akali Dal as a co-partner and keep its fingers crossed hoping for the best. It can even ban the Akali Dal as a politico-religious organisation. There is a choice of several short term alternatives and it is for the Prime Minister and his colleagues to determine what they feel is the best for Punjab and for the country in the present circumstances

But nothing will succeed in the long run without a concerted attack on communalism and fundamentalism. Mr Rajiv Gandhi in his speech has underlined the importance of secularism and one can only hope that he means this. It is very easy in this country to speak of secularism and pander heavily at the same time to communalism. The Congress(I) has done this in the past and in fact is guilty of it in its campaign for the recent elections. In Amethi, which is the Prime Minister's constituency, this correspondent heard anti-Sikh slogans directed at Menaka Gandhi being raised by Congress(I) workers in all parts of the constituency. In Nainital the Congress(I) workers made it clear that the unity of the country was correlated to Hinduism. This was because the rival candidate, namely, Akbar Ahmed had captured the Muslim and Sikh votes to some extent and the Congress(I) was unashamedly appealing to the majority community to unitedly return its candidate to the Lok Sabha

Today while eulogising the new chapter that has opened in Indian history the politicians and the journalists have chosen to forget the worst post partition riots that shook this country. The Prime Minister, while assuring the Sikhs that their life and property were secure, did not assure them that a judicial enquiry would be held to look into the carnage that took countless lives in the country's capital and the neighbouring states. Action against parties like the Akali Dal which mix religion with politics is long overdue but no government can take such an action in isolation. It has to have the confidence of the community concerned with it and for this the government now has to take the necessary measures. The Sikh extremists must not only be isolated but should be dealt with ruthlessly while the confidence of the rest of the community is restored in the government.

Only a truly secular government can attack fundamentalism and stamp out communalism with confidence. For this the government and its functionaries should not be seen by the people to be pandering to any one community. Mr Rajiv Gandhi has spoken of secularism; only the future will tell if he is capable of and really inclined to follow his words with concrete action or whether he is merely paying lip service to a concept he does not fully understand.

Seema Mustafa, New Delhi

'Constitution of the Cabinet Panel Does Not Mean Anything'

Sardar Surjan Singh Thekedar, convenor of the ad hoc committee of the Akali Dal told SUNDAY

Q: Can normalcy return to Punjab?

A: Normalcy can return if the government sees things in the right perspective. The Akali leaders now in jail have to be released. So have the Akali workers and the other people arrested during the last one year or so. The centre then has to declare the acceptance of the just and legitimate demands of the Sikhs and provide constitutional guarantees for the safety and the security of their lives and property.

The Akali Dal is not a secessionist or a separatist party. It does not believe in violent methods of agitation. I can say that the Akali Dal is more patriotic than even the ruling party.

Q: Will the constitution of the panel by the Prime Minister bring an end to the Punjab problem?

A: So much suffering has been inflicted on the Sikhs that the constitution of the panel does not mean anything. I think there can surely be more constructive steps than the formation of the panel. Among these steps are the declaration of the acceptance of the Sikh demands which the government knows are genuine and legitimate.

Q: Why is the Akali Dal so adamant about the acceptance of the Anandpur Sahib resolution?

A: The Anandpur Sahib resolution is being misinterpreted. The resolution stands for more power to the states and for a federal structure. The government should not feel hesitant to act just because the name of the resolution starts with Anandpur Sahib, one of the holy places of the Sikhs.

Q: Can the Akali Dal start the talks now?

A: I do not think so. There is no question of the Akali Dal starting any negotiations. Only the leaders in jail can deliver the goods. So, they have to be released first.

Interviewed by Tirthankar Ghosh

Destination: Punjab

The Akalis are promoting a transfer of Sikh population from other parts of the country

"Until the central government assures the Sikhs who have left their homes in other parts of India to come to Punjab, the refugees will not stop coming here. Neither will they go back."

Giani Sahib Singh, one of the five head priests of the Golden Temple in Amritsar

Nineteen year old Mahinder Kaur hurried up the stairs to her room in the Guru Ram Das Niwas, outside the Temple complex. Mahinder had arrived in the Golden Temple with her parents and her two brothers in the beginning of November 1984. Her husband Sukhbir, to whom she had been married in September 1982, had been killed in the riots in Delhi following Indira Gandhi's assassination. The family had taken refuge in a gurudwara in Delhi and had almost decided to go back to their home in Mahabir Enclave near Palam village in New Delhi, when they heard that there would be bloody reprisals against the Sikhs during the Lok Sabha elections. The family members were told by Sikh leaders that it was useless going back to their home; it would do them good if they migrated to Punjab.

Mahinder's family had been to the Golden Temple once on a pilgrimage and naturally the first place in Punjab which came to their minds was Amritsar. Today, Mahinder's is one of the 100 families which have taken refuge in the Guru Ram Das Niwas. The trickle of refugees from Delhi, Kanpur, parts of Himachal Pradesh and Bihar which started in the first week of November 1984, grew to a flood as the Lok Sabha elections approached. According to conservative estimates put forward by the Punjab state government officers in Chandigarh, around 5,000 Sikh families have come to Punjab since the November riots.

But ask any Sikh connected with the relief and rehabilitation of the Sikh refugees in the 13 centres set up in the state and the reply is: one lakh to one-and-a-half lakh Sikh families have migrated to Punjab. This may be an exaggeration, for while travelling from Chandigarh to Jullundur and Amritsar via Ropar and Ludhiana, where the families have settled down, one arrives at a figure somewhere around 30,000.

The SGPC is sparing no pains to help the refugee families. In fact, its youth wing and volunteers are even encouraging them to stay on. The methods adopted are subtle. While there is no dearth of assistance to the refugees—whether in the form of money or materials—the leaders have mounted a campaign to tell the refugees that there is no security for Sikhs anywhere in the country, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assurances notwithstanding. This correspondent had a taste of the SGPC methods in Jullundur's Gurudwara Diwan Sathan in Central Town. Many young Sikh members of the Youth Relief and Welfare Committee were



Sikh refugees in a gurudwara in Ludhiana

more keen to give information about the Sikh refugees than they could themselves. Said one of them: "You must write that migrants do not want to go back to their homes," he warned, "All of them want to settle in Punjab and we will do everything to rehabilitate them."

This correspondent spoke to Darshan Kaur, an elderly lady who has been living in Gurudwara Diwan Sathan for the last month or so. Her home was in Patnasaheb, near the gurudwara and she had left Patna because, as she confided, "I was very scared. During the riots we were not harmed. In fact, we suffered no losses— our business was intact. I came here because I have relatives in this town (Jullundur). Every Sikh I knew told me that the murders would start taking place during the Lok Sabha elections. But nothing happened." Would she go back, we asked her. Before Darshan Kaur could reply, an elderly Sikh gentleman, who had arrived from the trans-Jamuna colony in Delhi, shot back at us: "How can she go back? For that matter how can all of us go back? The Congress(I) is waiting with knives, sticks and bombs for us." Darshan Kaur had no answer.

The SGPC has grand plans for the rehabilitation of the Sikh refugees. According to a senior intelligence officer in Chandigarh, looking after Punjab affairs, there are plans to collect Rs 11 crores for the refugees. And he was quite confident that the amount would definitely be collected.

The relief centres set up by the SGPC have till now provided assistance to over 1,800 families in Amritsar. In Ludhiana, over 5,460 families have been given money and help to settle down. Already plans are underway to construct 100 shops and two multistoried housing complexes on land owned by the SGPC in Amritsar. Perhaps the most ambitious scheme has been formulated at Mohali near Chandigarh. There an industrial training institute, where various technical trades would be taught, will be set up.

Sardar Bhan Singh, secretary of the SGPC, in charge of the relief and rehabilitation programme said: "We are trying our best to provide relief to the refugees. They have suffered a lot. Anyone who comes to the Golden Temple and asks for refuge is never refused. So, when the widows and the families came here, we asked them to stay on." Over 200 widows and their dependants have been given Rs 1,000 each. In addition, free clothing, bedding and rations are provided. The children have been admitted in five colleges and 10 schools run by the

'Mentally All Sikhs Have Become Extremists'

Rajinder Kaur, ex-MP and president of the Istiree Akali Dal, told SUNDAY



Rajinder Kaur

Q: *Can the Punjab problem be solved?*

A: The Punjab problem has been exploited by the Congress(I). Although Mrs Gandhi could not exploit it, her son has. It is the Congress(I) which killed the Sikhs in Delhi and other parts of India. The situation is quite tense now and no one—neither Hindus nor Sikhs—feels safe in Punjab.

Q: But the Prime Minister has appointed a panel to look into the Punjab problem.

A: The panel cannot succeed. How can it succeed when the persons in it are guilty of keeping the problem alive? I will give you an example. I was supposed to lead a *jatha* to liberate the Golden Temple from army occupation on 16 July 1984. On the morning of 15 July, the army general came forward for a meeting with us (the Akali leadership). The army wanted us to give up the idea of the *jatha*. The talks with them had neared completion and we had worked out some sort of compromise, when K.C. Pant came to Amritsar with express orders from the centre to break down the talks. It is my personal feeling that Mrs Gandhi was misled by the people around her who have wanted to keep the problem alive.

Q: Are the Sikhs then totally alienated?

A: Do you know what the Sikhs feel today? The Sikhs are under the impression that the government has told them to get out of India. No one has been arrested yet for the killings of Sikhs in the riots following Indira Gandhi's death.

As for the compensation given by the government, it is nothing. What can anyone these days do with Rs 10,000. A Sikh cannot move around safely and everywhere he is looked down upon as a traitor and killer of Hindus. Mentally all Sikhs have become extremists.

Q. How can there be peace?

A. There can be peace if the government want. But it seems the government does not want peace.. innocent Sikhs are killed almost everyday in fake encounters...The tension can be lessened if the senior Akali leaders are released from jail.

Q: Should not the Akali Dal have disowned Bhindranwale?

A: They could not and should not have disowned Bhandranwale. He was after all an Akali, like all Sikhs are. However, he could be checked but no one could check him. You know, the tragedy of Bhindranwale was that he did not know he had been set up by the Congress(I). He was used by the Congress(I) which built him up as a symbol of Sikh extremism.

Interviewed by Tirthankar Ghosh

SGPC and are being given free education. Most able-bodied men in Amritsar are being given jobs by Sikh industrialists.

With all these facilities, it is natural for the Sikh refugees not to want to go back. And the reasons being given by the refugees vary. "There is no security anywhere. How can I go back home when I have lost everything?" asked Gurmeet Singh from Kanpur. Said Fateh Singh, owner-driver of an autorickshaw (DER 4306) from Sabzi Mandi in Delhi: "We can't trust anyone. We don't want to stay outside Punjab. If the centre was instigating the riots can the Sikhs ever stay in peace?"

Both Gurmeet Singh and Fateh Singh are living off the largess of the SGPC. Yet both like numerous other Sikh families have one or other family members at their homes in Kanpur, Calcutta, Bhopal, Patna, Ranchi and other places. We asked Fateh Singh, originally from Calcutta's 1/1 Shibnarayan Das Lane, whether he would ever go back to his wife, children and brothers in Calcutta. "How can I?" he asked "I am sure to be attacked on the way." When we assured him that the days of madness when Sikhs were picked out and killed were over, he evaded our reply and added. "Don't worry, though nothing happened in Calcutta, I have written to my family to sell the house and come and settle down in Punjab. This is the only safe place for us."

More and more Sikhs are reaching Punjab every day, although the number has decreased considerably. This correspondent asked a number of refugees in the Golden Temple whether they had come on their own volition or on the advice of some people A story doing the rounds in Chandigarh mentions that a large number of letters have gone out from the Golden Temple to the gurudwaras around the country asking the members of the *sangat* to migrate to Punjab. Said an intelligence officer, who did not wish to be named: "I have myself seen 70 or 80 such letters. Most of them do not have proper addresses. Common Sikh names, like Surjeet Singh, are picked. In the Golden Temple, they have a list of nearly all the gurudwaras in the country. Suppose they were to send a letter addressed to Surjeet Singh of the Gurudwara Bangla Sahib in Delhi, some Surjeet Singh of Delhi would receive it And, after the November riots, a Sikh is ready to believe anything. If he receives an advice to migrate to Punjab, Surjeet Singh most certainly will."

However, when Giani Sahib Singh, one of the high priests of the Golden Temple was asked if any such letters had been sent out from the Temple, he evaded the question. He then said: "The government is responsible for what happened to the Sikhs. The people have no other place than the gurudwaras in Punjab to go to."

Nevertheless, some Sikh families have gone back to their homes. Charanjeet Kaur from Delhi, now in the Kalgidhar Gurudwara in Ludhiana said her husband had to go back to his job in the ministry of labour in Delhi. She said: "My husband is a clerk and he had to join his duties. But he will come back to Punjab. He has only gone to arrange his transfer from Delhi." Charanjeet Kaur's is the only instance of a family going back that this correspondent came across. Some families, more resourceful than the others, have settled down in rented houses or have bought property in Chandigarh and Ludhiana. Estate agents in Chandigarh have been doing good business. In fact, land prices in and around the 'city beautiful' as Chandigarh is known, have more than doubled.

An uneasy calm prevails in Punjab. Shops down their shutters after sundown, cinema halls stop functioning after the evening show and almost everyone warns that it is not safe to travel on the highway after it is dark. The Sikh leaders themselves say precious little to ease the tension. The tension snowballs,

The "Martyr" of Maloya

Date: 28 December 1984. Place: Maloya village, about 15 km from Chandigarh. It is nearing noon and the 3,000-strong congregation gathered in the middle of the village is waiting in front of a hastily erected dais. They have gathered in Maloya, the native village of Beant Singh, one of the assassins of Indira Gandhi, to take part in the *Bhog* (a religious ceremony for a dead man) ceremony of the dead assassin.

On the dais is Beant Singh's widow, Bimal Kaur Khalsa. Beside her are a dozen persons, among whom are three senior Akali leaders: the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee's acting president Prem Singh Lalpura, an Akali Dal legislator, Beant Singh Khalsa and an ex MLA, Bachittar Singh. On the rostrum is also a lifesize portrait of Beant Singh.

The ceremony starts with recitations from the Guru Granth Sahib and other Sikh scriptures. Soon after, the Ropar Akali Dal jatha chief, Sant Ajit Singh rises to speak Without beating around, the Sant comes to the point. He describes Beant Singh as a martyr who the entire Sikh community should emulate. He calls upon the Sikh youth to follow the example set by "the brave and courageous son of the Sikh community. Beant Singh" says the Sant, "had done a great service to India by getting rid of the tormentor of the Sikhs;" thus he deserved to be praised, respected and revered.

The other Akali leaders, along with half a-dozen other leaders deliver highly provocative speeches. At the end of the ceremony, one of the leaders rises and asks the congregation to donate money for the widow and the children of the "martyr." Almost everyone donates money and when the amount collected is totalled, it is found to be around Rs 28,000 The money is given to the widow. Before dispersing, the leaders promise that similar congregations in the memory of Beant Singh would be held throughout Punjab. Though a criminal case was registered in the union territory of Chandigarh against those who delivered the speeches, the authorities did not take action immediately. The intelligence and police authorities were in a quandary whether to arrest the guilty or not In fact, on 5 January 1985, senior intelligence officials were wondering if the arrest of the Akali leaders would bring the Punjab crisis to the boil again. With the bulk of the Punjab Akali leadership in jail, the thinking of the top officers was not wholly misplaced. However, the Akali leaders were arrested on 7 January.

According to a very highly placed intelligence officer who did not wish to be named, "The Akali Dal leadership does not realise what misery and pain the Maloya incident can bring to the entire Sikh community living outside Punjab." Already, the country has witnessed what happened after Indira Gandhi's assassination and such incidents might start the cycle once again. Perhaps, the Akali leadership has not learnt yet, since a similar gathering was organised at Sohana village in Ropar district on 6 January 1985.

Ritu Sharma and Tirthankar Ghosh



The *langar* inside Kalgidhar Gurudwara in Ludhiana

fed on rumours spread by vested interests and the migrants are those who are affected the most. With nothing much to do, they feed each other with exaggerated versions of the November riots. Gurpreet Singh of Kanpur, now living in the Diwan Sathan Gurdwara in Jullundur's Central Town, said that he had heard of a two-month old Sikh baby who had been roasted alive on a gas stove. In Jullundur another story was doing the rounds. A Sikh lady from Delhi said that she herself had seen three Sikh children being tied together with a piece of tyre and that some white chemical was thrown on them which caused a fire killing them instantly.

The SGPC Relief Committee and other volunteer organisations are only too eager to brainwash these helpless migrants. When we were asking questions to the Sikh refugees a few of the SGPC volunteers gathered together a few of the migrants and shouted angrily: "*Raj karega Khalsa. Akee rahe na koi* (The Sikhs will rule and no enemy will exist)." As for the Sikh leaders most of them parrot the same lines. Rajinder Kaur, the daughter of the legendary Master Tara Singh and the president of the Istree Akali Dal said, "The release of the senior Sikh leaders can only lessen the tension. That and the withdrawal of the army at the earliest."

The Sikh refugees are often misguided by politicians and the Sikh youth activists when approached for advice and guidance. History is used by them to change their views. Gurnam Singh Tir, a lawyer and a senior adviser to the Akali Dal, gave an example. He said: "We have been treated as criminals and it is all due to the one family Kashmiri Brahmin rule. Out of 121 persons who were hanged during the independence movement, 93 were Sikhs. Out of 2,668 whose property was confiscated during the struggle against the British, 2,000 were Sikhs. Out of 1,302 persons killed during the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, 799 were Sikhs. How can we expect justice from a government which does not recognise these figures?"

The scenario in Amritsar and other parts of Punjab reminds one of the pre-partition days of 1947. Today there are no end to rumours as there were in 1947. Reminds Leonard Mosley in his *The Last Days of the British Raj*, that Amritsar was made up of "only narrow streets where gossip, rumour and alarm can spread like fire among dry kindling wood." Migrants in relief camps in Amritsar and Ludhiana had been given a dose of such gossip. They said they had been informed by political workers and responsible SGPC members to reach Punjab before 22 December 1984 because on that day a large scale massacre of Sikhs outside Punjab would start. Strangely, the date was extended to 24 December and later to 13 January 1985. Fortunately, intelligence sources were well aware of what was happening or going to happen and accordingly took measures.

Why are the Sikhs and the Akali Dal, in particular, so intent on encouraging this migration? In March 1947, the Muslim League had started advising the Muslims in India to move over to Pakistan. When the League realised that very few of the Muslims were interested in leaving their native villages, the leadership hired goondas to organise anti-Sikh and anti-Hindu riots in the area. Three months later the Sikhs organised their own killer squads which roamed about the country side wreaking vengeance. Is the Akali Dal interested in seeing a 1947 type of situation in this country again?

Though the refugees have been received with open arms and are being given all help now, the migration is sure to have its repercussions. As Gurnam Singh Tir confided, "Punjab is not in a position to rehabilitate the refugees. The Sikhs or the SGPC do not possess the resources to take care of the thousands of people who have come." And the rumblings of discontent have already started. "Land prices have shot up in Amritsar. Jobs which could be taken up by the people here have been given to the refugees. We have given enough in the form of money and help," said a Sikh shopkeeper, Harbhajan Singh, who owns a shop on the outskirts of Amritsar.

If some Sikhs of Punjab are resenting the migration from the rest of the country, the Hindus who have not been affected by the aftermath of the assassination of Indira Gandhi, are keeping quiet. But it is a very deceptive calm. As Ram Kumar Sharma, owner of a teashop just outside the city limits of Ludhiana put it: "What the Sikhs received in Delhi after the assassination of our Prime Minister was only a slap. This time, if they start anything in Punjab against the Hindus, they will receive something more." This belligerent mood of the Sikhs as well as the Hindus does not augur well. If the government does not take timely action, Punjab can well be in flames in a few months.

Tirthankar Ghosh in Amritsar and Rita Sharma in Chandigarh

Should Communal Parties Be Banned?

Some eminent personalities answer



Arjan Singh

Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Arjan Singh: Communal parties should be discouraged to function. I think they have no place in our Constitution.

Dr Karan Singh: It is very difficult to say which party is communal. According to our Constitution every one has the right to form a party. No party should be banned.

Raghuvir Sahai, eminent Hindi journalist and literary figure who won the Sahitya Akademi award this year: I can only say that there should not be any communal party. But, if communal parties exist, one has to determine the intention of those who want the ban on communal parties.

V.P. Bhatia, Editor, *Organiser*: I am against any ban on any political party

Amrita Pritam: How can one decide which party is communal? But, religion and politics should be separated. If some parties are based on religion, they should play a clean game of politics.

Shabana Azmi: All communal parties should be banned.



Shabana Azmi



Raghu Rai



Amrita Pritam



Karan Singh

Saeed Akhtar Mirza, noted filmmaker: I think all parties are communal; all of them should be banned.

Raj Krishna, economist and former member of Planning Commission: We should not ban communal parties: they are parts of our political structure. Large sections of the Indian society find their collective identity in terms of their religion. In outlawing communal parties, you are outlawing most of Indian society. The recent elections have shown that the Congress party is also a communal party—would not say the entire party, but large sections of it. Thus, it would also have to be banned. All communal, tribal, linguist, religious parties should co-exist in the Indian orchestra and settle their differences by political horsetrading. It is unfair for one communal party to ban other communal parties. The ruling party has alliances with communal forces in Maharashtra and Kerala.

Raghu Rai, photographer: Any party which evokes communal feelings should be banned. Unfortunately, some parties are communal by name and others *are* communal, without their name being so. So what does one do about those?

SPECIAL REPORT

Assam: Solution Ahead?

The mood in the AASU camp is one of reconciliation

Assam agitationists have come a long way since the heady days of 1979 to 1982, when their fiat ran supreme in the state. The movement for the removal of foreign nationals from Assam and the need to cleanse the electoral rolls was enthusiatically supported by the people in the state. Throughout the country too, there was widespread sympathy for the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the young student leadership which claimed to lead a peaceful, non-violent agitation on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi. However, with time one heard less and less of Mahatma Gandhi and the movement strayed from its original path. The Nellie massacre rang a deathknell to the professed non-violent pretensions of the agitationists. The internal schism in the AASU leading to the expulsion of Muslim students led by the AASU vice-president Nurul Hussain shed it of its secular garb. The Muslim students led by Hussain accused the AASU executive of adopting an aggressively Hindu posture. At the same time differences within the AASU and the AAGSP have been steadily surfacing leading to the expulsion of Atul Bora of the PLP from his post as convenor of the AAGSP.

Riven as it is by internal differences, the movement also has, since February 1983, to contend with chief minister Hiteswar Saikia who has been working behind the scenes to wean away the support base of the agitationists. In upper Assam from where Mr Saikia hails, the movement, at present, exists more or less in name, except among sections of the upper castes. Saikia has shrewdly managed to convince the people there that the agitation dominated as it is by caste Hindus has little to offer the Ahoms. Long before the numerous calls for *bandhs* and boycotts of the ministers and visiting dignitaries from New Delhi became meaningless in Lower Assam, they were ignored in the Sibsagar and Dibrugarh districts.

The chief minister's principal achievement has been to prove to the people of Assam that he is as committed to the interests of the state and its people as the most ardent AASU supporter. He has repeatedly emphasised that patriotism and well-being of the state was not just the prerogative of the AASU and the AAGSP. Even AASU sympathisers grudgingly admit that Mr Saikia has been able to bring in a lot of money from the centre to the state and that, considering the present circumstances, he is the best person to look after the interests of the state.

Saikia has been able to earn a considerable amount of goodwill from even the middle classes,



Women demonstrating in Gauhati in 1980: weary of agitation

formerly the most ardent supporters of the AASU. By restoring the confidence of the police and the bureaucracy and its own efficacy, by placing Assamese officers in key position in the state, Saikia has managed to keep significant sections of the middle and upper classes happy. He has also seen to it that Assamese businessmen and contractors are given a fair share of contracts

While Saikia's role in bringing peace to the state is creditable, the election commission has also achieved what would have been impossible even two years ago. Amid the raging controversy over the correction of the voters list, which had in the first place triggered off the agitation, the election commission has quietly been at work. Today, the enumeration of all potential voters in the state upto January 1985 has been completed. While both the AASU and the forces opposed to it, principally organisations of the minority groups and the ruling Congress(I), have been vociferously advocating their argument for and against the correction of the voters list on the basis of the 1971 electoral rolls, the commission has gone ahead and announced its guidelines for the publication of the draft electoral rolls.

While the AASU had not till the time of writing made public its reaction to the proposal of the election commission, in private the AASU leaders have expressed their disappointment with the election commission. However, they have also made it clear that this would not stand in the way of future negotiations.

According to the directive received from the election commission, those whose names have been entered in the 1971 electoral rolls and those "linked" with 1971 (the descendants of those whose names are present in the 1971 rolls) will be entered in the draft rolls. For the others whose names are not in the 1971 list, scrutiny will be done. Forest, revenue and police officials will be entrusted to forward the relevant information about such persons Their place of birth, land records and any other document to prove their bonafides will be collected and the information passed on to the electoral registration officer for scrutiny. The electoral registration officer would then decide whether or not a person's name should be entered in the draft rolls. The order of the election commission would go a long way in paving the path for conciliation. However, it is certain that minority organisations and the ruling Congress(I) would do their utmost to ensure that people



AASU chief Prafulla Mahanta

entered in the 1979 voters list should also be included. It is to be seen how much pressure the chief minister can exert to ensure that Congress(I) voters are not left out.

Even if differences about inclusion of people not in the 1971 voters list do crop up, this will probably not make much difference to the talks. The AASU today distinguishes between the foreign nationals problem which entails the removal of the 1961 to 1971 migrants from Assam, measures for the prevention of fresh influx from Bangladesh, and the deletions which were required to ensure that no foreign nationals are included in the voters lists. Meanwhile, the AASU and the AAGSP have directed their supporters to file claims and objections against all suspected non-citizens whose names may have entered the draft rolls.

Like Hiteswar Saikia, the AASU today makes a distinction between the foreign nationals issue and the election and revision of the electoral rolls. The foreign nationals question would include the removal from Assam of all those who entered the state between 1961 and 1971 or probably a date between these two and adequate steps to stop the further influx of foreigners from Bangladesh. The question of revision and correction of the electoral rolls would probably be discussed separately with the election commission.

While earlier such a move by the election commission would have provided the AASU with ample reason to renew the agitation, today they are sadly not in a position to mobilise the kind of mass support they had earlier. While all sections of Assamese sympathise with the AASU, the mood to come out to the streets and fight for their rights is no longer there. The people of Assam have become weary after six years of struggle which, so far, has not achieved any substantial results, while on the other hand is causing considerable damage to the economy of the state. As such the announcement of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that fresh negotiations between the union government and the Assam agitationists would soon start has been appreciated by all sections of the people in Assam. Most Assamese feel that the new Prime Minister may be more sympathetic to the problems of the state than his mother had been.

However, notwithstanding what the Prime Minister may feel it is unlikely that a solution that has eluded both parties in more than 20 rounds of discussions can be solved because of a change at the top. The only reason for hope is that today the students are separately looking for a solution. They are in an unenviable situation where they can neither rekindle the agitation or conclude it satisfactorily The general mood in the AASU camp is one of reconciliation and once a suitable solution to the foreign nationals issue is found, their first priority would be to form a strong regional party and contest the elections. The present AASU leadership cannot remain in the forefront much longer. Once they are out of the AASU and unless they can form another platform they would be in the wilderness. The students during the first AASU conference had changed their earlier views and had admitted that the Assam issue being a political one can only be solved politically. As such the need for a strong regional party in the state on the lines of NTR's Telugu Desam has been advocated by the AASU sympathisers. So far no party has been formed, though during the AASU conference in Jorhat in December last year the idea was mooted once again. The regional parties especially the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad is opposed to the formation of another regional force. However, it is certain that the AASU will preside over the genesis of another political party as soon as the opportune moment arises. It is also known that the present AASU leadership will assume charge of the new party.

However, before all this comes about, an honourable solution to the Assam issue would be sought by the agitationists. Unless they can do so, they may become irrelevant. The next round of talks between the students and the union government officials which is scheduled to start soon may find the agitationists more pragmatic in their approach than they have been thus far.

Seema Guha, Gauhati

GUEST COLUMN/ RANJIT SAU

Greening of the Gangetic Banks

It did not catch much of the media headline; it was perhaps found not very exciting for the urban elite. It did not have the thrill of the dramatic announcement of bank nationalisation or of the celebrated 20-point programme. Perhaps after the most stunning general elections followed by a dull Test cricket match at the Eden Gardens in Calcutta, the intelligentsia lay exhausted in a listless mood in this cold winter month. Little did they realise at the moment that the young Prime Minister's address to the nation, broadcast on radio and television on 5 January, tenderly touched a deep chord in the country's socio economic choreography.

The Prime Minister has proposed a central Ganga authority vested with the task of cleaning up the much-polluted waters of the epic riverine system that has been for centuries nourished in mythological lore and lately filled with factory effluents. Windfalls from this venture are likely to be immense, far-reaching, and pervasive.

Another imaginative component in the Prime Minister's list is the scheme for setting up a national waste land development corporation with the agenda of reclaiming every year five million hectares for cultivation of fodder and fuel woods. In round figures the territory of India is 300 million hectares, of which 45 per cent is used for agriculture, and 20 per cent is under forest; most of the remaining 35 per cent may be treated as wasteland. The national wasteland development corporation will have plenty of work for years to come with enormous possibilities that usually accompany the opening up of a frontier of some 100 million hectares. Here is an area where the vast manpower of the country can be mobilised without eliciting much social tension at least for the time being. It is a positive-sum game. Its contribution to the much-depleted ecological wealth of the country is beyond any simple monetary measure, so would be its gift to the economy.

If the Prime Minister succeeds in re-orienting the ethos and work potentiality of the countless youths of the country along such productive channels the results are bound to be of heroic proportions. The job is not exactly easy; there are instances of less than satisfactory outcome of similar campaigns earlier in India as well as in some neighbouring countries. But this is not the hour for brooding over the past.

Policies on long-term basic issues of the Indian economy will take time; they are on the anvil. Two problems, however, call for immediate attention. Repayment of the IMF loan has to begin soon. The other one is no less daunting. This year and in the last, India is fortunate to have had two successive peak harvests. Every year the country creates a record or sorts in population; so should be the food crop; but it does not happen that way. If experience is any guide, the downward part of the cycle is expected to commence next year when drought may visit this land.

The vast irrigation network that has been built over the years with so much of care and expense lies choked with salination, silt, and unattended or uncut feeder channels. This priceless national property should be renovated and kept at its prime for meeting any unwelcome behaviour of the monsoon. The irrigation system must not be allowed to decay in indifference and bureaucratic lethargy. With aroused enthusiasm it can be reconstructed to productive vitality.

Apart from the officially classified non agricultural wasteland which is going to be looked after by a national development corporation, there is yet another, perhaps more precious, type of wasteland, namely, the cultivated area that is left idle after one crop in a year. The quantum of such unutilised natural resources may be of the order of another 100 million hectares. Opportunities available at this vital moment in India's destiny may be seized to facilitate and ensure that a second, if not also a third, crop is raised in every agricultural plot in the country. Subsidies, if given for this effort, would at ease be justifiable in relation to the return.

Advice is always a free commodity, to the policy-makers in Delhi it is now flowing in embarrassing abundance. I would complete my bit of the addition to this periodic nuisance by the following terse comment. In the modern age, electricity (without load-shedding) is a necessary condition for economic survival and growth. Every town, village, factory, farm, workshop in the country needs an uninterrupted and ample supply of this ray of Alladin's lamp. The sooner it is provided the better.

The present style and mood in Delhi is one of confidence and hope in the future. Time is an irreversible and jealous goddess; she can be unpredictable. Voters in India can testify to that. Among all the proposals, schemes, machinery, and plans that we are hearing about one stands out in shining glory: Rajiv Gandhi's idea for greening the Gangetic banks, in the long run, is going to be ranked as high as Indira Gandhi's nationalisation of commercial banks. In a remarkably shrewd move, the nation's eyes have been shifted to the majestic beauty of nature, away from the wasteland of narrow politicking. Thank you, Mr Prime Minister!

If the Prime Minister succeeds in re-orienting the ethos and work potentiality of the countless youths of the country along such productive channels the results are bound to be of heroic proportions.

SPECIAL REPORT

Vendetta in Sitapur

A family feud leaves 23 dead

"I saw four of them. Ram Pal and three others, rushing towards our house, guns in hand. I ran to bolt the door. Then I heard bullets hitting the wall, whistling past Shivlal and I threw ourselves on the floor and lay still. They were shouting abuses. *Maro sale Shivlal ko! Nikle to goli mardeo!* I saw two of them on the roof. Then I could feel the heat, and the smoke. i don't know what happened after that. I fainted. *Sahib*, I do not know how I am alive." Shivdeen Yadav (40) spoke in wide-eyed terror, as members of his still dazed family, hands to their faces, heard in silence. One of several survivors of a dastardly act of revenge by one Yadav family on another—a brutal sequel to a four-year quarrel which started over a stolen bicycle, then a mango tree—that left 23 dead and charred, 11 of them children, seven women, and a large, 40-roomed house burnt to ashes, Shivdeen, his brothers and his family, face a dark uncertainty. The wealth they had earned from years of hard work has been consumed by a spiteful envy—which grew into a violent family feud involving rape and murder. Overnight, their fortunes have changed, from abundance to penury. And, with most of their young dead, they have hardly anything to look forward to.



The storeroom where 11 children were burnt alive

The 23 corpses, wrapped in cloth, lined in a morgue in Sitapur, made a ghastly sight. As many as 22 of the dead were from the same family, and one, Bhagwati alias Bhabhuti Yadav, who was murdered on 1 January, from the other. It was to avenge his murder that the 22 others were killed. Three of the 22, Dwarika, his wife Chhidwani and their daughter Phoolwali were riddled with bullets. The other 19 include three children who died of suffocation, and 16 others who were roasted alive. Grotesquely disfigured, some of the bodies were just misshapen lumps of burnt flesh; the body of one of the women had a whole leg burnt off, and just a bone for a limb. Outside the morgue, a crowd of sobbing relatives waited for a look at the corpses.

Mohaddipur's Yadavs, a quiet, hardworking, intensely competitive lot, who have seen no trouble in the last two years, have been shattered by the carnage. Surprised at what jealousy within a family can do—the two families are related to each other--the men and women seem confused about what to think of it all. Although the quarrel between the two families was well known, nobody had thought it would be so vicious. Most of the survivors of the attack had fled the village for fear of their lives, even after being rescued by the police and other villagers. Only on 4 December, a good 48 hours after the massacre, when the embers were still burning, did some of them

dare to come back—to see their homes in ashes and ruins, littered with signs of the raging fire.

The district of Sitapur, known for its hardened criminals, has always been a problem for the police. The liberal issue of gun licences makes things worse. Besides, Mohaddipur, with its large Yadav population—of the 45 families who live in it, all, save one, are Yadavs—has always had the tensions and conflicts of a fast-growing backward caste community that has struck it rich. Even though the violence never came out in the open, disputes over land and property—common obsessions among a people desperate to outstrip each other in a race for wealth and power—are usual, especially between in-laws and cousins.

The two warring families, whose patriarchs are Jagannath (70) and Lilkantha (72), brothers themselves (who are not directly involved in the clash, however), live in separate quarters of the same neighbourhood of Mohaddipur. Lilkantha's is the larger of the two houses, a huge, sprawling mud-and-thatched roof structure built like a honeycomb, with over 40 large and small rooms, four courtyards, but hardly any way of getting out unnoticed. A virtual fortification, the house was also a death-trap. A joint family of 70 lived in it; most of them ate and slept there and toiled in the fields for the rest of the day. "Twelve *chullas* (earthen stoves) burnt here," said a villager about the house. Lilkantha's house also had three tubewells, and 40 bullocks and cows. Jagannath's family, which was not as well off, has 35 members, who own about 12 cows and bullocks, and much less land than Lilkantha's massive 400 bighas.

The first quarrel between the two families, though of a minor nature, was over a bicycle belonging to a *dudhwala* (milkman) which was recovered by Chandrika, a member of Jagannath's family, from the house of Sham Lal, of the rival family Sham Lal was accused of stealing it. Later, tension arose over a plot of land that had changed hands between the two groups. Shivlal Yadav, one of Lilkantha's sons, had bought the land from Chandrika's brother Jawahar. Chandrika is related to Shivlal's family through marriage; he is Shivlal's brother Puran's own brother-in-law. Probably because it hurt his ego to see his own family losing land to his in-laws, Chandrika resented the sale. The nine-bigha plot, in Kol village, grows wheat and *arhar* and was sold off with proper sale deeds for Rs 1,000 or so.

Originally Jagannath's, it had with it a house and a mango tree. After the sale, there were quarrels between Chandrika, Jawahar, Chandrika's father Raggha and Jagannath on one side, and Shivlal and family on the other. Although by law Shivlal was the new owner, Chandrika laid claim to the tree. Often the dispute would be taken to the headman of Mohaddipur, Sardar Singh, but Chandrika's group found him siding with Shivlal. The bitterness increased. Perhaps to teach Shivlal a lesson, Chandrika cut the tree down. At the end of 1982, villagers say, Lilkantha's grandson Mewalal's (30) young wife was raped by Barati (35), Chandrika's son-in-law. A criminal from Baisampur village in the Mishrikh tehsil, under the Chandauli police station area Barati was a corrupting influence in the otherwise peaceful village "Ever since he began staying in Chandrika's house," a villager said, "there have been fights and threats in this place He was a notorious criminal, close to Ram Bhagat Singh, a noted criminal of Mishrikh. It was Barati who was responsible for all this trouble."

Vengeance came soon afterwards. Shivlal's men killed Barati and later, one of Chandrika's sons, Bhagwandin (28), in the village of Murka in December 1982. After making indepen-



Shivdeen Yadav (sitting); behind him stands Pyarelal, his rescuer



Two of the survivors with Pyarelal

dent inquiries into the double murder. Chandrika's other son Bhagwati alias Bhabhuti (25) lodged a police complaint, naming ten persons in his FIR. Mewalal, Chhotelal (35), Shivlal (45), Ram Swarup (24), Brijmohan (55), Rajan (32), Puran (27), Baikunth (35), Kunwar (27) and the headman of Mohaddipur Sardar Singh (35). The case is on in the Sitapur district sessions court. The next date for hearing was 15 January.

The murder case, over a year-and-a-half old, had been worrying Shivlal and his brothers, who were implicated. And since Bhagwati happened to be the only person who knew enough about the case to cause them trouble, they decided to remove him. On 1 January, when he was returning from Sidhauli, Shivlal and his men allegedly kidnapped him from a spot on a dirt track to the west of Bare village, roughly three km from Mohaddipur, between 5 pm and 5.30 pm. When they found that he had not returned home for long, Chandrika's family started a search for Bhagwati that lasted all night. On the morning of 2 January, Bhagwati's younger brother Bahadur (18) chanced upon his dead body in a pool of blood, in an *arhar* field. Beside it lay a blank cartridge, his *chappals*, a muffler and a bicycle on its side. It was between 7.30 am and 8 am. Aghast, Bahadur ran to his family in the village shrieking *"Daddu ko mar daley gaye!"* (Grand father has been killed)." The rumour that had been afloat in the village the whole night, and Chandrika's worst suspicions, were confirmed.

Chandrika and another of his sons, Chattrapal (22), made their way to the Sidhauli police station, six km away, to lodge a complaint. But the case was not registered until the next day, 3 January. According to the police, they got to know of the murder from Chandrika and his son around 11 am on 2 January, but residents of the area near the police station, which is located on the main road to Sitapur, say that the complainants had arrived around 10 am. In the half hour that followed Chandrika's visit, the police claim they got to know of an attack by Chandrika's family on Shivlal's house. Their first reaction was to look for Chandrika and his son, whom they apprehended from the Sidhauli bus stop where they were waiting to board a bus for Lucknow.

In Mohaddipur, around the time Chandrika and his son were making their complaint, other members of his family were wreaking vengeance on Shivlal. According to eyewitnesses, Chandrika's family members "had gone mad." They had all left their home, as though seized by some alarming news, with the doors ajar. Plates full of food, clothes and bedclothes strewn on the floor were left as they were. Bahadur, Ram Pal, Ram Dayal and Rajaram, armed with 12 bore guns, were seen approaching Shivlal's well-fortified house. In an attempt to escape, Dwarika, his wife Chhidwani and daughter Phoolwali scampered out of the front door, and were gunned down instantly. In a dirt road in front of Dwarika's room, strands of the little girl's hair could be seen sticking to a mud wall; other walls bore large patches of blood, and so did the ground below.

The three done to death, the attackers climbed on to the roof of the house and started calling out the men. They caught sight of Shivnarain first, on the steps leading to his room. But as they took aim, the frightened man fell on the ground and jumped for cover inside. Seeing that the attackers had gone up to the roof, more than 30 men, women and children, instead of trying to escape, ran into the inner recesses, a number of small, low-ceilinged, ill-ventilated rooms used for storing grains and

farming equipment, to hide there The attackers saw that the people in the house had been trapped for there was no way they could escape and went about setting fire to the dry, thatched roof from all sides. As the flames leapt, they threatened to shoot anyone who tried to escape. They had even blocked the door from outside. Of the 27 people shut inside, 19 were roasted alive and the remaining eight—most of them in an outer room—were found unconscious by the police and other villagers when they broke through a wall to rescue them at around 12.30 pm, a good two hours after the fire had started.

"I saw Ram Pal and three others coming towards our house with guns," said a still dazed Shivdeen Yadav, Shivlal's brother. "Then I heard bullets from his gun..." After a while, I could clearly see Bahadur and Mahavir standing on the roof, setting the house on fire. Burning embers were falling around us. Shivlal and I lay on the floor. I saw Bahadur strike a match and put it to the roof." Pyarelal, a lad of 17 who rushed to help the victims after the marauders had fled, said, "I saved Shivdeen and Shivlal, and later brought the police. The chowkidar of Bare, Brijlal, also came to help." "The whole house was on fire, *sahib*," said Shivdeen, refusing to stop. "I could barely see anything. The burning roof was falling on us. But Bahadur and his men did not see the two of us. They went away. *Muqaddar se bachey* (fate has saved us)." According to Shivdeen, after setting Shivlal's house on fire, the attackers were planning another onslaught on the house of Babu, a relative of Sohan, Shivlal's brother, in Shahibajpur village, but failed.

The officer-in-charge of the Sidhauli police station, Rizwan Hyder, visibly shaken by the whole affair, had never guessed matters could come to such a pass. He had known of the enmity between the two families, and had prior information of the murder, and the likelihood of a violent reprisal. Why did he not act? In the four months that he has been posted in Sidhauli he had learnt that Mohaddipur was trouble-free for the last two years since the double murder at the end of 1982. "There has been no fighting here, no clashes of any sort," he told this reporter, and then went about calling villagers to corroborate what he said: "Say, you," he shouted to a woman, and an old man standing nearby. "Was there anything here, ever?" "No *sahib*," everyone said, eyeing the policeman.

Take the villagers aside, and it is a different story, however. "This whole thing started with a tree. On 21 August 1983," Hyder said, "Chandrika cut the mango tree on the land that had been sold to Shivlal. A fortnight later, Barati and Bhagwandin were murdered. Bhabhuti filed the complaint, naming Shivlal and his associates, and on 1 January Shivlal and his men kidnapped and killed him. Chandrika's group retaliated by setting Shivlal's house on fire. We tried our best to put it out. A police jeep came within half-an-hour, but since water had to be lifted out of a well, the operation proved difficult." Hyder and his men, when they arrived, found the entire village almost deserted, with not a soul around to call out for help. After yelling for some time, a middle-aged woman came out to assist the police. "We rescued this girl, Munni," Hyder said, pointing to a child with a head wound. "She was fired at. We took her out of one of the outer rooms, opening into a courtyard."



A view of Shivdeen's burnt house



Six-year old Munni

Curiously, however, Shivlal Yadav, whom Chandrika had named in his complaint for the murder of his son Bhabhuti, was allowed to flee Mohaddipur after being rescued. The fact that Chandrika's complaints were never taken seriously, and Shivlal and his family, the richer and more powerful of the two, have always found favour with the authorities, has led to suspicions of police complicity in the feud. People in the village talk of how easily murders are committed, after bribing the police.

A large portion of Shivlal's and his brothers' wealth has gone up in smoke. "There was so much money in this house," said Shabir Ali of Bare, pointing to the ruins. "Just four of their cows cost Rs 70,000. Shivlal himself lost Rs 5,000. And it was all hard-earned. They all worked with their bare hands." But for the Yadavs, prosperity has brought its own evils: jealousy and hatred. The climax to the vendetta is perhaps still to come—with yet another bloody revenge.

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

Photographs: Gopinath Kochunni

A Festiva

Mediocre films and i

Had it not been in the end so tragic, the tenth International Film Festival would have been quite funny, like a Marx brothers comedy. The opening scene of this "tragi-comedy" of errors was the inaugural night of 3 January in Delhi's resplendent Vigyan Bhavan. A thousand more passes than were seats in the auditorium had been given by the star-struck officialdom, ever ready to oblige its unending list of friends, relatives and "contacts." There were almost as many people sitting in the aisles as there were in the seats. There had also been an invasion from the Bombay film industry, causing a traffic jam of sorts in the aisles and below the stage.

But the best was yet to be. The real "show" began once the speeches ended and filmdom took over. Raj Babbar, the ripples in his shiny black hair like the Arabian Sea on a moonlit night, began to call out the names of stars as if he was going through an attendance register in a school.

Slowly, but surely, the stars began to crowd on the stage beginning with Raj Kapoor. Soon, the stage began to resemble an overcrowded airboard sky in which the stars were so near each other that the sky disappeared. In this case it was the jury. There stood our "Bombaywallahs": Raj Kapoor, his sons, Raaj Kumar, Rajesh Khanna, Amrish Puri (bald like Mr Goldfinger in the Bond movies), Basu Bhattacharya, Vinod Mehra, Mithun Chakravarty, surreal in his black leather outfit with a white shawl sloppily thrown over his shoulders. (East and West might well mix but not leather and pashmina). Chauvinist the film industry must be, for the roll-call of women followed later: Simi Garewal in a scalloped white silk gown and a mini, mink coat, Padmini Kolhapure, Salma Agha out of the Arabian nights with bells on her toes and fingers and jewellery on her waist (Naushad was asked to move over to make room for the actress-singer), Smita Patil, Tina Munim and Poonam Dhillon dramatic in black and gold. And then came the starlets. Nobody begrudges the stars, they do after all make the industry go around and will now sparkle in the Lok Sabha. But why did they have to stand there with their backs to the jury for over half an hour, violating all norms of decency and decorum?

It was to become worse. The roll-call completely missed out eminent personalities—among many others Pandit Ravi Shankar, Naushad, Mrinal Sen, Puttana Kanagal, Tapan Sinha, Adoor Gopalkrishnan, D.V.S. Raju, former chairman of the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) as well as of the Film Federation of India. The latter two left the function in a huff, with Mr Raju even issuing a statement that the south is being "discriminated against."

Equally disastrous were the diplomatic gaffes. French and Italian diplomats were furious about not having been invited to the inaugural function. Both countries have sent many films for screening. Moreover, the chairperson, actress Jeanne Moreau is French, and the Italian embassy cultural centre had helped to organise the Luchino Vis-



Dilip Kumar inaugurating the festival and (below) scene from *Pembetino* (Greece)





A still from *Revanche* (Greece)

SPECIAL

of Chaos

efficient organisation

conti retrospective. In fact, it was the Italian cultural centre which sent out press releases about the retrospective, for which they had also organised a seminar. While the French ambassador was invited to the inaugural function, the Italian was not

During the function itself, there were some unforgivable gaffes. While asking Jeanne Moreau to address the audience, actress Deepti Naval referred to her as Madame Jules and Jim (*Jules and Jim* is the name of the film directed by the late Francois Truffaut and starring Madame Moreau which opened the festival). Whether Ms Naval was being funny or was just plain stupid was not clear, but Mme Moreau was certainly not amused.

Although the films in the competition section are as a rule rather mediocre, there were some good films amongst the 81 films being screened in the information section from 29 countries. France has sent 11 films of which Eric Rohmer's "*Full Moon in Paris*" (for which actress Pascale Ogier won the best actress award in Venice last year), Alain Resnais's difficult but interesting and differen· *L'Amour a Mort* and Claude Lelouch's *Viva la vie* were top drawers.

Italy, apart from its mini-retrospective of Visconti, has sent five films, including the overpowering Bertolucci film, *The Moon* and Franco Zefferelli's *La Traviata* and an awful Marco Ferreri film *The Future is Women* which provoked the loudest catcalls at Venice this year. Hungary has Marta Mezaros's superb *Diary for my Children* (which won an award in Cannes last year) and Zoltan Fabri's *House Warming is* not one of his best. Greece with *Remetiko* by Costas Ferrio has also made its presence felt in this festival. Sweden has Ingmar Bergman's *After the Rehearsal*, which is really a filmed theatre, but powerful nevertheless. United Kingdom and the United States have sent many films but most of them are disappointing and trite.



Chairperson of the jury Jeanne Moreau



A still from the Japanese film *Appasionata*



Saddest of all, however, is the fact that although there are some good films in the information section (and the black American cinema, Latin American cinema and the retrospectives), the calibre of films in the competitive section was quite lamentable. To be fair, it could be said that 1984 was not a good year for cinema: The Venice and Cannes film festivals did not see any grand moments of cinema. But, it does seem apparent that nobody wants to come to Delhi any more.

Not only is there a dearth of foreign delegates (in fact after the demise of the Manila International Festival whose dates overlapped with the Indian Festival) there should have been many more, but getting a jury was also difficult. William Greaves, the American filmmaker dropped out at the last moment. Italian film maestro Michelangelo Antonioni agreed and then backed out. Bernardo Bertolucchi bowed out as well. Even jury member Safi Faye from Senegal reached Delhi a day after the festival began.

The I and B ministry should now reflect on the nature of film festivals in India. Perhaps we should be a little less ambitious and put our own house in order before we have the next one.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

'I Have Mixed Fact With Fiction'

Adoor Gopalakrishnan talks about his film Mukhamukham *to* SUNDAY

With Mukhamukham, *the rather enigmatic Adoor Gopalakrishnan has emerged as perhaps the most important Indian film maker of the post-Satyajit Ray generation. It is not only Mr Gopalakrishnan's mastery of the cinematic language and his use of the meticulously worked out structure which makes this film a landmark in Indian cinema. The film raises fundamental, difficult questions in its quest to find out why the revolutionary or the spirit in all of us evaporates or dies. The film has become controversial and will continue to be a talking point because it depicts the disintegration of a revolutionary hero. Marxists in Kerala bitterly attacked Mr Gopalakrishnan and have called him "irresponsible" in what they consider to be an attack on the communist movement in the country. Some have even said that the Congress(I) should make sure that* Mukhamukham *is screened in West Bengal before the Assembly elections. The film works at many levels, and one of them is a very personal search for the death of the spirit. Crucial to understanding the film is a quote from Lenin used in the film: "The proletarian movement passes through various stages of growth at every stage, a set of people stagger, stop and are unable to continue the forward march...," The first part of the film is set in the decade ending in 1955—just before the Communist Party was voted to power in Kerala for the first time in the world in 1957. The second part begins in 1965, a little after the Communist Party split. Mr Gopalakrishnan's previous films are* Swayamvaram, Kodiyettam, *and* Elippathayam *which won the British Film Institute award.*

Q: *I found* Mukhamukham *to be even more powerful than your previous film* Elippathayam. *But you appear to be perturbed about the reaction to this film...*

A: I think there were some problems with this film...once you understand the structure of the film, it is easier. This film works at two or three levels. The uppermost level: The exterior level shows a man coming back after ten years. It is seen as a straight narrative of slow, gradual disintegration and disillusionment. The next level can be seen in the second part of the film which deals with his return at a fictional level. But since I did not want the audience to get the impression that it is only fiction that they are watching, I treated it at a very realistic level. It is like when you have a dream: while you are dreaming you do not realise that it is a dream. Only when you wake up, do you realise this. If somebody is told that you are going to have a dream and you prepare for it then it ceases to be a dream, at both levels: the experience and the rumination level.

I wanted the audience to get the



Courtesy: Kalakaumudi

Adoor Gopalakrishnan

feeling that they are experiencing reality. It is very important to understand this film. But I fear that many people stopped at the exterior level. I have given a lot of suggestions in this film. The first suggestion is that the man is dead. Remember there is a raid in the party office. That whole sequence is about death: the attack by the police on the people which ends with the death of the proprietor. Death becomes a factual thing, an actuality. This is fictionalised by the reports. I have mixed fact with fiction throughout the film—fiction emerging as fact.

After the contradictory reporting of the proprietor's death and even the motives behind the death all in the printed word, you see the open text-book of the young boy. Next you see the image of the fly. That is the key to the understanding of my film. As the boy is reading, you hear the sound of a night fly, a kind of moth. You hear the noise of its taking off, you do not really see the fly at that time. But you see the boy lifting his face from the book from that picture, from that image of the fly, upwards. And he is watching the fly. Then you hear the moth striking the ceiling and falling into the oil lamp—the *kruk, kruk, kruk* sound is there. The boy watches intently—I would even say watches cruelly this fly die in the oil lamp. I have purposely kept an oil lamp because it has so many associations. Especially, this particular oil lamp which is called *nilavilaku*. You are only supposed to speak the truth in front of it. Marriages take place before such a lamp. And in this house, only this lamp has been lit in the porch (*poomukham*). The boy at this point says to his mother: "You always tell lies..." This line is important because I am telling a lie—fiction.

Q: When did you first think of this film?

A: I wrote the first draft four years ago. The concept came from a personal experience of why the fire dies out in a man. I went in search of this. This kind of search cannot be done in a vacuum. There has to be a genuine background. I am mixing fiction and reality with my characters. If you look at the political situation, it is historically true and clear, factual and not manipulated. But that situation looks more fictional. The political situation which is so realistically portrayed in the film actually looks like fiction. The fact looks like fiction.

Q: Is this what people have objected so strongly to in your film?

A: Yes. I was truthful about the political situation. Talking about politics, I don't comment on it. I do not say that so and so is telling a lie or is wrong. That is why I do not call this a political film. People attack me on this point and ask why I hold that this is not a political film. I say that I am not taking sides. I am not promoting a political idea. I am seriously concerned no doubt, otherwise I would never have made the film.

Q: Yes, but why have most people

seen your film as an attack on the Communist Party?

A: I am not responsible for the situation, the film starts with clay. This shows that I am going to mould. It goes through various stages that is an artist's freedom: to deal with basic material, the earth. The film is also in the beginning about the coming of the industrial revolution: wheels and chains are very prominent in the opening sequence in the tile factory with the kiln operation. And on the red of the kiln comes the slogan, *Inquilab Zindabad*. What you see next is the factory in the back ground and the flags in the foreground.

Q. Is the use of the colour red just a symbol?

A: It is the theme throughout.

Q: Why are all the women so fat in this film?

A: Why not? In Kerala—a lot of people objected. They said that the woman was too fat. I used her as a mother image. She is one of the seven characters who reconstruct the image of the man. Those who remember him are ordinary people from all walks of life, they are representative of the people who would love change to occur. But it is not there. In the second half, the conjuring of the image of this man takes place. For this you need a medium. Thus the woman. She has to look the archetypal woman: big, large. She mothers him in the second part. Because she is the one who gets him back. To call him back, even in fiction, you need some mothering. The trouble with this film is that I tried to make it look simple, approachable, but I now realise that this has also become the problem or the obstacle to an understanding of the film. If the film had looked very difficult or profound from the exterior, people would have looked for the structure that is there. But then, perhaps, the film would have become prohibitive. Even at a very plane level I wanted this film to mean something—that simplicity is achieved at great labour. A journalist wrote that my film is a documentary on tile manufacturing!

Q: This film is really for those who know cinema language.

A: You are right. I did not want it that way though. But very ordinary people in Kerala have liked the film. I had all these schemes in the film, but I did not want any of them to show.

Q: Could you compare the use of symbolism in Elippathayam and *Mukhamukham?*

A: Even my previous film needed a certain amount of education in the medium on the part of the audience, for it to be understood. That film was not accepted so easily. There are places where I have used dialogue as commentary. Throughout the film, image is mixed with the real. Remember the conversation in the party office: is the image of this man on the wall (the photograph) real? The camera moves from this image down to the object and back—that is a constantly evolving relationship—structurally, throughout the film. Moreover the concept of letters, whether it is graffiti or a newspaper. I have used this both as a statement, I have used the graphics of the letters. *Inquilab Zindabad* is used as a chant—almost a religious chant.

Q: The structure of the film appears to be very important in understanding it.

A: Well, the second part of the film is really about if he were to come back. The man who emerges in the second part is constructed from the threads in the first part. In the first part he drinks alcohol as medicine for his stomach ache. In the second part he becomes an alcoholic. Then there is his attitude towards his wife and child. For somebody who is so devoted to a pursuit, whether it is literature or culture or cinema, the passion becomes all-consuming.

The film starts with clay. This shows that I am going to mould. It goes through various stages that is an artist's freedom:to deal with basic material, the earth.

Q: What about the letters which Sreedharan keeps burning.

A: The first part of the film is happening today: The political situation especially against the Kerala background. I mean the ordinary people who do not belong to any political party. There are very sincere party followers of this idealism. The ordinary people are absolutely confused about what is happening to the leftist movement.

Q: Could you talk about the use of silence in your film?

A: It has to do with the interrelation of shots. For instance, when the boy, Sudhakaran, comes after having been dismissed from the party and stands in the courtyard, it seems almost like a court. The scene is composed like that. The camera looks at him from above, and he says: "Did you hear that I have been expelled?" He should be the judge, but then that is a comment on himself. The camera then moves towards him when he says: "There are many like me who are dissatisfied, but we will not resist, we will fight." Then the camera moves to Sreedharan. Sudhakaran's words continue, they become commentary as he says: "We will identify the traitors and we will unmask them and tear the masks from the faces of the enemy of the people." The word mask is important because the glow on Sreedharan's face slowly vanishes. It becomes green and dark. The face is absolutely mask-like. Then he begins to look for money. He wants to ask his wife for money but he is not sure that she will give him the money. It is not stealing—he wants to tell his wife who is bathing at that moment. But this act becomes an act of stealing when his son is punished for the theft. This man's very inactivity becomes an act of guilt, of crime.

Q: Is this your best film?

A: I would say that I consider it my most important work.

Q: The actor S. Ganga who plays Sreedharan is a new face. He is amazing.

A: He is a novice. He does dubbing for films and acts on stage once in a while. One of the reasons forchoosing him is that he is squint-eyed. He appears more like an enigma because you do not really know where he is looking—and he has a fantastic voice. I asked him to come home every Sunday. I asked him not to shave. I took photographs of his growing beard and made an album. Then I studied his face and physiognomy. And then we began to film. In the second part he has no shirt. In the courtyard scene after his arrival he has already become an object, people murmur in front of him. The person magnified, ceases to be a person, he becomes an object. This shot is taken from all sides.

Q: Could we return to the attack on your film by Marxists?

A: The Marxists accused me of being irresponsible. They said I intended to tarnish the image of the party. When those who are considered to be good theoreticians of Marxism react in so pedestrian a manner it is upsetting. Marxism should really help you. It is not just a political philosophy but an aesthetic philosophy as well. My response is that I am not blind and I am not anti-communist. An anti-communist approach would be blind.

Interviewed by Madhu Jain

BOOK EXTRACT

Niven, Gable and Hollywood

David Niven, the wellknown Hollywood actor who died in 1983, describes his early days in Hollywood and his friendship with Clark Gable, the then reigning matinee idol, in an extract from Niven, *published recently by Hamish Hamilton (distributed in India by UBS Publishers' Distributors 5, Ansuri Road, New Delhi 110 002). This is a compilation of his two books* Bring on the Empty Horses *and* The Moon's a Balloon.



A blond sunburned fuzz covered his muscular forearms and his pot-belly hung over the top of his pants. Gross, pig-eyed and rude, Chet Liebert was a loathsome human being but he had one great asset—a 45-foot spear-fishing boat named *Konig*; he also had an undeniable talent in his chosen profession, and by the other charter-boat skippers working out of Balboa, California, he was grudgingly acknowledged to be the most successful They had no opinion but to bestow this accolade upon him because every year he caught more broadbill and marlin swordfish than they did.

He kept his huge frame topped up with beer, swore endlessly in a heavy Dutch accent and never by any chance gave credit where credit was due. In an effort to keep deck-hands, he paid generously and this attracted me to him like a moth to a flame. As a two dollar and fifty cents a day Hollywood 'extra', who only worked spasmodically, I was in no position to be choosy so I swallowed the heavy insults and eagerly grabbed the six dollars he gave me for ten hours of dangerous, dirty and back breaking work as deck-hand 'spotter', spearman, hauler, gutter and swabber. When we were out spearing the giant broadbill swordfish for sale in the market, I took those six bucks, but I also gratefully pocketed the generous tips that were slipped into my hand when *Konig* was chartered by private individuals in the more exciting and less exacting pursuit with rod and reel of the blue and white marlin.

'Okay, so you're late,' said Liebert when I showed up for work at five o'clock one morning. 'Get her cleaned up from top to bottom, gut a dozen flying fish and check two sets of gear and the teasers—make sure the head is spotless too, Goddammit, becos we've a charter today and the guy is bringing a broad with him, they'll be here at six thirty and they'll need breakfast so see that the coffee's ready and stand by with ham and eggs and all the crap.' 'They're picture people,' he added, 'so keep your goddammed trap shut about being a lousy phoney actor and get on with the job.'

Liebert had a sneaking regard for me. I suspected, because on the very first day I had worked for him, he had slipped on the wet, pitching, gut-slick flooring and had misjudged the gaffing of a two-hundred-pound

Niven with Ava Gardner in *The Little Hut*





Niven (centre) with Prince Rainier and Princess Grace

marlin which an exhausted oil executive had finally brought alongside after a slashing, fighting, plunging three-hour battle. The giant fish with its last gasp had managed to spew out the hook and the gaff not planted, was free and sliding down tail first into the dark, blue water. In a moment of madness, I had grabbed the disappearing sword with my left hand removing most of the skin off my palm and, with my right, I had punched the poor brute in its large saucer eyeball thereby paralysing it for the split second which Liebert needed to sink the gaff. Not a word was said but there had been a tiny flicker of recognition in the puffy red pig-eyes of my employer.

By six o'clock on a still and cloudless morning, *Konig*, as ordered, was swabbed down, mopped, dried and polished and by the time a large open Packard turned on to the quay, the aroma of good coffee was rising from the galley.

'Okay, now go over and fetch their gear, and don't get movie struck,' he added.

When I approached the Packard I saw what he meant—the girl was blonde and willowy with a fresh, open, fun-loving face. She wore a blue reefer jacket, red slacks and her yachting cap was tilted at a rather exotic angle over her right eye. I don't think I noticed what the large, muscular man was wearing—he was opening the boot of the car and his back was toward me, but when he turned round, smiled and said, 'Hi, it looks like a good day,' I nearly fell into the harbour. The man was Clark Gable.

I relieved him of rods, various professional-looking tackle boxes, a large ice bucket, a bottle of Scotch whisky and watched him stride purposefully towards *Konig*—the blonde held on to his arm.

'Okay, Chet—bait 'em up and let's go,' he yelled happily as he leaped aboard.

We had a lucky day. Gable landed two big, blue marlin and was once broken after an hour's struggle with a gigantic, leaping Mako shark. We also found a school of hungry, yellowtail tuna which were striking at everything in sight and even the blonde amid shrieks of excitement landed a couple of twenty pounders. She also became rather maudlin towards late afternoon when she hooked a dolphin on a white feather lure and decided that it was the soul of a dead sailor. .the whisky was almost empty by then. She pawed Gable a great deal.

The deck-hand was working at full throttle throughout the day and when not perched uncomfortably in the crosstrees of the mast looking for fins or tell-tale swirls, I was baiting hooks, gutting and cleaning the catch, making sandwiches or mixing drinks.

When Gable heard my voice, he immediately pinpointed my accent and voiced a mild curiosity as to why I was there and doing what I was doing. Liebert gave me a long, hard look as I prepared to answer but suddenly the first blue marlin hit and forty-five minutes later when he triumphantly unstrapped his shoulder harness, Gable's curiosity had vanished.

Six months later, in the Spring of 1935, I landed something myself—a small contract with Samuel Goldwyn; the doors of Hollywood began to open, and I met Gable again. The iron man from Cadiz, Ohio, was looking rather trapped in white tie and tails, but the occasion demanded his discomfort...it was the Academy Awards Presentation Dinner—the annual handing out of the early Oscars.

The year before he had won one himself for his performance in *It Happened One Night* and his acceptance speech was the shortest on record, two words—"Thank You " That night Hollywood history had been made. Gable had been loaned by MGM to the despised Harry Cohn and his struggling company, Columbia, as a punishment for intransigence in turning down too many mediocre scripts. Claudette Colbert was being similarly chastised for the same reason by her studio—Paramount, but between them they had outsmarted their bosses and persuaded the brilliant director, Frank Capra, to direct the picture for which Cohn had borrowed them. As a result, Claudette, Capra and Gable all collected golden statuettes, *It Happened One Night* was voted Best Picture of the Year, and Columbia Pictures entered the big league.

Now a year later, the Academy Awards had come around again and Hollywood—still very much a village—was honouring its own with its strange tribal rites. Gable did not win this time though his picture *Mutiny on the Bounty* came out on top. Excitement ran high among the two hundred tribesmen and women who filled the private banqueting room downstairs at the Ambassador Hotel. A demure Bette Davis was proclaimed the winner for her performance in *Dangerous*

and Victor McLaglen (who to everybody's delight belched loudly when receiving his prize) was voted Best Actor for his portrayal in *The Informer*.

It was a vintage year and the competition for votes must have been fierce because among other classic offerings that night were Gary Cooper in *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, Fred Astaire in *Top Hat*, W.C. Fields in *David Copperfield* and Garbo in *Anna Karenina*. Less successful in all departments had been the Warner Brothers' entry—*A Midsummer Night's Dream* with James Cagney as Bottom and Mickey Rooney as Puck. For the premiere in Beverly Hills, an elaborate programme had been presented to each member of the audience, embossed on the cover of which were four golden plaques, each containing a well-known profile—the three Warner Brothers and William Shakespeare.

Gable was seated at another table with a party from his studio—Irving Thalberg, the producer of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, Thalberg's wife Norma Shearer, Jean Harlow, William Powell, Joan Crawford and others. Ria, Gable's second wife, was also there and I looked at her with interest. Several years older than her husband, she looked very calm and distinguished and Gable was smiling across the table at her in the conspiratorial way happily married couples signal mutual boredom at dull parties. I was remembering with pleasure the unaffected charm and friendliness Gable had dispensed aboard *Konig*, when suddenly, he glanced directly at me. For a moment he looked puzzled then my face must have clicked into place because he waved, smiled a friendly smile and mimed the hooking of a big fish. I nodded and waved back and after the presentations were over he came to Goldwyn's table and shook my hand.

'Good to see you again,' he said, 'what are you doing here...trying to get Sam to go tuna fishing?'

I felt embarrassed at first telling it to 'The King' as he was known throughout Hollywood, but bathed in the warmth of the great man's personality, I relaxed and



Clark Gable in *Mutiny on the Bounty*



Clarke Gable: MGM's blue-eyed boy

explained that I had changed my job and had lately landed a contract with Goldwyn.

'Well, that's just *great*', he exploded, 'lots of luck, kid, and don't forget—the first thirty years are the hardest!' Then he added quite seriously '...and don't give up fishing—you'll find it's a great help sometimes.'

When he had made the rounds of our table, followed everywhere by looks of great affection, he spoke to me once more.

'I'm moving over to the Goldwyn lot for the next one so I'll hope to see you around...we can forget about making pictures for a while and yak about steelhead—is that a deal?'

'Fine,' I said, delighted at the prospect of seeing him again and not unaware of the soaring of my personal stock among my high-powered dinner companions.

Several weeks later, Goldwyn gave me my first speaking part: the role of a Cockney sailor in *Barbary Coast*. It consisted of one line; thrown out of the window of a waterfront brothel in San Francisco, as I sailed past the Madam, I was called upon to say—"Orl rite—I'm goin." Then as I lay face down in several inches of mud, the two stars of the picture, Miriam Hopkins and Joel McCrea, accompanied by several donkeys and a posse of vigilantes walked over the top of me.

Gable was, by now, working at the Goldwyn studio making *The Call of the Wild* and on the morning of my big moment he, the greatest star in the Hollywood firmament, took the time and the trouble to walk over to the Back Lot to wish good luck to an unknown beginner. He also insisted on stills being taken of the two of us and the Goldwyn publicity department gleefully grabbed the golden opportunity to rub off a little of 'The King's' glamour onto their nameless charge.

Several times I visited Gable while *The Call of the Wild* was being made and I soon discovered that he had many other things to talk about besides fishing and hunting. Certainly, more than anything, he enjoyed the



David Niven with Elizabeth Taylor

Great Outdoors, and just as surely he felt uncomfortable at formal parties and despised the Hollywood hostesses and their 'success lists'.

'They only invite me because at the moment I am on top of the heap,' he said, 'but when I fall on my ass, they'll just move someone else up a notch and I'll go down to the bottom of the pile.'

One January day he did more than talk about the big fighting sea-going, rainbow trout of Oregon, his excited voice came down the telephone—'Hey! Let's go!...I've just been talking to some pals who have a fishing camp on the Rogue—the steelhead are running!'

'I don't have a rod,' I said feebly.

'Forget it,' said Clark...'I've got everything—I'll pick you up at midday, we'll spend the night in 'Frisco and be at Grant's Pass by tomorrow afternoon.'

He was a fast and dedicated driver and he made it clear that he could do without small talk because it ruined his concentration. This was perfectly all right with me and I sat back and revelled in the glories of two-thirds of California. At Grant's Pass, where he stayed overnight at the fishing lodge, we were joined in the cold dark of the following morning by the guide who came with his squaw to fetch us, a squat, unsmiling, flaccid-faced Indian who smelled heavily of spirits, and was, according to Clark, the best man on the river. He was also the worst driver in the neighbourhood and in the semi-gloom of that freezing winter dawn, his dilapidated Chevvy, unbalanced by trailing a heavy fishing skiff behind it, swung terrifyingly round icy mountain bends. Clark watched me averting my eyes from the roaring river several hundred feet below, noted my tight smiles and high-pitched conversation and correctly diagnosed my condition as one of abject terror.

'Don't worry,' he said. 'He'll make up for it when he goes on the river and his wife, thank God, drives us back.' He indicated the almost totally round and equally smelly lady who was huddled, unspeaking and blanketed, beside her erratic husband.

As the sky began to lighten, we slithered down a winding track and came to rest on a sandy beach between towering grey, pine-topped cliffs. There we manhandled the skiff into the water, loaded it and watched as the spherical wife took her husband's place behind the wheel and disappeared in a barrage of flying gravel up the almost perpendicular hillside, to meet us at dusk miles down river.

Gable was wearing a heavy chequered Macinaw and his 'lucky' long peaked cap. He had not bothered to shave and a heavy black stubble was discernible in the growing light—it was bitterly cold.

'What are you giving us for breakfast, Chuck?' he asked the Indian.

'Small trout fried in butter,' said the unsmiling one, 'but you've got to catch 'em before I can cook 'em, don't you?

'Sure thing, Happy,' Gable grinned. 'Let's get going.'

The river was broad and sluggish where we put in but the Indian knew the likely pools and using a wet fly, we soon had half a dozen beautiful brook trout about eight inches long. We pulled over to a sandbank and while Gable and I collected dry driftwood, the guide, with a few quick flashes of his hunting knife, cleaned our catch.

On the East ridge high above us, the sun was backlighting the snow-covered firs. They looked as though they were on fire but down on the sandbank it was still well below zero and we huddled gratefully around the fire, sniffing the coffee and watching the deft movements of the Indian. A family of deer, seven of them, came down to drink at the riverbank opposite, a pastoral scene that was rudely shattered when an eagle flashed out of the sky and picked up a large rattlesnake from the rocks beside them. With his prey in his talons the great bird spiralled upward gaining height till up near the ridge the sun caught them and for a long time we could



Niven with Susan Hayward, co-winners of the 1958 Oscar

see the writhing silver underbelly of the reptile flashing out distress signals.

Clark was a true sport fisherman, and was unconcerned about catching his limit of 'meat', a comparatively easy achievement during the winter run when the silvery, twenty-pound trout slashed with a vivid scarlet streak at their sides after years away in the big ocean, were making their way in thousands far up the river to spawn in the self-same gravel whence they had come. After a big January rain, the barriers of flotsam had been washed from the river, the snow 'melt' from the mountains had augmented the torrent and the rapids between the pools were a roaring, rocketing menace.

The big pools were full of fish and the air was so cold we had to dip our rods constantly in the water to free the 'guides' of ice—it was very exciting. The fish were taking single salmon eggs washed free from the high spawning grounds but Clark spurned the conventional use of these and we cast with brightly coloured salmon flies ...a much trickier operation. Clark had two rods, a beautiful English Hardy which he lent me and a dream of a Cross which he used with great effect himself.

You learn a lot about a man in four days of strenuous fishing and four nights of medium to heavy drinking. There was not a phoney bone in Gable's body. Round the log fire, or drifting down calm broad reaches between the tumbling rock-strewn rapids of the aptly named Rogue, he would talk frankly and unemotionally about Hollywood, and the people who controlled it.

The curvaceous blonde comedienne, Thelma Todd, had just been found dead in her beach front restaurant near Santa Monica. Found dead in the most mysterious circumstances and for days the newspapers had hinted darkly at foul play and gangster connections.

'Thelma didn't read the small print,' said Clark.

'The small print?' I queried.

'Yes—we all have a contract with the public...in us they see themselves or what they would like to be. On the screen, and in our private lives, we are the standards by which they measure their own ideals of everything—sex, guts, humour, stupidity, cowardice, crumminess—you name it. They love to put us on a pedestal and worship us and form fan clubs and write thousands of letters telling us how great we are. But *they've* read the small print and most of *us* haven't—they expect us to pay the price for it all...we have to "get it" in the end! So, when we get knocked off by gangsters, like Thelma did, or get hooked on booze or dope or get ourselves thrown out of the business because of scandals or because we just grow old...that's the pay-off and the public feels satisfied...Yeah, it's a good idea to read that small print.'

Clark had a moderate opinion of studio heads:

'They're bastards,' he said flatly, 'they encourage people to be larger than life, they'll give 'em anything, take any crap from them provided they interest the public and the public pays to see them, but the moment they slip—oh! brother! Look at the kids on our Lot at Metro now, Garland, Taylor, Gardner, Rooney, great kids all of 'em and loaded with talent but they'll probably ruin 'em all. Right now they can do anything they like, show up late, keep everyone waiting, go home when they want to, but God help them if the public stops coming...they'll pull the rug out from under 'em all over town.'

I asked him how it felt to be in the No. 1 spot in the whole industry.

'Well,' he laughed, 'as sure as hell there's only one place I can go from where they've got me now! So I just go along with Tracy's formula and hope for the best.'

'Tracy's formula?'

'Sure—get there on time, know the jokes, say them the



John Huston directing Niven and Deborah Kerr in *Casino Royale*

best way you can, take the money and go home at six o'clock.'

Gable talked about Hollywood and everything connected with it but he remained completely unimpressed by it. He certainly never took his success for granted.

'Look,' he said, 'so they call me the goddamn "King" at the moment but there are dozens of people warming up in the wings and anyway I'm just out in front of a team, that's all. Metro have half a dozen people, top writers, whose only job is to find the best possible properties for me, things that I fit into with the least risk of falling on my ass...that way I remain valuable to them and everyone's happy—for the moment

'Don't ever let them kick you around,' he warned. 'They squeeze people dry and then drop them ..when you start to fade they put you into 'skid' pictures so you'll turn them down and they can put you on suspension and get you off the payroll...be tough with them if you get up there, because it's the only language they understand and that's the only place where you can use it. Remember you're dealing with people who believe that a 2,000 dollar a week writer is guaranteed to turn out better stuff than a guy who is only asking 750...

'Most executives at the big studios have no guts—they're so busy holding on to their jobs they never stick their necks out. Know how Lubitsch found out the other day that he was no longer head of Paramount? From his goddamn masseur for Christ's sake! This guy had been rubbing down the studio brass and they all told him what was happening but nobody had the guts to tell Ernst to his face that he was through.'

Next to fishing and hunting, Clark loved to play golf and we played a great deal together. He was a splendid sight at Pebble Beach, his favourite course—he didn't walk between shots...he strode. He had a fearsome slice which he never completely corrected so we bent the rules slightly so that he could continue to play when his ball had drifted out of bounds on to the beach and roars of laughter would rise from below as he hacked happily away among the seaweed, the crabs and the small pools.

He was a doughty opponent but he lacked concentration and in an important foursome match I gleefully saw him falter because my partner was Group Captain Douglas Bader, the legless R.A.F. fighter pilot.

Douglas visited me in California soon after World War II. He had come out to tour the hospitals and encouraged hundreds of double amputees who were wondering what the future could possibly hold for them. He did untold good recounting to them his own story of being shot down and baling out over France, where he buckled one of his artificial limbs. The German Commandant of the prison camp in which he soon found himself, was so impressed by Bader that it was agreed that, at a pre-arranged time, one Spitfire could fly over the camp and drop him a new leg. When the leg arrived, Bader thanked the Commandant, put it on and that night he escaped.

At dawn, he was recaptured hobbling gamely along ten miles from the camp. Thereafter, both his legs were taken away from him at night and locked up in the guardroom.

Playing golf against the legless Bader, as Gable soon discovered, was a hazardous undertaking and knowing of Clark's feeble concentration, I was quietly confident of the outcome.

Bader's first 'ploy' manifested itself on the second tee. Just as Clark was about to drive, Bader, with a noise like a machine-gun, knocked the ashes out of his pipe against his artificial thigh. On the fifth green, he winked at me and tightened a little wheel in his knee, then by moving very slightly just as Clark pulled back the head of his



David Niven (extreme right) in *Around the World in Eighty Days*

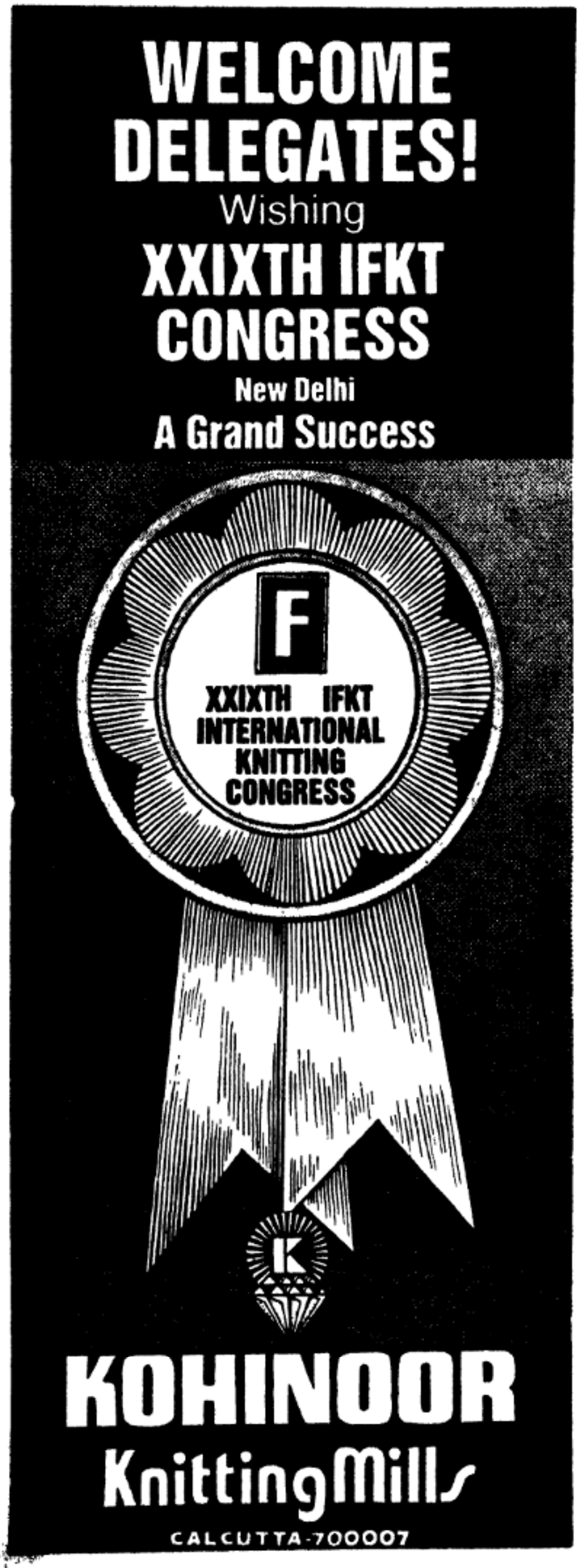
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putter he produced a high penetrating mouse squeak. Thereafter, a jittery Gable and his unnerved partner never felt completely secure and Bader and I coasted to an easy victory.

Gable never spoke much about his wives; he felt no urge to unburden his domestic problems on his friends and he was strangely fatalistic when his marriages broke up, which they did with great regularity. In fact he was strangely fatalistic about everything. He never went out of his way to make men friends, he reckoned that he was what he was, people could take him or leave him, and if they preferred to leave him—that was perfectly okay with him. Above all, unlike so many big stars, he felt absolutely no need to bolster his ego by surrounding himself with stooges and sycophants so his circle of friends was small and independent.

It is difficult to paint a fascinating picture of a man whom nobody seemed to dislike. As David Selznick remarked during the filming of *Gone With The Wind*—'Oh, Gable has enemies all right—but they all like him!'

However, wherever there is competition there is jealousy and where there is jealousy the 'knockers' will knock. So in Hollywood people occasionally nudged each other and said 'Gable only likes older women.'

It was the understatement of the century—Gable



Clark Gable (right) in *Gone with the Wind*

loved *all* women—older, younger, blondes, brunettes and redheads he loved the lot.

True, his first wife Josephine Dillon happened to be twelve years his senior, and his second wife, Ria, five years more than that but Carole Lombard, Sylvia Fairbanks and Kay Williams when they became numbers three, four and five, were all in the junior league.

It was said by the knockers that Josephine, who was a well educated drama teacher, had 'invented' Gable, and the same source of bitchery passed round the happy word that Ria had paid for him to have his teeth capped. Clark just laughed when he heard this—'my Mom and Dad invented me,' he said, 'and L.B. Mayer paid for my teeth.'

Clark was not really stingy with money· he was 'careful'. With the whisky bottle, however, he was always lavish and for years I was amazed at the amount he could consume with no apparent effect.

Gable said that acting did not come naturally to him—'I worked like a son of a bitch to learn a few tricks and I fight like a steer to avoid getting stuck with parts I can't play.'

As an unsuccessful Broadway actor, he made three safaris into the Hollywood jungle. If the first trip in 1924 was a flop...(he worked only in small theatrical roles around Los Angeles or occasionally as an extra in the Studios)...the second was total disaster—he didn't work at all. Back again on Broadway, he finally smelled success when the egomanic George M. Cohan cast him as

the lead in *Gambling* but after the opening in Philadelphia, the sweet smell changed rapidly to something more unattractive. Cohan decided that he would like to play the part himself and fired Gable. Understandably short on self-confidence, Gable thereafter ricocheted off a succession of short-term flops till one day he was offered a part in a Los Angeles stage production of *The Last Mile* and his third and ultimate safari began. He never agreed that his subsequent breakthrough into the Hollywood big time was the glamorous rocket-propelled affair claimed by the MGM publicity department and always gave credit for it to two people—Lionel Barrymore and Joan Crawford.

Barrymore got him a test for his native boy in *Bird of Paradise*.

Barrymore directed the test himself and according to Gable—'They curled my hair, then they stripped me and gave me a G-string, a prop man stuck a knife in my G-string which scared hell out of me in case his hand slipped then he stuck a goddam hibiscus behind my ear and told me to creep through the bushes.'

Irving Thalberg, the boy wonder of MGM, saw the result and told Barrymore—'You can't put this man in a picture; look at his ears...like a bat!' Nevertheless, he was finally hired by MGM to play a milkman in a



David Niven (second from right) in *The Guns of Navarone*

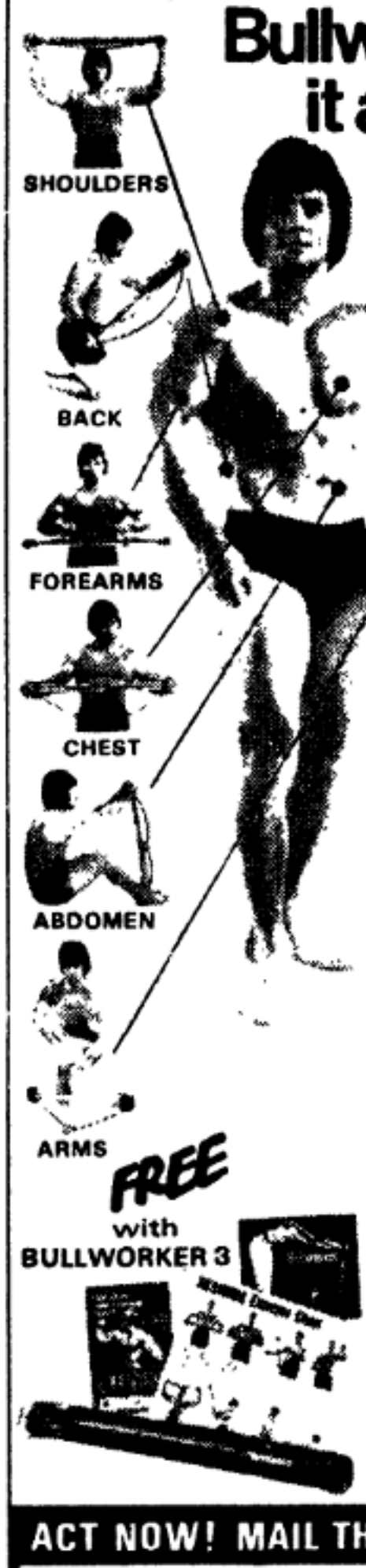
Constance Bennett picture and a small contract followed which brought in its wake the all important contribution by Joan Crawford. She bullied and cajoled the studio till Gable was given a major part in *Dance, Fools, Dance*—a tough hard-boiled character. His success was instantaneous. The critics raved and the movie audience found a new hero and, for what it's worth, both Crawford and Gable always vehemently denied that their friendship was anything but platonic.

I have hinted that Clark was a little close with a buck but this was only in connection with things his honest Dutch-German blood persuaded him were extravagant or unnecessary. For instance, none of the many women in his life were ever seen festooned with goodies.

Divorce, however, was something else again. Gable never skimped on that and to obtain his freedom from Josephine, Ria and Sylvia, he, almost without arguing, was practically wiped out three times. Each time he was divorced, he issued the same hopeful statement:—'I don't intend to marry again—ever...' but each time he soon forgot what he had said.

One of the interim ladies to whom he was attached for a while observed, rather sourly, 'Of course, Clark never really *married* anyone. A number of women married *him*...he just went along with the gag.'

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A Thing of Joy

Most books that set out to provide an overview of the Olympic Games and which include, of necessity, a variety of photographs, can be dismissed as belonging to the usual genre of coffee-table books: tastefully laid out, pleasing to the eye, but not containing much to stimulate the intellect. If the *Wills Book of Excellence: The Olympics* does not fall into the above category, it is simply because of the great care that has gone into the writing, selection and arrangement of the material contained therein. Though the design is calculated to please the most discerning, there are also facts and personal glimpses aplenty, with the occasional intriguing tidbit thrown in to please the trivia addict.

Throughout the book's 11 chapters, the underlying theme of the quest for excellence, as exemplified by the performances in the Games, is subtly stressed and this serves as a useful connecting link to bind together what would otherwise have been a random collection of data. As it is, the book's weakest parts are those where this theme of excellence is not given due emphasis, for then the reader is faced with bald facts and figures with no point of reference.

The book attempts to chronicle the high watermarks of the quadriennial display of athletic prowess that is Baron Pierre de Coubertin's legacy to the world. Instead of specifically dwelling on the details of every single Olympiad (such treatment is best left to books of record) it touches upon the flashes of brilliance and the continuing drama of human endeavour—in terms of physical as well as mental determination—that separate the Olympics from all other universal sporting contests.

The chapter on Pierre de Coubertin throws light on a hitherto unemphasised aspect: his initial attempts to revive the Olympics, the teething troubles of the International Olympic Committee and the atmosphere at the first modern Games at Athens, 1896 (where American James Connolly earned the distinction of becoming the first modern Olympic winner by clearing 13.71 metres in the triple jump event).

Interestingly, the roots of the commercialism and financial difficulties that plague the organisers of the Games today are traced as far back as the 1904 Olympics at St Louis when de Coubertin, in an attempt to overcome the hurdle of adequate finance, linked the Games with the St Louis World Fair. The result was, in the words of one spectator, "a sporting contest (and) a fair where there were sports, where there was cheating, where monsters were exhibited for a joke." De Coubertin himself admitted later that the move was a commercialisation of the Olympic spirit but also added that he had no other choice.

A particularly fascinating chapter is the one that deals with "the difference between gold and silver," which recounts the photo-finish finales and the contests in which only marginal differences could separate the winners from the runners-up. The story of how Russian gymnast Yelena Davydova snatched the gold from Nadia Comaneci at the 1980 Moscow Games, winning by just 0.075 points, deservedly earns a place here, as well as the now legendary Coe-Ovett encounters.

The most heartening part of the book is the section which describes the struggles of the people with special handicaps to win through to

Wills Book of Excellence: The Olympics, published by Orient Longman Ltd 17, Chittaranjan Avenue Calcutta 700072 Price Rs 100



Carl Lewis flashes the smile of triumph as he crosses the 100 metre finish line

success. The tales of the attempts to overcome physical as well as psychological stumbling blocks makes inspiring reading. Among others, there is the story of Shelley Mann, who once had to struggle even to lift her arm out of the swimming pool. She went on to establish an Olympic record in the 100m butterfly event. Also recounted is the ill-starred story of Konrad Frieherr von Wangenheim, a German equestrian. On the second day of the three-day equestrian team event at the Berlin Games, his horse stumbled and Konrad, who was thrown off, broke his collar bone. Aware that if he dropped out the German team would be disqualified, he remounted and cleared the remaining 32 obstacles flawlessly. The next day, his horse reared and toppled backwards, falling on its rider. Konrad, who was riding with a bound arm, somehow managed to remount, urge his steed to action again, and both horse and rider completed the event without further misadventures. The German team went on to win the gold medal.

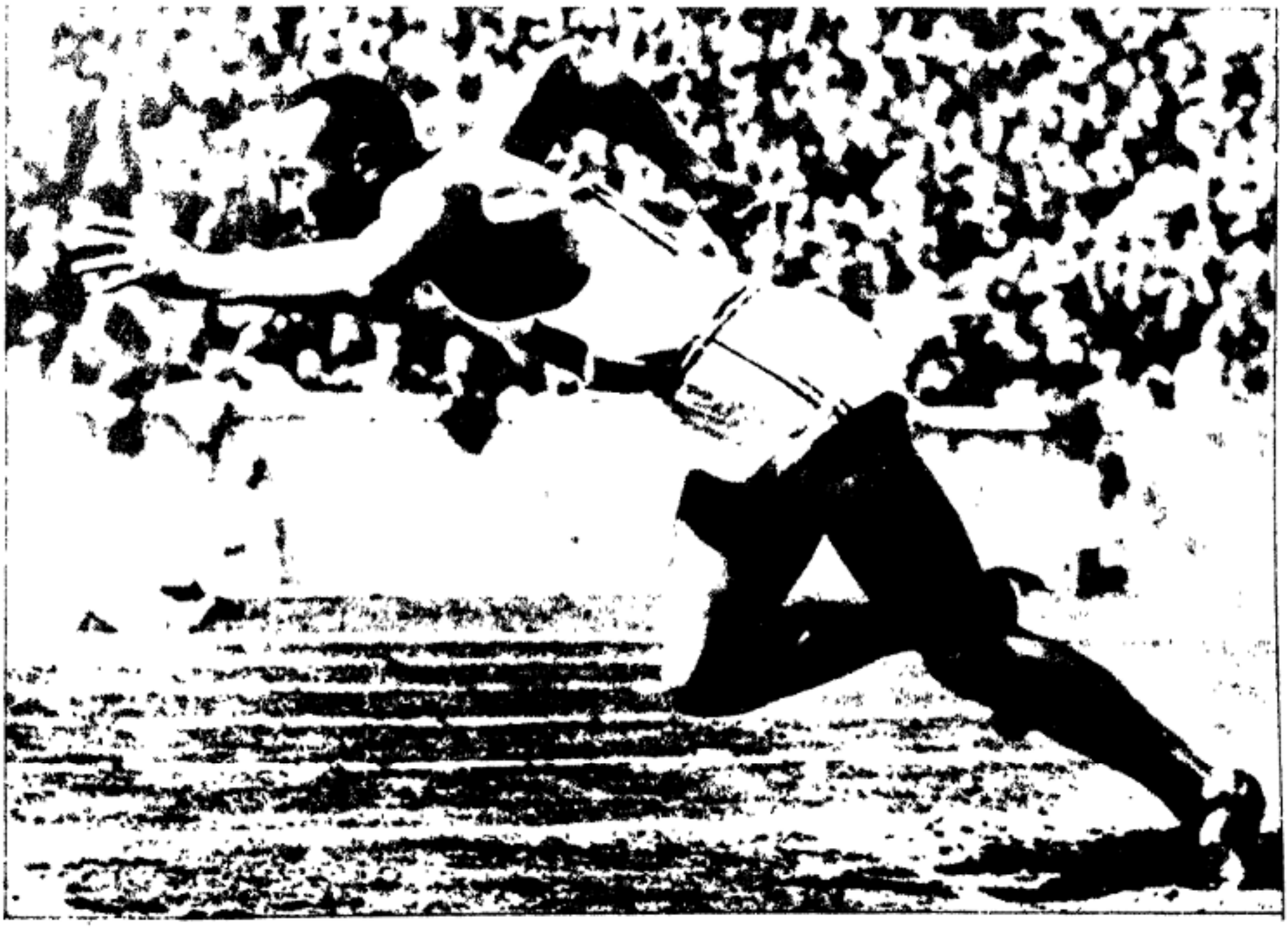
The oft-told story of the 'black gazelle', Wilma Rudolph, is also recapitulated with feeling. Polio, atrophied limbs, cardio-vascular disorders, third degree burns: nothing seems to have deterred these men and women whose strongest asset proved to be their implacable will to succeed.

A separate chapter is devoted to providing an overview of the Indian presence at the Games, and this fills a long existing hiatus. Expectedly, the hockey performances are discussed at length, beginning from India's hockey debut at Amsterdam, 1928. This team did not concede a single goal and scored 28 times in five outings. The ups and downs of India's subsequent hockey appearances till they captured the gold at Moscow in 1980 are then recapitulated. India's 1984 debacle is reserved for the final chapter on the Los Angeles Games.

Apart from this and the Milkha Singh story, other topics in this chapter are touched upon perfunctorily. In particular, the wrestling events (where Maharashtra's K. D. Jadhav won the bronze in 1952: independent India's sole individual medal win-



The memorial at Athens containing Pierre de Coubertin's heart



Jesse Owens



Nurmi (right) holds off Ritola's challenge in the 5000 metres

ning performance) could have been given more prominence as India has been a hair's breadth away from a medal more than once. The reasons for India's abysmal performance in general are dismissed by stating that the organised, sustained effort that is required is lacking. A further analysis would have proved most helpful here.

The chapter on the Los Angeles Games begins well, capturing the heady mix of commercialism and competitiveness that was the hallmark of the events there. However, the chapter *in toto* is disappointing as the linguistic elegance of the rest of the book seems to be lost in the maze of statistics. Also lacking are the personal glimpses that abound elsewhere in the book. The book ends befittingly with a reference to P.T. Usha's glorious performance in the 400m hurdles.

The photographs are carefully selected and capture the essence of the Olympics. Perhaps to steer clear of controversy, the writer does not attempt a critical and separate analysis of the dangers of crass commercialisation, the use of drugs to improve performances and the politicisation that are threatening to wreck the spirit and even the existence of the modern Games

Lokesh Sharma, the 23-year-old author, and sports reporter of *The Telegraph* has enriched sports literature, with this well-researched work. Not that everything about the Olympics is said in this book.

Indian book designing has also reached new heights with the eye-catching visualisation of Sunil Sil. By sponsoring the book the ITC has done what Indian publishers have not been able to do. This, incidentally is the first of a series on different sports that ITC is sponsoring, the next one being on tennis.

One wishes such a treat was served hot. The book is a little too early for the next Olympics and a little late for the last one. But then, as the saying goes, it is better late than never. And a thing of beauty is a joy foreover.

Sanjay Sipahimalani

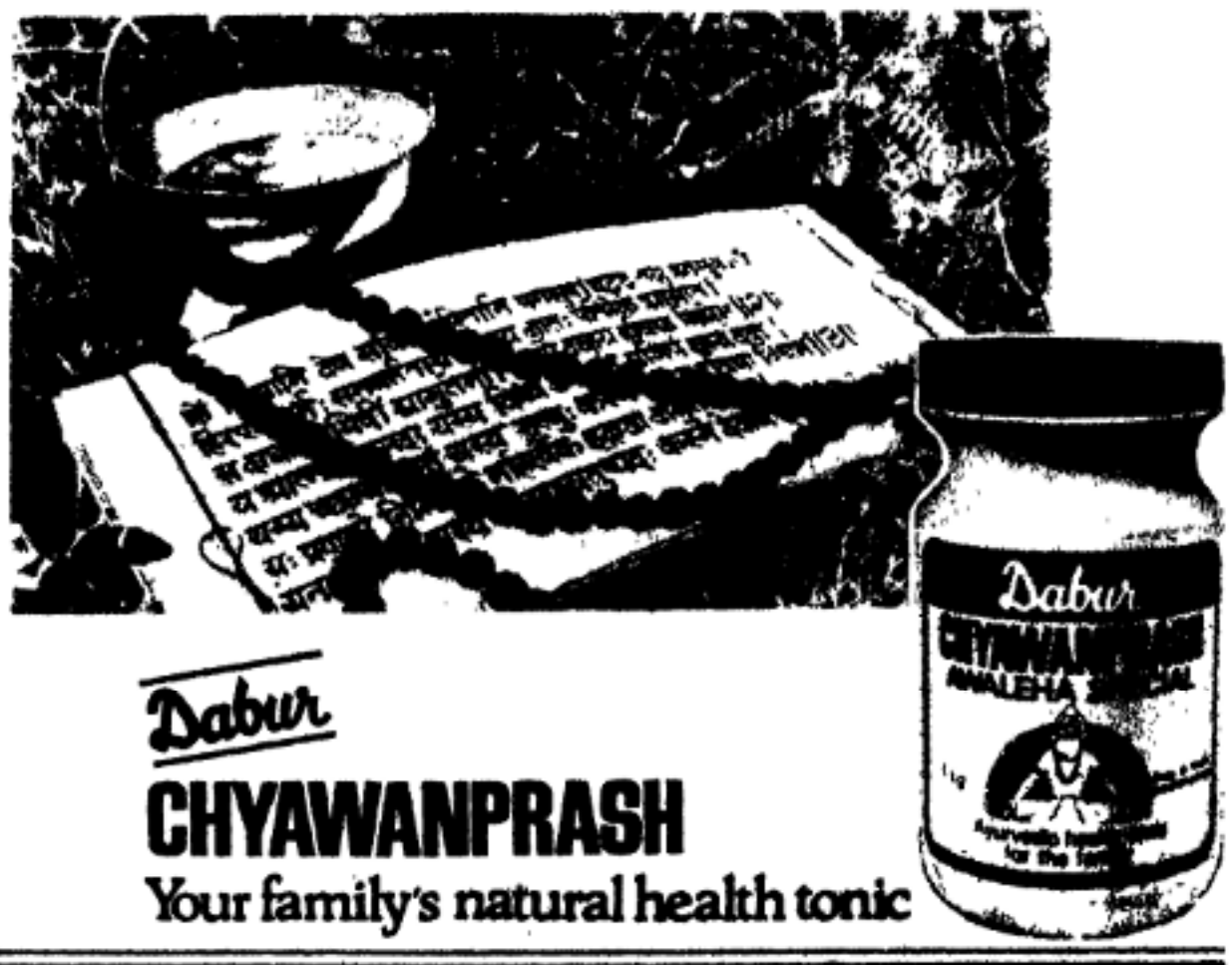
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BIHAR

Police Massacre Harijans

Naxalites blamed for the killings

Even as the whole country settled down to enjoy New Year's day, the harijan villagers of Kaithi Bigaha under the Obra police station in Aurangabad district in Bihar prepared for what would, for many of them, be the last day of their lives.

It all began on 31 December 1984. Around 30 harijan villagers from Kaithi Bigaha had assembled outside their village to protest against the rape of the daughter-in-law of Kanhai Sahu, a fellow harijan, by Shiv Kumar Sharma, the son of the Bhumihar landlord of Makhra, the adjacent village. This was not the first time the harijans had held such a protest meeting. Since 1981, the harijans have been demanding minimum wages from the landlords. Only this time, they added a new dimension to their meeting by raising their voices against the rape of their women.

The landlords at first tried to obstruct the harijans from holding the meeting. When the harijans proved to be adamant, the landlords sought the help of the local police. The police first surrounded the harijan village and two of them went inside one of the houses to investigate. The women protested against the police's entry and a scuffle followed. By then, say the eyewitnesses, the landlord and his men had sprinkled kerosene on the harijan huts and set them on fire. As the harijans rushed out to save themselves, the police let loose a hail of bullets killing five harijans on the spot. Another eight harijans were arrested by the policemen.

The police however claimed that they had fired in self-defence and that the dead harijans were Naxalites. "They were Naxalites and were killed in the retaliatory firing that lasted for 30 hours," said C.D. Singh, the sub-inspector of Obra police station. He continued: "Two police constables were killed and the district superintendent of police D.S. Prasad had a narrow escape. The harijans fired indiscriminately from inside their mud houses which were fortified," said Mr Singh. The Obra police have filed cases against the harijans for arson, dacoity and arms snatching.

The recovery of three rifles by the police has strengthened their suspicions that the harijans are Naxalites. The police explanation of the harijans being armed extremists has too many discrepancies to be convincing. The fact that the policemen set fire to the huts clearly disproves the story of the encounter with Naxalites. The police could hardly have burnt the huts after dousing them with kerosene if Naxalites were firing from inside. This correspondent also saw no signs of any fortifications around the 30 now deserted huts.

Though the police claim that blood spattered police uniforms were recovered from a harijan hut and have been sent to Aurangabad where the state director general of police (DGOP) would inspect them, it has been learnt that the DGOP is yet to



K M Kisan

Ruins of huts burnt by the police

arrive in Aurangabad. The uniforms have not been dispatched either. Instead they are still in Obra and are being used by the policemen there Moreover, the harijans killed have no criminal records as claimed by the police

There is growing suspicion about a conspiracy between the Bhumihar landlords in the area and the police against the harijans. Just the day before, on 31 December, the harijans had met just outside the village to protest against the rape of a harijan woman by Shivkumar Sharma, the son of a Bhumihar landlord Chotanarayan Sharma in the nearby village of Makhra The meeting was organised by the woman's father-in-law, virtually a bonded labourer of ChotanaravanSharma But Kanhai Sahu and his family members were held as hostages by Sharma in order to prevent the meeting from being held. But seeing that the harijans were adamant, the landlords took the help of the police Discussions about the rape of the daughter of another villager Nanku Ram (from who's hut the bloodstained uniforms were allegedly recovered) by Arbind Sharma son of a landlord and the daily wages given by the landlords which is below the official rate of Rs 8



Terror-struck neighbours of the harijan villagers

KM Kiran



Wounded police constable Shatrughan Singh

were also held. It is believed that the harijans were so upset that they did not eat anything on the day of the meeting. The post-mortem of the dead bodies also show absence of food in the visceras indicating that the dead were only protesting harijans and not extremist Naxalites.

The harijans in the area work mainly as bonded labourers, wage earners or casual workers in the fields of the Bhumihars and atrocities on them are fairly frequent. In 1981 in Gaini, a nearby village, six harijans were killed for demanding the official minimum wages. However many harijans have been enrolling in the Indian People's Front (IPF), formed in 1982, which has been encouraging the harijans to resist.

Relations between the harijans and landlords deteriorated further after the Kaithi Bigha villagers demanded and got a raise in minimum daily wages from Rs two to Rs six, still less than the official rate of Rs eight. The landlords have also been trying to evict the harijans from the village, and Parasuram Sharma one of the landlords who reportedly masterminded the massacres argues that the harijans have settled on land which belongs to the school where he teaches. Official records, however, show that the land does not belong to the school and that the harijans have been given ownership of the land under the 20 point programme.

Another reason behind the tension between the landlords and the harijans is the division in political loyalties. While the landlords supported the Congress(I) candidate in the constituency Mr S.N. Sinha, the harijans supported either the Janata Party or the CPI.

The situation in Kaithi Bigha and the surrounding villages continues to be tense. The police deployed in the area are believed to be "guests of the landlords." The village *mukhiya*, Mr Ram Baran Singh has been approached by the district administration to ask the harijans to come back. But the hundred or so survivors are yet to return. The executive magistrate Mr A.B. Singh inspected the village on 3 January and has assured that the relief and rehabilitation measures would be carried out and that there would be no more violence in the area. The government however is yet to accept that the houses were burnt by the police but still believe that the cluster of houses were a well-designed fort with an underground tunnel for escape.

Meanwhile the harijans in the adjoining areas, aware of the government's apathetic attitude towards them are planning an exodus. The ones who are willing to stay on are too terror stricken.

Yubaraj Ghimire, Patna

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DYNAMICS

GUJARAT CONGRESS(I)

Sweep Helps Loyalists

The dissidents are on the defensive

The landslide victory of the Congress(I) in the Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat has strengthened the loyalists belonging to the Madhavsinh Solanki group while the dissidents, headed by Mr Solanki's former mentor Mr Jinabhai Darji, are on the defensive. As the state government prepares for the elections to the Gujarat Legislative Assembly in March, the Solanki group appears to be on top.

"Not only will Solanki become the first chief minister in the state to complete the full term of five years in office, but in all probability he would be elected for a second term as well," a top loyalist worker said. The dissident leader, Mr Darji, had sometime ago vowed that he would make sure Mr Solanki did not become chief minister again. No chief minister has completed the full term of five years in office since the state came into being in 1960.

The optimism in the Solanki camp is because the Congress(I) won 24 of the 26 Lok Sabha seats from the state While much of the credit is being given to Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the loyalists also claim that the high command had picked up most of the nominees suggested by the Solanki group. The Congress(I) polled 53.24 per cent of the valid votes cast, which, however, was lower than the 1980 figure of 54.84 per cent.

The chief minister has already approached the high command after the Lok Sabha victory about disciplining the dissidents. He has also shored up his own position in the Gujarat party by informing the sitting legislators that they would be given tickets if the party did well in their Assembly segments in the Lok Sabha polls. The party has 142 MLAs in the 182-member state Assembly now and an analysis of the voting pattern in the Assembly segments in the Lok Sabha polls reveals that the Congress(I) got more votes in 139 Assembly constituencies while the Opposition led in the remaining 43 segments.

The loyalists concede that another Congress(I) sweep in the Assembly polls where a lot of local issues are involved, is unlikely. But they are still hopeful of doing well, if the high command does not encourage the dissidents. This means that the Solanki group wants the Congress(I) high command to follow the Lok Sabha pattern in selecting nominees of the loyalist group's choice.



Madhavsinh Solanki

At least two more incentive schemes for the poor were in the pipeline at the time of writing. The state government plans to provide foodgrains at concessional prices to nearly one and half crore people from fair-price shops and arrange for completely free education for women at all levels, including at the university and technical institutions. The first scheme is expected to counter the price rise and the second, to attract women voters. At present, girls get free education up to the eleventh standard in school. The two schemes could cost the exchequer about Rs. 77 crores a year according to official estimates. But private assessments indicate that the schemes could cost much more

While the Solanki faction has been celebrating its victory in the Lok Sabha elections, the dissidents have been taking stock of the situation. Just as the poll campaign began in December, there were reports that Mr Darji was planning to give up the executive chairmanship of the 20 Point Programme Committee. The post carries the perquisites of a cabinet minister, such as a bungalow, an office and a car although Mr Darji has never drawn the honorarium that goes with it. However, after the results were known, the dissidents are lying low. When asked if he had received Mr Darji's resignation, Mr Solanki denied receiving any resignation so far.

The dissidents may have suffered a setback, but they are certainly not out of the reckoning. Said a dissident leader, "Mr Solanki cannot appropriate the credit for winning the Lok Sabha poll all to himself. The dissidents too had worked as hard as anybody else." They also argued that the hopes of Mr Solanki's followers to wipe out the dissidents was too optimistic. Mr Solanki does not wield that much influence with the new Prime Minister,the dissidents argue. The dissidents quote the inclusion of Mr Yogendra Makwana, union minister of state in the new cabinet to back their claim.

Mr Solanki is at loggerheads with Mr Makwana, who as a Rajya Sabha member was retained in the cabinet, while included in none of the 24 Lok Sabha MPs from Gujarat wereincluded. In addition, two supporters of Mr Solanki in Delhi, Miss Kumud Joshi and Mr Digvijaysinhji Jhala have been dropped

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

NEW DELHI

For Our Fallen Heroes

A war memorial for the Cavalry and Armoured Corps

The war memorial which lent its name to the Prime Minister's house in the Nehru era has been renamed. The long forgotten Teen Murti Memorial in New Delhi was named the Cavalry Memorial on 6 January 1985 to pay homage to the soldiers of the Indian Cavalry and Armoured Corps who have laid down their lives in the two World Wars and in the wars fought by India after independence.

The Teen Murti House, once the official residence of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, now houses a museum dedicated to him. The building opposite Rashtrapati Bhawan was once used by the British commander-in-chief of India and had got its name from the Warriors' Memorial located opposite the main gate of that building. The monument, a sandstone column with three bronze statues of horsemen from the Hyderabad Lancers, Mysore Lancers and Kachchwana (Jodhpur)

in their traditional uniforms, stands on a roundabout outside Teen Murti House. The top column of the statue is crowned with a horseshoe carving. The inscription at the base reads: "Their name liveth for evermore." Engraved all around the column are names of officers and soldiers who died or were missing in action.

The statues of the lancers were sculpted by Leonard Jennings in 1922 and the memorial was originally for cavalrymen who had died in the First World War during the capture of Haifa in the Middle East in 1917, which was occupied by the Germans and the Turks. The Imperial Cavalry Brigade which consisted of the former princely states of Hyderabad, Mysore and Jodhpur with detatchments from Bhavnagar, Kashmir and Kathiwar, had taken part in the battle and had suffered heavy casualties. The monument was specifically constructed opposite the official residence of the British commander-in-chief of the Indian armed forces, who ranked only second to the viceroy and governor general during the British Raj.

General A.S. Vaidya, the chief of army staff, himself an Armoured Corps man has played a vital role in rededicating the memorial to the



Gen. Vaidya rededicating the memorial

Cavalry and its successor, the Armoured Corps of today. The ceremony was to have taken place in the second week of November 1984, traditionally observed as the Cavalry weekend, but the function was postponed because of the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Ceremonies will be conducted here during the Cavalry weekend, and also Armoured Corps day, 14 April (the day Indian Cavalry units switched from horses to tanks).

The function on 6 January was attended by officers of the Armoured Regiments dressed in typical Cavalry outfits with blue and gray *Kamarbandh* and shoes with spurs. There were also retired generals of Cavalry units. Amidst the bugle's solemn sounding of the Last Post, the chief of army staff, general A. S. Vaidya, escorted by Lt. General J.M. Vohra, placed a wreath at the memorial. General Vaidya also dedicated a bronze plaque affixed on the memorial while the band of the Armed Corps Centre and School (Ahmednagar) played the funeral march. In a brief chat with the press, General Vaidya said that the memorial would revive memories of those who had died for the country. "When we pay homage to the dead we also look upon the Teen Murti House and pay homage to the leaders of the country who lived there and whose funeral procession started from there."

Falguni Talwar, New Delhi

Life piled on life will be of no avail if the gray spirit yearning in desire does not 'follow knowledge like a sinking star beyond the bound of human thought' Perfection is not the prerogative of mortals but to try to drink knowledge to the lees and not to miss significant knowledge in the underwood of details must be the endeavour of every managerial aspirant Knowledge must be unified and not disparate, if not, it degenerates into acquisition of isolated facts and we may lament 'where is the knowledge we have lost in information?' Effective use of knowledge combined with a capacity for guidance and direction is the very essence of leadership and managers are leaders

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TENZING NORGAY

The Old Man and the Mountains

The ailing Sherpa is missing the Himalayas

The window of Room 307 at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences overlooks the chaos of rush-hour traffic and a solid concrete wall. A man who has had the rare privilege of standing on top of the world's highest peak now stares at this bleak city scene. Tenzing Norgay, the conqueror of Mt. Everest, is a thin, frail figure today. A lung infection has kept him in hospital for the last one month. His lined but strangely young face is full of amazement as he talks about his illness. "All my life I have lived in the mountains; lived with snow. There was never any problem But then I caught pneumonia So strange, isn't it, so unusual!"

He pauses, as if to consider this odd behaviour on his body's part. The mountains and Tenzing have been an inseparable part of each other and now, at 71, the body has suddenly turned traitor. "But only the left side is bad. The rest is okay. Now everything is going to be fine," he reassures himself. "There is only a little weakness but soon I'll leave this place, maybe in a week."

The hospital room, during visiting hours, is like a warm, cheerful gathering of Sherpas. Children, grandchildren, and friends surround Tenzing. Beaming faces look upon fondly at their grand old man. "He has done so much for us," a granddaughter says softly. "Not only for the family but for all the Sherpas. He has sponsored so many children, sent them to school." One of the first things he did when he came back from the Everest was to bring his mother to Darjeeling and make a good home for her."

The same son had run away from home at the age of 13. "My parents were very understanding, kind people, but I had to go and see the world." Born in the shadow of Mt. Everest, at a village called Tsa-chu, Tenzing remembers how, as a child, he used to see the peak rising high in the sky, towering over the other mountains. He did not know then that it was Mt. Everest. The Sherpas called the mountain *Chomolungma*—the "Goddess Mother of the Wind."

But both the names meant nothing to the boy. The only name that made any sense to him was his mother's description of Everest, "The mountain so high that no bird can fly over it." That is the name Tenzing still likes best for Mount Everest

There is a certain quiet strength about Tenzing which fame and adulation have not disturbed. "What did I feel when I stood on the peak? Nothing, we had reached, we had been lucky, now we had to get back." There are no regrets that his moment of glory was 30 years ago. He is totally contented with his work at the Mountaineering Institute at Darjeeling. "The main thing is that I am going to the mountains with students. It is peaceful and I am happy. I want to go back now." He looks at his family defiantly. "The cold is not good for him," one of them murmurs. He might get a relapse. "Tenzing turns his head away. A sharp horn outside breaks his reverie and he sits up." The Prime Minister came yesterday. But he also came to see me because he loves mountains. Indira Gandhi and Panditji also loved the mountains." Panditji started the Mountaineering Institute. He really loved nature."

It would never occur to Tenzing that the Prime Minister came to see Tenzing Norgay, one of the greatest mountaineers of the world. He believes simply that he is just an extension of the mountains and any recognition given to him is meant really for the whole Himalayan range.

One subject Tenzing hates to talk about is who stepped on the summit of the Everest first. Was it Edmund Hillary or Tenzing? "We never ask him and he never tells us," whispered his son. They understand instinctively that a man like their father would not answer such a petty question. "What does that matter?" Tenzing asks "The important thing was the team spirit. There were just two of us on the top. Who was there to judge which one is lying? Today I will say I was first, tomorrow he will say, 'No, I was there before him.' Our friendship will be divided into pieces by people asking this question. We were there together, that's all."

Even in his hospital bed in Delhi, Tenzing keeps track of the mountains. "There is good snow this year, you say?" he asks Prem Chand, a mountaineer friend. Prem Chand smiles gently, "You must come Tenzing, sir. You were with us last year at Base Camp. You are lucky for us." "August is still far away, the Sherpa whispers. I must regain my strength I'll be well soon. It's just the weakness now. I will definitely come."

The doctors, however, think otherwise. Tenzing was in a bad condition when he was brought to the hospital. There was an acute lung infection brought on by pneumonia. The left lung had a large abscess. But he is much better now and the lungs have cleared except for a small lesion.

No one is sure when Tenzing will leave the hospital But the six-week follow-up treatment will begin soon. "How will I live in a city?" asks Tenzing. "Life is so difficult here" For him, a month's stay in Delhi has been too long and tiresome. Tenzing had not wanted his stay at the hospital to be publicised. Though Rajiv Gandhi's visit was a pleasant surprise, the overwhelming attention after the visit has made him tired.

Bulbul Sharma, New Delhi



Tenzing Norgay

Illustration by Bulbul Sharma

HEALTH

Hard Sell

UNICEF for social marketing

The UNICEF has called for serious "social marketing" of the oral rehydration therapy (ORT) through mass media campaigns in the developing world. The just-released 1985 report on *The State of the World's Children* recalls the examples of family planning and the Green Revolution where governments with political will have utilised the campaign techniques of commercial advertising to spread knowledge and motivation in these two areas. The UNICEF has stressed that the revolution in child survival depends on the communication of information to millions of parents and that social marketing has an important role to play in realising the potential of ORT.

Among the 'success stories' in the hard-sell of ORT, the report cites two major examples: radio commercials in Honduras and the Gambia where the ORT jingle has become something of a hit song; and a promotional project in Nicaragua where the radio government station in partnership with an advertising agency has successfully spread knowledge and use of ORT salts sold as 'Super Limonado'.

While highlighting the importance of social marketing, the UNICEF report sounds two warning notes: One, no media message can achieve anything without structural socio-economic change. Richard Manoff, consultant for many social marketing projects in the Third World, is quoted as saying that the nutrition educator turned advertising-agent must remember never to permit marketing to become a substitute for social policy initiatives. Second, it must never be forgotten that there are not only similarities *but also differences* between commercial and social marketing. The former may associate products with moods, emotions and irrational 'images' which heighten their desirability. But the latter must necessarily be eminently rational, practicable and with solid substance in its message.

The UNICEF also reminds ORT campaigners that intensive research into the problems and needs of the target audience is vital, with constant field-testing and evaluation, and a high degree of professionalism to launch a campaign that truly works.

Vimal Balasubrahmanyan, Secunderabad

INDUSTRY

Tomorrow's Technology Today

Indian industries to use advanced techniques

While only half-hearted attempts are being made by the country's prestigious universities and research labs to check the 'brain-drain' in the country, at least one institution, Indian Institute of Technology—Madras—has evolved what could be a solution to the problem. The Madras IIT is now in the process of bringing back its past students who have settled abroad, doing either advanced research or working to enable them to share their knowledge with the Indian industry.

On 29 December 1984 and 3 January 1985, the Alumni Association of IIT, Madras, conducted a two-level programme appropriately named 'Operation Catch-up' involving a number of top industrialists. "The programme aimed to provide a rudimentary knowledge of advanced technologies that may directly affect Indian industry," says Mr Amaran, a former student and one of the co-ordinators of the programme.

According to one estimate nearly 2000 ex-students of Madras IIT alone have settled abroad. The total number of Indian engineers and other professionals settled in the USA is over a lakh.

The programme covered robotics, artificial intelligence, solid geometric modelling and office automation which are rapidly growing fields in the United States. In fact, robotics is being used by some Indian industries and a major national workshop on robotics was organised by Kanpur IIT in November. The programme originally meant for service organisations, consultancy and manufacturing companies and companies looking out for opportunities in several other growth areas including artificial intelligence industrial automation etc., was poorly attended probably because it was arranged hurriedly. In fact, Dr S.L. Rao, a prominent scholar and industrialist and also a director of the Mettur Beardsell Company Limited has remarked that such programmes should be popularised as the Indian industry is on the threshold of rapid development and every manager should know about the latest technological improvements.

A major complaint about Indian industry is its lack of knowledge in new developments. "Industrialists are mere passive spectators. They do not try to bring in advanced technologies and are content with producing more things using outdated techniques," says Dr P.V. Indiresan, a former director of IIT, Madras. The 'Operation Catch-up, Dr Indiresan's brain-child was evolved just before his tenure as director ended last year. Citing the example of the Ambassador car, Dr Indiresan argues that while the Japanese firm Nissan had taken the same design from the British principals and improved upon it vastly, the Indian cars were exact prototypes of a three-decade old design with minor changes. "Where is Nissan and where is Hindustan Motors?" he asked.

According to him the government's attitude towards technology imports has undergone a dramatic change and the industry is yet to catch up. This may be due to the psychological barriers inhibiting the Indian industry about adopting technologies that are too advanced and because of operational factors. "What is needed is an appropriate technology using all the latest techniques which are fully developed abroad," Dr Indiresan says.

Dr Indiresan wants redesigning units to be set up by every industry for which a fixed sum of money could be allotted. This centre could be used to update the technologies to suit internal needs. Even the export promotion bodies such as sum AIEI (Association of Indian Engineering Industry) could consider insisting on the inclusion of a technical expert on each buying mission going abroad who could evaluate the growth in technology and bring it back to the country.

S. Ramchandar, chief executive of Tubes and Malleables Limited, a division of TI group of companies claims "While technology transfer is an essential pre-requisite of rapid industrialisation, it would be out of reach of small and medium enterprises because high technology processes are prohibitively expensive." He suggests some kind of a syndicated facility wherein some of the user industries could pool their resources and manpower to get the best of technologies. Dr Rangarajan Jayaraman, a top researcher with the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Centre, New York, says robotics has revolutionised the modern industry. Products are characterised by high functional efficiency, complexity in

manufacture low cost, and the usage of integrated circuits, computerised digital systems etc. "Industrial automation is the only answer to keep up with the rat race in many such advanced industries." Computerised design techniques are being employed largely by many companies in the USA.

According to Dr Rangarajan, robots not only do mechanical funtions based upon certain present instructions, but are also beginning to 'think'. The modern industrial robots are fitted with a variety of sensory devices using cameras, heat detectors or other devices for flexible operation on the shop floor. "These artificial intelligence facilities improve productivity by as much as ten times," says Vinod K. Batra, a senior executive in one of the largest US telecommunications companies, General Utilities. "For many corporations artificial intelligence (AI) means much less arcane applications. For instance, at its Stapleton airport hub in Denver, United Airlines deploys voice-recognition equipment to speed up baggage handling. The handlers simply speak into the microphone and identify the baggage numbers which are 'recognised' by a computer which sends away the baggage to the appropriate bay. The handling operators have improved by as much as 100 times."

Mr Batra feels that in late 1980s, along with the development of new operating software, fifth generation computer hardware, artificial intelligence and speech recognition will reach out of research and development to offer the business community greater productivity.

While the 'Operation Catch-up' is only a token exercise towards such ambitious technology transfer ideas, it is a step forward because Indian industry for the first time, has been involved in a meaningful discussion on scientific developments by experts of Indian origin abroad. This 'technology park' concept exemplified by the Stanford and Berkeley Universities was so successful that the Silicon Valley type of hi-tech industrial region could be born. In West Germany too, the Berlin Senate—Technical University Programme titled "Berlin Innovation and Business Promotion Centre (BIG) had caught on very well and nearly 25 companies have benefited till the end of December 1984 in the very first year of its operation. The Madras IIT experiment should also prove successful provided the idea catches up with other research centres and the industrialists.

T. Raman, Madras

SRI LANKA

Moving Towards a Holocaust

New government measures will escalate violence

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict has escalated to such an extent that a civil war threatens to engulf the nation. Tamil militant leaders in interviews with SUNDAY expressed the fear that yet another bloody chapter of anguish and strife has begun in the island, which will lead to a civil war. Mr A S. Balasingham, the official spokesman of the Liberation Tigers of Thamil Eelam (LTTE) told SUNDAY that the Sri Lanka government has begun a series of measures which have "created the conditions for a civil war." He pointed out that the Sri Lanka government has begun engaging the Sinhala civilians in their war against the Tamils. By ordering conscription or compulsory military training for Sinhala youths and forming a new ministry for public mobilisation (intended to mobilise Sinhala opinion against Tamil "terrorists"), the Sri Lankan government has escalated chances of racial hostilities. According to the national security minister Mr Lalith Athulathmudali 30,000 armed Sinhala civilians are to be settled in Tamil areas.

In enlisting civilians for the fight against the Tamil terrorists, the Sri Lanka government has shown its own desperate situation. There would have been no need to resort to such a dangerous move had the government been in a position to rely solely on its armed forces, but the Sri Lankan forces are too small, ineffective, indisciplined, and thoroughly demoralised. The attempts at conscription prove that the war against the Tamils has taken a heavy toll on the Sri Lankan security forces, a fact suppressed by rigorous censorship. Past events show that Sinhala criminals and musclemen of the cabinet ministers have been able to wreak far greater havoc on the Tamils (innocents not militants) than the armed forces.



President Jayewardene

The Tamil militant leaders are apprehensive of a civil war because they feel it detracts from the purpose of their liberation struggle. Their intention has never been to fight the Sinhala masses but to enlist their support to overthrow the capitalist regime and usher in a socialist democratic political set-up. The militants lament "We just want to drive away the aggressors from our homeland. We don't want to fight with the Sinhala masses."

After the United National Party and Mr J. R. Jayewardene came to power in 1977, Sri Lanka has steadily moved away from the sphere of India's influence. Ideologically and economically it has followed the United States. Prior to this, Sri Lanka had freely acknowledged the fact that India was the guiding force in the sub-continent. Very often, India directly intervened in Sri Lanka's domestic affairs at Sri Lanka's request. Now Sri Lanka refuses to even accept India's good offices, though the events in the island are linked to happenings in India The Sri Lanka government has introduced a series of harsh anti-terrorist measures between November and December 1984, taking full advantage of the political uncertainty in India after Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Mr M.G. Ramachandran's illness also coincided with this phase. The measures introduced included the declaration of "no man's land" over a coastal stretch of 350 kms from Mannar to Mullaiteevu. The villagers in the area have been directed to abandon their houses so that a stretch of land 100 yards from the shore to the interior is totally unpopulated. This is in order to curb the movement of militants, particularly between

Tamil Nadu and the northern parts of the island. This measure had displaced 3 lakh fishermen who have been deprived of a livelihood

The Tamils of the area who subsisted primarily on seafood are seriously affected Vehicular movement in Jaffna has also been restricted. All vehicles, including cycles, require passes to plv—the authorities hope to restrict the movements of the terrorists. The militant leaders are happy with the situation because they believe that by opting for a military solution, the government has precluded the possibility of a negotiated settlement—and a military solution will lead to the division of the country.

The LTTE has curbed its activities because they want India to arrive at the conclusion the Tamils have come to long ago—the futility of holding negotiations with the Sri Lanka government. The LTTE was also waiting to see the outcome of the All Party Conference (the proposals which were drafted by Mr Jayewardene were summarily dropped) and of the general elections in India All the hopes they had vested with Mrs Gandhi have been smoothly transferred to Mr Rajiv Gandhi, who, they are convinced, is a genuine sympathiser

Mr Balasingham feels that India must acknowledge the futility of holding talks with Sri Lanka. Since Sinhala chauvinism will always be a stumbling-block for the resolution of the ethnic problem, India must therefore approach the United Nations and move a motion condemning the Sri Lanka government for grave violations of human rights. Such a step would isolate Sri Lanka in the eyes of the world. Secondly, India could be a little more assertive in influencing the United States to pressurise Sri Lanka to restrain itself "A stern word from United States would definitely restrain Sri Lanka from plunging into an "all out genocidal onslaught on the Tamils," he said. The Sri Lanka government is getting weaker, its economy is in a shambles, the tourist industry has been sluggish and the industrial sector has virtually collapsed. Time is running out for the Sinhala government and the Tamil militants believe that if the western world refuses aid and investment, the Sri Lankan government would be in no position to prolong its war against the Tamils. The LTTE has always ruled out armed intervention by India in resolving the ethnic crises However, in the event of a civil war, they hope that India would intervene to restore order

The opening of the Israeli Interests Section in the American Embassy has angered the Muslim community in Sri Lanka. The hostility intensified when several Muslim businessmen were affected in Mannar when the army went on the rampage. Now it is the turn of the Christian community to sit up in alarm. The killing of a methodist priest, Jaga Rajasingham and a Catholic priest Rev. Fr. Mary Bastian in Mannar has exacerbated the sentiments of the Christian population. The World Council of Churches of various Christian organisations are bound to register their protest. Moreover, most of the displaced fishermen in the "no man's land" are Christians.

The time has come for India to take a more assertive role in the island's ethnic conflict, the effects of which are spilling across the Palk Straits into Tamil Nadu. Moreover, wanton attacks on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan coastal guardsareincreasing. Recently, two Indian fishermen were killed in Indian waters by the Sri Lanka navy personnel, an incident that the Sri Lankan government chooses to deny. The fishermen operating in the Rameshwaram belt are enraged by this incursion on their livelihood and in fact even life, and are resorting to violent agitations. The attacks on Indian fishermen are usually not deliberate acts of provocation by the Sri Lankan government, but the result of overreaction by the Sri Lankan navy It's a "Shoot first, questions later" policy. The spokesman of the LTTE told SUNDAY that such incidents are part of an orchestrated campaign by Sri Lanka government to whip up anti-India sentiments. However, there can be no justification for any act of aggression by the Sri Lankan forces in Indian territorial waters.

The exodus of Sri Lankan refugees into Tamil Nadu has swelled to alarming proportions. At the moment, according to official figures, there are 50,000 of them stranded in Tamil Nadu. Most of them are poor people who have fled with little or no possessions. They are spreading out over the coastal districts, and are to be found in large numbers in Ramnad, Pudukottai and Nagapattinam. The official figures do not take into account the upper middle class. These Sri Lankan Tamils who have cut their losses back home are now settled in Madras. They have bought up flats and houses here and are trying to integrate with the local Tamils. As the numbers swell, the economic amd other constraints imposed on the state will assume alarming proportions which the Tamil Nadu and Indian governments cannot afford to ignore.

Anita Pratap, Madras



Sri Lankan soldiers on patrol

TIBET

The Dalai Lama: Homecoming?

The Chinese government does not want him back

"Despite official and fulsome invitations to the exiled Dalai Lama in India to return and play 'a patriotic role' in the future of China and Tibet, the communists will never allow him officially to retain his role as spiritual leader of Tibet," observed John Frazer, an American, after his visit to Tibet in July 1979.

Today, five years later, this observation has been proved right. For the first time, the Chinese have made their terms public, the most significant of which is that if he should return he would be allowed to live permanently and comfortably in Beijing, and not in Lhasa, though he would be allowed to go to Tibet from time to time like the Panchen Lama who has been living in Beijing since the late Seventies, but was allowed to visit Tibet only once in 1982. The Chinese claim that the Dalai Lama will be made the vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (China's Parliament) which, Sinologists say, is a figurehead position. The other terms that the Dalai Lama would have to accept are: the unification of Tibet with the rest of China and a silence about the events of 1959 which led to his flight to India.

Though these terms were formulated by Hu Yaobang, the secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1981, they were kept secret till now. The conditions were discussed in a meeting between a senior official of CCP's central committee and a three-man delegation of the Dalai Lama in Beijing.

The 49-year-old Tenzing Gyatsho, the 14th Dalai Lama, has taken these terms for his return to China, calmly. In fact, he has asked Beijing to clear certain doubts and confusions regarding the conditions. The Dalai Lama says, "The very fact that the Chinese are insistent that I return and stay in Beijing clearly indicates that there are still problems in Tibet." He adds that unless the Tibet issue is solved by the Chinese to the full satisfaction of the Tibetans, he could be of more benefit to his people by remaining outside Tibet. "The proposal of my return is, therefore, irrelevant at this stage," he emphasises.

The Dalai Lama has been living in self-exile in Dharamsala since 1959 along with 1,10,000 Tibetan refugees, who followed him into India. These



Ashok Bose

The Dalai Lama

refugees have been settled in 44 agricultural and industrial settlements in different parts of India.

For many years now Beijing has been inviting the Dalai Lama to return home, but these invitations have been ignored by him. In 1982, the Dalai Lama at a Buddhist congregation (where Tibetans from Tibet had also come) declared that he would visit Tibet briefly in 1985, provided he was allowed freedom of speech and movement. Also, he would take reporters of the "free world" with him. He hoped that the Tibetans who would meet him and express their thoughts freely to him are not punished by the Chinese after his visit. The Dalai Lama had in mind those Tibetans who had suffered at the hands of the Chinese, when they spontaneously welcomed three delegations sent by him to Tibet in 1979 and 1980. Some of them are still in prison.

The Chinese were taken aback. They had been issuing invitations for propaganda purposes to make the world believe that while they were keen to have the Dalai Lama back, it was he who wasn't responding. Then, the Chinese tried to force the Dalai Lama to cancel his visit. They arrested and executed a number of Tibetans labelling them thieves, rapists and criminals. According to some Tibetan refugees, they were mostly political activists, and not anti-social elements. The Chinese also stated that the Dalai Lama would be allowed to visit Tibet only if he acknowledged his past mistakes.

But the Dalai Lama refused to change his mind. Finally, the Chinese resigned themselves to receiving him in 1985 and preparations were launched to ready Tibet for the visit. Restoration work began on monasteries, temples and relics, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution of the Sixties. In addition, 40 developmental projects were launched and the deadline set for their completion was 1985.

In October, 1984, a three-member delegation led by 55-year-old Juchen Thubten Namgyal, the seniormost *Kahlon* (minister) in the *Kashag* (Tibetan cabinet-in-exile) left for Beijing with the 38-year-old Lodhi Gyari Gyaltsen and 65-year-old Phuntsok Takla to finalise the details of the trip.

A surprise awaited this delegation. The Chinese, instead of discussing the 1985 visit, released their terms for the Dalai Lama's return through the New China News Agency (NCNA). When the news reached Dharamsala, the headquarters of the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile, it dismayed the moderate Tibetans. They had been taken in by Deng's policy of liberalisation in China and had hoped that Beijing would make some move towards the political settlement of the Tibetan issue. The reaction among the refugees was unanimous: the Dalai Lama should reject the Chinese terms.

The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) leadership had opposed the Dalai Lama's 1985 trip. Within the refugee camp, the 10,000-member-strong TYC represents the hardliners who wouldn't settle for anything less than Tibet's independence from China. "We don't object to the delegation visiting China but we object to their discussing anything but Tibet's independence," says Sonam N. Dagpo, president of the TYC.

Another TYC activist said that had the Chinese agreed to Dalai Lama's brief 1985 visit, he would have tried to stop it. "I wouldn't have been alone," he says.

Refugee sources say that the Chinese have already begun going back on their 1980 policies of liberalisation. The Chinese have brought in over 100,000 Chinese workers into Tibet during the last one year despite Hu Yaobang's announcement in 1980 that the Chinese workers would

be removed from Tibet. Though some workers were sent back, the tide has been reversed. The new arrivals are being justified on the ground that they are needed to complete economic and technical projects in Tibet for which no qualified Tibetans are available.

The Chinese since November 1983 have restricted the freedom of worship in Tibet. From 1980 to 1983, Tibetans were allowed to display photos of the Dalai Lama in temples, homes and even wear them as colour badges. Now, visitors entering Tibet are searched and photos of Dalai Lama and other religious objects like scriptures, images, sacred threads are confiscated. Refugee sources say that the photos of the Dalai Lama at Potala Palace, the Dalai Lama's traditional residence, have also been removed. Tibetans in western Tibet have been advised not to keep the photos of the Dalai Lama in their homes.

By announcing the conditions for Dalai Lama's return and maintaining a silence about a political solution of the Tibetan problem, the Chinese have clearly demonstrated their rigid stand on this 25-year-old issue.

According to a political analyst, the Chinese have offered only a change of place of exile to the Dalai Lama from Dharamsala to Beijing. In return, the Chinese have not offered any concession to his people or changed the present status of Tibet, even within Chinese suzerainty. As the Dalai Lama says, "Either the Chinese leaders are still ignorant about the basic Tibetan issue or they are deliberately trying to distort it by giving the impression that the issue is something minor."

A. J. Singh, Dharamsala

NEPAL

A New Five-Year Plan

But the economy is still floundering

When King Birendra of Nepal observed sometime back that his kingdom was "a rich country struggling against poverty," he was not far from the truth. For, the Himalayan kingdom is in no shape, as the King explained, "to harness the resources we have." And that is precisely the problem Nepal's Seventh Five Year Plan (1985 90), scheduled to be launched in mid-July, proposes to tackle. The objectives of the Seventh Plan, according to Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand is "to increase production at a faster rate, to increase productive employment opportunities and to meet the minimum basic needs of the people" by mobilising the country's internal resources.

Although the Plan looks sound and fairly objective on paper, it does not appear very convincing, especially to those who are aware of the problems of the Nepalese economy. Nepal has been striving for the last three decades to eradicate hunger, unemployment, disease and illiteracy but, even after six five-year plans, has not succeeded. It remains the least industrialised country in South Asia and is among the ten poorest nations in the world.

The major emphasis of the Seventh Plan, which is estimated to involve an aggregate development expenditure of 54,110 Nepalese Rupees will be agriculture, the main occupation of 90 per cent of the kingdom's population of 16 million. Despite the foodgrain surplus after a good harvest last year, agriculture continues to languish. The previous plans have done little to improve irrigation facilities, increase the output of fertilisers and provide for newer farming



Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand

methods to increase agricultural output. However, the hopes of the policy formulators of reaching the take-off stage in the agricultural sector by the end of the Seventh Plan period may prove to be unfounded.

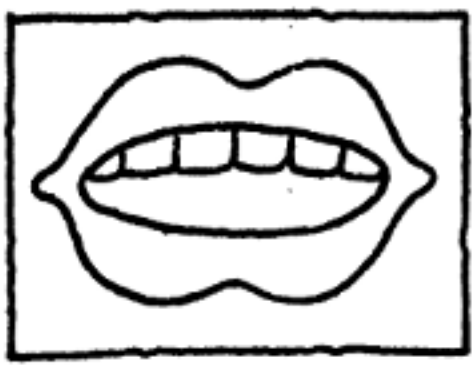
The growth of a viable industrial sector is one of the essential conditions of the country's economic development. However, there is not much chance of a breakthrough in the industrial sector, which at the moment employs only one per cent of the kingdom's workforce. The factors which are impeding industrial growth are too numerous and difficult to be overcome immediately. The Seventh Plan does not appear to be paying much attention to the development of heavy industries; the focus is more on small and medium-scale industries. The tardy implementation of the Sixth Plan will also prove to be a burden for the Seventh Plan, which will have to depend more on foreign aid and loans than the previous plan. While 60 per cent of the Sixth Plan's resource requirements was met by external aid and assistance, there are indications that foreign donors and creditors will finance 70 per cent of the Seventh Plan's development budget.

Another inhibiting factor is the increasingly adverse balance of payments position which has worsened over the years. In 1981-82, exports paid for 30.7 per cent of Nepal's imports. Exports have further declined in 1982-'83 to only 18.8 per cent of the kingdom's import bill. But imports cannot be curtailed either because any reduction in imports will slow down the development process.

The trade deficit with India, Nepal's largest trade partner, has been going up from Rs 72.90 crores in 1974-75 to Rs 137.32 crores in 1982-83. This is because its exports which account for more than 60 per cent of Nepal's external trade, have trailed far behind its imports. According to an economist associated with the kingdom's Institute of Third World Economic Studies, "The Nepalese budget has neither been able to give protection to national industries nor has it tried to reduce the trade deficit with India." However, some policy makers are aware that for 'planned development' the economy has to be diversified, dependence on India decreased, the balance of trade corrected and internal resources mobilised. But it is unlikely that Nepal's economic position will improve after the Seventh Plan.

Bhola Chatterjee, Calcutta

Artificial Mouth Designed



It's part robotics, part computer, part biology. It's an artificial mouth, designed by a university of Minnesota research team, that does a year's worth of chewing in 24 hours. Such a device will test new materials which have been designed by US dental companies—based on mixtures of resins and new ceramics—that could be used to improve false teeth, bridges, crows and fillings in millions of real mouths. Dr William Douglas, leader of the team, says that the materials look more natural than conventional silver-based fillings and gold crowns.

Aging: An Enigma



Scientists are still at a loss to explain why some people live to be 80 or 85, robust, can see and hear, albeit slightly less well than in their youth, and why others lead such miserable, painful lives before dying. Currently, science offers no antidotes to aging, no magic potion, no fountain of youth, only some tantalising clues about what may be governing this inevitable process.

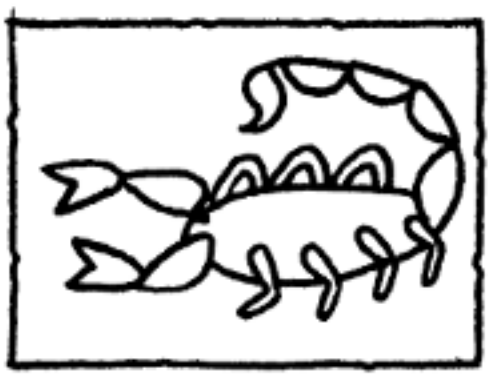
Old people suffer from a host of ailments: dementia (where the patient loses mental powers like intelligence or memory), cancer, arthritis, heart problems, pneumonia, etc. However, the cells of older creatures are able to carry out, though rather unsteadily, the tasks that keep the body going, such as utilising nutrients, removing wastes, repairing gene damage and manufacturing vital protein molecules.

Gerontologists—those who study old age—put forward two theories for aging: wear-and-tear theories, based on the assumption that the environment is responsible for wearing the cells down; and genetic clock theories, which assume that the genetic make-up of its body dictates its death. A Japanese researcher, Takatoshi Ishikawa of the Cancer Institute in Tokyo stipulates that during a lifespan of 70 years, the cell's indomitable enzymes, proteins themselves, may perform nearly 128 billion repair jobs.

Among the chemical 'culprits' are lipofuscin (a fatty, brown pigment) and glucose (a sugar). Glucose may actually be a prime cause of aging. It damages the proteins, including collagen, the main component of the connective tissue that supports and enmeshes cells. In a test tube, glucose binds collagen fibres together, and such linking has been observed in the tissues of elderly people as well. It also occurs in cooking (for instance, in the skin of a broiling chicken).

Researchers say that there are ways of prolonging life. Anti-oxidants like Vitamin E and limiting food intake could help. Roy Walford, one of America's leading researchers on aging, observes that many of the immune-system deficiencies that accompany aging can be tackled by undernutrition. Food restriction does not appear to work through the hormones that trigger growth

Hypersensitive Insect



Two American scientists have come out with a remarkable discovery: the sand scorpion is able to detect vibrations in sand, which is a bad medium for conducting seismic signals, by the movement of an insect as delicate as a moth. The two scientists—Dr Philip Brownell of Oregon state university and Dr Roger Farley of the university of California at Riverside—were observing the nocturnal behaviour of a colony of sand scorpions on a dune in the southern Mojave desert near Palm Springs, southern California. The scientists would use lanterns to attract moths; once a moth touched the sand, the scorpion would instantly ensnare it. They also noticed that the scorpion was shortsighted and could neither hear nor smell. In an experiment they found that a moth which was trapped above ground, near a scorpion, could elicit no response from the scorpion even when beating its wings furiously. This showed that the scorpion could not detect, in the air, the presence of its prey. So as a further test the scientists disturbed the sand with a twig. This sparked off a vigorous attack, precipitated by the mechanical vibrations.

Bacteria: The Snowmakers

The bacterium, *pseudomonas syringae*, is being tested by ski resorts in Colorado, USA, that determine whether it would improve standard snow-making methods on the slopes. The maker of a product called Snomax, which uses the bacterium, says it produces more snow than standard snow-making methods and at warmer temperatures. Large concentrations of Snomax are injected into underground snow-making pipes at a rate so that every drop of water comes out with an ice nucleus around which snow can form.

New Drug for Alzheimer's Disease



Scientists in the United States have come out with a drug that could help in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, which occurs in old age and leads to the weakening of mental powers. Patients suffering from this disease lack a brain chemical called acetylcholine, important for learning and memorising things. It is with little success that scientists have tried to tackle the disease with drugs that boost the levels or prevent the breakdown of this chemical.

The medical team of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Centre in Hanover, New Hampshire, implanted pressurised tubes under the skins of four patients to pump a continuous trickle of bethanechol chloride, an acetylcholine-like drug, to their brains. Prior to the experiment, some of these patients were so severely demented by the disease that they could not dress themselves or run errands. But after being administered the drug, the results were remarkable: all four improved noticeably.

Illustration: Prabir Sen

Rekha was fluttering around with unbounded joy the day the election results started coming in. She was not interested in any party winning, but her concern was for *Amitabh Bachchan*. She was shooting that day and she kept running to the radio. As Amitabh's lead skyrocketed so did Rekha's joy. "I knew he would win. He is too big a man to lose anything. Remember he even fought *Yama* and won. My respect for him has grown much more. I feel this is the beginning of many great things to come for him," Rekha gushed. Is this also the beginning of nice sweet times for Rekha?

Amol Palekar is now concentrating on Bengali films, not because he did not want to survive in Bombay, but because Hindi films did not want him. He tried directing *(Akriet)* but did not succeed. He has just completed *Ankahee* and his survival in Hindi filmdom will depend on the success of this film. But he seems to be liking Calcutta, "I feel very comfortable here. It's a great feeling. The money is not so good but the satisfaction is always there."



Rekha with Anuradha (left) in *Utsav*

Poonam Dhillon: lonely



Poonam Dhillon has never been the cherubic flirt after *Ramesh Talwar*, the young director, jilted her to marry the girl his parents chose. What put Talwar off the Dhillon trail was the presence of *Raj Sippy*, the reigning playboy-financier-director who dangles carrots before starry-eyed girls. At one stage it became the Talwar-Dhillon-Sippy triangle. Poonam, however, completed *Zamaana* which Talwar was directing but theirs is just a *naam ka waaste* relationship now. "I still have to get used to living all by myself," Poonam Dhillon cries. There are many others ready to wipe her tears, and it will soon become tears of joy.

Farooque Shaikh, who tried to take advantage of *Amol Palekar's* departure to Bengali films, is also on the verge of total defeat. Initial success intoxicated him and he started asking for fabulous prices. His explanation: "I want to do just a limited number of good roles. Those who want me will have to pay me my price."

Silk Smitha has no patience with anything that bars her way. And she believes in doing things in style. Once she made her producer fan her with a cardboard when the power went off. She rants publicly against the censors for using the scissors through her seductive scenes. *Maya Mohini*, in which she plays the heroine and matches her talents with *Jayamalini* and *Anuradha* will soon be released.

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debashis Deb

BOMBAY: A ham-handed railway policeman found himself at the wrong end of the baton at the Wadala station the other day. In the course of a routine roundup of unauthorised commuters in the ladies' compartment, the cop grabbed a person dressed in jeans, pulled the 'culprit' out of the train and proceeded tying the person's hands in a methodical fashion. Suddenly, the person snatched away the hands, flicked off a shoe and started thrashing the cop right royally. It turned out that the 'culprit' was a military nurse dressed in unisex clothes. The near six-foot lady let the cop go only after he fell grovelling at her feet, seeking forgiveness—*Indian Express* (K.S. Mahalingam, Bombay)

NAGPUR: A young bank officer could not vote in the recent elections as his name did not figure in the voters' list, instead, he was hooked by a marriageable girl's father waiting outside a party *pandal*. Presuming that the list included his name the young man proceeded towards the polling booth but was startled not to find his name in the list. Disappointed, he was about to return home when a man in his late fifties sitting on a dais outside the polling booth called out to him, "Young man, your name is very much there in my list." The grateful bank officer eagerly approached the old man to see the 'list' only to discover that it was the 'marriageable candidates' list' which the old man was talking about and not the voters' list—*Nagpur Times* (S. Farah Deeba Abidi, Amravati)

BHOPAL: In one of the polling booths in Raipur, a couple arrived by scooter and went to separate polling agents of the Congress(I) and the BJP. Their logic was that while the husband was voting for the Congress(I), his wife would vote for the BJP and their young son, who followed them on the moped, would vote for an Independent. The three said that they believed in democracy and every member was at liberty to support the candidate of his choice—*Nagpur Times* (Jyotirmoy Roychowdhury, Nagpur)

GUWAHATI: A kilogramme in Assam now weighs 950 grammes. One-kg weights having 50 grammes less are said to have been in circulation and thereby unsuspecting customers are being deceived by the unscrupulous traders and hawkers. It is said that people close to the trading world know that there are under-weights in the markets of the state. Two such one-kg weights were recently detected at Tihu bazaar when a trader was using them—*The Assam Tribune* (Sanjeet Sinha, New Delhi)

HYDERABAD: An independent candidate contesting from Medak and Nizamabad constituencies in Andhra Pradesh has hit upon a novel method of attracting crowds to his meetings. The candidate, Ganta Babu, dances on the dais and also sings while dancing, providing entertainment to the people. He goes round the constituency in a cycle rickshaw and one of his electoral promises is "supply of free liquor"—*Indian Express* (Dhanpatrai Agarwal, Tadepalligudem)

BERHAMPUR: Only one person cast his vote on 24 December 1984 at Nalia Knuagaon of the Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency, ignoring the poll boycott call by fellow villagers. The rest of the villagers boycotted the poll alleging that no welfare measures were undertaken in their area—*Indian Express* (P. Suryanarayana Murthy, Gudivada)

SRIKAKULAM: The electorate of Kotia villages in Parvathipuram parliamentary constituency, bordering Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, exercise their franchise officially twice in every election, according to Mrs Chandana Pyal, joint collector and returning officer of Parvathipuram. She says that both the states have been claiming the villages and at the time of elections, polling booths are set up by both the states. The practice is being carried out for the last 15 years—*Indian Express* (S. Rao, Vishakhapatnam)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Political leaders are different from political dealers. Sometimes dealers succeed but they don't lead the country, they deal with the country. Dealing with the country successfully at a particular time is not leading the nation—Chandra Shekhar in *The Week*

Our people believe in symbolism and I have become one of the symbols of the Janata government in the state. This is Indian culture—Ramakrishna Hegde in *India Today*

The opposition behaved like children fighting over whether they should have chocolates or cakes—Datta Samant in *The Telegraph*

We want an opposition. But it is not our job to develop them. They are all over 21—Arun Nehru in *Blitz*

In many ways it's similar, if you imagine India as a huge aircraft, but with a much longer response time—Rajiv Gandhi, when asked whether the training he got as an airline pilot was relevant to his present job, in *Newsweek*

A happy love life is for juveniles and cretins. Anyone who feels can never aspire to an untroubled love life—Pritish Nandy in *Femina*



Sujit Ghosh

If one day there's a holocaust in the world, it's in Calcutta that life will come back—Dominique Lapierre, famed novelist, in *Celebrity*

There is no cinema of the Third World...I think there is no difference between a good film from India and from any other part of the world. A film carries itself—Jeanne Moreau, chairperson of the 10th international film festival jury, in *Indian Express*

prize Rs 30 for the entry given first

BEGINNING 20 JANUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The week is particularly good for sportsmen. some of you will win rare honours. The period is equally favourable for those in service a promotion cannot be ruled out. However, businessmen should refrain from taking hasty decisions Friends and relatives will be very helpful to you this week. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. But watch your health closely this week.
Good dates: 21, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: North-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is the right time for businessmen to embark on new ventures. But professionals should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Those unemployed are likely to get jobs during this lucky phase. Lovers are advised to steer clear of all controversies Financially, this is a good phase but avoid extravagance. Those above the age of 40 should be careful about their health
Good dates: 22, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: East



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The week ahead is lucky for all of you. Businessmen will get new opportunities to expand their business while professionals will make steady progress Among students, those who have appeared for competitive examinations will come out with flying colours. On the financial front, some of you are likely to inherit wealth. Your health too will improve during this lucky period
Good dates: 20, 23 and 26
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week someone close to you will be working to embarrass you. At office you are likely to incur the displeasure of your superiors exercise restraint in dealing with such a situation. Your health will add to your worries. However, this is the right time to solve legal disputes. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. A pleasure trip is in the offing.
Good dates: 21, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



LEO (15 August—14 September) Your economic status will steadily deteriorate. A word of advice: try and live within your means. Circumstances may force you to change your career, but before doing so consult your elders. However, the week is particularly favourable for sportsmen and commercial artists. The period is also good for love and matrimonial alliances. Avoid undertaking journeys this week.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: North-east



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Women are likely to get married during this period For those in love, this is the right time to solve misunderstandings. This is also a favourable period for businessmen: do not hesitate to take risks Professionals too will be rewarded for their work. Financially, this is not a very bright phase: check extravagance. Keep a sharp eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 21, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) You will have to borrow money to tide over this lean period. Professionals are advised to be more diligent regarding their work. At home a member of your family may suddenly fall sick, adding to your worries. However, this is a favourable period for those in love and waiting to get married. A journey towards the end of the week will relieve you of all your tensions.
Good dates: 20, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Social engagements will keep you occupied for most of the week but avoid mixing business with pleasure. Businessmen should devote more time to their business. Take the advice of friends and elders before taking a crucial decision. For those in love, this is not the right time to get married. A pleasant surprise awaits you at the end of the week.
Good dates: 22, 24 and 26
Lucky numbers: 2, 4, 6
Favourable direction: South



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Despite losses on the financial front most of you will make steady progress this week. The domestic front promises to remain inspiring. If you are in love this is the opportune time to propose marriage. Businessmen and professionals should not hesitate to take risks. Sportsmen too will be rewarded for their dedication. However, do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 24, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South-east



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Financially, this is a lucky week: some of you will gain money from unexpected sources. The period is also good for sportsmen and artists. The domestic front will remain peaceful. The time is also favourable for lovers: if you have marriage plans this is the right time to execute it However, professionals should be diplomatic while dealing with their superiors or colleagues.
Good dates: 20, 23 and 26
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is not a good week to settle legal disputes. Financially, this is a bleak phase. you may suffer losses but do not get upset as this is only a passing phase. Slow progress in all your dealings may strain your patience but avoid taking hasty decisions. Your health will add to your worries The weekend will keep you busy with social engagements but do not neglect your work.
Good dates: 20, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) The week is particularly lucky for lovers: you may go ahead with marriage plans. Businessmen are advised to push their efforts to the utmost. Professionals will also make steady headway. However, some of you are likely to suffer losses this week. At home your wife or one of your relatives may suddenly fall sick. Avoid undertaking pleasure trips.
Good dates: 21, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west

For those born on the 20th, 21st or 22nd of any month:

By nature you are shy and not in the habit of giving vent to your feelings in public. Most of you are soft-spoken and lack leadership qualities. You have an artistic temperament and hence you will do well if you choose the creative arts as your profession. Financially, you are extravagant but this does not mean that you do not live within your means. To your friends you are popular and most of them look upon you for advice. Females born during this period will make good housewives.

VARIETY

CHESS

Sacrificial attacks which persist deep into the endgame are to my mind aesthetically much more pleasing than the short, sharp shock games which tend to pervade chess columns such as this. The following from this year's Polish championship is a bit of a squeeze to get in but well worth the effort.

White: Szymczak. Black: Adamski. Szymczak. Nimzo-Indian Defence.

1 P–Q4	N–KB3	2 P–QB4	P–K3
3 N–KB3	P–QN3	4 N–B3	B–N5
5 Q–B2	B–N2	6 P–QR3	BxN+
7 QxB	0–0	8 P–K3	P–Q3
9 P–QN4	P–QR4	10 P–N5	

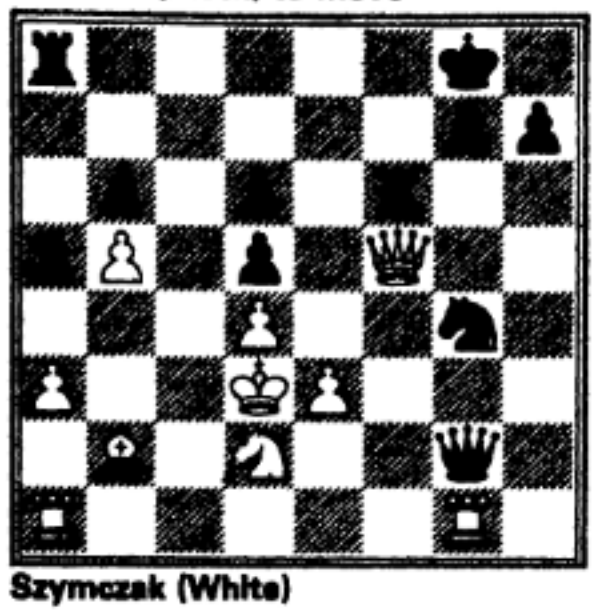
Strategically a poor move. White must in the long run seek to close off the black bishop by P–Q5 but now this will always leave a gaping hole on QB4 for a black knight.

10 . . .	QN–Q2	11 B–N2	N–K5
12 Q–B2	P–KB4	13 B–Q3	Q–K2
14 0–0	R–B3!		

Heralding the beginning of a terrible onslaught tactically made possible by White's feeble tenth move. If 15 P–Q5 R–N3 16 BxN PxB 17 QxP N–B4 will reopen the diagonal, as 18 Q–Q4 N–N6 costs an exchange.

15 P–B5	B–Q4	16 PxQP	PxP

Adamski (Black) to move



Szymczak (White)

17 N–Q2	R–KR3	18 P–B3	Q–R5

19 PxN

No choice. If 19 P–R3 N–N4 a nasty sacrificial finish is imminent.

19 . . .	PxP	20 BxP	QxP+
21 K–B2	N–B3!		

An important moment. Black needs another piece in the attack.

22 BxB	N–N5+	23 K–K2	PxB
24 Q–B5	QxP+	25 K–Q3	R–B3
26 R–KN1!		DIAGRAM	

It seems that White is crawling out, for if 26 . . . N–B7+ 28 K–B2 all the black pieces are hanging. The attack however is not to be denied.

26 . . .	QxN+!	27 KxQ	RxQ
28 RxN	R–B7+	29 K–B3	R–QB1+
30 K–N3	P–R5+	31 K–R2	R(1)–B7
32 R–QN1	P–R4!		

Despite the exchanges, Black's position remains overwhelming. The white king, rook, bishop triangle can never untangle, meanwhile Black's two kingside pawns are heading for a touchdown.

33 R–N5	P–R5	34 R–R5	R–R7
35 RxQP	P–R6	36 R–R5	P–N3
37 R–R4	P–N4	38 R–R5	R(B7)–KN7
39 P–Q5	P–N5	40 K–R1	P–N6
41 P–K4	RxB!	42 RxR	RxR

43 RxP

Or 43 K:R P–N7 44 R–N5+ K–B2 and . . . P–R7.

43 . . .	R–N6	44 Resigns.	

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Would you fancy your chances in Six Diamonds on the deal below? You never can tell, even at world championship level. Mind you, you will have to play it cleverly and encounter imperfect defence.

Dealer East Game all

	♠ 5 ♥ K 10 9 4 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ K Q 5 4 3	
♠ 10 7 ♥ Q 5 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ 10 9 8 7 6 2	N W E S	♠ K Q J 9 8 4 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ J
	♠ A 6 3 ♥ A J 6 ♦ A J 7 5 4 2 ♣ A	

This was the bidding in the match between Italy and Brazil:

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
De Falco	Chagas	Franco	Branco
—	—	—	3♠
4♦	No	5♦	No
6♦	No	No	No

Declarer won the spade lead, cashed the ace of clubs, ruffed a spade, and led the king of clubs from the table. East ruffed with the 9 of diamonds and was overruffed. The declarer played ace and another diamond and West, on lead, had no more spades. When the remaining trumps were played off he was caught in a show-up squeeze.

East's ruff with the 9 of diamonds was an error. What, after all, was the declarer trying to do, leading the king of clubs before drawing trumps? East must either refrain from ruffing or ruff with the queen.

Meanwhile, the great Chagas, hero of so many brilliancies, missed one when he failed to drop the king of diamonds under the ace.

Reviewing one of Victor Mollo's 'Animal' books, I remarked a little sourly that I would have disposed in three lines of a deal to which he devoted three pages. No such criticism applies to **I Challenge You** (Methuen, £7.95), which contains 200 neat problems in the middle range.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What do the following places have in common: Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Ireland, New Guinea and Crete?
2. The *samadhi* of Mahatma Gandhi is in Delhi. Where is the *samadhi* of his wife Kasturba Gandhi?
3. In alchemy, what substance is said to turn a base metal into gold?
4. Which well-known spirit also known as "jenever" and "schnapps," is distilled from malt and barley and flavoured with juniper berries?
5. The Russian kings were known as Czars. What were the German kings called?
6. Zeeland is the former name of which European country?
7. Name the famous Indian scientist and former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India who was killed in an aircrash in the Alps in 1966?
8. Name the rank in the Indian Air Force equivalent to major in the Indian Army?
9. What is the Mafia, the Italian crime organisation known as in the United States?
10. Name the priest or friar who is associated with the adventures of Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest?
11. Gary Sobers was the first cricketer to hit six sixes in a six-ball over in first class cricket. Who was the bowler?
12. How is Jean Francois Marie Arouet better known as?
13. Which city is known as the Manchester of India?
14. What is the collective noun of larks called?

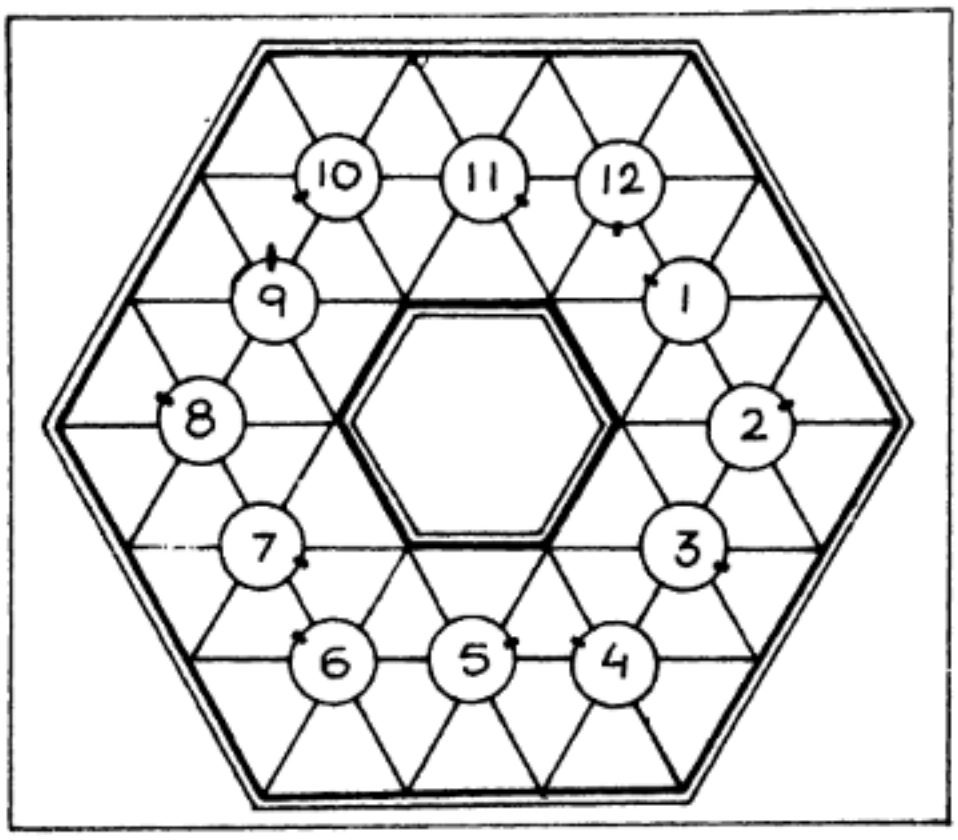
ANSWERS

1. They are all islands.
2. In Poona, at the grounds of the Aga Khan Palace.
3. The Philosopher's Stone.
4. Gin.
5. Kaiser.
6. Denmark.
7. Dr Homi Bhabha.
8. Squadron Leader.
9. The Cosa Nostra.
10. Friar Tuck.
11. Malcolm Nash.
12. The French philosopher-writer Voltaire.
13. Ahmedabad.
14. An exaltation.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Word Play



The object of this hexagonal word maze is to fit in 12 six-letter words into the blanks, according to the clues given below. Each word is to be entered around the appropriate number in this maze, beginning at the triangle indicated by the short line. Proceed one letter per space, either in a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. The direction, in each case, is for you to determine.

Clues:

1. Winding around a centre.
2. Very sad.
3. Baby pig.
4. Relating to a metre.
5. High school exam?
6. Where tennis may be played.
7. Decors shifted.
8. Very strict
9. Works as a sculptor.
10. Food for a bunny!
11. Fear or dismay.
12. Prawn.

Namegame

If Madame Tory is Margaret Thatcher, who are the following:

India's Glory.
Medallist Swimmer.
Carry on, Legs.
Nimble Cartwheeler.
London's Delight.
Actor Bygone.

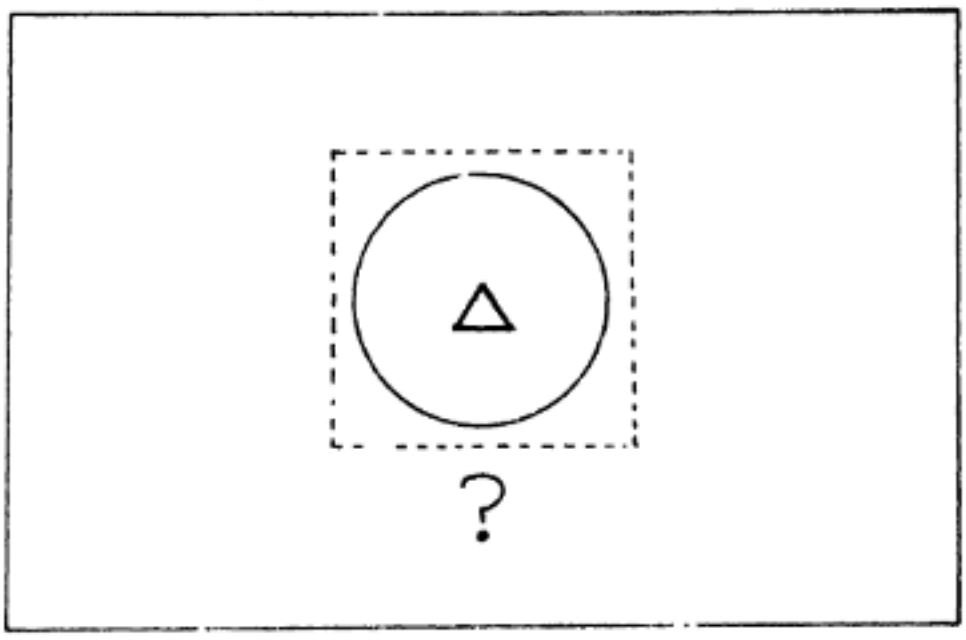
Really?

Did you know that the cricket has its ears on its knees and the butterfly, on the base of its wings!

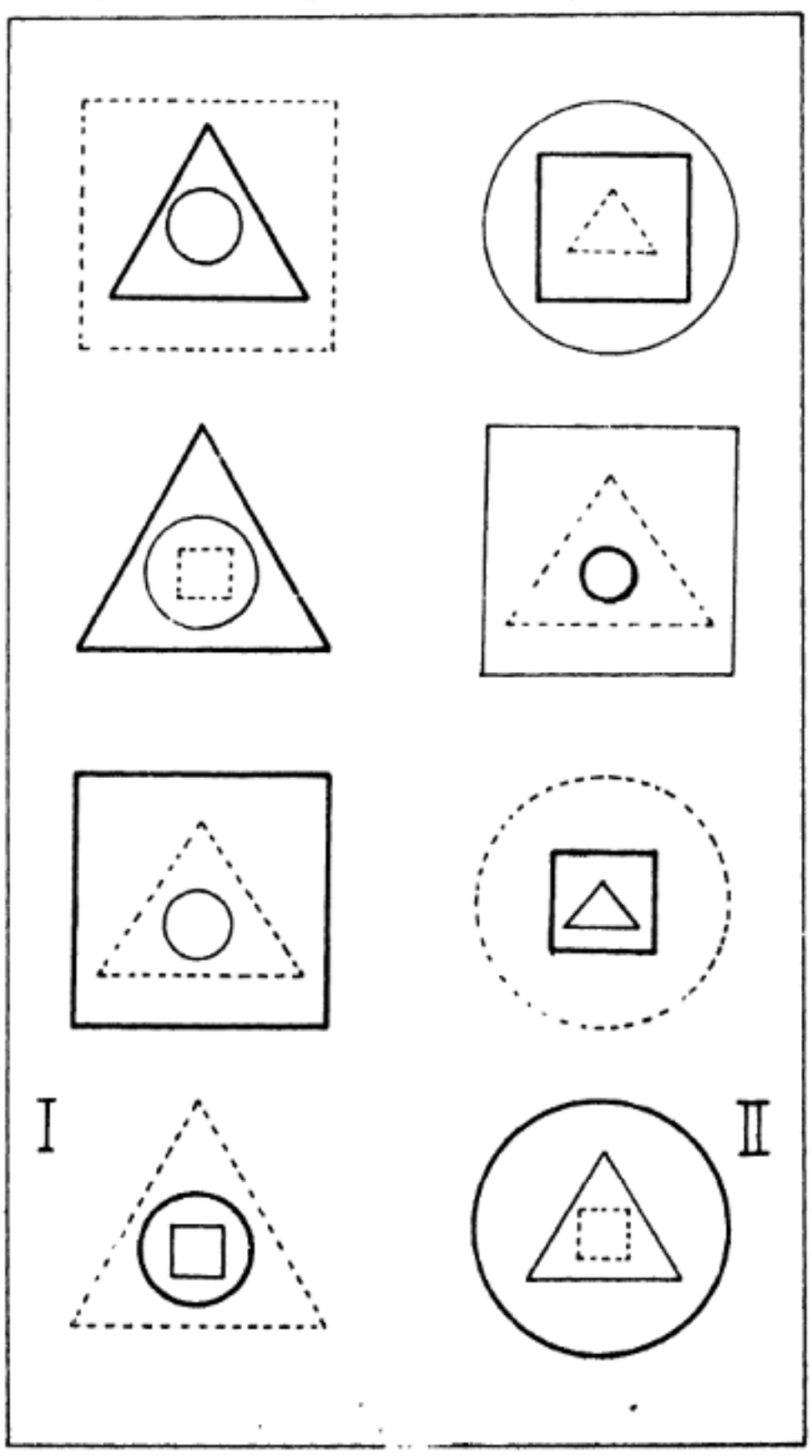
Quizbizz

How many things beginning with S can you think of which can be worn on your feet?

Wit Sharpener



To which category of illustrations: Group I or Group II below, does the diagram above belong?

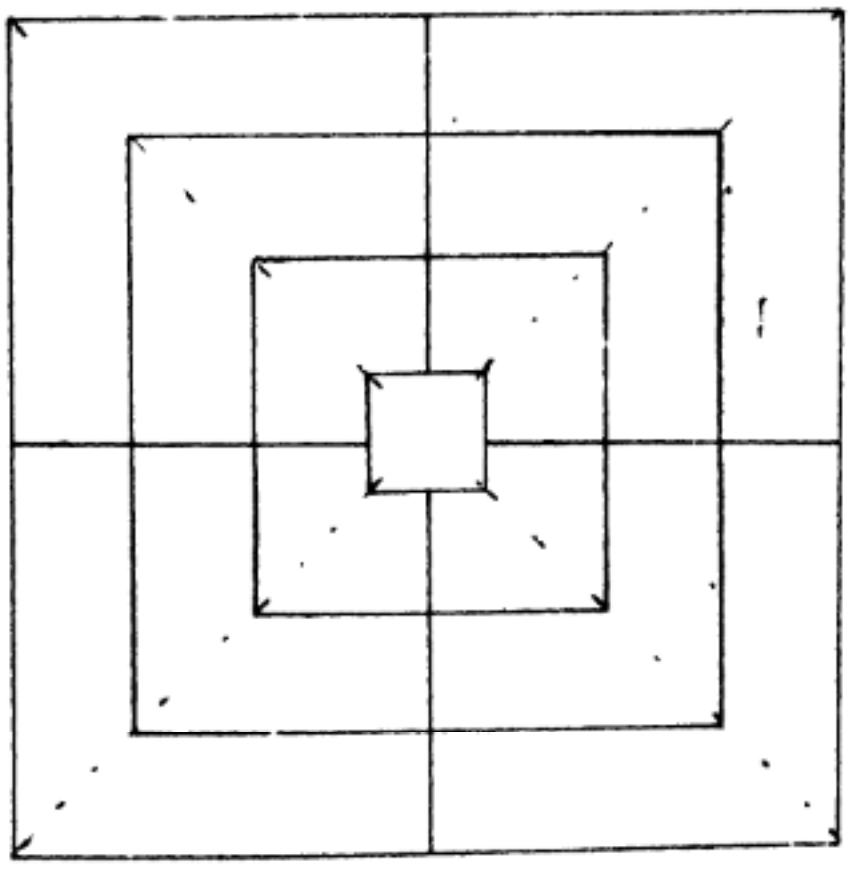


What's in a Word



Can you sort out this fruit cocktail? What other meanings do these fruits have?
Lemon
Prune
Bananas
Apple
Pineapple
Mandarin
Raspberry

Figure It Out



Using numbers from 1 to 13, fill in numbers along the diagonals, one in each section of the illustration, so that each semi-diagonal adds upto 28.

Solutions to last week's Teasers:
Cryptocross:

A	C	U	T	E	■	J	A	N	I	T	O	R
■	O	■	O	■	■	■	X	■	N	■	R	■
B	R	A	K	E	■	A	L	M	I	R	A	H
■	A	■	E	L	M	■	E	■	T	■	T	■
B	L	A	N	K	E	T	■	V	I	X	E	N
■	S	■	■	■	R	■	S	■	A	■	D	■
■	■	S	P	A	R	I	N	G	L	Y	■	■
■	A	■	A	■	Y	■	O	■	■	■	P	■
A	Z	U	R	E	■	S	W	I	N	D	L	E
■	A	■	Q	■	W	■	S	■	O	■	A	■
A	L	L	U	D	E	D	■	A	V	O	I	D
■	E	■	E	■	A	■	■	■	E	■	C	■
F	A	S	T	I	N	G	■	F	L	I	E	S

B	I	L	E	A	N
V	C	W	Y	S	J
T	H	D	K	P	F
R	O	U	Z	Q	M
X	G				

Shape Sleuth:
No. 5. Imagine the first square in each horizontal line being superimposed on the second square. Certain lines overlap. After you remove the overlapping lines, you are left with the pattern in the third square.

Quick Think:
There were seven. They were two little girls, one little boy, their father and mother, and their father's parents.

Wit Sharpener:
Ram is 14 years old (clue a) and Sisir is not 13 (clue b). Therefore Sisir must be 12 years old and comes to school in a rickshaw (clue b). Barun does not cycle and so he must come by bus and his surname is Mukherjee (clue d). Sisir's surname is not Bose (clue e) and therefore it must be Sen, and Ram's surname is Bose. To summarise: Ram Bose, aged 14 comes by cycle, Barun Mukherjee, aged 13 comes by bus, Sisir Sen, aged 12 comes by rickshaw.

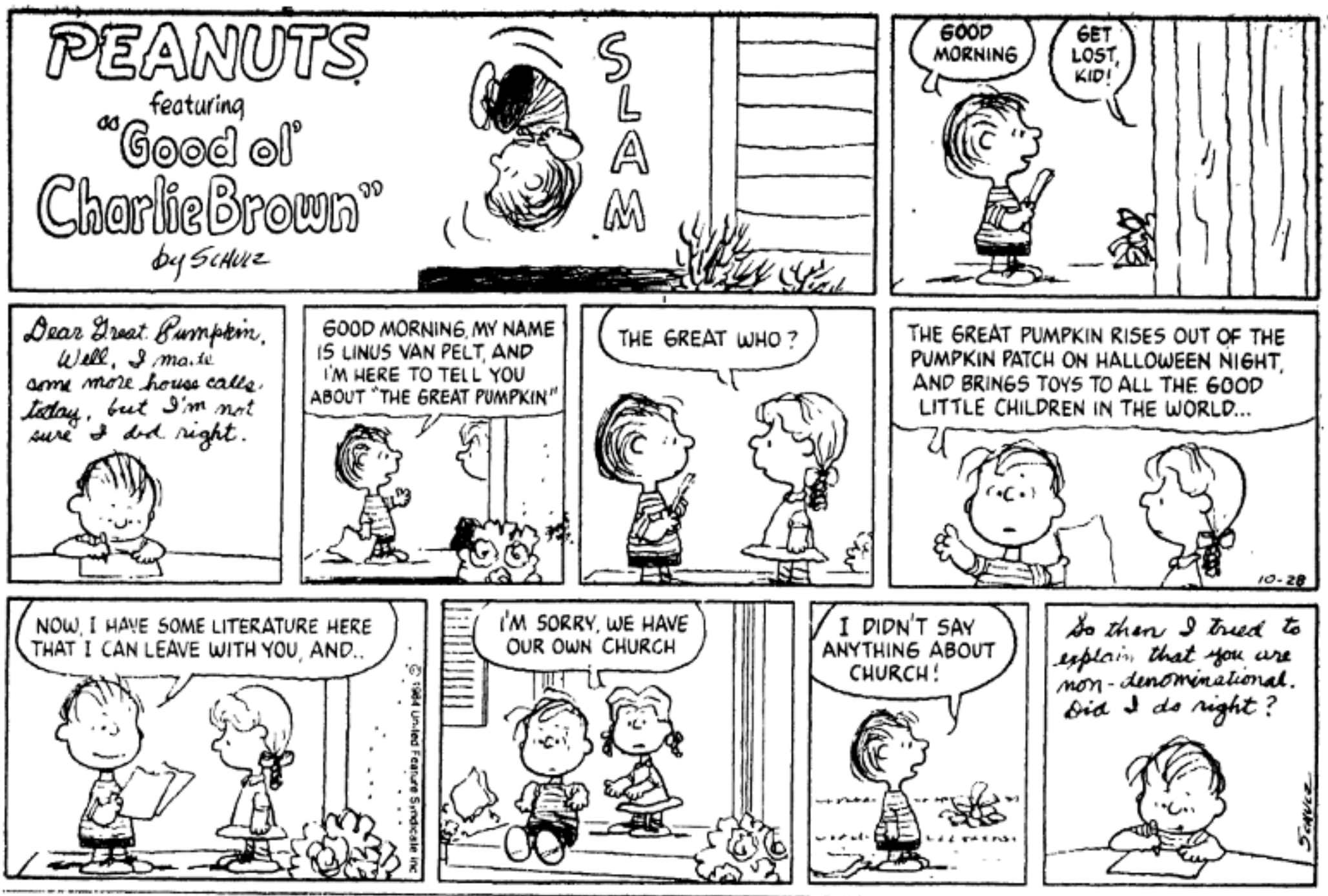
Scrambles:
Palestine, China, Argentina, Yemen, Bermuda, Angola, Israel and Algeria.

What's in a Word:
Chinchilla, Assassin, Propriety, Mesmerism, Clinging, Abominable.

Mindbender:
The Sheik loaned them a camel so that they had 18 to be divided. Then the first son took 1/2 (that is 9), the second took 1/3 (that is 6) and the third took 1/9 (that is 2).

Blockbuster:

		D		
	A	I		
M	R	N		
P	E	T	E	

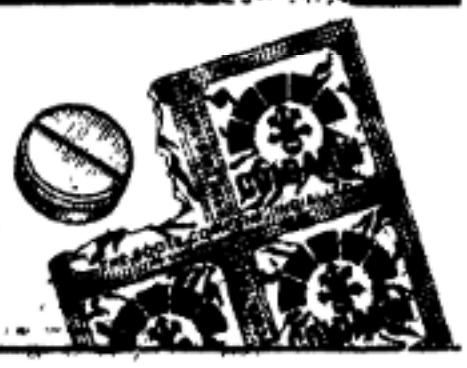


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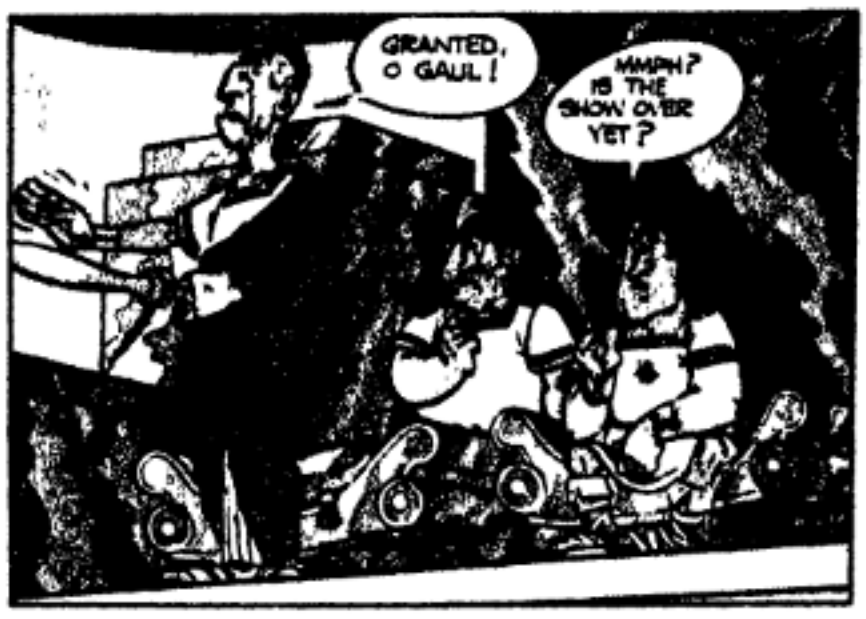
COMICS

Asterix

THE GLADIATOR BY GOSCINNY AND UNDERZO

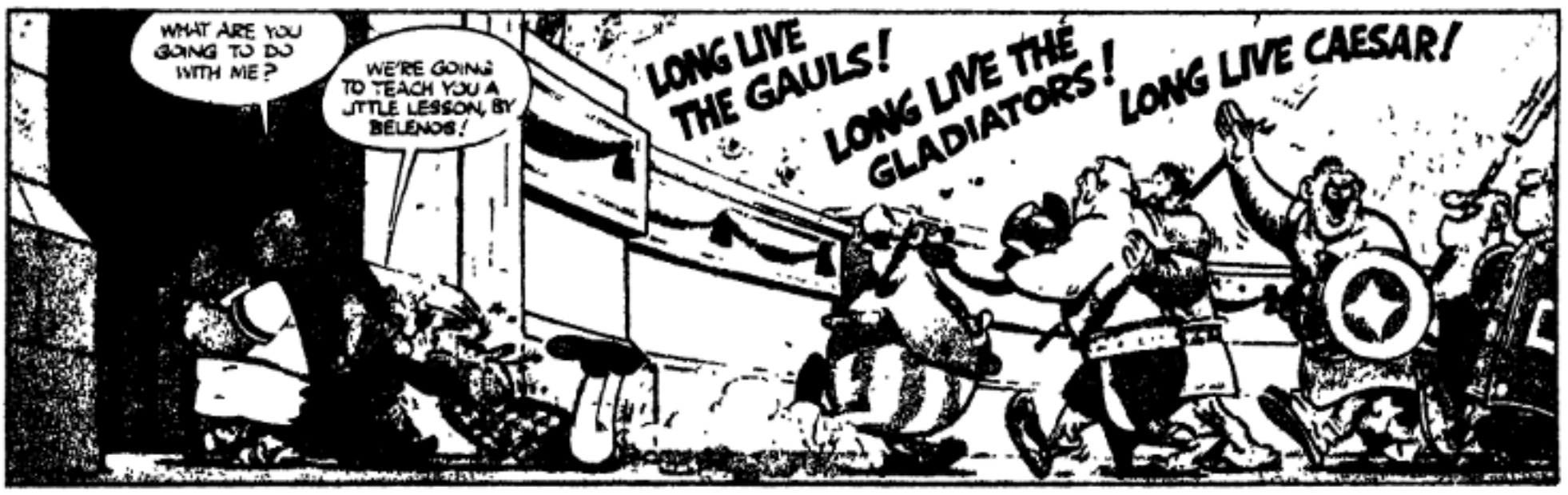


















DELHI DIARY

"I" or "U"?

Why was Arif Mohammad Khan not made a minister of state with independent charge? This youngest-ever minister (he became a deputy minister when he was 30 and a minister of state a year later; now he is 33) should have been promoted, considering that Ghulam Nabi Azad, another young minister, has been elevated from deputy ministership The portfolio allocated to Arif Mohammad Khan is important—industry and company affairs—which has been retained by the Prime Minister. For all practical purposes, he is the industry and company affairs minister Then why was he not given independent charge? One explanation could be the



Sondeep Shankar

Arif Mohammad Khan

alphabetical order of names. Arif with an "I" precedes Arun with an "U." Hence, in the list of ministers of state without independent charge, had Arif Mohammad Khan not been there, then Arun Kumar Nehru would have been at the top. Perhaps, after having decided to cut the Member of Parliament from Rae Bareili to size by making him a junior minister in the three-tier formation of the cabinet, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi decided not to put Arun Nehru at the top of the list. In the Doordarshan news on 31 December night, however, when the portfolios were announced, Arun Nehru's name was announced before Arif Mohammad Khan's. Arun Nehru is the minister of state for power, under B. Shankaranand, the cabinet minister for irrigation and power. Even if not as powerful as before, Arun Nehru has literally been allocated power.

Whose Bread?

Have you bought bread recently at a cheaper price? Have the prices of *maida* or *suji* gone down? These questions may baffle housewives, but even more baffled than them are the officers of the civil supplies ministry in the capital. Some months back the government reduced the supply price of wheat to the flour mills Till then wheat was available at Rs 2.08 per kg. And the mills, by and large, were working to 40 per cent of their capacity After the government's decision, the supply price of wheat was reduced to Rs 1.72 per kg and as a result the mills started functioning to near cent per cent capacity. The result of this should have been more supply of *maida* and *suji* to the market and a resultant fall in the consumer price of these two items as well as that of bread. Someone, somewhere has cornered the "bread"—the benefit has not reached the consumers, whom the civil supplies ministry is supposed to cater to

Importance of Parliamentary Affairs

The new ministry has three ministers who have been given full-time charge of parliamentary affairs The senior politician from Delhi, Har Kishan Lal Bhagat, is the cabinet minister Margaret Alva of the Rajya Sabha and Ghulam Nabi Azad of the Lok Sabha are the ministers of state. Of them, Margaret Alva has an excellent parliamentary record. She was in the opposition till two years ago (as a member of the Congress-S she was elected from Karnataka



Sanjay Rishi

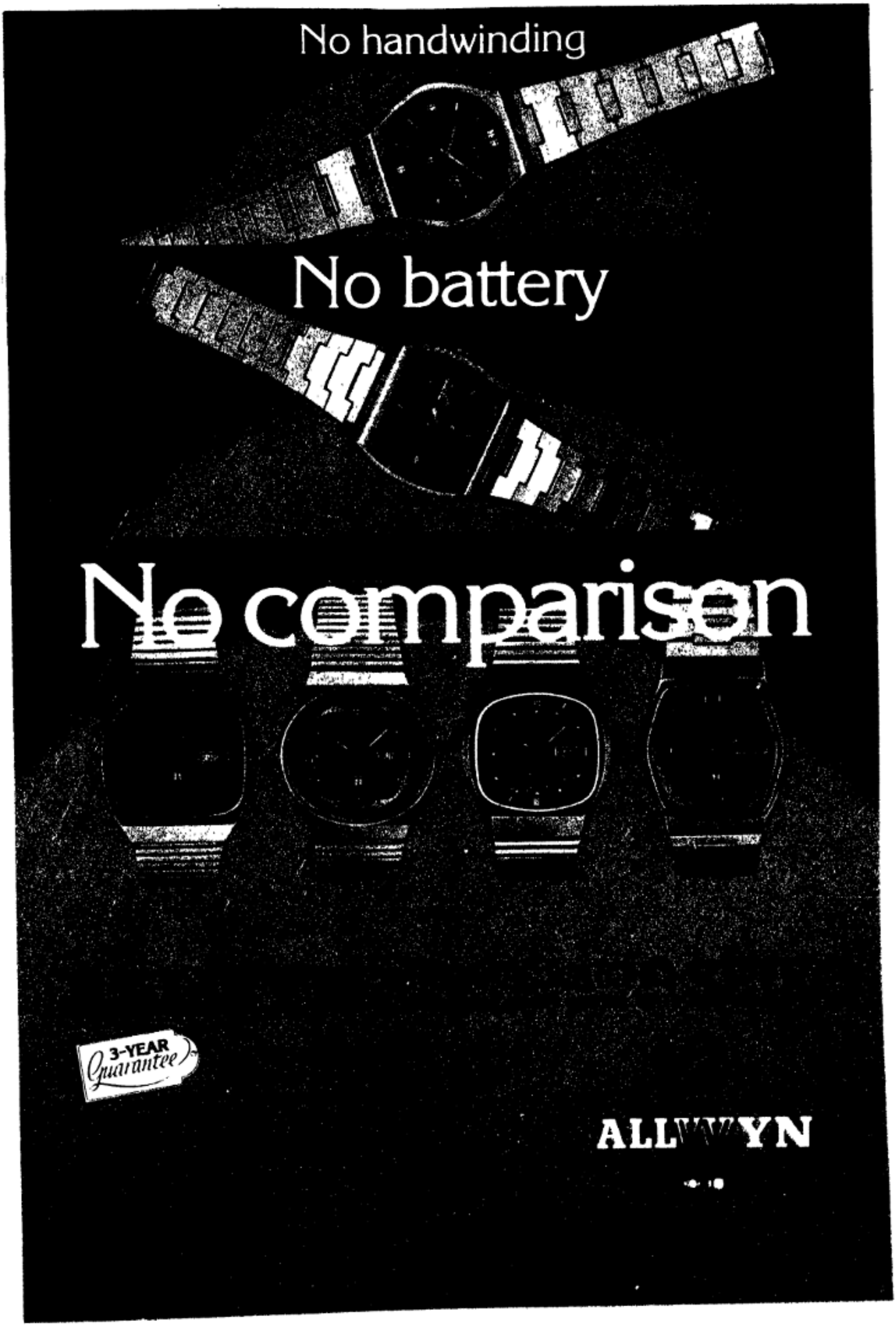
H.K.L. Bhagat

with the Janata Party's support in 1980) As an opposition member, she had hit the headlines with her brilliant exposure of the Centurion tanks deal, in which the government had found it difficult to defend its stand. Later, as a ruling party member, she was put on the panel of presiding officers and her performance reminded many oldtimers of her mother-in-law, the late Violet Alva, who was deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha in the Seventies. It seems that the government intends to take parliamentary work more seriously.

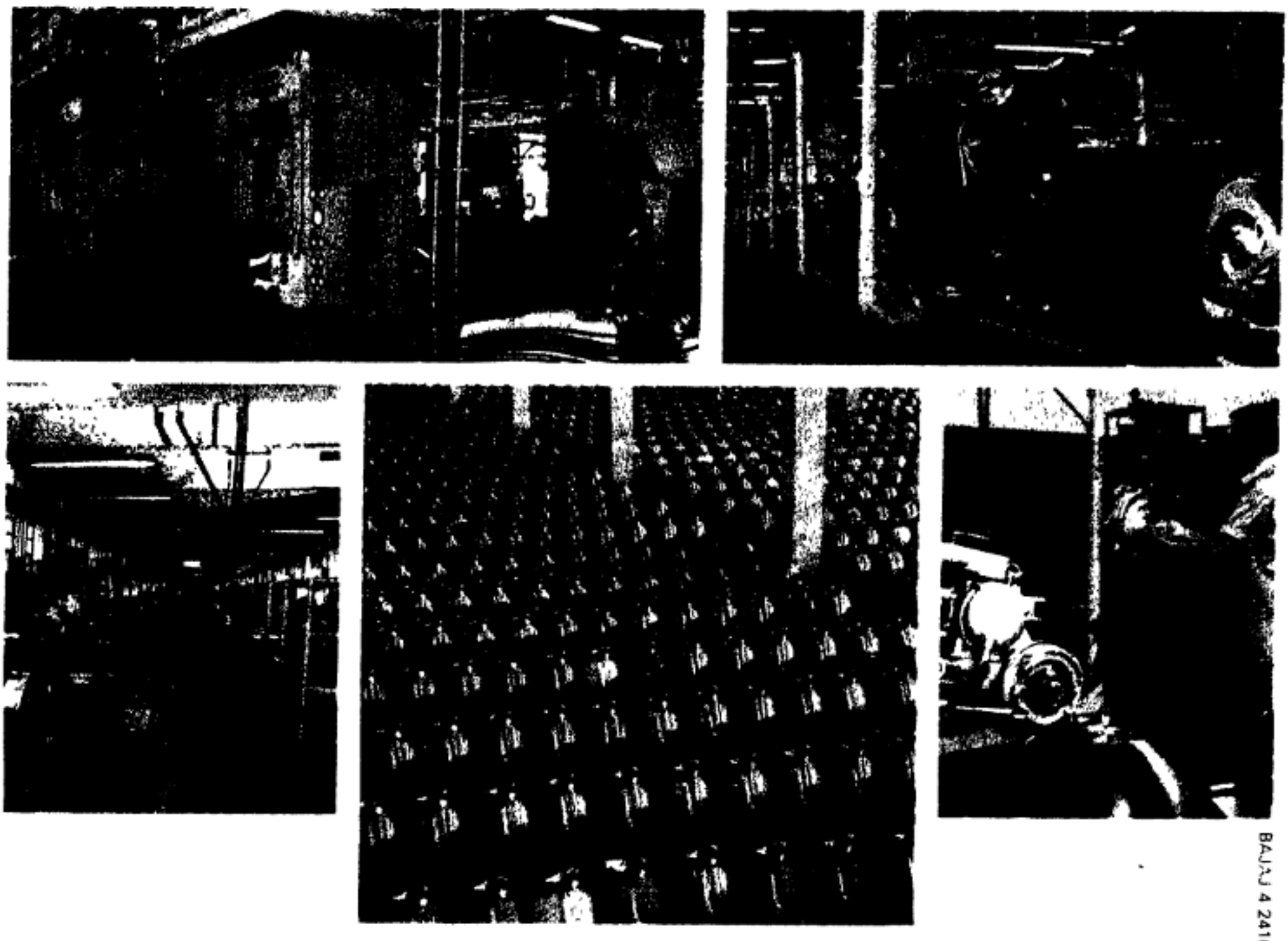
Long Innings

While journalists were looking embarrassed due to the failure of all projections regarding the general elections, an era ended in the news agencies of India on 31 December Wilfred Lazarus, former general manager of Samachar, the news agency of Emergency fame and ex-principal information officer of the government retired after four decades of news agency journalism The last posts held by Lazarus should not mislead us into believing that he had always led a comfortable life as a journalist. Having joined the Press Trust of India (PTI) in 1944, Lazarus became a legendary reporter who covered events abroad. His high watermark was his posting in the Middle East in the late Fifties and early Sixties, when he covered the Congo crisis in Africa and PTI was relied upon more than any other agency due to Lazarus's reporting. He was jailed in Congo but he managed to escape. He had earlier covered the events in Burma in the Forties and later in Nepal when the revolution took place When during the Emergency Samachar was formed by combining all news agencies in the country, he became the top boss of the setup. (Samachar was dismantled by the Janata Party.) Soon after the Congress returned to power in 1980, Lazarus, a favourite of Sanjay Gandhi, was made the PIO. His term expired in 1982. As PIO his performance was not remarkable. The seasoned Central Information Service hand, U.C. Tiwari, who was his second man, managed to outshine him and replaced him as soon as Lazarus's contract ended In the last two years of his service, this newsman led a quiet life.

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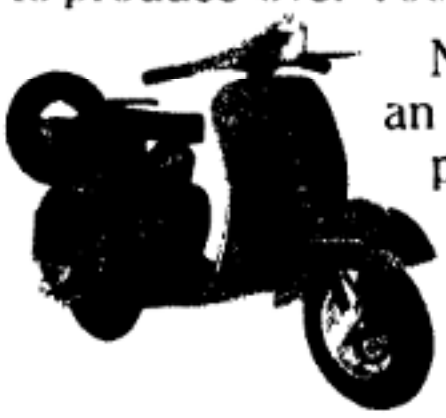
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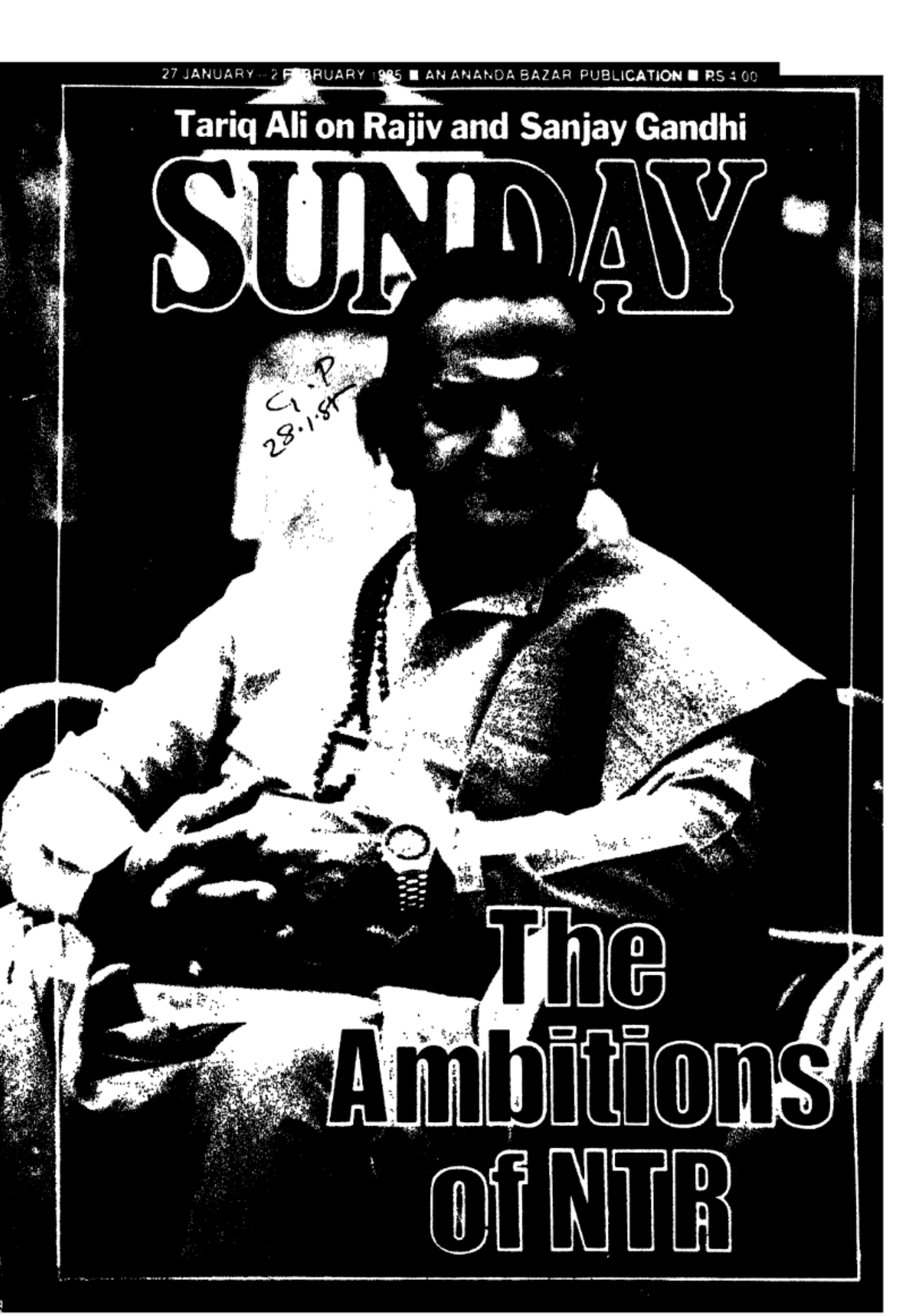
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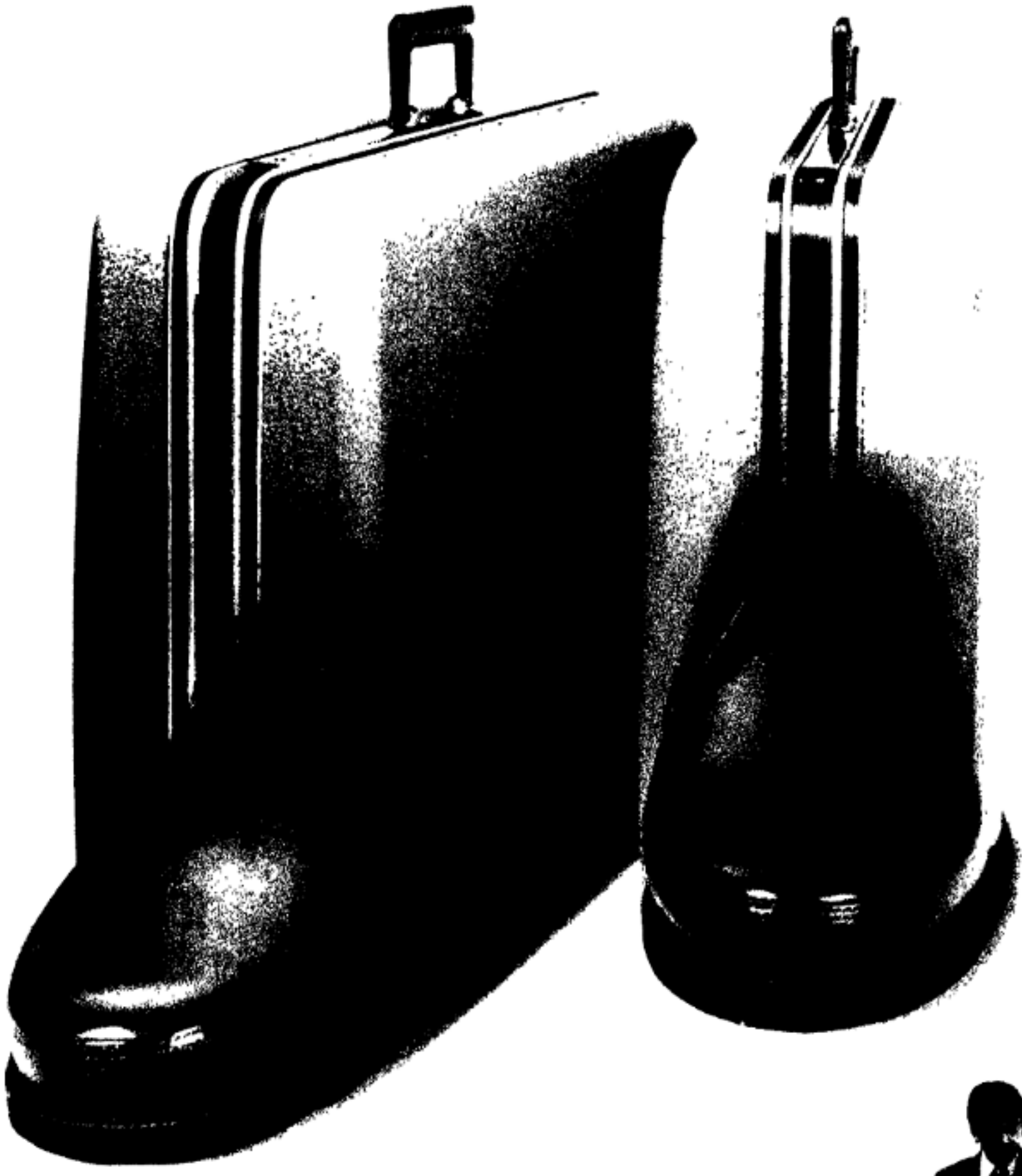
Tariq Ali on Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi

SUNDAY



The Ambitions of NTR

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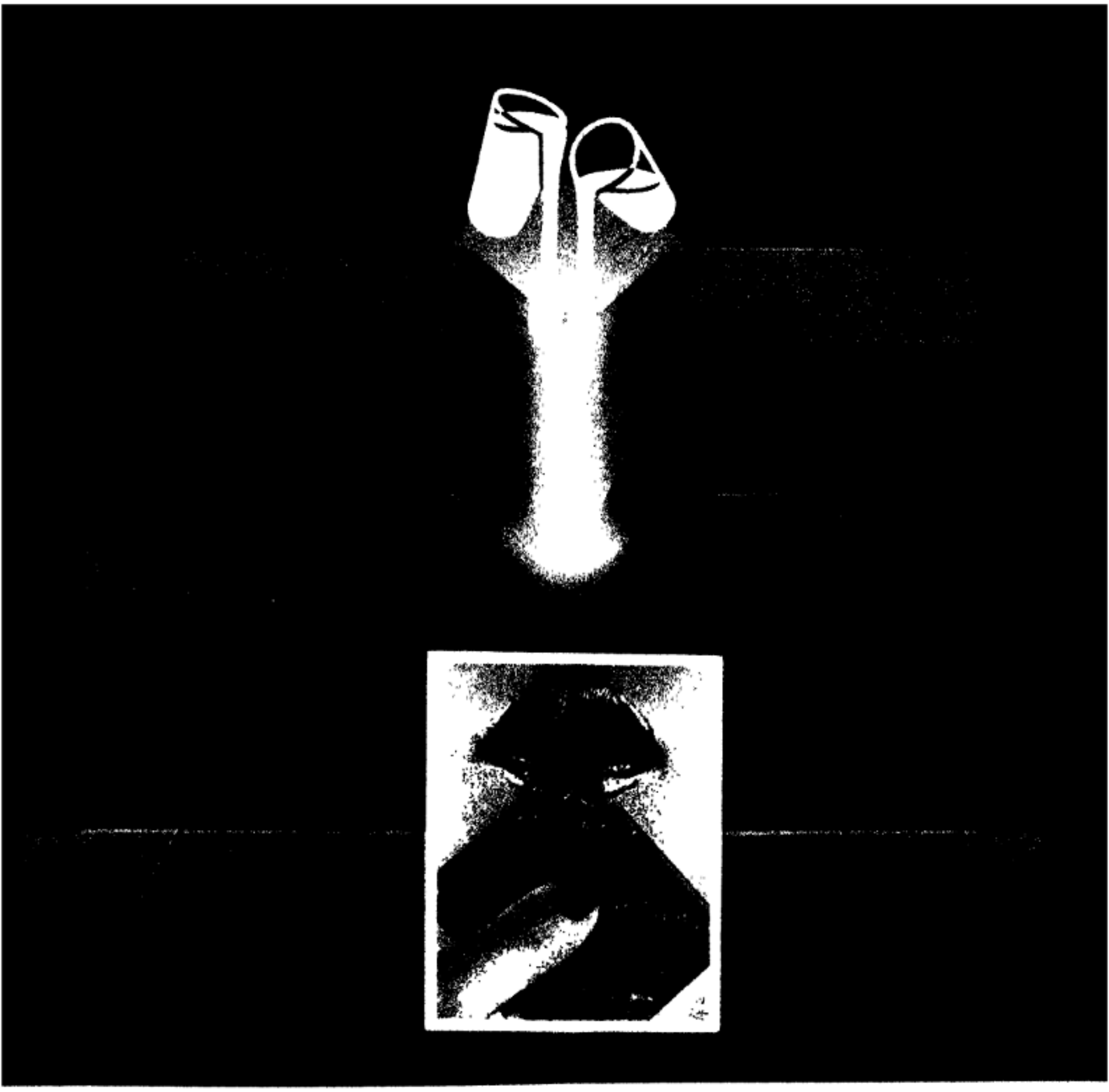
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After successfully stemming the Rajiv wave in Andhra Pradesh, chief minister N.T. Ramarao has decided to extend his vision beyond the borders of his state: he will launch the Bharat Desam later this year. Chidanand Rajghatta finds out the implications of this move.

INVESTIGATION **24**

Enemies of the State

On 18 January '85 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi made a startling statement on the floor of both the Houses: several persons holding sensitive posts in the government had been arrested on charges of spying. Of the five government officers held, one of them was identified as the personal assistant to the PM's principal secretary. A report by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya.



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EXTRACTS **46**

The Nation's Grandchildren

There have been many political families in the world but none has wielded power so consistently over their country as the Nehru-Gandhi family. In this extract from Tariq Ali's book, *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty*, the author traces the rise of Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi.

NEWS **55**

Attempt to assassinate Kirpal Singh
Feud in the AIADMK
Thus spake the Parsis

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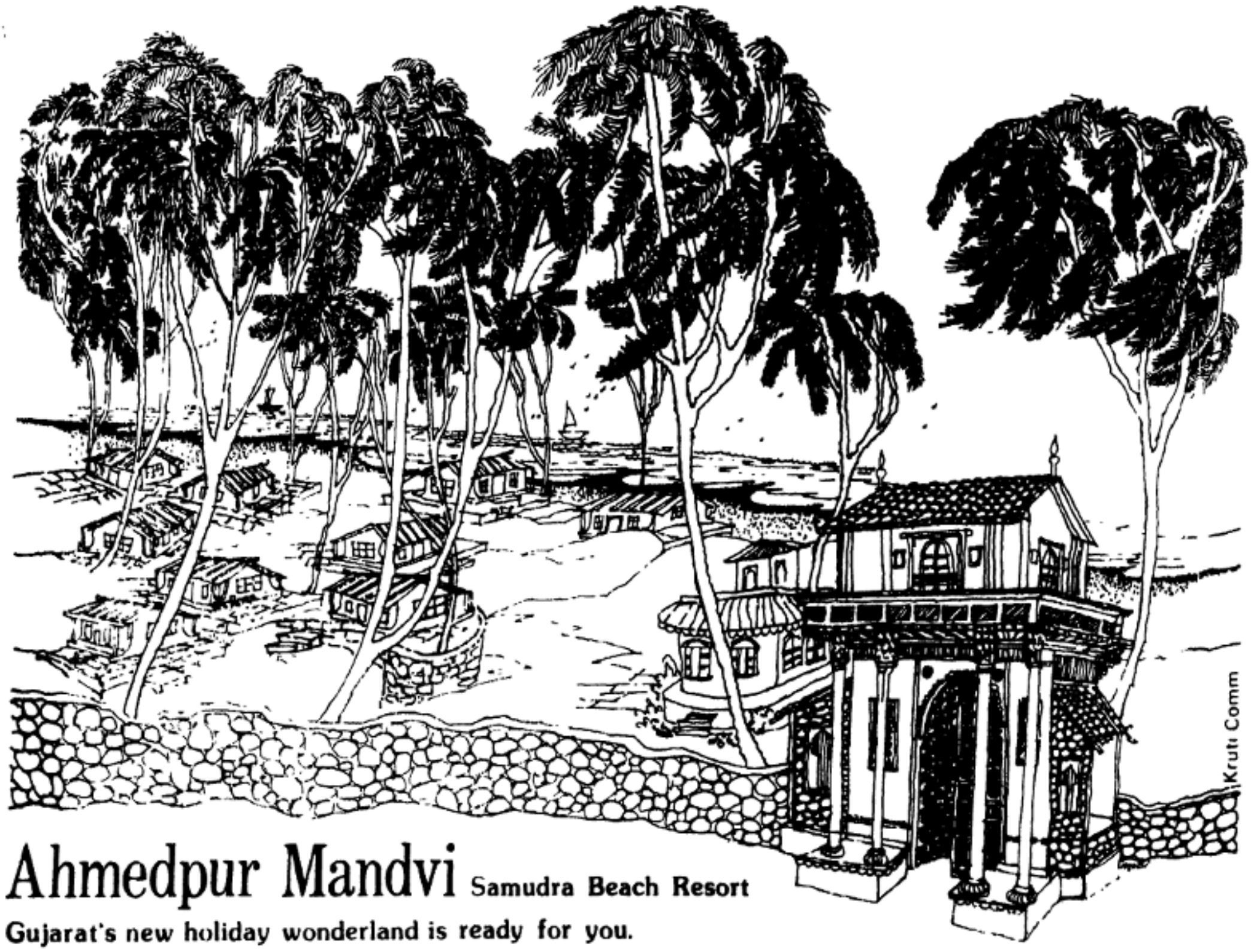
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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

New Delhi: Question of the hour: Is there any Phoenix among the ashes of the landslide defeat which could open its eyes, even if it did not quite manage to rise, in time for the March Assembly elections? Since the politician diets every breakfast, lunch and dinner on hope, there is no shortage of it in his breast. And so, despite the fact that the thunder of applause from the ruling circles continues to echo around the capital, the opposition has begun to paint a better future than objectivity might warrant. But it is necessary of course to do that. Every commander has to raise a standard—a dream rimmed by conviction—before any battle, however hopeless the odds might seem at the start of the campaign.

Typically, the opposition has offered its own variation of the formula: there won't be one Phoenix, but many of them. And they will all rise separately, from their different piles of ashes. Conscious that one of the reasons for the vast defeat was that there was no cogent government or credible candidate for the prime ministership, the opposition will announce the prospective claimant for the chief ministership. In Karnataka, of course, Ramakrishna Hegde: in Andhra, no need to ask who. For Maharashtra, there will be Sharad Pawar at the head of the Progressive Democratic Front; in Gujarat, the Janata's Babubhai Patel will have the honour; in Rajasthan, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat of the BJP and in Madhya Pradesh Kailash Joshi of the same ilk. No problems in Orissa and Haryana too: Biju Patnaik and Devi Lal will head the ticket. In Uttar Pradesh, H.N. Bahuguna will be projected as the man who can save lives in communal clashes and build roads and provide irrigation when not doing that. (As always, Mr Bahuguna remains a good choice for the job. And now that Mr Amitabh Bachchan has gone back to the job he knows best, that is, singing and dancing on the silver screen, hopefully the Congress won't make the star their choice for chief minister.)

So that makes it three chief ministers on the Janata label, two of the BJP variety, two from Chaudhary Charan Singh's stable, and one from the Congress(S) camp. Not bad at all, as opposition efforts to acquire some sense go. But it wouldn't be the Indian opposition if there wasn't confusion somewhere, would it? Bihar, of course. Far from the other opposition parties agreeing that Karpoori Thakur is the best person to lead the challenge against the Congress(I), even the DMKP cannot agree on that. Barely had the thought surfaced, when Hukam Narayandev Yadav and Vijay Kumar Mishra announced the revolt accusing, in the process, Karpoori Thakur of being primarily responsible for the opposition rout in the state. Everything changes and nothing changes.

The image of the Phoenix rising from the ashes is often used to convey the idea of an extraordinary resurrection, but the details of the allegory are conveniently forgotten. This mythical Arabian bird called Phoenix, worshipped by the Egyptians at a time when their civilisation was the greatest in the world, was the only one of its kind. Every 500 years it burnt itself and then rose from its ashes rejuvenated; only from death came life. Maybe Phoenix would be embarrassed about being mentioned in connection with the Indian opposition, which burns itself into ashes rather more frequently than every 500 years, and then expects miracle medicines each time. I do agree that in politics there is life after death, but not if you behave *a la* the Bihar Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party.

There are welcome signs that Common Sense, which always seems to disappear from public view during an election campaign, is returning to the capital. Both the shock of victory and the shock of defeat, with their differing manifestations, are easing. The victors, particularly those without experience, are beginning to realise that sometimes it is far easier to win than to handle power; and the losers are taking some quiet, internal consolation in the fact that the consequences of a marginal victory (which was their highest hope) might have been infinitely worse than this all-purpose defeat in the perspective of the long run. The evidence for the return of Common Sense comes from the slow proliferation of jokes which always lubricate the seams of national politics, but disappear in the anger and passion of a general election.

One story goes that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has a common policy for both education and the opposition: in both cases he welcomes the ten plus two plus three formula. That, after all, is the status to which the national opposition parties have been reduced: the Janata has got ten seats, the BJP two and the DMKP three. (Incidentally, the Congress(S) has got four seats, which makes it stronger than the BJP and the DMKP, at least in Parliament.)

Incidentally, those who believe that there is nothing called the shock of victory have not obviously heard what happened in Bombay. One of the victorious Congressmen was so sure, on the morning of the counting, that he would lose that he phoned his Janata opponent to congratulate him in advance and then disappeared. When it was learnt in the evening that the Congress was ahead even in this seat, the winner could not be found. A dummy was used to lead the victory procession. Later when our new MP discovered that he had actually won, he got a mild heart attack from the shock.

In the same week that Henry Kissinger visited Delhi, the city also had a guest from the other side of the western political spectrum. Michael Foot, the gentle socialist. His soft manners and twinkling eyes disguise a passion of commitment to the poor, the underprivileged and the oppressed which is only apparent when he starts speaking about politics. Suddenly you realise that there are honest men who have devoted their lives to the welfare of the world, and not to its exploitation or manipulation.

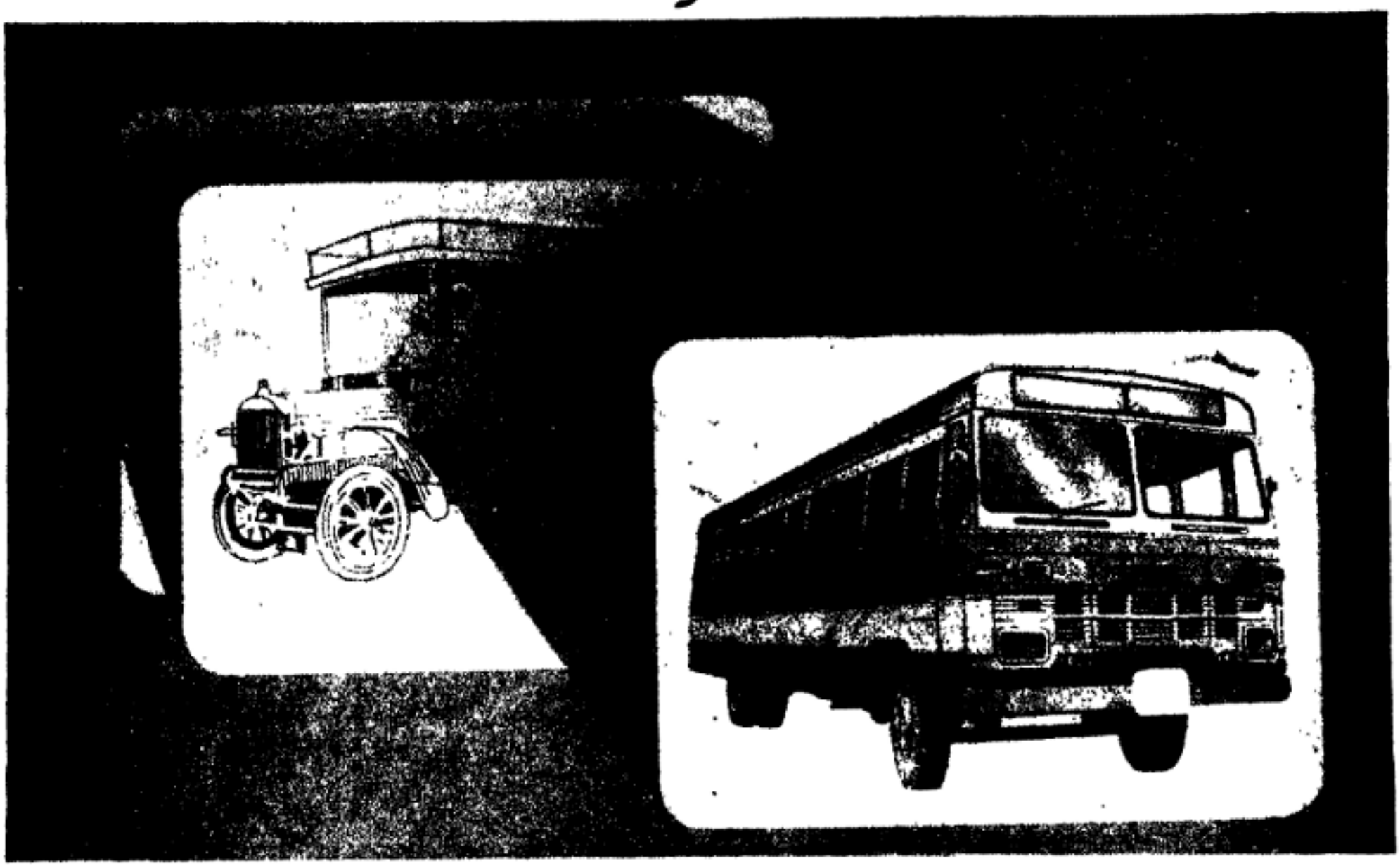
At a lunch (hosted by the Paul brothers in Calcutta) Foot took on a range of questions from a group of us with engaging wit and a conviction in socialism which helped wash away that cynicism that inevitably builds up during a time when the world seems to be turning towards the right. But the best moment for me came during a brief personal chat before the lunch. I had earlier given my book to him, and with some hesitation asked whether he had managed to find it interesting enough to read. He stood up, came towards me, the book in hand and showed me page after page with phrases and passages underlined. He had been delighted to read it, he said. And then he asked me to sign the copy; he would preserve it in his library, he said. Rarely has a better compliment come my way.

Michael Foot



Hariv Basu

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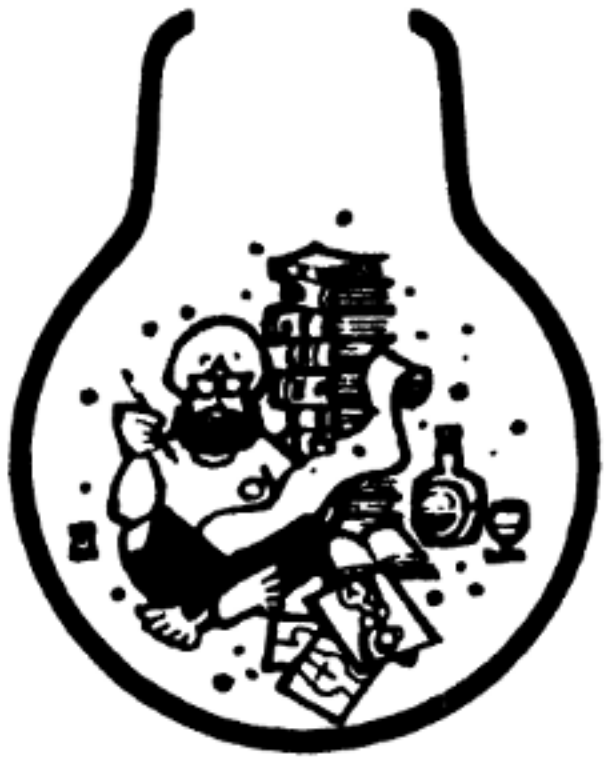
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Garlic

Ornithologists know that it is easier to identify birds from their calls than by their appearances. Sometimes a single line along the eye or a patch of different colour in the plumage puts them in a different category. Take for example the brown and the black partridge. They have different colouring but are of the same size and have similar habits. However, their calls are distinct. The brown partridge you come across in the plains calls *tito, tito, tito*. The black begins its call with a squeak and then goes on to utter sounds which are usually transliterated as *lassan, piyaaz, adrak khuda teree qudrat*.

It was quite sometime after I heard this rendering of the black partridge's call that it occurred to me that this was a rustic formula to extol the virtues of three plants—garlic, onions and ginger. All three are extensively used in our cuisine and, apart from Jains and some others who regard everything grown underground as unwholesome, highly rated by indigenous systems of medicine.

Ginger has never had any enemies. It is tasty, odourless and good for digestion. Till recently onions and garlic had many detractors largely because of the unpleasant smell they left in the mouth. Whatever other qualities they possess, raw onions also produce an awful amount of malodorous gas in the stomach. Onions can be dispensed with or consumed only after they have been cooked. Garlic has a lot going for it both in the flavour it lends to all foods as well as its medicinal properties. It does leave an unpleasant odour in the mouth but unless you have a romantic date to keep, it is well worth the price. It is rich in sulphur, diallyl desulphide (which emits its distinct smell) and allyl-thio sulphinate. It is prescribed for people who bleed through the nose (*nakseer*), rheumatism, coughs, colds, bronchitis and high blood pressure. It is the king of natural medicines and answers Hipocrate's prescription: "Let food be your medicine." Even eating garlic in excessive quantities does not create any side effects. It is strongly recommended for people who suffer chronically from sore throats and colds. Next time you catch a cold try the following remedy. Heat two table-spoons of olive oil and put five cloves of garlic till they have turned brown and pour them into any kind of hot egg-based soup. It is tasty, it will warm your



entrails and do a world of good to your throat and cold. Garlic is, as black partridges call from the hilltops, gift of the gods, *khuda teree qudrat*.

Act of God?

On a recent visit to Hyderabad I ran into Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, governor of Andhra Pradesh. I had known him in his younger days in Bhopal where he was born. He went there soon after the poison gas tragedy and what he had to say was revealing. No sooner the people became aware of what had happened, local politicians and senior civil servants who should have given the lead in rescue operations fled from the city to save their own lives. It was the common people who risked their lives to save others and many died in the attempt. Although the majority of victims were Muslims, no distinction was made between Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Sikh. People tore up their own clothes to cover eyes and nostrils of those who had been exposed to the lethal gas. "In every calamity," said Dr Sharma very proudly, "it is the common man of India who rises to supreme heights of self-sacrifice. They helped picking up the dead. Hindus dug graves and buried dead Muslims. Muslims collected wood to cremate dead Hindus." He also had words of praise for the army which saved many lives. Also for trees and foliage. Inmates of houses which had trees were saved because trees absorbed the poison.

Would the Bhopal tragedy be described as an act of God? I suspect Union Carbide may try to take shelter behind this excuse. Why is it that we ascribe most calamities like earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions etc. to God? It must be human arrogance to pin catastrophes on God's head and arrogate successes to ourselves. However, there is an instance on record where an act of God did not turn out to be a calamity. The actress Helen Hayes became pregnant during the run of a play and was unable to fulfil the terms of the contract with the producer. When the producer sued her for damages, Miss Hayes contended that pregnancy was an act of God because she was against using contraceptives. The court gave a verdict in her favour

Kya Maloom

Driving back from Kasauli to Delhi I took a new route which was more picturesque as it ran along the foothills. However, at many intersections there were no roadsigns to indicate the right direction. At one major crossing not knowing which one to take, I espied a peasant sitting in the shade.

"Bhai sahib, can you tell me where this road goes to? I asked.

"*Kya maloom?* (How should I know?)."

"What about this one on the left, where does it lead to?" I asked.

"*Kya maloom.*"

"For the one on the right?

"*Kya maloom.*"

I lost my patience and shouted: "*Kucch to maloom hoga*—(you must know something). Which way are you going?"

He replied with composure: "I am not going anywhere. I just came here to see motor cars go by."

Central Hall

It is the gossip room of both Houses of Parliament where besides tearing up reputations of politicians, some good anecdotes are manufactured. The latest is about Babu Jagjivan Ram's reactions to the new cabinet of ministers.

Question: "Babuji, do you think new ministers like K.R. Narayanan and Natwar Singh who have spent most of their years in foreign countries or in aircooled offices in the secretariat know enough about the countryside to be effective?"

Answer: "No, I think they should spend some time in India's villages to get to know villagers problems."

Question: "In that case don't you think Mr Rajiv Gandhi should also spend some time acquainting himself with villagers' problems?"

Answer: "No, he does not need to do so. He is well-acquainted with them. He knows the Asiad Village."

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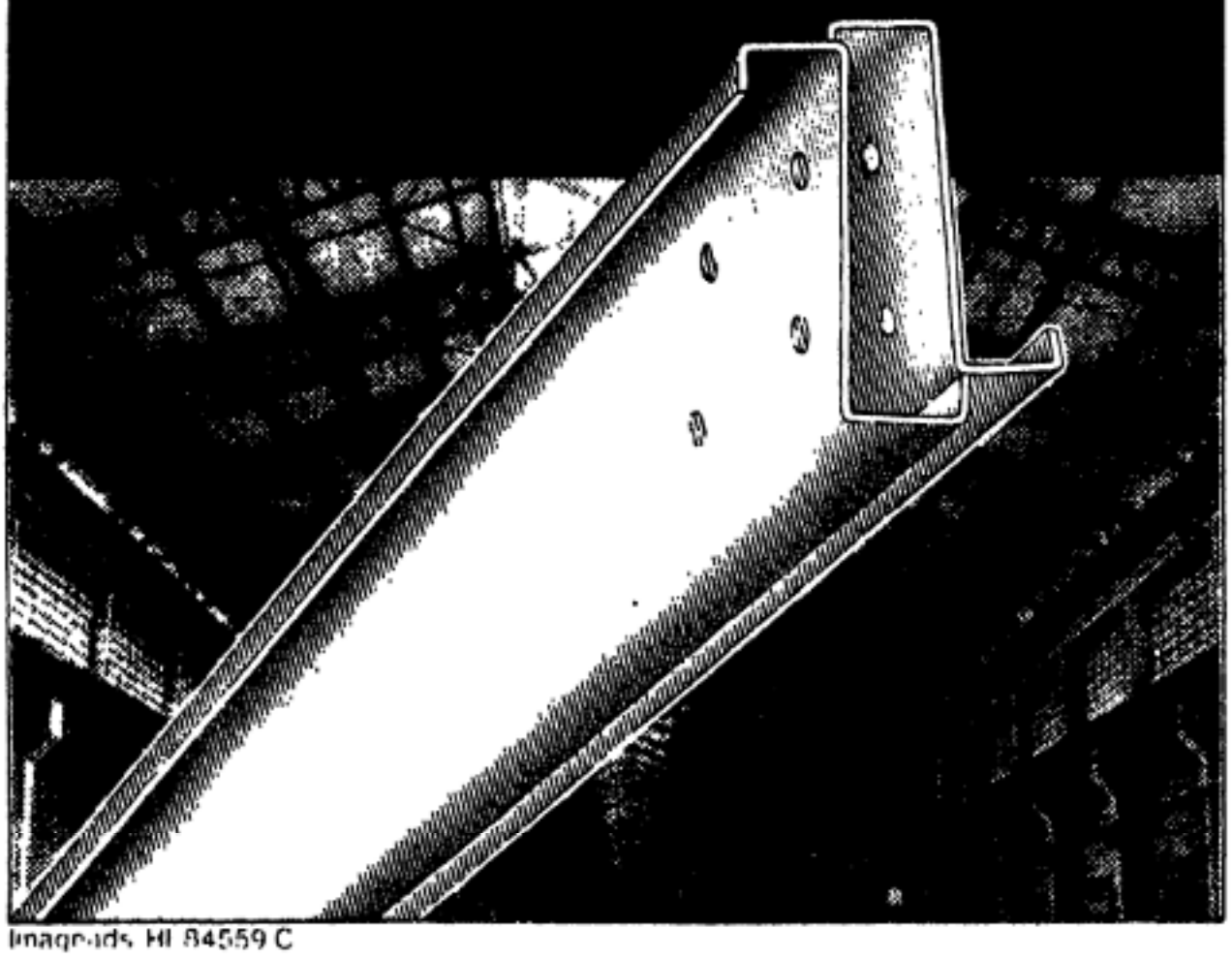
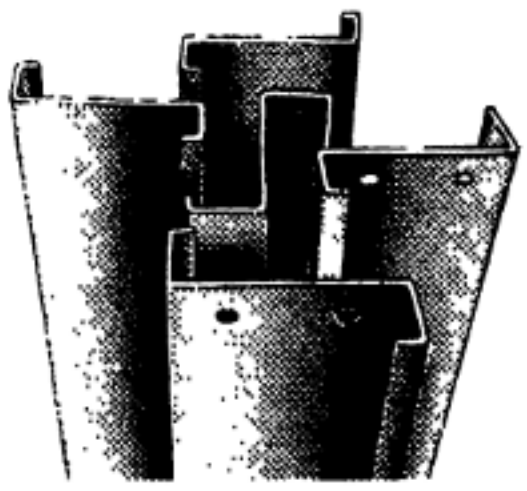


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The Foreign Office Mess

When the formulation of foreign policy has been taken away by the policy planning division, the foreign secretary is left with nothing to do except pester his colleagues

The foreign office is not what it used to be. Nehru as foreign minister and Girija Shankar Bajpai as foreign secretary were the ideal combination and they founded not only the policies which have sustained us through the years but also a service which acquitted itself quite well. But for some years both policy-making and the service have suffered a reverse because of lack of professionals and men of vision.

With the creation of the policy planning division, the external affairs ministry has lost its importance. True, the division is a part of the ministry, but it was once in sole charge of framing policy. What is a ministry without any control over policy? When D.P. Dhar headed the division, he ran the ministry and made the foreign secretary, if not the minister, redundant. The same is the case today with G. Parthasarathy heading it. He has even been placed above the minister of state for foreign affairs. And it is an open secret that Narasimha Rao was never in his elements in the ministry of external affairs because GP, as Parthasarthy is known to his friends, was in direct touch with Mrs Gandhi on foreign policy.

I am not criticising GP, because the policies he has formulated have stood the country well. On Pakistan he may be considered by some as rather hawkish, but his overall approach to world problems has the necessary depth and keeps India's interest uppermost. He has, however, diluted the importance of the foreign office and left the foreign secretary with only the task of administration. That probably explains foreign secretary M.S. Rasgotra's over involvement in postings and transfers.

If one talks to foreign office personnel in Delhi, one finds that nine out of 10 officers are waiting for the day of Rasgotra's retirement this February. They tell you how he rewards his favourites and punishes those who have ever dared cross his path. One recent example is that of Narender Singh, who recently retired as India's ambassador to France. Rasgotra had asked him to canvass T.N. Kaul's candidature as chief executive of the UNESCO board. Narender Singh, after sounding some people, had replied that Kaul stood no chance. As predicted, Kaul was defeated, but Rasgotra made Narender Singh's life miserable.

India's permanent representative in Geneva, Muchkund Dube, was arraigned for visiting New York though he had gone on official work. And S.K. Singh faced Rasgotra's wrath on the issue of the guests he invited to an official party. When K.S. Bajpai, now India's envoy in Washington, was secretary in the ministry of external affairs, Rasgotra rubbed him the wrong way. The point I am emphasising is that when the formulation of foreign policy has been taken away by the policy planning division, the foreign secretary is left with nothing to do except pester his colleagues.

Then there are wheels within wheels in the ministry. Sometimes even a strong recommendation from the head of a mission goes unheeded, but in other cases a mere commendation may be sufficient for an out-of-turn promotion. Such incidents have demoralised the service and affected its efficiency. The favoured ones consider themselves superior and have contacts at the top. Those who are neglected trust nobody and are reluctant to cooperate with their colleagues. The result is that in many missions the right hand does not know what the left is doing.

At present the country has nearly 150 missions abroad. The ministry has been enjoying some sort of a diplomatic immunity which prevents a detailed examination of its working. It is time that a parliamentary committee considers whether a poor country like India can afford so many missions. Probably some of them can be grouped together. There is also the question of staff. Some missions, it appears, have a larger staff than is required. It may be worthwhile to examine why missions in Africa and South-East Asia are often smaller than those in Europe. There seems to be some complex about working in Africa, even if it has nothing to do with colour. One way to improve the foreign service is not to give extensions to foreign secretaries. There are many good officers who are in the queue but they either cool their heels or retire by the time the superannuated foreign secretary completes his extended tenure.



G. Parthasarathy and Rasgotra: no cohesion

Already the policy planning division has R.N. Kao, former RAW chief as a member. That means intelligence must be a part of policy planning. Why not have a national security council, as America has, and accommodate in it the three service chiefs? The Prime Minister should be its chairman and in his absence the head of the policy planning division could preside over it.

OPINION

Not Justified

The cover story, *The Quest* (30 December 1984—5 January 1985) by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya was interesting. However, except for Rajiv Gandhi, none of the others are steady enough to keep the country united. They even failed to bring about unity among themselves to contest the elections.
Barnali Basu, Jalpaiguri

• The cover story is inaccurate. In fact, not five but three of the personages on the cover were after the prime ministership of the country. Chandra Shekhar's case is different. He never tried to become the PM.
M. K. Vasudevan, Bombay

• The article was interesting. The defeat of Chandra Shekhar and A. B. Vajpayee was a great blow to their supporters.
Muyyam Rajan, Singrauli (MP)

• The cover story was not impressive. In view of the landslide victory of the Congress(I), Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's article appeared to be obsolete and purposeless. Moreover, bracketing Rajiv Gandhi with the others was not justified.
M. A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

• Why did SUNDAY leave out the sixth person in the race for the prime ministership: Mr Morarji Desai?
V. Satyamurti, New Delhi

• The absence of NTR on the cover alongside the five men who have spent five years striving to be the Prime Minister surprised me.
Neeraj Cummar Bansal, Moradabad

Laudable Effort

T Raman has rightly focussed attention on the Apollo group of hospitals in Madras (*Breaking New Ground*, 23—29 December '84). A lot of money is wasted in the film and hotel industry in India. But since the profits are quite high in those industries, a lot of people are ready to invest. In such circumstances the efforts of Dr P.C. Reddy and his colleagues are laudable; they have set up what is known as the medical industry. The first of its kind in India, the Apollo group of hospitals in Madras is pledged to the service of mankind. But I am yet to know whether the hospitals will cater to the needs of the poor.
Kartikeswar Behera, Keonjhar



Excellent Article

Poems of Peace and Tolerance (30 December '84—5 January '85) was an excellent article on Sufism. As rightly stated by Dr Nazir Ahmad, the liberalism of the Sufis and the conservatism of the *mullahs* are two different means to achieve the same goal. But unfortunately with the passage of time and the wake of modern revival of religion, the Muslim society has shunned the former and shown strong inclination towards the latter.
M.A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

Manmade Disaster

I was deeply moved by Tooshar Pandit's article, *Killer Gas, Callous Carbide* (16—22 December '84). More than 3000 people lost their lives and many more were crippled as a result of the disaster. We tend to blame nature and fate for most of the disasters that strike us. But the Bhopal tragedy was totally manmade. The government is as much responsible for the tragedy as Union Carbide.
G.V. Phaniraj Kishore, Hyderabad

• Tooshar Pandit's investigation rightly pinpointed the responsibilities of the Madhya Pradesh government. Moreover, I wonder how such a killer factory could operate in a densely populated area. From now on all state governments should see to it that licenses of such firms are not renewed.
T.A. Pai, Bokaro

Faulty Planning

In *Wanted: A Consensus* (30 December '84), Kuldip Nayar has rightly analysed the issues raised by the Congress(I) and the opposition parties in their campaign. He has correctly asserted that if we have to accept an authoritarian government to keep the country together the remedy would be worse than the disease. The massive mandate in favour of the Congress(I) in the recent Lok Sabha polls indicates the will of the people for an amicable solution of the Punjab and Assam problems.
M.W. Baig, Raichur (Karnataka)

• Kuldip Nayar's article, *The Rich-Poor Divide* (9—15 December '84) was excellent and timely. The policy followed by our policy planners has made the rich richer and the poor poorer.
Donepudi Madhu Babu, Tenali (AP)

• The wide chasm between the rich and the poor in our country is responsible for the unrest within India. The responsibility for failing to uplift the weaker sections of our society must rest solely with the rulers. To a large extent India's pro-Moscow stand comes in the way of progress. We have developed a habit of criticising the capitalist West. For all the unrest in our country we blame the CIA and the USA. Not a thing is said about Russia or the KGB.
S.C. Mathur, Bichpur (UP)

• While analysing the problems facing India Kuldip Nayar has dealt with only the economic problems: he has ignored the ideological crisis. The absence of a firm ideology is responsible for the ills plaguing our country.
K. Maheswaran, Trivandrum

Why Not an Actor?

This has reference to M. J. Akbar's comments in *Dateline* (9-15 December '84) regarding the fate of Amitabh Bachchan in the Lok Sabha elections. It was H. N. Bahuguna who got a pasting in Allahabad and not the actor. Moreover, I do not understand the logic behind Mr Akbar's reservations about Amitabh entering Parliament. If a doctor, a lawyer or a trade union leader can aspire to represent the people, what is the harm if an actor does the same?
S. Vasudevan, Madras

Off the Mark

I was amused to go through *What the Astrologers Say* (2—8 December '84). The predictions of both the astrologers, Ramakrishna Sarathy and Amritlal regarding the outcome of the Lok Sabha polls were wrong. Astrologers should stop political predictions.
V. Shanmugasundaram, Salem

•A reputed magazine like SUNDAY should not have commissioned astrologers to predict the political future of a country or its leaders. As it turned out to be most of their assertions were off the mark. Atal Behari Vajpayee did not win by a handsome margin and the Congress(I) got far more than 250 seats.
Desh Ratan, Allahabad

•The fraud behind astrology and palmistry has been exposed. Generally predictions are worded in such a way that 50 per cent correctness is assured. But I wonder how most of Amritlal's predictions went wrong.
B.R. Nanda, Lucknow

•The 'hand' of the Congress shows neither the line of fate nor the line of life, but its success is phenomenal. Is this not a chalienge to palmistry?
A. Baruah, Dibrugarh

• Ramakrishna Sarathy began his predictions by saying "that the Congress(I) will get between 200 and 250 seats in the Lok Sabha elections. The total number of seats in the Lok Sabha will be divided equally between the Congress(I) and the opposition parties." This prediction proved to be a total flop. Amritlal's predictions, more or less on these lines, were also wrong. My organisation is fighting for the upliftment of astrology but when a reputed weekly like SUNDAY publishes predictions which turn out to be totally wrong, people's faith in astrology is bound to be shaken.
A.K. Chaudhuri, executive secretary, Indian Institute of Astrology, Calcutta

A Wise Step

For a long time I have stopped reading SUNDAY since it was full of political news with very little for children. Introduction of the *Teasers* pages was a wise step to make the popular magazine more popular Moreover, the brain teasers are not meant for teenagers only. My father enjoys it as much as I do.
Sonia Singh, Calcutta

Bleak Future for Indian Cricket



Kapil Dev: a scapegoat

Nikhil Bhattacharya

Ashis Ray's report, *Sunil Gavaskar versus Kapil Dev* (30 December 1984—5 January 1985) was revealing. The tussle between the two cricketers can only be solved by taking the captaincy away from both of them. The selectors should realise that the Indian team as a whole is more important than either of them. If they wish to enjoy their cricket, they are welcome to do so in their back gardens.
Deepa Sinha, Calcutta

• The author has rightly concluded that "the hostility, in fact, commenced the moment Gavaskar lost the captaincy and the mantle was handed on to Kapil." Knowing full well that his days are numbered in Test cricket, Gavaskar struck at the first available opportunity to finish off the only real competitor in the field. It is high time for both to be excluded from the team. A new team should be built up around Ravi Shastri and Vengsarkar, the two most consistent players.
V. Sagar, New Delhi

• We can afford to miss Gavaskar who is nearing the end of his career but we cannot miss Kapil Dev. He is in his mid-twenties and his bat is capable of blasting a few more runs.
C.S. Krishnamurthy, Madras

• Due to the large amount of money involved, the image of cricket as a sport has been spoilt. Both Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev should step down voluntarily to put an end to such dirty politics.
Rajendra Kumar, Bombay

• Ashis Ray's article was informative. Kapil has undoubtedly been made a scapegoat and is the victim of the North Zone—West Zone rivalry in cricket. Let us hope a healthy atmosphere will return to Indian cricket and all the differences sorted out.
Swarup Kumar Saha, Calcutta

• If no positive steps are taken to discourage the greed for money of the Indian cricketers, the future of Indian cricket is bleak.
S. Hussain, Dibrugarh

• Indian cricketers have by their achievements put India on the cricket map of the world. Unfortunately, Sunil Gavaskar, who has broken numerous records and has been awarded the Padma Shri, has stooped low to undermine the achievements of his contemporaries. His act of ousting Kapil Dev amounts to degrading the World Cup hero. I appeal to Sunil Gavaskar through this column not to stoop so low.
Mahesh Kumar, Bombay

• The article clearly shows that our cricketers are interested in nothing except money. I think a radical change in the system of payment to our cricketers is called for. I suggest that the cricketers should not be paid anything for Test matches drawn or lost. Only for the Test matches our team wins, should the players be paid some money as a bonus. If the cricketers are unwilling to play on these terms, cricket will die a natural death.
A. R. Ramnarayanan, Rourkela

COVER STORY

The Ambitions of NTR

Is the Bharat Desam a pipe dream or a way out for the opposition parties?



NTR atop his Chaitanya Ratham after being reinstated as chief minister

"So are you going to vote for an Assam Desam, Punjab Desam, a Karnataka Desam, a Maharashtra Desam, a Telugu Desam, or are you going to vote for a Bharat Desam?" This was the constant refrain of the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, from hundreds of microphones across the country, during campaigning, seeking votes that would bring his party—the Congress(I)—back to power. In the event, the people across much of the country responded by voting overwhelmingly for the Congress(I), seconding the claim that it alone could provide a strong and united India.

But not in Andhra Pradesh. Here, in what was until a couple of years ago a pocket borough of the Congress(I), the electorate rejected the claim of the Prime Minister and once again "punished" the Congress(I) for its behaviour in both the distant and recent past. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) won 28 of the 32 seats it contested, and its allies won five more leaving a measly six for the Congress(I), where it had won 41 seats in 1980. It was not as if the Andhra electorate did not believe in Bharat Desam. Simply, it believed that the Telugu Desam MPs could best represent their collective aspirations in the nation's highest forum, while at the same time upholding the unity of the country. The Congress(I) gimmick did not sell in Andhra and the answer of the electorate that had sided with the Congress for seven general elections, was: anything but the Congress(I).



Now, less than two weeks after a heady and euphoric win, N.T. Ramarao, the founder-leader of the 34-month old Telugu Desam Party, has created quite a stir by announcing his plans to form a national level political party called the Bharat Desam. Coming from the actor-turned-politician who is known for his impulsiveness, this could well have been dismissed as a political joke. But in the light of the Telugu Desam's emphatic win and the decimation of the opposition, NTR's nebulous concept is being watched with keen interest.

By naming the new party Bharat Desam, Ramarao has extended his vision beyond the borders of Andhra Pradesh. He has also answered directly and literally the Rajiv Gandhi election-eve refrain. The proposed Bharat Desam also provides a new platform for the discredited opposition to come together. As a very close aide of NTR put it: "Now NTR need not go to the opposition. The opposition will come to him." From all accounts, the idea of a national opposition party like the Bharat Desam is not new. Ramarao has been toying with the idea for well over a year, as he disclosed to SUNDAY in a talk last week (*see interview*). Nor has the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh kept this a secret. He has been discussing it with his colleagues in the cabinet and the party. The Bharat Desam idea was very much a part of a resolution adopted at a conference celebrating the second anniversary of the formation of the Telugu Desam in Vishakapatnam in May last year. But few took notice of the idea and even fewer believed N.T. Ramarao would see it through to its end.

Of course, it would be too early to

predict how seriously or how soon Ramarao would push through his idea of Bharat Desam. The announcement of Bharat Desam, when the Congress(I) has yet to get over its unprecedented win and the opposition its shattering loss, is rather unreal. Argued Prasuna Kotregudda, a Telugu Desam MLA in the dissolved House and a close confidant of Ramarao, "Telugu Desam also sounded unreal when it was launched in May 1982."

What is really baffling is how exactly NTR is going to bring the Bharat Desam idea to fruition. Is it going to be a confederation of existing national and/or regional parties? Or is Ramarao going to encourage the formation of regional parties on the lines of his own Telugu Desam, in other states? In that case, will he entrust or invite leaders like Sharad Pawar. Ramakrishna Hedge, Biju Patnaik and others to head the party in their respective states or does he plan to have an entirely new leadership?

Ramarao is himself vague about the whole scheme. "I cannot say anything till I have talked with the other opposition leaders," he said, when asked to be more specific. But sources close to Ramarao said he was extremely serious about Bharat Desam. The enigmatic chief minister, who Congress(I) politicians themselves now grudgingly admit, has mastered the art of political strategy, apparently feels that this is the right time to push home his advantage. The entire opposition is down on its knees like never before. The opposition leaders are also finding it extremely difficult to resurrect themselves in the aftermath of a total rout. Ramarao's Bharat Desam may well offer a way out.

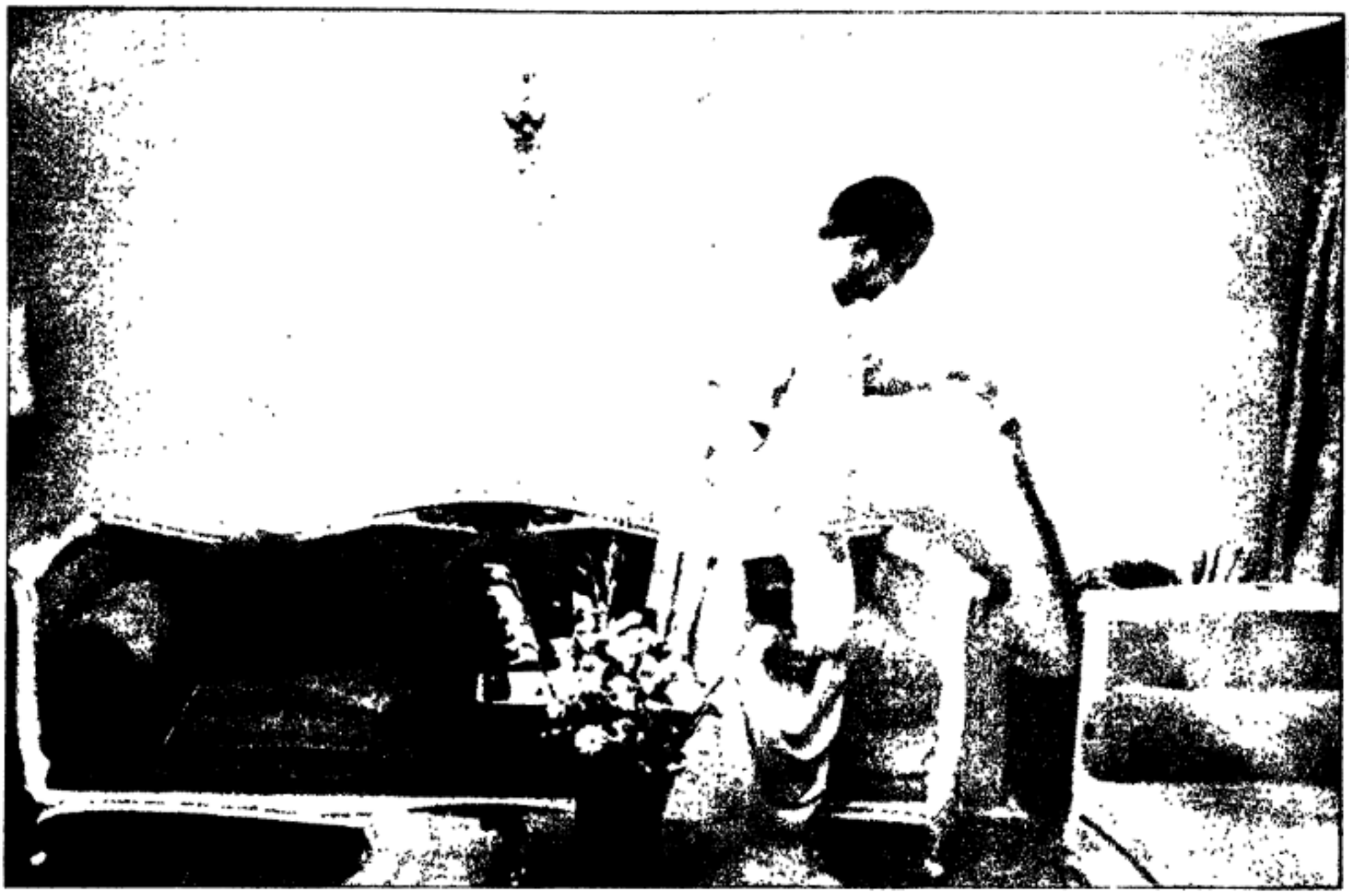
Telugu Desam sources, however, say that Rama Rao is being deliberately ambiguous about the whole Bharat Desam project. He would first like to find out the reaction of opposition leaders like Hegde and Vajpayee, two leaders he is very interested in roping in. Between now and May this year, Ramarao will gauge the mood and reaction of the people, besides knowing the minds of other opposition leaders as also the performance of the Rajiv Gandhi government. In the end, Bharat Desam may well turn out to be a loose federation of opposition parties, much on the lines of the Janata Party of 1977.

But with the kind of ambition and eccentricity that has come to be associated with Ramarao, Bharat Desam is naturally being scoffed at. Ramarao, says a senior level bureaucrat at the state secretariat, "talks first and thinks later." Political circles in Andhra Pradesh including allies of the TDP like the BJP, the Janata Party, the CPI and the CPI(M) are not inclined to take Ramarao seriously. Among the sceptics is Ramarao's most famous political adversary, Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, who sneered, "Bharat Desam today, World Desam tomorrow." But there was more churlishness in his comment than anything else.

NTR cannot be faulted over his sense of timing. Rarely, if ever, has the saffron-clad chief minister even put a wrong foot forward since he took Andhra Pradesh by storm two years ago. From the time he launched the Telugu Desam in May 1982 to his political reincarnation following the coup by Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, Ramarao has proved to be a political Midas. This, combined with his sense of purpose and his increasingly apparent sincerity, is forcing even the sceptics to have a second look at Bharat Desam. Strangely enough, NTR's Bharat Desam is to be formally launched in May, later this year, in the week of Mahanaadu. There is a degree of personal aggrandisement in this unilateral decision. Mahanaadu is the week beginning on 20 May (the day NTR launched his Telugu Desam



NTR flanked by Charan Singh and Vajpayee (right): taking the initiative



NTR: grandiose plans

Party in 1982) and culminating on 28 May (Ramarao's birthday). The Telugu Desam itself is such a highly personalised party, that his decision does not come as a surprise. In fact, the first opposition conclave, held in Vijayawada, was during Mahanaadu in 1983. But will the opposition leaders, with their smouldering ambitions, allow NTR to have his way so easily? It sounds most unlikely, even considering that NTR is in a position to call the shots.

One of the many pointers that indicate Ramarao's earnestness about the Bharat Desam is the manner in which he has been presenting the 28 newly-elected Telugu Desam MPs to the nation. In fact, NTR has taken pains to show that the MPs belong not only to Andhra Pradesh but also the rest of the country. Each MP has been instructed to "adopt" one state, study its problems and represent it in the Parliament. It sounds rather presumptuous, considering that the other states do have some representative MPs from even among the opposition. But clearly, Ramarao is laying the groundwork for his future plans. All this has been in line with NTR's own actions. Over the past few weeks, he has repeatedly asserted that he is "an Indian first and a Telugu next." Then, when he came to New Delhi to witness the oath-taking ceremony of the Telugu Desam MPs., he addressed the press in Hindi, English and Telugu. It was NTR showmanship at its best. But sometimes, naivete can also be winning.

While most of the TDP allies in Andhra Pradesh are sceptical about the Bharat Desam idea, the Telugu Desam workers are quite taken in by the prospects of their leader becoming a national hero. Lounging before NTR's swank Abids residence at 6 am, Baggidi Srinivas said he had no doubts that NTR would make it In many cases such confidence does not stem out of blind faith any more.

Ramarao himself talks of the Bharat Desam in a most matter of fact way. There is no rhetoric (not yet, anyway) that accompanied the birth of the Telugu Desam. What is more, he talks of it with well-worn cliches like "need for unity among the opposition parties," "welfare of the people and this great country..." But there is a quiet fervour about it. At least apparently, his sights are not yet set on the gaddi in Delhi. It is just as if he believes in himself totally and the lofty ideals he speaks of. He believes that he cannot fail in his mission to bring together the hopelessly splintered opposition. Coming out after a meeting with Ramarao, Dr James Manor, professor of commonwealth and comparative politics at the university of Leicester, England, murmured: "It is as if he believes he has been annointed by God to lead this country."

So confident is NTR of the success of his Bharat Desam, that he has given up the initiative in organising another of those meaningless opposition conclaves. His immediate objective now is to win the two Lok Sabha seats. Srikakulam and Rajampet in Andhra Pradesh, elections to which were countermanded following the deaths of independent candidates. A victory in both constituencies will result in the TDP becoming a full-fledged, legitimate opposition party, since it will raise its strength in the House to 30. But between now and the Mahanaadu in May, NTR's principle troubleshooter, Parvataneni Upendra, the swarthy general-secretary of the Telugu Desam, has been deputed to canvass for the Bharat Desam in the opposition ranks. In the end, the bedraggled opposition may well settle for it. But as of now there are no takers.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Hyderabad

NTR: Superstar

What makes NTR tick?

Few, if any, would take a bet today against the Telugu Desam sweeping the Assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh a few weeks hence. Certainly not after the way in which N.T. Ramarao's party not only contained, but even reversed the Congress(I) wave in the just concluded Lok Sabha polls. This has naturally led to speculation about what kind of majority NTR will get in the coming Assembly polls.

victory in the Lok Sabha polls and his rise as the dominant opposition leader in the country. It is now clear that the Telugu Desam Party's second great electoral triumph is not the result of NTR's charisma alone. No doubt NTR is still considered a demigod to a large section of voters, but this image is also accompanied by some sincere work put in by the Telugu Desam Party in the two years it has been in power.



NTR: for a better vision

What makes NTR tick with the people of Andhra Pradesh? Why did the electorate of Andhra Pradesh vote against the Congress(I) when the rest of the country, with a few rare exceptions, stood solidly for Rajiv Gandhi's party? How long will NTR's reign continue? These are some of the questions that are being asked following NTR's stupendous

Surely the Telugu Desam government's performance was no more exceptional than the Janata government's performance in Karnataka, or the Left Front in West Bengal? The answer to this was provided by a former Telugu Desam MLA, who did not want to be named. "There is a qualitative difference in the schemes initiated by NTR and his counterparts in other states. The other schemes are merely on paper. Literally, they involve a lot of paperwork before they really reach the recipients. In Andhra, the schemes have been simple: like the Rs two-a-kilo rice schemes, and the *Janata* saree and dhoti scheme. These programmes are easy to implement, communicate and publicise."

These schemes have worked. In Andhra Pradesh today, everyone knows about the two-rupee-a kilo rice scheme and in the villages a lot of people have benefited by it. It is good rice, available in plenty and in time. It costs the state exchequer nearly Rs 100 crore in subsidy, but it has been worth it. Everyone knows N. T. Ramarao has been responsible for it.

Several other factors have also helped NTR carve out a facile victory. There was the Bhaskara Rao coup last September which thoroughly resurrected a new and chastened N. T. Ramarao. But NTR exploited the situation in a manner few other opposition leaders would have done. In fact, the Andhra episode was widely regarded as the nucleus around which the opposition could come together against the Congress(I). But they flattered to deceive. In the end, NTR alone capitalised on it, wringing the last bit of advantage from the episode, exposing the Congress(I) role in propping up Bhaskara Rao.

But it can be pointed out that something similar happened in neighbouring Karnataka where there was the distasteful Moily tapes incident. Why then could the Janata Party not win? Says Ramoji Rao, the stocky chairman of the Eenadu group of publications, which has stood by NTR at all times: "Hegde failed to exploit the situation arising out of the Moily tapes. The issue was confined to the cities. Here, NTR went to every nook and corner of the state explaining to millions of people. This was especially touching considering that he was just back from a heart operation. Few opposition leaders would have had the stamina or drive to do that." What NTR did was virtually a pre-election campaign.

Ramoji Rao cites three principal reasons for the Telugu Desam's triumph: the welfare schemes launched by NTR like the two-rupee a kilo rice scheme that has really won over the poor, NTR's own unique style of campaigning and his ability to bring about unity among the opposition parties in Andhra Pradesh. But there is also a fourth reason: *Eenadu's* own strident campaign against the Congress(I). Published from four centres in Andhra Pradesh, *Eenadu* reaches 400,000

homes each morning, hitting out hard against the Congress(I) while at the same time reporting almost every word uttered by Ramarao in public. Ramoji Rao himself estimates that the daily is read by four million people across Andhra Pradesh.

The last two of Ramoji Rao's three points need closer scrutiny. In spite of two years in the chief ministerial *gaddi*, NTR's campaign style has not changed. It has only become better. The Chaitanya Ratham, a 40-year-old rambling truck with a deceptively broken-down look, is still his principal campaign vehicle. NTR still remains the master of words, capable of evoking the emotions of the people with hard facts disguised in lofty phrases like *"atma gauravam"* and *"dharmayuddha,"* many of them with religious connotations. Ramarao's saffron robes may be a bit of a joke in the cities but it has gone down well in the rural areas. NTR himself cares little now for the city votes and it is apparent that the Telugu Desam is not exactly popular in the fashionable areas of Hyderabad. While Hyderabad returned an MIM candidate, Secunderabad voted for a Congress(I) nominee. There was also some fear in the initial stages of campaigning that Ramarao had lost his ability as a crowd-puller. Indeed, if anything, Rajiv Gandhi drew bigger crowds everywhere in Andhra Pradesh. But the results proved the late K. Kamaraj's tautological masterpiece: "Lakh lakh people, hundred hundred votes."

The chief minister has also been able to bring about a remarkable degree of harmony among the other parties opposed to the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh. Seat adjustments for the Lok Sabha polls were made with the minimum degree of fuss. Only in one case, Khammam, an agreement could not be reached.

There is, of course, nothing to suggest that NTR's popularity has increased. On the contrary, the results of the Lok Sabha polls, though very much in favour of the Telugu Desam Party, show that the percentage of votes polled by the TDP has gone down by almost nine per cent since the Assembly elections in January 1983. The TDP leaders explain this away by pointing out that a fairly large section of the electorate would have voted on the sympathy and unity and integrity factor, and they would vote for the TDP in the coming Assembly elections. While the Congress(I) won only 60 Assembly seats in the 1983 Assembly elections, the party led in 75 Assembly segments out of 294 in the Lok Sabha polls. Only another Assembly election, however, will show the true nature of the Congress(I) gains. The Congress(I) leaders themselves admit that there is precious little they can do to contain NTR. "The only person who can bring down NTR, is NTR himself," said one leader. This is fairly evident. For inspite of his seeming infallibility, there are quite a few chinks and kinks, in the NTR armour For one, there seems to be no other leader in the TDP than NTR, and to a certain degree, P. Upendra. The kinks, of course, get great publicity, the latest being his directive to the newly-elected TDP MPs asking them to wear yellow shirts.



N.T. Ramarao campaigning

These idiosyncrasies apart, Ramarao has been quick to take advantage of the slightest mistake made by the Congress(I). In the Lok Sabha elections, the chief minister adopted an aggrieved posture when the Governor refused to repromulgate the ordinance pertaining to the abolition of village officers' post. This may have lost Ramarao a few thousand votes (there are almost 35,000 village officers in Andhra Pradesh), but they won him gratitude from lakhs of peasants, especially in the Telengana and Rayalaseema region, where they have writhed in the feudal grip of the hegemonistic *Patels* and *Patwaris*. Similarly, Ramarao's reign is considered despotic by white-collar workers who have come to despise his rule.

At the moment, it is difficult to visualise the Congress(I) containing the Telugu Desam in the forthcoming elections. On Pongal day, as a colt named Chaitanya Ratham ran as the day's best in the South Indian Derby, NTR's own Chaitanya Ratham was being taken apart and being prepared for yet another election: his third. Come March, and Ramarao will be out on the road again atop his Ratham, barnstorming the state in a spectacle that continues to enthrall his people.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Hyderabad



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The Forgotten NBR

The wind has gone out of him. He even seems to have shrunk in size. Nadendla Bhaskara Rao faces what is arguably the most frightening phase in an Indian politician's life: loss of power and not even a remote chance of regaining it. The most turbulent period in Nadendla Bhaskara Rao's political career came in August and September last year. That was when he staged what can easily be the greatest coup in democratic India, ousting N. T. Rama Rao in connivance with the then Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Ram Lal, even as the chief minister returned after a heart surgery in Houston, Texas.

But now all that is over. That tumultuous month finally ended in disaster for Bhaskara Rao. However, he was rather lucky. There have been cataclysmic events in the country since Bhaskara Rao turned a quisling. The assassination of Indira Gandhi, the subsequent riots, the Bhopal tragedy have all combined to put the Andhra incident into the background. Public memory is short, but with regard to the Andhra episode, it has been snipped shorter. Even then, it will be a long, long time before Bhaskara Rao lives down the image of a traitor.

Today, Bhaskara Rao heads a political outfit of his own. Predictably (and most ironically), it is called the Democratic Telugu Desam Party (DTDP). As he has so often argued to the bored disbelief of every one that he was the progenitor of the Telugu Desam in 1982. The DTDP of Bhaskara Rao has been allotted the symbol of rising sun between two mountains. The way things are going for Bhaskara Rao, it could well have been the setting sun.

Almost everyone has deserted him. "My party has 28-30 MLAs," he said listlessly in a talk with SUNDAY. He meant former MLAs, since the House has been dissolved. The numbers really do not matter. Not with Bhaskara Rao anyway. Those two dozen (former) MLAs who are still with him are the ones who have no other option. They have not been taken back to the Telugu Desam and even the Congress(I) has spurned them. Needless to say, no one would like to touch Bhaskara Rao. But Jeevan Reddy, one of the lucky ones in the NTR cabinet who deserted Ramarao to share the spoils with Bhaskara Rao, gained entry into the Congress(I). He was one of the "distinguished" MLAs of the Bhaskara Rao group who created a furore in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly during the historic Assembly session of September 1983.

Metropolis



NTR comes to meet the President after he was ousted from the chief ministership



N. Bhaskara Rao in the wilderness

Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, however, sits alone in his party office in Narayanagudda, Hyderabad. Everything about the place is sparse and hollow including the furniture and the people. Bhaskara Rao says his party is going to contest all the 294 seats in the coming Assembly elections. One really wonders how. "I have got nearly 500 applications for nominations and 24 January is the last date," he said with a strange kind of pride, as if to establish his legitimacy as a politician. But the echoes did not make the numbers any larger. In fact, it is ridiculous, considering that the Telugu Desam of NTR will probably have something like 10,000 applications for the Assembly elections.

It is quite pathetic really. Last September, Bhaskara Rao sat in a swivel chair in the state secretariat, defying the mandate of the people, taking decisions about the state and its people. Today, he sits alone on a plain steel chair in a room that is only just whitewashed and has no carpeting.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Hyderabad



Jagdish Yadav

NTR with P. Upendra (left) at a press conference in Delhi

'Politics is Not for Power, It is for Service'

Andhra Pradesh chief minister N.T. Ramarao told SUNDAY

It was the famous pre-dawn interview. For N.T. Ramarao, the saffron-clad chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, the day begins at four a.m. The habit, it is said, is a hangover from the bleak days, when he had to wake up at half-past three to milk cows in order to supplement the family income. The chief minister of six crore Andhra people is still to get over the habit, much to the exasperation of journalists, bureaucrats, partymen alike who would like to meet him.

At six am N.T. Ramarao peaks. Dressed in his usual saffron robe, a white tilak on his forehead, his eyes sharp and clear, his mind alert, he radiates energy as the day goes by and rushes through his tiring routine till late. In the evening he looks dull and listless, his eyes glazed and his movements slow. Rarely is he awake after nine p.m. Ramarao spoke to SUNDAY *on Sankranti day, the harvest festival for the Telugus. Later, the same day, he was to leave for New Delhi to watch the 28 Telugu Desam MPs take oath.*

***Q**: How did the Telugu Desam manage to defy the Rajiv wave that swept the country?*

A: We have won the confidence of our people. They know that I am working and my government is working to uplift the poor and the downtrodden. These are not mere words. They have faith and belief in our party manifesto which we are implementing with success.

Q: Now the opposition has been routed and you are, perhaps, the only person who stood up against the Congress(I) and won. Do you have any plans or new ideas to get the opposition back on its feet?

A: Unity must come about without any motive and ambition, that is the first thing the leaders have to learn. They must unite for the sake of the country. Personal ambition must be kept aside. They must reach the people with their hearts and not their tongues. Once they create this confidence in the hearts and minds of the people, then winning elections is fairly simple.

Q: The Telugu Desam is the single largest opposition party. But it is also a regional party. Do you foresee the Congress(I) not taking your party seriously in Parliament with respect to the larger issues facing the country?

A: *(Angrily)* We are the representatives of all the people. Nobody can stop us from taking up the problems of the rest of the country. We may be a regional party but our partymen have gone there as members of the Lok Sabha. They have a right to project the plight of the whole country. The Parliament is not to raise the issues of our state; for that we have the Assembly. The Telugu Desam MPs are Indians first and Telugus next. That empowers them to speak for the nation and they will acquit themselves.

Q: What about the opposition conclaves and your attempts to unite

A: We are becoming a national party. We are starting the Bharat Desam.

Q: So we hear. But how will you go about it? When did the idea originate?



NTR with P. Upendra (extreme left) and TDP MPs sporting yellow shawls photographed at Parliament House

A: Long back; quite long back Bharat Desam is going to be a federal system. It will have Gandhian ideology adopted to the modern days. Under this federal system, each state should have its own government elected by its own people. Then each party winning in the state will be represented in the Parliament. When my government has a majority here, then it must be represented in the Parliament, in the cabinet, only then the problems will be evenly projected. Whichever major powers are existing in the state, they must be represented in the union cabinet. only then can all the views be presented.

Q: Now, just a moment: you said represented in the union cabinet. Do you mean to say that if the Telugu Desam is invited to join the union cabinet now, you will agree?

A: That is next. I am only talking about the policy guidelines of the Bharat Desam. Let us not assume things.

Q: How will you work out the modalities of the Bharat Desam?

A: There will be several *Desams* from different states, all of which are on a linguistic basis. See Tamil Nadu... *nadu* actually means *Desam*. So naturally each state is a separate entity. The union of states gives a federal government which is the feature of our Constitution.

Q: Specifically, are you suggesting that leaders like Biju Patnaik, Sharad Pawar and Ramakrishna Hegde start their Desams *or will you start a* desam *in their states with new leaders?*

A: No, no. I don't know their minds. Without knowing it, I cannot say.

Q: What about your efforts to unite the opposition? Have you given it up?

A: They must be united. Even for matters like adjustment of seats, they must draw up a procedure Power is not the important thing; when it comes, it comes. But the country comes before all and the poor people who need our sacrifice. Politics is not for power, it is for service. Politics is for the 50 per cent of the people without food, clothing and shelter.

Q: Now that you happen to be the dominant opposition leader, do you plan to be selective in inviting other opposition leaders to conclaves or even in joining the Bharat Desam? Especially considering that a few of them have been detrimental to opposition unity.

A: That is not the question. First they must have a clean understanding of the purpose of the Bharat Desam—service to the nation No-thing else matters Work for the people and they will automatically recognise your service. Success does not have any meaning without creating confidence in the minds of the people.

Q: Sure, but some opposition leaders have been particularly damaging to the unity moves.

A: Let them correct themselves. My only purpose is to create better things and comforts for the people who are in need of it, to bring about social justice and to create opportunities for all the people of this great country.

Q. The Telugu Desam itself is a personalised party with no second line leadership...

A: Yes, we are having one now. In the coming Assembly election new people will be given an opportunity. Whoever is of questionable reputation will be thrown out.

Q: When is the Bharat Desam going to come about?

A: We are launching it on 20 May in the Mahanaadu week.

Interviewed by Chidanand Rajghatta



Intelligence agents drive out of the 16, Hailey Road office of T. Manekial and Co.

Enemies of the State

A powerful espionage ring is smashed

The foreign hand has now been exposed. The umpteen references to "foreign hand," which Mrs Indira Gandhi and later Mr Rajiv Gandhi had been making over the past few years, had made this term jarring to Indian ears. The busting of the super spyring on the night of 16-17 January has exposed that the foreign hand is not merely a reality, but it operated right from within the Prime Minister's office. The entire office of the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr P.C. Alexander, who has since been asked to resign, was betraying the country each and every minute of the working hours of the government of India, round the year. Not a moment when the gates of the South Block office of the Prime Minister were open, was the nation's interest safe. Every document marked "secret" was being passed on to a private person who, in turn, supplied these to foreigners. The operation was not specialised. The instruction given by the spymaster to his ring was that each and every document which reached the office of Dr Alexander and had the "secret" classification, was to be handed over to the person in-charge of the spyring. Expert sifting of these papers was done later, by the foreign masters, who therebybecame privy to minutest details of the government's functioning. Such was the ramification of the operations that on the day of the arrest nearly 600 classified documents were seized from the premises of Coomar Naram, the Delhi regional manager of a bluechip Bombay firm, T. Maneklal Manufacturing Company Ltd, which was a cover organisation for espionage.

The counter-intelligence activities cell of the intelligence bureau has done the nation proud. In less than two years, this is the second time that this cell, headed by a Haryana cadre IPS officer, Kalyan Rudra, has cracked major spyrings. In late 1983, the Larkins case, in which two retired top brass of the armed forces were arrested, exposed the vulnerability of the defence ministry to espionage by foreigners. Now the Prime Minister's office itself has been exposed as a spyden. This cell, referred to in the IB circles as the "CIA cell," has done excellent work. (The reference to CIA is not in the American context, but it is the abbreviation for "counter-intelligence activities.")

The present case came to the notice of the CIA cell by accident. In early October 1984, an operative was sent to Hotel Vikram, near Greater Kailash in South Delhi, to keep watch on a suspect. It was a bad day (initially) for this man, as the person under surveillance did not provide any interesting report. But as he had been asked to keep vigil, the opera-

tive, rather bored, stood outside the hotel. Suddenly the movements of a man aroused his interest. The operative saw the man (later identified as Mr Coomar Narain) arrive in a taxi and disembark outside the hotel and walk into the hotel compound. Why should anyone get off a taxi outside the hotel and not drive upto the portico, the operative wondered. He followed Coomar Narain into the hotel, where he saw Narain meeting a foreigner, An Indian meeting a foreigner in a lesser-known hotel is sufficient ground for the counter-intelligence sleuths to get interested. The operative saw Narain get out of the hotel, walk to a nearby taxistand and leave. Narain did not use the hotel's taxi-hailing service. The operative was on a hot trail. Narain was followed upto his office at 16 Hailey Road, in downtown New Delhi. On enquires, Narain's identity became known and the alert operative also learnt that T. Maneklal and Co., of which Narain was the local boss, owned a fleet of cars. A chauffeur-driven car was also assigned to Naraian for his personal use. Then why should be have moved around in taxis? The matter was reported to the higher-ups by the operative and as a matter of routine, Coomar Narain was put under surveillance. Along with his Hailey Road office, his residence, aa double-storeyed bungalow owned by him at the posh Defence Colony, was also watched. Soon, a farmhouse owned by him near Chhatarpur on the Gurgaon Road also came under the IB's watch. The vigil, which had begun quite accidentally, vielded rich dividends.

The *modus operandi* was simple. The office at Hailey Road used to see a sudden spurt of activity after dusk. Between seven and nine pm on most days of the week, a trickle of visitors used to be seen at the office of T. Maneklal and Co. The visitors were not on social calls. They were junior-ranking government functionaries, holding sensitive secretarial positions, who used to call on Coomar Narain and have a drink at his office. While the entertaining by Narain was on, the secret documents picked up by the sources during the day were taken by a peon of Maneklal and Co. to a xeroxing shop nearby. The IB operative saw a regular pattern in Narain's entertainment technique: the visitor arrived, a peon soon afterwards left through a bylane towards a multi-storeyed office building, Rohit House, on Tolstoy Marg. The xeroxing shop on the ground floor of Rohit House received steady business from Maneklal and Co and the shop owner did not mind

From Spinning to Spying



The Calcutta office of SLM-Maneklal Ashok Chakravorty

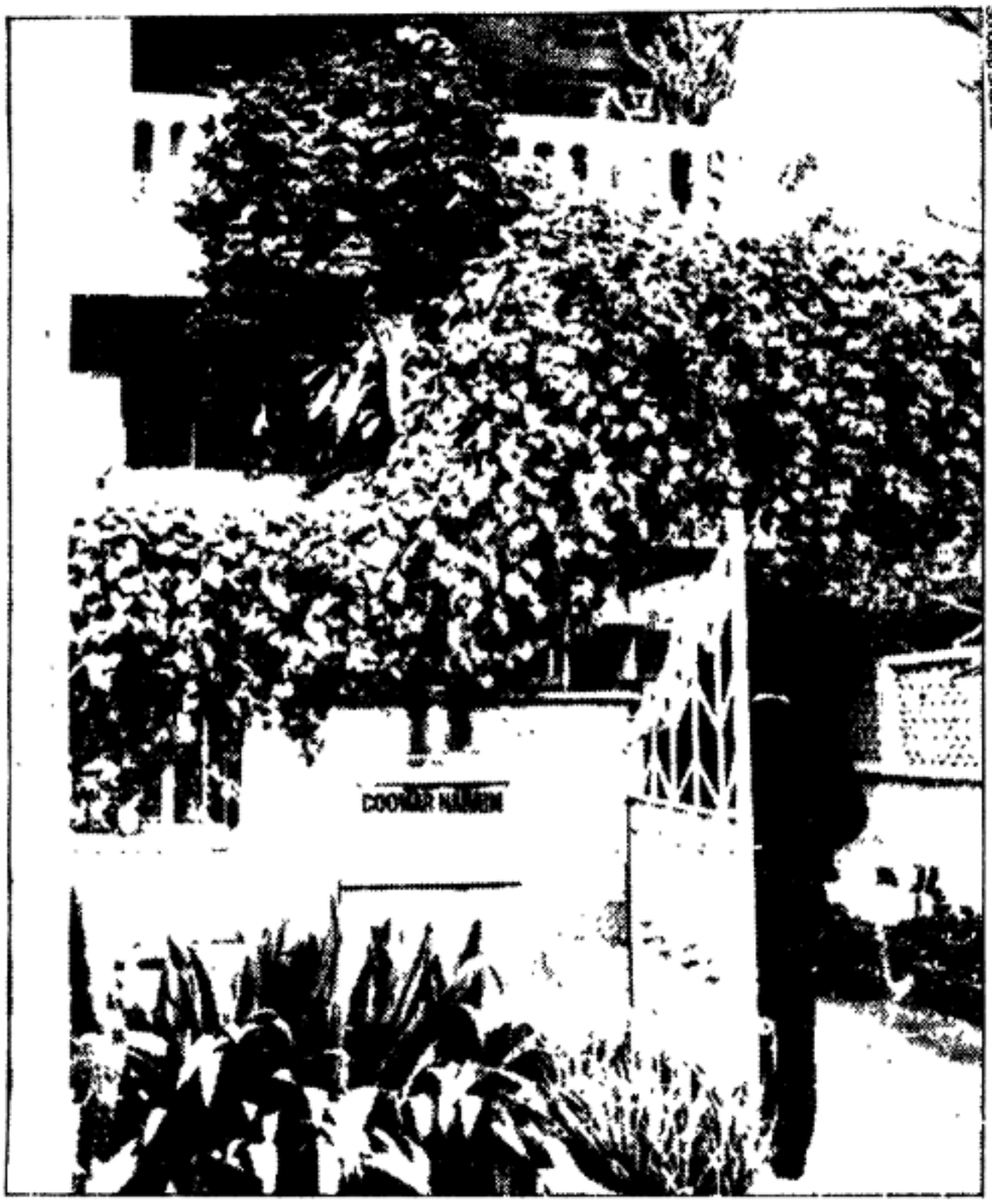
T Maneklal Manufacturing Company Ltd., the Bombay firm which has now been exposed as a cover organisation for espionage, began its operations in the field of manufacturing textile machinery. The journey from manufacturing spinning equipment to involvement in spying has been a long one. The principal accused in the spying case detained in Delhi, Coomar Narain, is the Delhi regional manager of the firm, which is known for its "SLM-Maneklal" range of products. After his arrest, Coomar Narain has told investigators that he had been running the spy ring under instructions from his managing director, Yogesh T. Maneklal, who lives in Bombay. The Maneklal firm has many foreign collaborations with French, American and Italian companies. Maneklal's involvement in espionage may have begun due to his business links abroad. Till 1983, Maneklal's firm mainly dealt in textile machinery manufacture. Last year, it diversified into the more lucrative oil rig equipment manufacturing field, which has assumed importance following the growth of oil exploration in Bombay High.

Weatherford International, an American firm specialising in oil rig equipment signed a tie up with SLM-Maneklal last year. Thereafter, this combine competed in several tenders floated for the Bombay High by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC). The Italian connection was through a contract signed by SLM-Maneklal with Uniroyal Manuli of Italy, which is a joint US-Italian company, floated by an American firm, Uniroyal and Dardanio Manuli of Italy. This firm specialises in industrial rubber and rubber products used in oil exploration.

Due to recession in the domestic textile industry which was facing a two-pronged attack from trade unions of the Datta Samant variety on the one hand and the manipulations of the textile king, Dhirubhai Ambani on the other), the accounts book of SLM-Maneklal showed a downward trend two years ago. Its gross profits fell from Rs 106.12 lakhs in 1982-83 to Rs 34.27 lakhs in 1983-84. Apart from diversifying into oil rig equipment, Maneklal apparently fell prey to spying operations around this time.

Apart from the French, US and Italian connections, this company also had dealings with the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries like Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Vietnam. Belgium and Iran were also its trading contacts. The Maneklal firm also dealt in defence orders and had received orders for Riki boats and floats and other rubber products required by the armed forces. Apart from the office at Delhi's downtown Hailey Road, the firm had an office at Ansal Bhavan on Kasturba Gandhi Marg, also near Connaught Place. This office, however, was not used for spying. Only the Hailey Road and Coomar Narain's Defence Colony residence and a farmhouse were centres of spying activity.

S.B.



Sanjoy Sarkar

The house of Coomar Narain

staying beyond office hours to serve his customer. The xeroxing done, the peon went back to the sprawling single-storeyed building on Hailey Road and handed over the documents and the xeroxed copies to Naram The visitor then left the premises, obviously contented with the good liquor he had consumed. The system worked on spot-payment basis Apart from cash, a bottle of imported liquor used to be given to the visitors at the Maneklal office. Evenme itter evening, visitors were entertained at the Hailey Road office and the nation's secrets were passed on to foreigners, via the office of Maneklal and Co. The Defence Colony house and the farmhouse near Chhatarpur (where Delhi's elite own farmhouses; the Nehru-Gandhi family too, have a farm there) were used for entertaining higher officials. Coomar Narain apparently did not want the joint secretaries and the other senior officers he entertained in these two places to run into their secretarial staff, hence the use of the Hailey Road office, which was the main centre of the spyring.

Investigations which began in early October were hampered by the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The staff of the CIA cell were put on other duties for a while. The probe began in right earnest again in the middle of November and by early December, the IB was confident about the involvement of the office of the principal secretary to the Prime Minister in spying. Bypassing the cabinet secretary, who usually monitors all intelligence gathering, a senior home ministry official and the director of the IB, H. C. Barari, briefed Rajiv Gandhi about the scandal. The young Prime Minister, though unnerved, kept his cool. He wanted the report to be rechecked. In the meantime, he began cutting out Dr Alexander's office from sensitive work. Arun Singh who had been appointed parliamentary secretary took over all the sensitive work quietly. Dr Alexander was kept in good humour, while actual work was handled by Arun Singh's office. According to a section of the press, the spyring was not busted in December in view of the impending elections. This is a naive suggestion. If anything, when the nation's integrity was the election plank, the busting of a spyring would have only made the position of the Congress(I) stronger. The reason why the Prime Minister did not want hasty action to be taken was because a false alarm would be raised.

Within ten days of the assassination of Indira Gandhi, a case had been decided in the court of Bharat Bhushan Gupta, additional chief metropolitan magistrate, Delhi (the same judge before whom the present accused are being produced). In a judgment delivered on 10 November, the judge had acquitted three men, including two IB officers, Raghbir Singh and Dharam Singh, who had been charged with espionage because of lack of evidence. The courts have to follow the statute and when after registering the case against these men in February 1983, the police could not prove the charge that they were passing on secret documents to foreign agents, the case was filed as "untraced" due to lack of evidence. Had the arrests of officers in the Prime Minister's secretariat been carried out, and later not proved due to technicalities, then the image of the government would have suffered.

It was but natural for the Prime Minister to be cautious. He wanted concrete evidence to be gathered before the ring was busted.

Dr P. C. Alexander's importance diminished soon after the new wave government assumed office. Dr Alexander, of course, was trusted with the list of ministers on the day of the swearing-in: 31 December 1984. That was because the list had been typed by Mr Rajiv Gandhi's trusted aide, V. George, and handed over to Dr Alexander, without involving his office staff. But in all confidential matters from around 4 January, Dr Alexander was not in the picture . The parliamentary secretaries headed by Arun Singh ruled the roost. The political bureaucracy, as represented by the three parliamentary secretaries, Arun Singh, Ahmed Patel and Oscar Fernandes, had suddenly been elevated and placed over the bureaucracy in the PM's office.

After the removal of Dr Alexander, in all likelihood the post of principal secretary would be abolished. This

Those Arrested: Who's Who

On 18 January, the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi announced in both the Houses of Parliament that certain officials who were occupying sensitive positions in the government had been arrested and were suspected to be indulging in activities detrimental to the national interest. At the time no one realised that the Prime Minister was revealing the biggest espionage case in the history of independent India.

The next day when names of the arrested persons were revealed, the entire bureaucracy was shocked. Of the eight persons arrested initially, six were government employees and two were businessmen. The main person in the spy ring was Mr T. N. Kher, under secretary of principal secretary Dr P. C. Alexander. Mr Kher has served in the Prime Minister's office for more than 20 years. He was with Mr P. N. Dhar, a former joint secretary to the PM till 1977 and also served with Mr H. Y. Sharda Prasad, the information adviser to the PM. Mr Kher was the most trusted man in the PM's office and no one had realised that he could be indulging in such activity. He owns a large house in Greater Kailash, a posh colony in South Delhi. One of his sons is a doctor and another an engineer. Mr Kher is a Kashmiri pandit and has good family connections.

Mr P. Gopalan, also arrested in connection with the espionage case, was the personal assistant in the office of Dr Alexander. He worked under Mr C. Ramachandran, the energy minister in the Janata regime and after the Congress(I) came to power in 1980, worked with Mr Ghani Khan Chaudhury when the latter was the coal and mine minister in Mrs Indira Gandhi's cabinet. When in 1981 Dr Alexander took over as principal secretary, Mr Gopalan was shifted to the PM's office.

Mr Coomar Narain, the regional manager of T. Maneklal and Company was arrested after intelligence personnel got information about his involvement in the case. Mr Narain is suspected to be the person who was chiefly supplying secret information to the foreign powers.

Mr S. Shankaran, the personal assistant to Mr Suryanarayan, the press secretary to the President, was the man who knew Mr Narain for many years and introduced him to Mr Kher last year.

Mr Narain was working for Maneklal and Company for the past 22 years and he owns a bungalow in the posh Defence Colony area of South Delhi. His wife usually stays at his Mehrauli Farm. According to neighbours of Mr Narain he was not friendly with anyone in the Defence Colony. He is also said to own a number of cars. His assistant Mr Chaman Lal Chanana was also arrested, who used to help Mr Narain at his 16, Hailey Road office for the spying business. This office is believed to be the nerve centre where secret information passed hands.

Mr K. Malhotra, another personal assistant in the PM's office was also arrested, along with others. Intelligence sources point out that he was involved in espionage.

Mr Jagdish Chandra, the personal assistant to the secretary, defence (production), Mr M. C. Sarin, was instrumental in the leakage of defence secrets. Another government employee Mr Jagdish Tiwari, the personal assistant to the additional secretary, Mr Baijal, was used by the foreign powers to obtain information regarding the country's economic plans.

Jagmeet Uppal, New Delhi

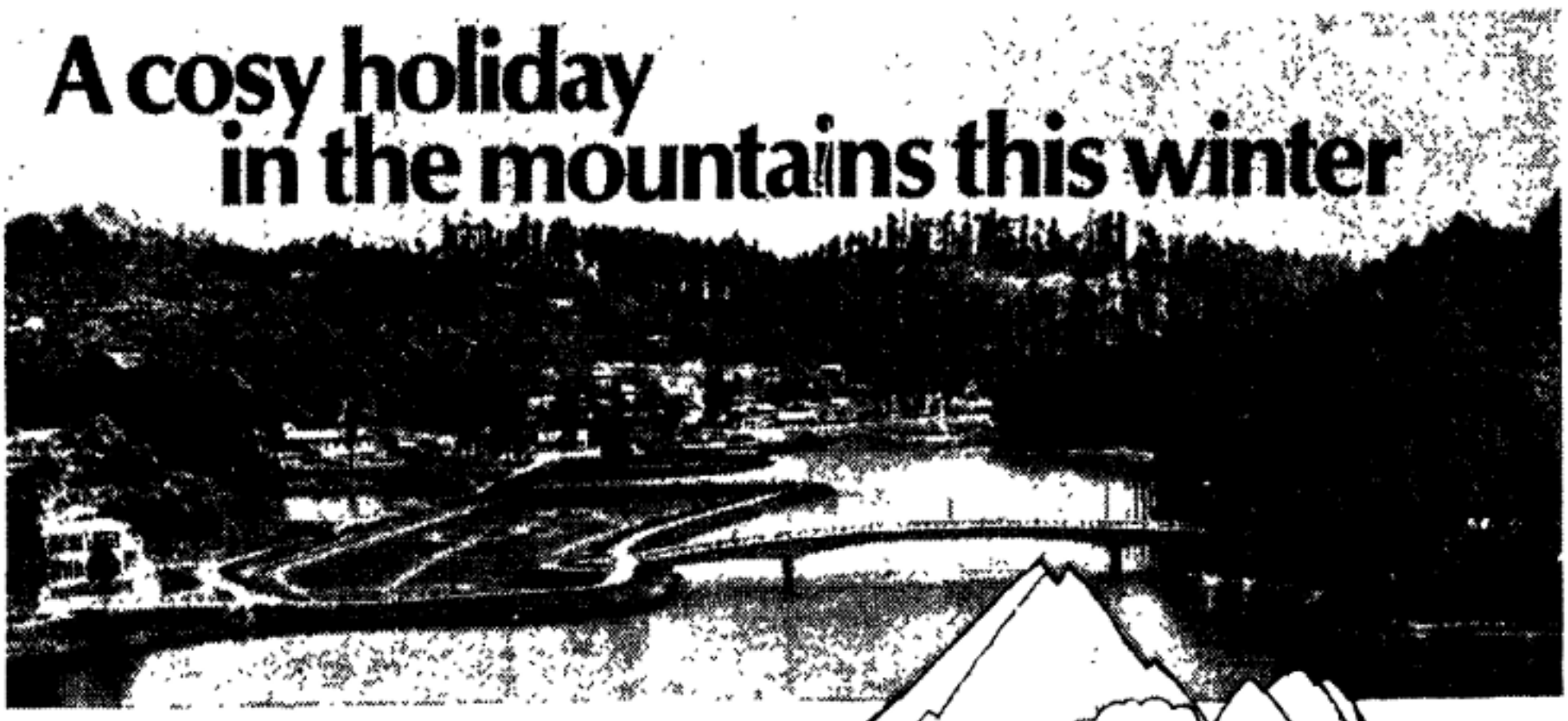


Jaspal Singh Gill being taken to a court in New Delhi on 8 December 1983

post was created during the prime ministership of the late Lal Bahadur Shastri, who appointed Lakshmi Kant Jha to this post. Mrs Gandhi chose P. N. Haksar first and in her later tenure she had at first Krishnaswamy Raosahab and then P.C. Alexander, an officer who had quit the IAS in 1977 as the Janata government wanted to send him back to his parent cadre, Kerala. He had taken up an assignment with the United Nations at Geneva before being asked by Mrs Gandhi to join as her principal secretary. Mrs Gandhi's personal friend, Pupul Jayakar, had recommended his name. Mrs Gandhi did not know Alexander closely before and Mrs Jayakar's word carried weight.

The IB mounted vigil at 16, Hailey Road in the early part of January. It was decided that the crackdown would take place on a day when maximum evidence could be collected. On the evening of 16 January, as many as seven "visitors" called on Coomar Narain at Hailey Road. The presence of P. Gopalan from Dr Alexander's office further provided an opportunity for the big catch. The raid was conducted and the officers

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An earlier spy scandal: Maj-Gen F.D. Larkins, who is believed to have sold defence secrets to the CIA, being escorted by the police in 1983

with their documents were nabbed (Normally the secret papers were taken out by the suspects for an overnight operation. After the xeroxing had been done, the documents were innocently replaced in the respective offices the next morning.) The same night the residence of T. N Kher, the aide of Dr Alexander who had been in the PM's office for the last two decades, was raided. Documents were seized at his house as well. The raid at the office and the residence of Coomar Narain yielded nearly 600 documents. The magnitude of the racket can be gauged from the fact that on the day of his arrest Coomar Narain had collected papers from the Prime Minister's office, Rashtrapati Bhavan, defence ministry, department of defence production, finance ministry, department of economic affairs, petroleum ministry and the planning commission. The choice of 16 January for the raid by the IB sleuths proved useful.

Simultaneous raids were conducted on the premises of T. Maneklal and Co at Bombay and Calcutta and a rich haul of classified documents was gathered. The Indian firm had been an effective cover. Had some foreigner acted the way Coomar Narain did, the officers would not have been as accessible as they were to an Indian businessman. Though one wonders if the accused officers had not applied their minds to the fact that the Indian company was looking at too many files, not all connected with the business activities of the firm.



P. C. Alexander

The details of the expose need not be gone into. Newspapers have been flooded with different versions, about defence secrets, foreign office documents, etcetera. The fact is that there was no paper marked "secret" in the office of the principal secretary to the Prime Minister and in the offices of many senior bureaucrats which did not find its way into unauthorised hands. The involvement of the French diplomat need not surprise anyone It is normal practice for both the CIA and the KGB to employ diplomats other than those belonging to their own countries for spying. Western diplomats could be working for the CIA. Similarly, Eastern Bloc nations (even non-aligned Yugoslavia) are used by the KGB sometimes to spread their net. Even if an ordinary document of the

Who is Bolley?

Whether Colonel Alain Bolley, the French deputy military attache, who was asked to leave the country on 20 January following disclosures about his being the key foreign link in the spy scandal, was only working for the CIA or was, in addition, a spy for his own government as well is uncertain. What is certain is the fact that the Colonel subscribed to extreme rightwing ideology and was a bitter critic of the French government ever since the Socialists came to power in May 1981.

Bolley, a short man in his early fifties who sported a goatee,would often publicly abuse the present government headed by Francois Mitterrand, especially its inclusion of four communist ministers in the cabinet. Colonel Bolley feared that his country might one day become communist. Moreover, after Francois Mitterrand came to power in the summer of 1981, an old French group consisting of the extreme right overseas French citizens was reactivated to stir up opinion against the new government in Paris.

Delhi served as the headquarters of South Asia for such French nationals living in this region. (Last year, members living in the seven countries of the region met in Kathmandu). The group is believed to meet every six months, and it receives instructions from its Paris headquarters. Significantly, when the elections for the European Common Market Assembly were held a few months ago, there was not a single vote from the French community in India for members belonging to the socialist government. The votes all went to Jacques Chirac.

The Colonel had all the right credentials to attract the attention of the CIA. The disgruntled old soldier had also served in Algeria and is said to have been a sympathiser of the OAS (Organisation De L'Arm Secrete), the dreaded group of French servicemen who had served in Algeria which had master-minded and carried out several unsuccessful attempts on the life of general Charles de Gaulle after he had announced the historic decision to give Algeria its independence in 1962.

It may be recalled that at that time many of the French officers and soldiers working in "Algeria Francaise" (as Algeria was called prior to its independence) deserted and fought against the French army in a very bitter war.

Colonel Bolley, who was promoted to the rank of Colonel a few months ago and was given the Legion d' Honneur last winter had rather crucial assignments during his four-year stint in New Delhi.

An aviation expert, he was an important negotiator in many of the Indo-French military deals, including the controversial Mirage contract and most other military negotiations.

While information gathered by intelligence sources indicates that the Colonel was recruited by a CIA operative in Paris belonging to a front office involved in gathering Indian defence secrets, it could even be that Colonel Bolley was "hired" in New Delhi itself a little over two years ago.



The four communist ministers in the French cabinet whom Bolley always criticised

The French air and naval attache was, according to intelligence sources, the link between the CIA and Indian members of the spy ring. The Colonel's rather unobstrusive presence must have served him well for it made it easier for him to move through Delhi's social circles.

The "deportation" of the French diplomat also took place rather strangely. Although one of the national dailies, the *Indian Express*, published a story on the morning of 20 January that a French diplomat involved in the spy scandal had been sent out of the country on a special plane on the afternoon of 19 January, the Indian government did not make any move. The French embassy continued to deny all knowledge of the affair. And the Colonel himself, when reporters telephoned him,denied the involvement of any Frenchman. By the night of 19 January, the Colonel said "no comment" and later on that night itself, he was unavailable for even that. Finally, the Colonel boarded the scheduled Air France flight at 11.40 pm, with his wife and child. His family did not normally live with him in India but had come to Delhi this winter. In Paris, in an interview he later said when he was questioned about his involvement: "I am a soldier, not a spy..."

What is interesting is that the Indian government refused to say that it had deported the French diplomat. In fact, on 21 January the AFP (Agence France Presse) commentary made out the case that the French government could not have been involved because the Indian government had not demanded the expulsion of the French diplomat. The commentary also mentioned the fact that, perhaps, the Indian government did not want a break in Indo-French relations.

Meanwhile, in a statement in Parliament on the morning of 21 January, home minister, Mr S.B. Chavan clearly said that an agent of a foreign power had been asked to leave the country. While socialist governments are not supposed to be consorting with the CIA, it is a fairly well-known fact that the secret services of various European countries, including the socialist do share their information with each other and the CIA.

What still remains a little perpflexing about the French angle is the other "invisible" French diplomat who was supposed to have been despatched on the afternoon of 20 January. The military office of the French embassy has six Frenchmen, two of whom have diplomatic status. The question is: has one of the non-diplomatic staff been deported as well?

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

labour ministry, which has been marked "secret" falls into foreign hands, it is a matter for concern.

Who is to blame for the situation which leads to the occurrence of such incidents? The counter-intelligence activities cell of the IB has shown that it can bust such rackets with expertise. But are all reports of this cell passed on to the Prime Minister honestly? Since 26 June 1975, the overall charge of intelligence was handed over to the cabinet secretary. This order, issued on the first day of the Emergency, is still in force. If there are intelligence lapses, the cabinet secretary is certainly to blame.Why did a senior home minis-



Lt. Col Jasbir Singh, charged with supplying defence secrets to the CIA, arriving at the Patiala House Court in New Delhi on 8 December 1983

NEXT WEEK

The Decline and Fall of the Indian Bureaucrat

A special investigation into the spy scandal and its consequences

try officer and the director of IB choose to go directly to the PM, bypassing the cabinet secretary, to inform him of the spying in the principal secretary's office? Also, one prime ministerial aide who has been overseeing intelligence monitoring in the PM's office is V.S. Tripathi. When he was an IAS officer, he looked after intelligence matters. Even after leaving the IAS and becoming a private individual on contract service, Tripathi was in-charge of intelligence. So much so that at one stage in early 1983 there was a move to make him the only non-official member of the Joint Intelligence Committee. This move, though approved by no less a person than R.N. Kao, then senior security adviser to the cabinet, ran into rough weather and was later dropped. Krishnaswamy Raosahab and V. S. Tripathi certainly have some explaining to do after the spy scandal was busted. This is not to suggest that either Dr Alexander, Krishnaswamy Raosahab or Tripathi was in any way involved in the racket which has been busted. But their liability cannot be overlooked. Even after the death of the former Prime Minister, laxity seems to dominate the highest quarters of the bureaucracy.

The Prime Minister acted maturely by waiting for the arrests before he confronted Dr Alexander with the case. His announcement on the floor of the Parliament on 17 January was made at an opportune moment. The opposition leader, Madhu Dandavate, rose to the occasion by allowing the Prime Minister to withhold details of the arrests in the national interest. The early days of 1985 in New Delhi were marked by morning fog, which lifted around ten and thereafter there was bright sunshine. The fog around the Prime Minister's office has lifted, the culprits have been booked. One hopes the sunshine is not replaced by cloudy weather too soon.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

SPECIAL REPORT

White Paper or White Lie?

Or, how G.M. Shah is trying to frame Dr Abdullah

"They are only making me a greater leader," Dr Farooq Abdullah had commented when in August last year the state government headed by his estranged brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohammed Shah, first came out with a document alleging that the former chief minister had, during his tenure at the head of the state, shielded anti national and secessionist elements and had indulged in anti-India activities while in England as a medical student



Farooq Abdullah

Though Dr Abdullah had been advised to drag G. M. Shah to court for defaming him, he chose to fight his detractors politically and "not waste time in courts." Perhaps he was under the impression that the Shah government, which had come to power through defections, in order to justify its existence had indicted the former chief minister to give the impression that the Farooq Abdullah ministry had to be dismissed to save the country from the "traitor."

But Shah and his colleagues have not stopped accusing Dr Abdullah of being anti-national and communal. During the past six months a number of documents repeating the same charges were released officially. The recently released 113-page White Paper prepared by the state cabinet sub-committee headed by deputy chief minister Devidas Thakur repeats the same story. Dr Abdullah has, however, reacted sharply to the charges levelled against him and is seriously considering the idea of "teaching Shah a lesson for defaming me in the eyes of my countrymen" and he has described the official report as a "bundle of lies." As he declared at a public meeting in Srinagar, "I am prepared to face the gallows if these allegations are proved correct in a court of law." The faction of the National Conference led by him is also collecting material to prepare a counter document "to give a lie" to the official one But the state government also does not seem to be in any mood to close the chapter. A report released to the press by D. D. Thakur in Jammu early this month said that the White Paper was only an "interim report" and that a "complete and final report" would be made by the sub-committee in due course of time "depending upon the extent of engagements of its members."

The idea of the "White Paper" dates back to 7 July 1983 when, seven days after the dismissal of Farooq Abdullah's government, G. M. Shah decided to appoint a sub-committee under the chairmanship of deputy chief minister D. D. Thakur, with the minister for education and revenue and the minister for agriculture as its members and the chief secretary to the state government as its member secretary. The terms of this committee were spelt out in a government order issued a few days later. Subsequently, the chief minister who had been given the power to include any other terms of reference, added, "All acts of commission and omission of the cabinet headed by Dr Farooq Abdullah" should be inquired into by the sub-committee.

The four-member body was asked to present a report to the cabinet within a period of 15 days, but it could not do so till early September last year. The reason for the delay has been attributed to the busy schedule of the members. According to Thakur, he as well as the members of the committee took pains to prepare a report based on facts and said that political differences with Farooq Abdullah had not influenced the findings of the sub-committee. However, this assertion is not borne out by facts: the document is a repetition of the allegations made against the former chief minister from time to time and it was Thakur himself who had earlier released a couple of documents listing the same charges. (It may be remembered that during Farooq Abdullah's ministry, an enquiry commission had been set up to probe into D. D. Thakur's conduct as a minister in Sheikh Abdullah's government.

Some of the charges against Farooq Abdullah listed in the White Paper are:

- He had ignored the warnings of the state and central intelligence agencies about the activities of anti-national and secessionist elements in his state and had even connived with them during his tenure as the chief minister.
- He went to the UK and stayed there for about a decade during which time he acquired a British citizenship and passport. He also went on a tour of Pakistan on a special invitation from Maqbool Butt, the executed leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), who had organised a convention in May 1974 in Pakistan. During this trip he forged links with the well-known secessionist organisation (JKLF).
- He joined hands with Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq. The National Conference flag which was hitherto a symbol of secularism was stitched on to the green flag of the Awami Action

Committee, a communal party which did not acknowledge the state's accession to the Indian union. This encouraged anti-national and communal forces in the state and their disruptive activities increased considerably.

- His government concealed the truth and misguided the home ministry about the growing activities of the secessionists and also about the 'Gurmat camps' organised by Sikh extremists.
- About 72 detainees were released on parole, the orders for many of which were passed by the chief minister himself. But none of those released reported to the jail authorities nor were they rearrested.
- Farooq Abdullah was willing to go to any extent to help his personal favourites in complete disregard of all rules and prescribed procedure and all norms of financial and administrative propriety were thrown to the winds. This created financial and administrative chaos in the state

Farooq Abdullah may not have been able to achieve anything substantial in removing the people's economic problems and streamlining the administration largely because he could not devote enough time to it. But was he to blame for this? The Congress(I) kept up a barrage of attack against him, after the defeat in the 1983 Assembly elections and tried to disrupt the functioning of the state administration. This created a number of problems for Dr Abdullah and he had to spend a lot of time facing his opponents on the political front, in and outside the state. Besides with violence escalating in Punjab, the tourist inflow to Kashmir decreased, creating economic problems for the government. It is true that Farooq Abdullah may have given jobs to a few acquaintances which may have created bad blood But the people who benefited from it are now crowding around G.M. Shah and his colleagues. Whether or not Dr Abdullah had violated laws or procedures in recruiting them only an impartial judicial enquiry can ascertain.

However, he can hardly be dubbed an anti-national or accused of being communal. It is true that he went to the UK to study medicine. It is also true that he acquired British citizenship and held a British passport. But subsequently he opted for Indian citizenship. Does this make him an anti-national? Farooq Abdullah's first visit to Pakistan was in 1964 when he accompanied his father to that country at the behest of Jawaharlal Nehru. The then Prime Minister of India had wanted Sheikh Abdullah to negotiate a settlement of the Kashmir problem In 1974, on his second visit to Kashmir, Dr Abdullah made it clear to the leaders of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) that he was opposed to their idea of an



D.D. Thakur



CNS

G.M. Shah (left) with Mrs Gandhi

Helping Hands

The administration and the police setup in Jammu and Kashmir saw a major shakeup in the upper levels in early January. The state cabinet took a decision to terminate the services of as many as 16 senior officers, which included the state's trade commissioner in Delhi, Gulam Nabi Naik. All those who were dismissed had been reemployed in recent years after their respective periods of service had expired. Whatever the intentions of the state government headed by Gulam Mohammad Shah, the step was, by and large, welcomed by those who had been suffering due to the officers occupying senior positions for many years.

But some other changes made in the name of overhauling the administration and the police department have not gone down well with many people. The changes have been criticised because many senior officers have been replaced by favourites of the ruling party and the move came about soon after the defeat of the National Conference-Congress(I) combine in the recent Lok Sabha elections. The ruling party and its ally, soon after the election results were announced, accused "a section of the state government officials and some senior police officials" of siding with the opposition National Conference and "even helping it in capturing booths and resorting to other malpractices to win the polls." But, said former chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah and the president of the opposition National Conference, "They did nothing in particular to favour us." Many in the ruling party as well as those in the state Congress(I) had, in vain, expected that the administration and the law and order machinery would favour the ruling party in the Lok Sabha polls. In the Kashmir Valley, where the National Conference-Congress(I) combine suffered a defeat, rumours were heard on the eve of the elections that the polls would be rigged in favour of the ruling party-backed candidates and the lone Congress(I) nominee

The plans of the ruling party, however, did not work out though the administration had managed to deploy men known to be sympathetic to it as polling personnel in some of the booths. The law and order machinery on the whole remained impartial. There were, however, cases where opposition supporters and party workers resisted attempts at booth-capturing and indulging in other irregularities and the election commission had to order a repoll in as many as 30 booths.

The ruling party and its allies are now taking the state government and police officials to task for not helping the combine in the elections.This is apparent from the Shah ministry adopting a pick-and-choose policy for victimising the officials. The list of such officials include the divisional commissioner of Kashmir division, Hamidullah Khan, who has been forced to go on a long leave. Mr Khan's role during the recent elections was not appreciated by the ruling party and its ally, the Congress(I). The ruling party had accused Dr Abdullah's party of attacking a polling booth in Srinagar constituency and snatching away a ballot box from there on 24 December. But Mr Khan and the deputy inspector-general of police, Ali Mohammed Wattali, had categorically denied the charge while talking to newsmen at the end of polling on that day. The two senior officials had also denied that a case had been registered against the former chief minister. Their denial had obviously upset the ruling party. Mr Wattali has been replaced and given an innocuous post. It is widely believed that Muzaffar Shah, the son of the chief minister G.M. Shah, and the ruling party-backed nominee for the Srinagar seat, was not particularly happy with Wattali and had even complained about him to the chief minister. Hence, the transfer order of Mr Wattali.

Another charge levelled against Mr Wattali mentions that he allegedly backed Muzaffar Shah's rival, Abdul Rashid Kabuli of the opposition National Conference, to whom he lost. It was on Wattali's orders that some ruling partymen had to be physically removed from the Sher-e-Kashmir recreation centre where the counting was taking place, for indulging in hooliganism. The younger Shah had, at that time, reportedly warned Wattali that he would teach him a lesson. The state's police chief, Peer Gulam Hassan Shah, was also not spared. Although the senior police officer had deviated from the rules by keeping the then chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, in the dark about the developments which took place before he was ousted, Peer Hassan Shah was replaced by M.M. Khajoria. Peer Hassan Shah, a police officer of repute, could not tolerate such humiliation and resigned on returning to the state.

There are many other senior police officers, engineers and state government officials who complain that they have been victimised for no fault of their own. But the state government has denied the allegations. Mr G.M. Shah, the cabinet maintains, had been contemplating a major shakeup in the administration soon after he took over as the chief minister in July last year. But it had to be put off "to monitor the functioning of the various departments and examine the conduct of the senior officers." When this correspondent drew the attention of a minister towards the frequent changes in the administration during the past few months, particularly in July and August last year, he said that during that period only "sporadic changes" had taken place and that the "task of streamlining and rationalising" the administrative setup was repeatedly postponed due to the government's pre-occupation with the law and order situation which was being aggravated by the agitational approach of Dr Abdullah. Begum Khalida Shah of the ruling National Conference told a daily recently, that some officials had to be replaced "because they were shielding anti-national and secessionist elements.

The state government has also abolished all recruitment boards in the state. Instead, separate boards for recruitment to each department with the head of the department as the convenor, have been constituted. This has been done "to eliminate delays in filling up the vacancies and decentralising the process of recruitment." But its detractors have asserted that the government only wanted to give ministers and other high-ups " a chance to recruit its favourites." In the beginning of January 1985, a large number of unemployed youths held a demonstration in Srinagar against the alleged malpractices in some recruitments. The ruling party president has also been approached by some unemployed women complaining that large-scale irregularities took place in the recruitment of teachers in the state's education department.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

armed movement for the liberation of Kashmir (*see box*). Nor did his allegedly anti-national activities abroad come in the way of his being appointed the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir after the death of his father. Devidas Thakur may not find it convenient to remember it now, but it is a well-known fact that he had taken extraordinary interest in the appointment of Dr Abdullah as the chief minister at that point of time. So much for the allegation that he is "anti-national." One heard comments about Dr Abdullah being "anti-national" and "communal" only after he had defeated the Congress(I) in the 1983 Assembly elections and formed the National Conference government in the state.

Neither the ruling state government nor its ally, the Congress(I), appears to be in any mood to give up its vicious campaign against Dr Abdullah. But his younger brother, Tariq Abdullah, who had also acquired British citizenship while in England and was included in the Pakistani delegation to the United Nations during the 1965 war, is now among the close confidants of G.M. Shah and has recently been appointed project director of Srinagar's prestigious Convention Complex.

The alliance between Farooq Abdullah and Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq has also been subjected to severe criticism by Shah, but it was the same Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq whom Shah met on the eve of the Lok Sabha elections to enlist his support. Again, the former chief minister has been accused of sharing the platform with the "secessionist and communal" Mirwaiz. His credentials, however, did not come in the way when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi conveyed through Shah a goodwill message to him for the constructive role he played in the wake of Mrs Gandhi's assassination. The White Paper claims that Farooq Abdullah was present on the eve of the last Assembly elections, at a meeting addressed by Mirwaiz where he revived the slogan of self-determination for Kashmiris. Even the worst critics of Dr Abdullah have been amused by this allegation: the question of Farooq Abdullah being present at that meeting did not arise as, till then, Mirwaiz had not announced his party's support to Dr Abdullah.

Syed Ali Geelani, the leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami's parliamentary board, who had been arrested during Farooq Abdullah's tenure as the chief minister for allegedly questioning Kashmir's accession to India, was released after G.M. Shah personally revoked his detention order last month. Iqbal Qureshi, the main accused in a bomb blast case in the sports stadium in Srinagar on Independence Day in 1983, was released on a month's parole soon after Shah assumed office but was not rearrested after his parole expired. As far as the "Gurmat camps" being held in Kashmir are concerned, former home minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has gone on record to say that such camps were held in some other states as well, including Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. Besides, no training in fortification or arms was conducted in these camps, as alleged.



Tariq Abdullah

The sub-committee's report indicting Dr Abdullah is, therefore, an act of political vendetta. Scraps of Dr Abdullah's past have been raked up in an attempt to produce a concocted story to make the former chief minister appear to be what, in fact, he is not. The timing of the release of the document is also significant. The National Conference faction led by Dr Abdullah won all the three seats in the Kashmir Valley in the recent Lok Sabha elections on the basis of which he demanded the dismissal of the Shah ministry and fresh Assembly elections in the state. This demand may have frightened his detractors who have now hit back. But if they wanted to defame Farooq Abdullah, then they have failed entirely in their purpose. In fact, it has had just the opposite effect: it is the image of the Shah ministry that is getting tarnished further as it is evident that the White Paper was released to malign Dr Abdullah. The national press has also denounced it, describing it as an act of political vendetta. Even some Congress(I) leaders have privately criticised the Shah government for preparing such a weak report against the former chief minister. The ruling National Conference and its ally, the Congress(I), will indeed find it difficult to make political capital out of it.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar



Hashim Qureshi (centre) and others with a picture of Maqbool Butt

SPECIAL REPORT

Gunning for Dr Abdullah

G.M. Shah accuses the former CM of being "anti-national"

The former CM of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Farooq Abdullah, has again been accused of being "in league" with anti-national and secessionist forces while he was in power. The 113-page report prepared by the cabinet subcommittee constituted by the Gulam Mohammed Shah ministry, asserted that while he was in England Dr Abdullah indulged in anti-India activities in collaboration with various pro-Pakistan and anti-India organisations like the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). Another official document alleges that Farooq Abdullah toured Pakistan in 1974 and established contacts with well-known terrorists like Hashim Qureshi and Amanullah Khan of the JKLF and "himself took and administered the oath of allegiance to remain dedicated to the movement for the liberation of Kashmir."

After the defeat in the June 1983 Assembly polls, the Congress(I) started a campaign against the then chief minister Farooq Abdullah. The party leaders had then accused him of shielding anti-national and secessionist elements within his state They did not stop short at that : in fact, they even claimed that he was in "league with" the JKLF, used to be its active member and continued to be in touch with such elements.

Dr Abdullah had first visited Pakistan in May 1964 when he accompanied his father Sheikh Abdullah The Sheikh had been sent to the neighbouring country by the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, possibly to negotiate a settlement of the Kashmir problem with the then president of Pakistan, Ayub Khan.

Farooq Abdullah, then a student of medicine in England, met some political activists of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and conveyed a message to them from Sheikh Abdullah. The Sheikh, he told them, wanted an organisation like the Plebiscite Front to be launched on the other side of the border as well The suggestion evoked an encouraging response and Farooq Abdullah again held a meeting with "disgruntled" politicians of the territory including G.M. Lone, a wealthy Karachi-based carpet exporter from Kashmir and former Azad Kashmir state councillor, during his stopover at Karachi, on his way to London from India. Farooq Abdullah also discussed briefly the proposal of launching a new political party.

Even later Farooq Abdullah did remain in touch with the leaders of POK and often became a conduit for messages between his father and the POK leaders. Exactly a decade later, Dr Farooq Abdullah visited Pakistan again in 1974. He was sent to Pakistan by his parents "on a purely family mission." But as soon as he stepped on the other side of the border, he was invited to tour various parts of POK by the Plebiscite Front (for Pakistan and Azad Kashmir) leaders which Dr Abdullah accepted. Needless to say the organisation which invited Farooq Abdullah to tour POK had been formed at the instance of Sheikh Abdullah a decade ago and the present CM, G.M. Shah, used to be the general-secretary of Sheikh Abdullah's Plebiscite Front on the Indian side of Kashmir.

Dr Abdullah, during his tour of POK, addressed a number of public meetings organised by the Plebiscite Front, attended the party's annual convention at Mirpur city in POK and held a series of meetings with the territory's leaders on the political situation there as well as the Kashmir problem. This correspondent, on his recent visit to POK and Pakistan, heard the recorded version of the speech delivered by Dr Abdullah at Mirpur. In the speech he described Kashmir as "our mother" and urged all her sons to fight for their rights. This correspondent was also told about the occasion when Ashraf Shah alias Qureshi, one of the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane, Ganga, presented a sword to Farooq Abdullah as a symbol of the armed struggle for Kashmir's "liberation from Indian occupation." During the convention, Dr Abdullah returned the sword to the Plebiscite Front leaders saying, "We believe in Gandhian methods only. Keep it (the sword). I am leaving it to you in trust." Maqbool Butt, the then president of the Plebiscite Front, also attended the convention.

There are, however, contrary claims about whether or not Dr Abdullah knew of the existence of the JKLF then and whether he took and administered the oath to remain dedicated to the movement" launched by the militant organisation. "He made many promises but I was even then convinced that this man cannot be trusted," said Mir Abdul Qayyum, a Karachi-based businessman from Jammu and the co-founder of the JKLF. Was Dr Abdullah a member of your organisation? When this correspondent posed this question to Amanullah Khan, chairman of the Birmingham-based JKLF during a telephonic conversation, he said with a rebuff, "Farooq Abdullah is not and has never been a member of the JKLF which was formed in 1977 whereas he has been in Kashmir probably since 1976. He is a hypocrite and cannot be trusted." The fact, however, remains that Farooq Abdullah remained close to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front leaders during his trip to Pakistan and could have hardly been kept in the dark about the existence of the organisation.

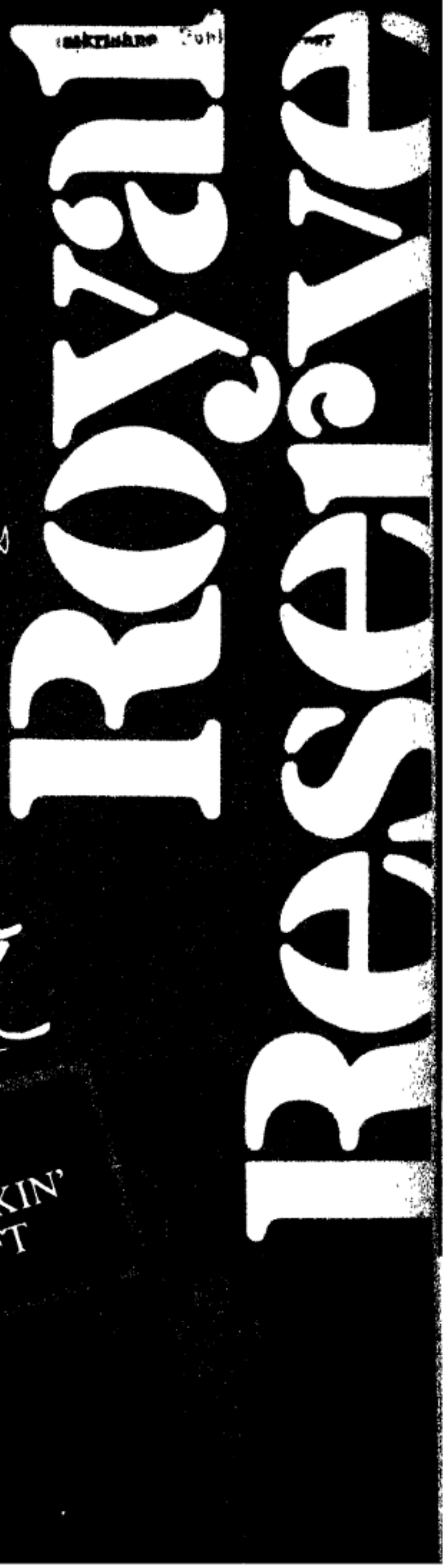
To Liberation Front leaders and many others in Pakistan and POK, Dr Abdullah is "an opportunist and a hypocrite." In fact, Hashim Qureshi even dubbed him a "traitor" and an "enemy" of Kashmirs. While Dr Abdullah might have raised hopes in the hearts of many political activists of POK during his tour of the territory, he was a changed man after his return to India. He acquired Indian citizenship, and gave up the British one.

Most of the politicians of Kashmir including the present chief minister have been associated with the organisation which either challenged Kashmir's accession to India or raised doubts on the issue. If their past can be ignored, why cannot Farooq Abdullah's? What is difficult to understand is how the Indian government granted Dr Abdullah Indian citizenship if his anti national activities were known Perhaps, what can be termed as the final word on the allegations came from the JKLF, following his dismissal from the chief ministership of the state. The JKLF had at that time issued a statement saying that Dr Abdullah deserved what he got as he had been repeating over and over again that he was an Indian.

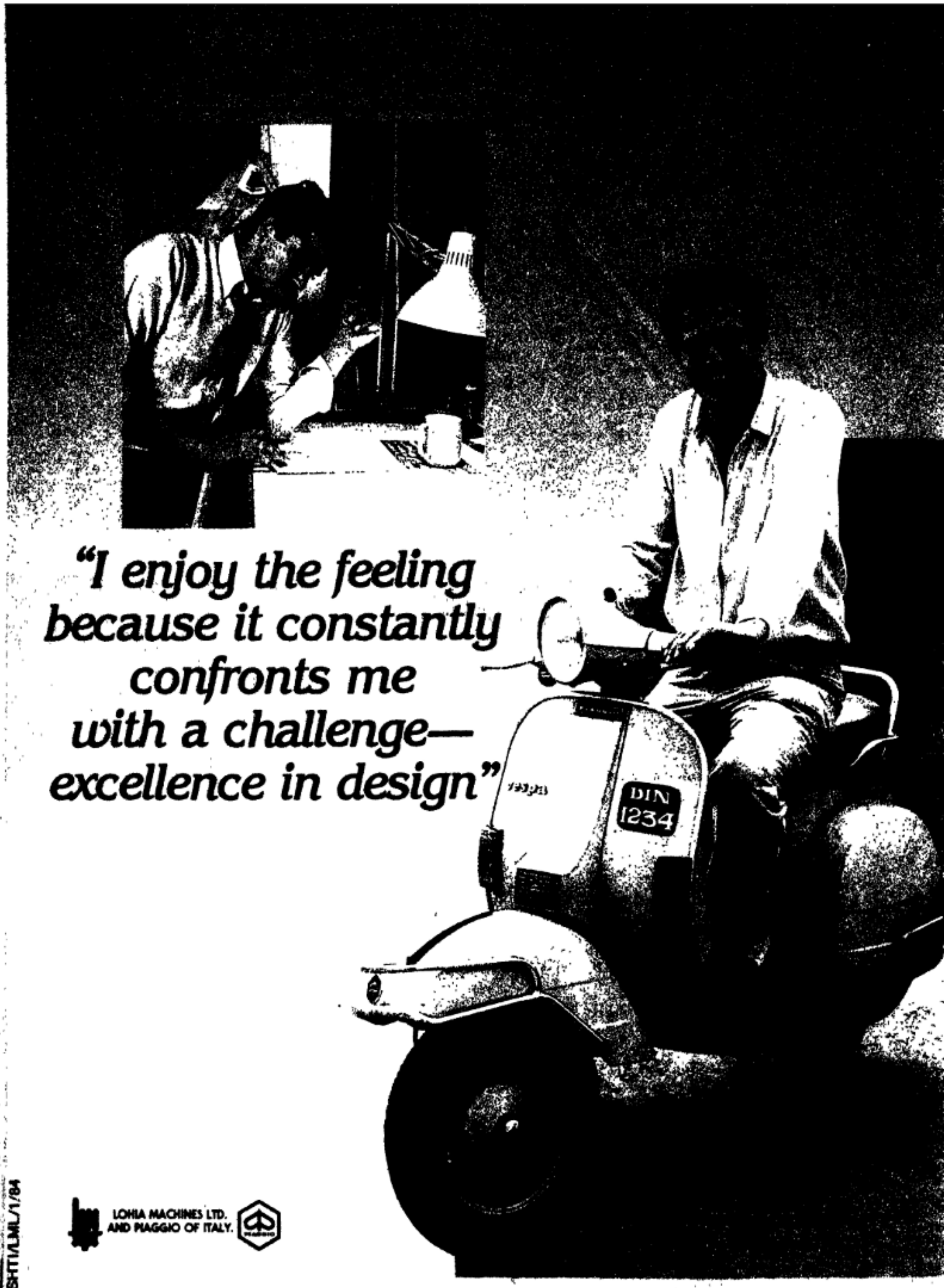
Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

It's a hard day's night
I've been walkin' the town
Makin' a living
And I'm feelin' down
I've been on the move
'Coz I got money to make
But after it's all over
A man needs a break
So here's to the good times
It's gotta be said
I'm ready for a Royal
I'm lookin' for the Red

Yeah, I'm lookin'
for the Red



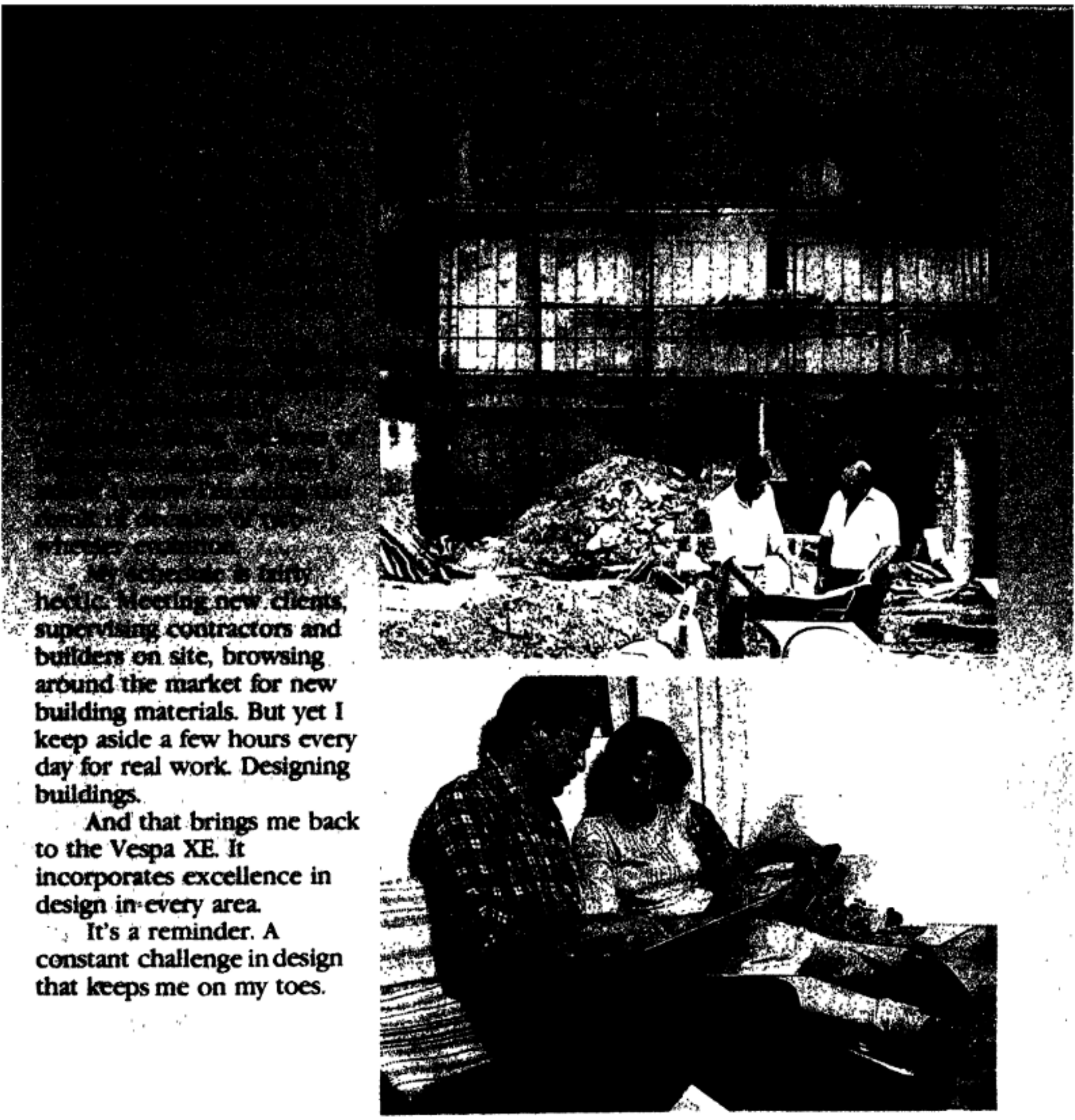
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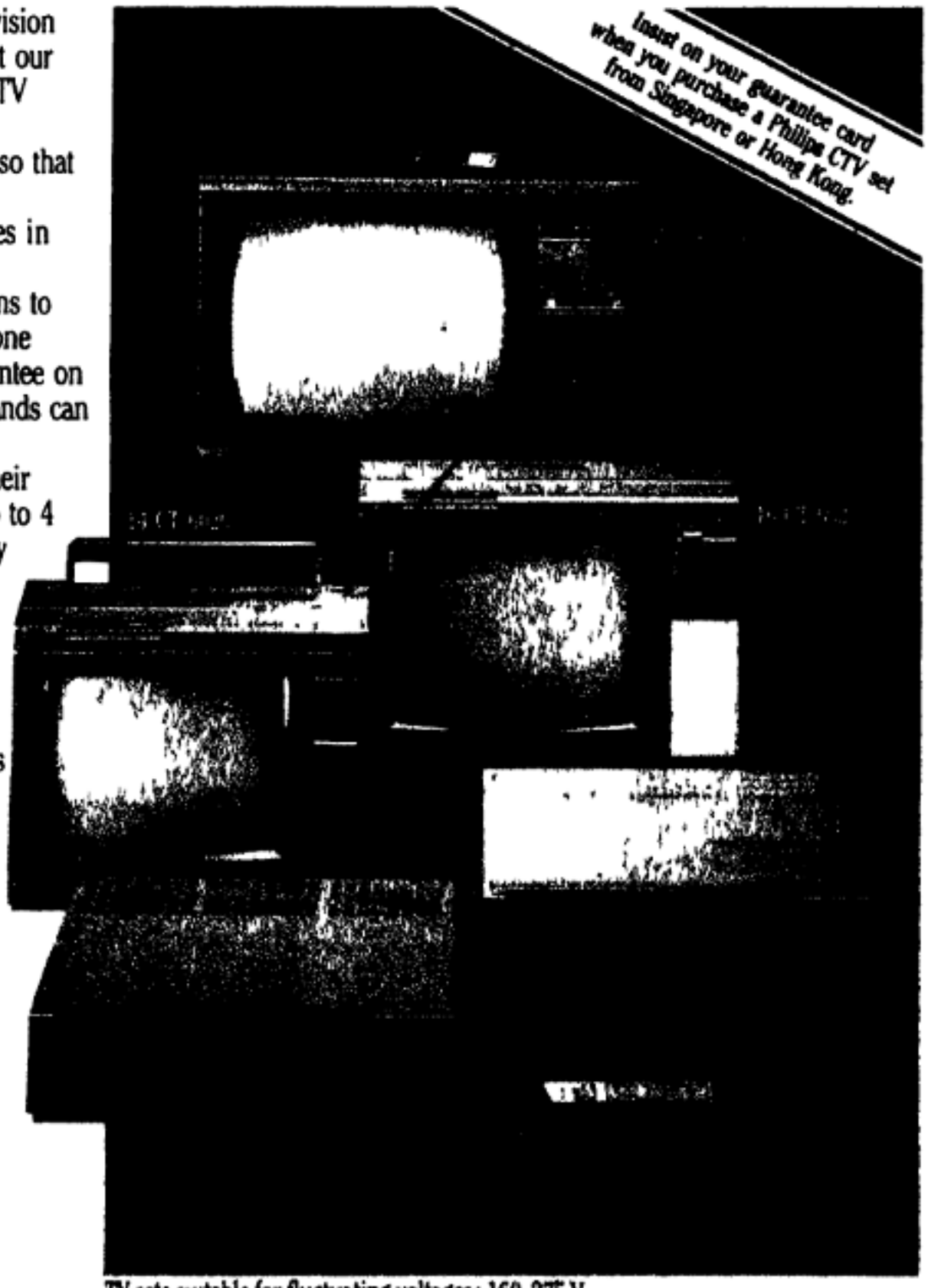
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The forest where the dacoits often take refuge

Bihar's Other '*Sarkar*'

It is the dacoits who rule West Champaran district

Early in January this year, 27-year-old Santosh, a shopowner in Narkatiaganj, West Champaran district, Bihar, was kidnapped by dacoits. Soon after the kidnapping the dacoits sent Santosh's father a ransom note demanding Rs 70,000 in cash. The note was stamped: "Bihar *sarkar* (government)." Santosh's is not an extraordinary case. Today in West Champaran district the gun rules supreme. And those who wield it do so with, what they claim, the authority of the Bihar *sarkar*. The dacoits—there are as many as six groups in the area—have their own areas of jurisdiction, their own laws and law-enforcing machinery.

The spurt of dacoity in this district began in 1980 when some musclemen of a Bettiah-based businessman began committing crimes in the area. Soon they started actively supporting politicians of the area and are even believed to have worked for the victory of former union minister, Kedar Pande, who contested the Bettiah Lok Sabha seat in 1980. After a spate of dacoities, the criminals found a patron in a toppolice official of the district. Senior police officers in Patna are of the opinion that it was this police official who counselled the criminals against committing dacoities. He told them to adopt, what he considered, more non-violent methods of earning money: kidnapping people for ransom. Since then, more than 200 persons have been kidnapped and released only after payment of the ransom demanded.

The police have been singularly ineffective in curbing the criminals or even in helping in the release of those kidnapped. The criminals, however, have been known to release those kidnapped on their own. This happened when Father Chakalackal SJ, a Jesuit priest from Ratan Purwa village was kidnapped and a Rs two-lakh ransom demanded. The priest was voluntarily released by the dacoits when the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, and the Kerala chief minister, K.M. Karunanidhi, took special interest in the case and demanded the priest's release.

Similarly, Manojnath Sinha, the grandson of the Uttar Pradesh Governor, C.P.N. Sinha, was released by the criminals without payment of the ransom amount. Others, however, have not been so lucky. The grandson of the Congress(I) leader and former AICC(I) working president Kamlapati Tripathi who was kidnapped from the Bagaha area was released after Rs 20,000 was paid as ransom.

Scared of the dacoity menace, the politicians of the area had no other way out but to patronise them or "live peacefully without disturbing them." The local people are convinced that there exists a dacoit-police-politician nexus since in the past three years, in spite of the repeated complaints by politicians to those in authority, the police have done precious little: only two dacoits have been killed in encounters with the police.

The police-criminal connection can

Photographs: K.M. Kishan

be ascertained from the fact that hardly a dacoit has been arrested so far. Further, the police officers who have tried to take action against the dacoits have been transferred. Such was the case with Bhagat Prasad, a superintendent of police posted in the district. Mr Prasad was transferred within months of his posting, while his predecessor, despite the censure of the district court for allowing the dacoits to rule the district, was allowed to remain in his post for three years.

The criminals have now begun using more sophisticated methods of extorting money. For the past one year, they have been imposing what has come to be known popularly as "Section 144" on some farms of the area. The imposition of the "section" means that the owner of the farm is prevented from working in this field unless he pays the tax demanded by the "Bihar *sarkar*." Often the labourers are warned not to work by the dacoits. With the police failing to give any sort of protection to the landowners, there are around 50 such farms, varying in size from 20 to 70 acres in the district, which have been abandoned. If the trend continues, the rich farmers of the area may sell their land and move out of the area.



Police picket at Ratan Purwa village where Fr Chalackal was kidnapped in June 1984

Sattan Ahir was perhaps the first major dacoit in Champaran. He was one of the gang members of Sitaram Rajgaria, whose name figures in cases varying from uranium smuggling to political murder. Rajgaria was widely believed to be the financier of Kedar Pande. In fact, Sattan Ahir and another gang member, Lakhan Ahir campaigned for Mr Pande during the 1980 Lok Sabha elections.

In 1982, a senior police official 'forced' Sattan Ahir to surrender while Lakhan Ahir formed his own gang. In the gang were Vyas Dubey, Nema Ahir, Ramjatan Nonia and Rudal Ahir. Soon, differences arose



Police display the corpse of Rudal Ahir, allegedly killed in an encounter with the police



Dacoit Laxan Ahir killed in a police encounter in Bettiah

and the group broke up. Each one of the criminals then formed his own marauding band. They agreed on their areas of operation.

Vyas Dubey, who was believed to be responsible for more than 50 kidnappings and imposing "Section 144" on more than 20 landowners, was killed by Nema Ahir on New Year's day this year. Nema Ahir dragged Dubey's body to his village in Bagaha, displayed it to the villagers and disposed it of. Rudal Ahir, another gang leader, was killed by one of his own men, Wakil Mian, last year. Bâsudev Yadav met his end in a police encounter. The gangs which are active now are led by Dhrub Yadav, Dhrub Mallah, Nema Ahir, Ramjatan Nonia and Bhaggar Ahir.

Besides the patronage from the police and the politicians, there are other factors which are responsible for organised dacoity in this district. There are more than 50 villages under the six most affected police stations—Bagaha, Ram Nagar, Narkatiaganj, Lauria, Dumri and Gaunaha—where roads are nearly non-existant and thus, the areas inaccessible to the police. Further, the areas are close to the 100-km stretch of deep forests where the dacoits often hide from the police.

There are also instances of police harassing the families of those kidnapped. A member of a victim's family told SUNDAY, that on 1 January 1985 Nema Ahir snatched a tractor belonging to Uday Bhan Singh to give chase to Vyas Dubey. The tractor was later released by Nema. The police have been threatening Uday Bhan Singh with dire consequences for his "connections with the dacoits."

With the dacoits enjoying protection, people of the area are convinced that nothing will be done to put an end to their activities. Till the time of going to press, only one of the six MLAs of the area. Arjun Vikram Shah of Ram Nagar, met the chief minister to apprise him of the situation and demanded action. It is doubtful if the true Bihar *Sarkar* will take action.

Yubaraj Ghimire, Bettiah



Inside Don forest: breeding ground of dacoits

PHOTOFEATURE

In Quest of Salvation

On Makar Sankranti day (14 January this year), more than four lakh pilgrims took their once-in-a-lifetime holy dip in the icy-cold waters of Ganga Sagar—where "Mother Ganga" meets the Bay of Bengal—to cleanse themselves of their sins. Photographer Sunil Dutt was at Ganga Sagar to capture man's quest for eternal salvation on earth





(Clockwise from bottom left) A sadhu lies on a bed of thorns while passers-by pay scant attention to him; women bow their heads in prayer; pilgrims performing a ritual at Ganga Sagar; and the temple of Kapil Muni at Sagar Island







BOOK EXTRACT

The Nation's Grandchildren

There have been many political families—the Roosevelts.the Kennedys, the Churchills—but none have wielded power so consistently over their countries as the Nehru-Gandhi family. Tariq Ali in his latest book, The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty *(published by Pan Books in association with Chatto and Windus and distributed in India by Rupa and Co, 15 Bankim Chatterjee St, Calcutta 700 012, price £2.50) from which this extract is taken, traces the rise of Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi and narrates the events that moulded them*



A family portrait taken in the Kremlin : Left to right Sonia, Rajiv, Rahul, Indira Gandhi, Sanjay, Priyanka and Menaka

Rajiv Gandhi was born in Allahabad in 1944. His brother Sanjay in Delhi in 1946. Their mother's childhood had been, in her own words, 'an abnormal one, full of loneliness and insecurity.' This had made her determined to ensure that her children were never short of love, companionship and children their own age. Rajiv was given an enormous amount of attention during his first three years. They were still in Anand Bhavan. Feroze and Indira were on their own since Jawaharlal was in prison. Rajiv was a happy child, full of fun and laughter. In 1946 he suffered two concurrent blows: they had to leave Allahabad and move to Lucknow *and* Sanjay was born. His mother wrote: 'I was far from well and I found his tantrums very irritating. Scolding only made it worse. So I tried reasoning. I told him that much as I loved him, his shouting disturbed me.' The following conversation then took place between the three-year-old and his mother.

Rajiv: What can I do? I don't want to cry, it just comes.

Indira: There is a nice fountain in the garden. When you want to cry or shout, go to the fountain and do it there.

Following on this experiment in child psychology, Indira explained that after this episode, 'at the first sign of tears, I would whisper "fountain" and away he went. In the garden there was much to distract his attention and he soon forgot his troubles.' Feroze for his part was a loving and playful parent, not in the least bit authoritarian. He was not, by temperament, a patriarch. Nor was he a hypocrite. He did not therefore, play the part of a severe father. He was constantly making wooden toys for the children and joining in their games. It was hardly a secret that he had been unhappy when Indira took the boys to live with their grandfather in the palatial prime minister's residence in Delhi. What about the boys? Sanjay was still very little, but Rajiv was over four at the



Rajiv Gandhi watches awestruck a Canberra jet flanked by his grandfather and mother, November 1953, Palam

time. Whether or not he ever expressed any disquiet at the time, the second move from what had become home must have been an unsettling experience.

One of Rajiv's earliest memories of unpleasantness must have been the communal riots which shook Delhi in 1947, when Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan massacred innocent Muslims in Delhi. Indira and the children had, at the time, been in Mussoorie, a hill resort. Feroze had cabled to say that under no circumstances should they return to Delhi. Indira was puzzled and 'Like all young wives, I began to get suspicious and I thought this was one reason why I should come immediately.' On the telephone Feroze described the horrors that had been taking place every day and indicated that this was not the place for women and children. Indira's reaction was the exact opposite. She packed their suitcases and caught the next train back to Delhi. The two boys must have sensed the tension and then, as they neared Delhi, seen with their young eyes an awful scene. At a Delhi suburb, Shahdara, communal mobs were preparing to lynch a Muslim on the platform. Indira was outraged. Her Nehru temper became uncontrollable. Leaving her petrified sons in the train, she jumped out of the compartment and silenced the crowd by an effective display of oratory. The victim was saved and the train moved on. She later told an interviewer that she would have done a great deal more than just shout at them had it not been for the fact 'that I myself was in the process of dressing.' What effect did this incident have on Rajiv and Sanjay? Children are extraordinarily perceptive at this age and even though they may have repressed their feelings, the image must have stayed in Rajiv's head for some time. He would also have heard his mother describing it to other adults on numerous occasions.

In Teen Murti House, however, the outside world seemed very far away. The Prime Minister's house was enclosed on all sides, with gigantic lawns, huge rooms and lots of people coming and going. Jawaharlal loved animals and the house had acquired a little zoo, which consisted of animals presented to the Prime Minister on his travels throughout India. There were dogs (pedigrees and strays), parrots, birds, squirrels, rabbits and more exciting additions, which provided endless diversions for grandfather and grandchildren. In Assam, Nehru was presented with a red Himalayan panda. It was a cub. They had not seen one before and had to consult a book on Indian animals in an Assam library to recognise the tiny ball of fur. Rajiv named it Bhimsa and it occupied a corner in the boy's bathroom. Their mother was indulgent, but she complained that, 'I could not house-train him and he always climbed on to the towel-rack to do his business, besides racing all over the house.' He was ultimately banished to the garden, and in the summer, when Delhi became too hot, he went to the coolness of Nainital. The Assamese provided Bhimsa with a mate,

Poma (lotus in Sikkimese). The two pandas immediately took to each other. It was love at first sight and they produced cubs, an unusual occurrence for captive pandas. Rajiv and Sanjay adored them. So did their grandfather. There was a small-scale rivalry for their affections. Jawaharlal spent time with them morning and evening and Indira wrote that 'they miss him a lot when he is out of station.' When Nehru was unwell, his grandsons would take Bhimsa to his bedroom to see him, an event which always cheered him considerably.

The year before Rajiv and Sanjay were packed off to boarding school, the zoo at Teen Murti was enlarged. Three tiger cubs entered the house. Rajiv and Sanjay took to them at once. Before long they were frolicking with the tigers quite fearlessly. Neither of the boys was scared of them. They treated them as ordinary pets. Other children and adults were petrified of the cubs. They would not go near them, much to the amusement of Rajiv and Sanjay, who used these occasions to show off without inhibition. As the tigers began to grow, two were presented to the zoo at Lucknow. The third had caught the fancy of a visiting world leader, Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. Nehru gave it to him as a present and it accompanied the Marshal back to Belgrade.

Life for the two boys was full of diversions, but the atmosphere was very different to the Anand Bhavan days in Allahabad. Jawaharlal and Indira had grown up at a time when India was engaged in struggles. The country was occupied by a foreign power. Indira's childhood was coloured by her never-ending visits to prison to see her father and grandfather, then her mother and she had finally spent some time inside herself.

This had affected the intellectual and political formation of father and daughter. During her youth and in her student days, Indira had read Beatrice Webb, Harold Laski, Aneurin Bevan, Bernard Shaw and numerous autobiographies. Later she read Sartre, Camus and De Beauvoir in the original French. Her stay in Europe had made her an addict of Western classical music, Bach and Beethoven in particular, as well as the cinema. Her favourite European city was Florence. In later life her reading had become a little less highbrow. One of the favourites during her last years had been Barbara Cartland, symbolic perhaps of a more general decline in the country as a whole.

Rajiv and Sanjay, by contrast, were brought up in the shadow of power politics. Nehru was a popular political leader, but his period in office was hardly a golden age. The deterioration in political standards had begun during his lifetime. Politics, in the India of the 1950s, as far as Rajiv and Sanjay were concerned, meant endless photographs with their mother and grandfather, accompanying the latter on odd state visits, being polite to visitors and dignitaries from abroad and observing the seamier side of politics when Congress bosses visited Teen Murti House to pay their respects. In short, the brothers Gandhi had become the nation's grandchildren. Whatever else this might have meant, it certainly did not encourage a critical view of India or the world. The ceremonies and rituals associated with power must have had some impact on two impressionable young boys. Their lives and their perceptions of reality might well have been very different if they had lived with their father in his modest MPs bungalow. Feroze Gandhi's lifestyle was markedly dissimilar in virtually every way

Indira Gandhi listening to father at the 1964 Bhubaneswar AICC session



to the domestic patterns of the Prime Minister's house.

Feroze was, in an environment of his own choosing, a totally relaxed individual. He hated protocol, state banquets, formality in any shape or form. He was at his best during family picnics, where he could laugh, joke and frolic to his heart's content. Equally important was his refusal to participate in cover-ups of any sort in order to maintain the unity of the Congress hierarchy. He was an iconoclast and extremely critical of the direction taken by the Congress governments under his father-in-law's stewardship. The children, under his care, would not have been so bedazzled by their proximity to power.

As Indira became more and more immersed in every-day politics a decision had to be taken about the boys. Rajiv was twelve, Sanjay was nine. Their education had become a major concern for Indira, Feroze and Jawaharlal. It was decided to send them to the country's leading public school in Dehra Dun, in the Himalayan foothills, where the air was fresh and where, it was hoped, they would find friends from a similar background and a good education. Dehra Dun was the site of India's first military academy and its most-sought-after Doon School, which had been established by an anglophile Indian in 1935.

Education in British India had been an upper-class affair, with certain institutions provided for the middle and lower-middle classes. The oldest schools had been set up to educate the sons of the royal houses, the heirs to the large estates of the gentry in the countryside, and others who were owners of property and inheritors of wealth. The Chief's College in Lahore was, as its name suggested, designed to educate the chiefs of tomorrow Most Indians were kept outside its boundaries, not in order to encourage rapid polarisations, but to ensure that it was the chiefs who became the leaders of the Indians and acted on their behalf vis-a-vis the British. Other schools were, of course, permitted for lesser mortals. The clerks and white-collar workers so vital to the Empire had to be produced from somewhere. As time had passed it was realised that the Chief's College syndrome was no longer sufficient. Polo, cricket and buggery might be sufficient to run a landed estate or a tiny despotism, but something else was needed to produce people who would manage industry and run the country after independence.

During the 1920s and 1930s, a number of schools were established in hill-stations throughout India. These were modelled on English public schools; they placed a great deal of emphasis on sports, but also provided a core curriculum, provided and taught by a set of efficient and relatively enlightened school teachers. There were St Paul's and St Joseph's in Darjeeling; Oak Grove in Mussoorie; Sherwood College in Nainital; Burn Hall in Abbotabad; Lawrence College in Ghora Gali; Bishops Cotton in Simla; St Edmund's in Shillong, and Doon School in Dehra Dun, to name but a few. A network of convents were provided to offer the same facilities to girls, but there were also the women's equivalents of Chief's Colleges, though very few in number. The prefix St was usually affixed to those schools which were run by Jesuits or Catholic brothers. These tended to be extremely strict, but maintained fairly rigorous educational standards. The Catholic brothers, descendants of the Inquisition, were great believers in torture. Beautifully

Rajiv Gandhi listening to mother at the 1983 Calcutta AICC session

Sujit Ghosh



oiled canes were kept on display and 'benders' were regularly administered to recalcitrant pupils. There were also numerous sexual incidents involving the Catholic brothers. 'Six benders now in front of the class or two in my room after school' usually meant that 'the two' would be applied to bare buttocks and in more than one case the petrified boy found that the object he was threatened with was not a well-oiled cane.

Doon School was established in the autumn of 1935 on a 70-acre estate in Dehra Dun. Its declared aim was to develop a rounded-out personality. The initial advertisement for the headmaster's job stated that: 'Though slavish imitation is to be avoided, the proposed school will attempt to develop in an atmosphere of Indian culture and social environment many of the best features of English public schools'. In fact slavish imitation was not avoided. Nor could it be. The English public schools had become essential suppliers of army officers and civil servants to service the Empire. In India they were needed to continue the tradition, but with indigenous recruits. It was in some ways symbolic that the military academy and the school were both in Dehra Dun, the Indian Army and the Civil Service would require these and similar institutions throughout the country.

Rajiv and Sanjay arrived at the school in 1955. Everyone knew who they were, but nobody cared. That was one of the best things as far as the Gandhis were concerned. The school was full of young men from privileged families and the fact that Nehru's grandsons had joined this select band was not a big surprise. The friends that Sanjay, in particular, was to make here were to remain his 'buddies' for the rest of his life and their school nick-names 'Dumpy' and 'Roly-Poly' (applied to Akbar Ahmed and Kamal Nath respectively) were to be featured in the Indian press.

The principal of the school in 1955 was a legendary character called J.A.K. Martyn. He had taught at Harrow for ten years from 1924-34 and had then gone to India with Arthur Foot from Eton and helped start the Doon School. He had become the headmaster in 1948 and had stayed at his desk for another 18 years. He had been greatly influenced by the educational theories of Kurt Hahn and had incorporated many of his reforms. He was generally regarded as unassuming and friendly and integrated easily into post-independence Indian society. He loved the mountains, and the school's most arduous climbs were planned by him with great care and an incredible attention to every detail. He introduced countless young Indians to the joys of mountaineering. According to their contemporaries, Rajiv and Sanjay both enjoyed the school, though the younger brother was even then considered far more of an extrovert. Neither he nor Rajiv, however, were ever known to have boasted, or attempted to utilize their grandfather's standing in the country. Their contemporaries included the actor Roshan Seth, who would one day play Nehru in Richard Attenborough's cinema version of *Gandhi*, and Vivan Sunderam, who would become a Marxist and a painter of the Baroda School, the most exciting and innovative group of artists in India. Apart from them the overwhelming majority of Doscos (the name taken by the school's alumni) were civil servants, journalists, business executives and industrialists. There were also a sprinkling of men who had become senior army officers. *Imprint* magazine in Bombay published an article on the school in which the author was told by an old Doscovian, nicknamed 'Taggy' (short for Tagore) of an incident during the Indo-Pakistan war in Bengal: 'During the 1971 war on the Pakistan border, a famous commander of an Indian regiment took his foghorn and shouted over to the other side, "Any Doon students out there?" When the answer came back in the negative he said, "OK, then fire!"' There is something grotesque about this story, but



Nehru with Sanjay (left) and Rajiv

it is not apocryphal. There were other incidents of a similar sort which were reported at the time. Many senior Indian and Pakistani officers had been, if not to the same school, to the same military academy in Dehra Dun and after the surrender many old stories were exchanged over glasses filled with an amber liquid.

It should not be forgotten that Dehra Dun did not only accommodate a military academy and Doon school. It also had a prison. The two boys at Doon School, had a grandfather, who had spent many years in Dehra Dun prison. Did they ever, during their long stay at the school, take an afternoon off and visit the prison? If they did it must have been a secret, for no one has written about or referred to it. All the indications are that they did not, which is hardly surprising. The colonial period may have been eight or nine years away, but it already seemed distant. The new rulers were firmly embedded in the old soil and prisons were no longer symbols of respectability in the Congress milieu.

In 1960 Feroze had died. Both boys were extremely upset. Rajiv was the more reserved emotionally, but even he had not been able to hide the pain. Sanjay had been visibly upset. Their mother wrote to an old family friend, Mohammed Yunus. "I don't know what to write. I am feeling so utterly desolate and miserable. You know more than anyone else how much Feroze and I disagreed and quarrelled over the years and yet instead of separating or slackening the bond of friendship, we were closer than ever before. We had a wonderful holiday together, nearly a month in a houseboat in Srinagar, and we made so many plans for the future. The boys are of an age when they need a father more than a mother. I feel lost and empty and dead and yet life must go on."

Indira knew how much Feroze and his sons had been attached to each other. Any plans being made by their parents to live together, and it is obvious that this is what was being discussed, would have delighted both Rajiv and Sanjay. The death was a tragedy in more than



A proud mother and her sons

just a personal sense. It is very unlikely that Feroze Gandhi would have encouraged any dynastic pretensions on the part of either son. Nor would there have been an excuse for Sanjay to become a pillar of support for his mother. Everything that is known about Feroze indicates that he would have found all talk related to the divine rights of the Nehru clan somewhat repulsive and would have been sarcastic, even brutal, at the expense of the sycophant who had suggested such a course. He had himself fastidiously avoided profiting from the fact Nehru was his father-in-law. The sycophantic faction in the Lok Sabha had always avoided Feroze, whose biting humour was well-known. What could even have been in doubt was Indira's own position after the death of Shastri. We cannot take speculation too far, but there is widespread agreement that if Feroze Gandhi had not died in 1960, India's political history—not in its essentials, but in relation to certain particular aspects—might have been very different.

After the death of their father, Indira confronted a dilemma. The Doon School days would soon be over. What should be done next? Neither Rajiv nor Sanjay displayed any interest in an academic career. Nor had they given too much thought to their futures. Indira discussed the problem with Jawaharlal. He was anxious that at least one of them follow in his footsteps at Cambridge. This was a period when the Indian government was discouraging Indian students from wasting precious foreign exchange by studying abroad. The decision to send Rajiv to Cambridge and Sanjay to study automobile engineering (his idea) was criticised by opposition politicians and the press. If restrictions were to be imposed on Indians wishing to complete their studies in Britain or the United States, then, it was argued, the nation's grandchildren should set an example. Indira's response was characteristically brusque: 'I' couldn't care less what people say. I thought it was necessary for my boys to go to England.' And England is where her boys went. They had not shown the slightest interest in politics till that time. When a journalist later commented on this fact, Indira replied: 'I tried my best to keep them away from it.' That remark was made in 1973.

At Trinity College, Rajiv enjoyed himself. He was a quiet man, extremely modest and generally liked. Occasionally the odd English student would ask him: 'By the way are you related to *the* Gandhi. Are you his son or something?' Rajiv would smile and explain that all he shared with Gandhi was a name. He never went on to say that he was, however, a Nehru, and that his grandfather was Prime Minister of India. He was still at Cambridge in the summer of 1964, when Jawaharlal died. Friends recall him being extremely quiet and upset for a few days, but he did not discuss the event with too many people.

Cambridge had not managed to interest Rajiv in politics or any academic pursuits. He left without a degree. His most important discovery in this old English university town had been a young Italian woman, Sonia, with whom he fell in love in 1965. He returned to India soon afterwards and declared that he was going to learn flying and become a pilot. Indira was not particularly pleased, but she had no serious alternative at the time. Though she must have cursed inwardly at this hereditary passion for flying that had afflicted the Nehru men. As far as Sonia was concerned, Indira was initially less than enthusiastic and persuaded Rajiv to postpone the marriage for a while. She made no secret of the fact that she would have preferred her son to marry an Indian. Shades of old Motilal had coloured his grand-daughter's vision, but when she realised that Rajiv and Sonia were serious, she gave her consent. They were married in 1968, in Delhi, and Sonia was welcomed warmly into the Nehru-Gandhi family circle. Whereas Motilal had threatened Jawaharlal that if he had wed a foreigner the children would suffer since they would be deprived of grandparental affection, there was nothing remotely similar in Indira's response to her first grandchild, Rahul. The new addition became an instant favourite. Sonia and Indira became extremely fond of each other. It was a relationship that time would deepen still further. Rajiv got a job as a pilot with the state-owned domestic airline (Indian Airlines) and was both satisfied and happy. His voice was often heard in internal flights, but it was always. 'This is your Captain Rajiv...' The surname was never used. Life in Delhi for the new couple fell into an easy groove of parties (both diplomatic and business) and an aimless upper middle-class existence. Rajiv met old friends from Doon School and Cambridge, but that was all. He never cultivated the politicians or the gangster-businessmen who were often trailing behind them.

Meanwhile, Sanjay's life was taking a slightly different course, though equally removed from any involvement with day-to-day politics. Sanjay had not been able to stay at Doon School. It was not that he had been expelled, but his mother had been told that he would do better elsewhere. He had returned from Doon to Delhi and found a place in a day-school in the capital: St. Columba's. When asked what interested him the most he used to make no secret of his passion for cars. He declined the offer to go to a university in either Britain or the United States.

Instead he decided to work as an apprentice with Rolls-Royce in England for a period of three years. Once again he left without finishing his course. His name meant 'victory', but he had allowed himself to be defeated first by Doon School and then by Rolls-Royce. He returned home with an incomplete knowledge about the mechanics of motor-cars. His grandfather was dead, but so was Lal Bahadur Shastri. Indira was Prime Minister of India. Sanjay had never cared too much for his grandfather. He would later admit to a journalist

that Jawaharlal had not influenced his thought in any way whatsoever On his return to India, Sanjay could have obtained a job with the already existing car industry. It is unlikely that he would have been refused a place. Instead he began to agitate for a small manufacturing industry of his own. He said he wanted to make a small car for India, more compact and neat than the somewhat unwieldy Ambassadors. Foreign cars are not allowed into the country becuase of tariff barriers, designed to encourage local industry. Sanajay wanted to design and build his 'Maruti' (Son of the wind-god).

His request proved an embarrassment to virtually everyone. Prior to his return from Rolls-Royce in Crewe, a number of teams of experts had been nominated by the government to study the feasibility of a more economic and smaller car. There had been talk of a state-owned industry in collaboration with a leading European firm, but the matter had not been taken any further because of the undisguised hostility of the private sector's powerful lobby of motor manufacturers, which resented any thought of competition. There was a radical opposition to the project from economists who were opposed to allocating badly-needed resources to producing cars, when there was a desperate need in the countryside for bicycles and new buses for public transport. The issue had been shelved.

The Maruti scandal continued to haunt Indira for a long time, but nothing illegal had been done. It was a straightforward case of nepotism. In Pakistan during the mid-1960s, the then military dictator's son had utilised his father's position to set up a flourishing industry with the help of local businessmen. When questioned about the affair by foreign journalists, Field-Marshal Ayub had replied: 'I never knew that my son [he had previously been an army officer—*author*] had such a talent for business.' A more recent case of the same type has involved the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her son, Mark, who accompanied her on a state visit to the *de facto* British protectorate of Oman, during which visit contracts were signed by the Omani regime and the private company by whom Mark was employed. The resultant furore in the British press was short-lived; a number of MPs alleged many details remained covered. In other words the Sanjay phenomenon was by no means unique or original. Numerous other cases could be cited from virtually every other capitalist democracy.

Two further problems soon arose. The first was that the Maruti never materialised. Sanjay was good at driving cars and fixing his own, but his performance as an industrialist had merely created a set of problems for his mother. A large amount of money had been expended to build Sanjay's cheap, low-petrol-consumption



Nehru



Mrs Indira Gandhi

Then something not so amazing happened. Sanjay refused to be dissuaded from his beloved Maruti project and all the barriers were suddenly lifted, an indication that when bureaucrats and industrialists wanted to move quickly they could do so regardless of any red-tape. Sanjay obtained government approval, which meant that a project being discussed by the state was immediately transferred to the private sector. He then raised the necessary capital, bought land near Delhi (a difficult operation at the best of times) and set up the Maruti factory. Indira had obviously not asked that special favours be accorded to her son, but then this was not considered necessary. She did not oppose the Maruti plan either and that was sufficient for the sycophants. When the oppsition attacked the Maruti affair as India's equivalent of Watergate, Indira was livid. She claimed that the opposition wanted to penalise Sanjay just because he was her son. 'What must I do,' she retorted, 'if my son does not happen to be a professor type?' Her opponents naturally remained unconvinced. They replied that Sanjay could do what he liked, but this was a case of the Prime Minister's position indirectly used to give an inexperienced youth privileges, which would have been denied to the overwhelming bulk of his peers in India.

automobile. People began to ask what had been done with the money. No replies were forthcoming. Sanjay had been defeated for the third time in his young life. To Doon School and Rolls-Royce could now be added the fiasco of Maruti. The second problem developed when Sanjay decided to abandon the small car and move into big politics. The catalyst was the famous judgment of the Allahabad High Court in 1975, which declared Mrs Gandhi's election from Rae Bareilly null and void and gave her a limited period of time to step down as the country's prime minister.

In the autumn of 1974 Sanjay had married a young Sikh woman, Maneka Anand. Her family had a long record of service to the *raj* in the Western part of the Punjab (which is now Pakistan). They had fled during the partition of the subcontinent and sought refuge in Delhi. Maneka's father was a retired army officer. Her mother had graduated in psychology and then did a post-graduate course at San Diego in the United States. When she was six, her father, Colonel Anand, had been posted to Britain for a special training course in signals. The family had accompanied him and they had settled in a tiny English village Watchfield, near Swindon.

and not far from Cheltenham. For two years young Maneka studied at a NAAFI school, before returning to India.

During a long interview with Dhiren Bhagat in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, she confessed that she had greatly enjoyed writing at school, especially children's poems, which 'I must have stopped as soon as I realised that they were bad'. This was not wholly true. She started writing poetry again after her marriage, though she only showed the poems to Sanjay. Her writing also included regular letters to her mother from school. One of these, written when she was fifteen, gives us an idea of her strong sense of loyalty: 'I hope Uncle Minna dies a gory death, I have run through all my schemes of kidnapping his children, poisoning his wife's food, etc., and now I give up.' The aforesaid Uncle Minna had been giving Mrs Anand a tough time!

Her reading, she confessed, consisted of 'studies on the mind'. This had startled her interviewer, who came back with: 'You mean things like Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of the Mind?*' Her reply was a quick denial: 'No, no, no. I'm talking about ... training schedules. Memorex systems. How the mind can be sort of expanded. Do anything you want... At the moment I'm reading a book called *The Possibility of Impossibility*... [it's about] how



Sanjay Gandhi

they train psychics for warfare, and how they make them work in hospitals.'

When Maneka married Sanjay, she was not interested in politics. Her parents had not been too strongly in favour of the match. They thought that he was too old and a libertine. During the courtship, Mrs Anand used to insist that the eighteen-year-old Maneka was back home by 9.30 p.m. every evening. The couple had decided on a civil marriage, which was legalised in the house of a Muslim friend of the Nehru family, the ubiquitous Yunus:

> Around this time an exciting event took place in my house—the marriage of Sanjay Gandhi with Maneka Anand, on 29 September 1975... Mrs Indira Gandhi, as well as the bridegroom himself, wanted austerity and neither any fuss nor advance publicity. Since the girl's people were known to me, they expressed a desire to use my place for the purpose. This fact was kept a well-guarded secret. The civil marriage and the signing of the documents were over in a few minutes. I was a witness along with the two mothers-in-law.

Maneka's arrival at 1 Safdarjung Road during the emergency further alienated Rajiv and Sonia. They found her enthusiasms irksome and her naivete painful. She later claimed that the emergency had not really bothered her in any way at all: 'You see, I was a new bride. All the time during the emergency the only thing I was aware of was that I was very much in love with Sanjay... My life really centred round Sanjay totally.' She was studying at India's famous post-graduate establishment, the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, during the emergency years. She claimed that she was oblivious to everything but the fact that her husband was being badly treated:

> I felt Sanjay was being made the scapegoat for everything. Ultimately, everything came back to Sanjay. The chief ministers shared no blame, the ministers shared no blame...all the people in charge were now on the other side accusing Sanjay...in those two years he was blamed for everything.

During these years a veteran Indian journalist, Khushwant Singh, had become a close friend of Sanjay and his mother. Khushwant once described himself to friends as the 'call-girl' of Indian journalism. His vices undoubtedly included political promiscuity and he was used by a wide variety of people, but always in return for favours of which he never made a secret. Thus in return for supporting the emergency he was the Nehru-Gandhi



Rajiv Gandhi

family's nominee for the editorship of the *Hindustan Times*, a paper owned by the Birla family and traditionally regarded as a government mouthpiece, like eighty per cent of the press in Britain. Khushwant was also presented with the Congress nomination to the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, a largely consultative chamber. He later became a non-favourite and then, as was his wont, revealed all. He helped Sanjay to start a weekly paper, *Surya*, so that Maneka could occupy herself at the editor's desk. He explained:

> Primarily he wanted to get her out. She was really getting into his hair the whole time. And he was getting very tired... After she got married, she was interfering in *everything*. She was very brash and she never really measures her words before she speaks. And he was getting a little tired and fed up. So *Surya* started. And the first half dozen issues were almost entirely rewritten by me.

On Sanjay, whom he met regularly during the emergency, Khushwant reported:

> He was obviously a very tough nut. He was very soft spoken. He never used any strong language. He was puritanical beyond belief... And he was quite ruthless. People who crossed his path were shown abso-



The family in mourning at the Sanjay Samadhi

lutely no mercy... He was really instrumental in my getting into the Rajya Sabha (upper house) and the *Hindustan Times*. He handed me a long list of *Hindustan Times* staff members and he said: these are communists. Watch out for them.' I had no intention of taking note of what he said—though I've preserved the list—but it surprised me that his information was absolutely correct. There were about 25 of them on this list and they were all members of the CPI or the CPI(M).

Many other people who have written about Sanjay have commented on his semi-fascist streak. He was impatient with democracy, fed-up at the slow progress of industrialisation, hated nationalised industries and the trades unions. His Maruti plant had, on occasion, been disrupted by strikes and he had developed an obsessive hatred against the CPI for that reason, even though it had loyally supported the emergency. Sanjay had taken over the Youth Congress as his special instrument and inaugurated a four-point programme: slum clearance, mass sterilisation, tree planting and abolition of dowries.

All this had backfired after the killings near Turkman Gate. The stories of the crimes had spread throughout Northern India. In August-Setember 1975 casual labourers had virtually disappeared from Delhi. This was unheard of in a city where there is always a rush to find work. The labourers, it was discovered, had returned to their villages to avoid the fatal incision in their genitals. In November 1975, the Nehru birthday celebrations, which always included a large free picnic for hundreds of children, had to be cancelled. Mothers had refused to send their male children to the event in case 'Sanjay Gandhi's doctors' had them sterilized. Fear can create many diversions. What was clear was that the emergency regime could no longer be sustained. The parliamentary majority was slowly being whittled away. Sanjay Gandhi was, without doubt, the most hated man in the country.

Indira was not in favour of postponing elections indefinitely, despite Sanjay's pleas to the contrary. It was not that she was still Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter or that part of the old Congress tradition had rubbed off on her. She was the most astute political leader in India at the time. Sanjay was a novice. She had been aware of the change in mood. She knew that running trains on time did not mean much to the bulk of the country. Most important of all, she understood that if Congress did not quit voluntarily through an election, other methods might become popular and the legitimacy of the whole system, not just the Nehru-Gandhi heritage and the Congress, might be put at risk. Elections had been announced. Sanjay had sulked. His mother broadcast the following message to the nation:

> Every election is an act of faith. It is an opportunity to cleanse public life of confusion. So let us go the polls with a resolve to reaffirm the power of the people and uphold the fair name of India.
>
> Change is the very law of life... This is a time of great fluidity in the world. Contemporary society is beset with dangers to which developing countries are specially vulnerable. Hence all change must be peaceful. This is the legacy of our freedom struggle, of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

It is difficult after reading the last paragraph to believe that the 1977 elections were a gross miscalculation on her part or that she had thought she would win. There had been too many writings on too many walls all over India for her to have harboured any illusions on this score. She knew Congress would not win even before the date was announced. One day into the campaigning and she had got a fairly good idea as to the size of her support.

Sanjay had now suffered his fourth defeat. He had lost Amethi, his constituency, despite the support of the local potentate, the Raja of Amethi. He declared, as the results came in from all over the country, that he was quitting politics. If Janata had offered any alternative, he might well have embarked on a new adventure, but observing their bizarre antics and mismanagement, Sanjay with his gang-leader's mentality, observed that this defeat could be transformed into a victory. He re-entered the battle and never left his mother's side during this period in her life. More to the point he began to build the Congress afresh, but on the lines we have already noted above. It was now that Akbar Ahmed (Dumpy from Doon) joined his ranks, a gesture Sanjay never forgot, for in India friends normally disappeared if you were no longer in office.

PUNJAB

Sikh Terrorists Shoot High Priest

Was it an attempt to scuttle the government's peace initiatives?

Giani Kirpal Singh, a Jathedar of the Akal Takht was shot at and injured on 16 January on the Ludhiana—Jagraon road by three Sikh youths. It was no blind attempt to murder as has been the case of many during the peak of terrorist activity in Punjab but a planned conspiracy. The Jathedar had gone to Ludhiana to attend the *bhog* ceremony of Mr Joginder Singh, father of Mr Mohan Singh Mundiani, general secretary of the district youth wing of the Akali Dal.

According to intelligence reports, Giani Kirpal Singh had made a speech at the *bhog* ceremony and condemned the terrorists and all those who in the name of *panth* were fulfilling their vested interests. This, according to sources; added fuel to the fire and the hired assassins who were in all probability present at the ceremony decided to do away with the Jathedar immediately. There is no doubt that these men were hired to kill Kirpal Singh but on 16 January had come to judge the situation and to recognise him.

The real reasons for the attempt to assassinate Giani Kirpal Singh were revealed from a piece of paper in a wallet which the accused dropped at the site of the murder attempt. He was to be killed for not having followed the terrorists' line in dealing with the government after Operation Bluestar and for appearing on television and stating that no harm had been done to the Golden Temple and the Kotha Sahab. Another reason for the attempt is because he exonerated President Zail Singh of the allegation that he was responsible for the army action in June. Terrorists also accuse Giani Kirpal Singh for being responsible for the entry of the police into the Golden Temple on 1 October.

The three Sikh youths had accosted the Jathedar on the Ludhiana — Jagraon road when he was proceeding towards Amritsar. They fired from a very close range injuring, apart from Giani Kirpal Singh, two of his *sewadars* (attendants), Mr Harbans Singh and Mr Gurdev Singh. The driver Mr Malkiat Singh escaped unhurt and drove the injured to a hospital in Ludhiana. Giani Kirpal Singh received minor wounds on his head and right arm. Miraculously, a bullet was found between his skull and his turban. The doctors did not have to take out any bullets from his body at all and at the time of going to press all the three are reportedly progressing satisfactorily. According to intelligence sources, the three survived this attempt because the ammunition used was 15 years old and thus ineffective. The .45 calibre revolver was also old and manufactured sometime in the forties.

Jathedar Kirpal Singh was a staunch critic of Bhindranwale and was the first person to have objected to Bhindranwale moving of the Guru Nanak Niwas to the Akal Takht. He had even gone on to say that a holy place could not be a place of residence. Kirpal Singh had also imposed a ban on the carrying of weapons in the "Parikrama" of the Golden Temple. But he had to revise his order due to pressure from terrorists. Intelligence sources claim that these were the reasons why the Jathedar was on the hit list.

It was merely two days after General A.S. Vaidya's statement that the army has more or less successfully completed the task of clearing the terrorists from the villages in Punjab and unearthed most of the weapons and explosives hidden in the state that the terrorists struck again. While it is true that most of the terrorists have indeed been wiped out, this incident is a clear indication that many are still at large. Police sources said that the three young men who attempted the murder were quite raw and untrained. Not only did they drop a wallet containing documents but also a blanket. Apart from that they possessed very old ammunition and weapons. This leads one to believe that the young men are new entrants who form a part of a disorganised and leaderless terrorist group. The police have been able to arrest two of the three gunmen and the dropped wallet has yielded valuable clues which have led to the arrest of Devinder Singh Fauji, an ex-servicemen and Darhan Singh Mistry of Dalai village in Jagraon. One suspect is still absconding. According to the district magistrate Mr K.R. Lakhanpal, the weapons and the motorcycle used in this crime have also been recovered from the two hitmen who were administered *amrit* at a gurdwara in Moga on 15 January when they took the oath to kill Jathedar Kirpal Singh

Mr Prem Singh Lalpura the acting president of SGPC stated that the attack on Giani Kirpal Singh was engineered by the Congress(I). However, Giani Sahib Singh, one of the five head priests of the Golden



Kirpal Singh

Temple said: "It was a cowardly and politically unsound attack on Jathedar Kirpal Singh at a crucial time when some kind of political settlement was in sight. The terrorist purposely struck so that Punjab could not remain peaceful. "Whenever there is a proposal of talks with the centre, the antisocial elements have deliberately sabotaged them."

The irresponsible statements by men like Prem Singh Lalpura, who are hardly known as Sikh leaders, are bound to mislead the innocent Sikh masses. Though the attack on Jathedar Kirpal Singh will not have any effect on any type of future talks with the Akalis it still remains to be seen whether terrorists will keep on striking. A visit by Arun Singh, parliamentary secretary to the PM, to Ludhiana to call upon the injured Jathedar is a clear indication that the centre is now sincerely interested in solving the Punjab tangle.

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh,

THE KISSINGER VISIT

Greeting an Old Foe

Warm welcome for Dr Henry Kissinger

The former national security adviser to the US President and part-architect of the US tilt towards Pakistan in the early 1970s, Dr Henry Kissinger's trip to New Delhi on his way from Kathmandu to Islamabad on 18 January generated a great deal of public interest in the capital.

It also surprised members of the opposition, as Dr Kissinger was the man who had described Mrs Gandhi as a "liar."

The invitation to this latter day Metternich, held in great awe by our bureaucratic elite, was made several months ago. But, the sudden announcement of his visit, while he was vacationing with his wife, Nancy, and friends in Kathmandu gives the impression that the visit was more of a private one. The private visit was hastily transformed into an official one, with the former secretary of state being treated as a state guest.

One of the reasons behind the "invitation" could be the fact that Dr Kissinger, though no longer secretary of state, has a considerable influence over the intellectual elite in the US and is a formidable 'opinion-maker,' especially through the lecture circuit. Senior bureaucrats believe that an exchange of views would perhaps "soften" this brilliant tactician towards India, a country he has been known to be antagonistic about ever since the Bangladesh war. This is clearly revealed in his book, *Henry Kissinger: Years of Upheaval*, in which he mentions his struggle to get the US Congress to tilt towards Pakistan and to give them military assistance.

For Dr. Kissinger, who is now a highly-paid consultant with several large business conglomerates, this public toasting could only be helpful. In India, after a gap of ten years, he packed in a lot in his brief stay. He met the Prime Minister, spent an-hour-and-a-half with Mr Romesh Bhandari, secretary, ministry of external affairs, met MrG. Parthasarathy, chairman, policy planning committee, the foreign secretary, Mr M.K. Rasgotra, and Mr L.K. Jha, who hosted a dinner for him.

Dr Kissinger, the Nobel laureate (for Peace) also gave a public talk on "An American viewpoint of the world situation" and met senior journalists in an "off-the-record" lunch. In his widely reported talk, he said that since there was no clash of interests between the United States and India, he saw no reason why the two countries could no. come closer.

In fact, he was amazed by some of the accusations made in India that his country was trying to divide India. "I am astonished when I read allegations," he said, "that the United States is involved in some of the sad events that have taken place recently./The alternative of an India that is desperate and engaged in communal disputes and internecine political warfare," he said, "would attract interference from both of the superpowers"A "strong, united and economically developed India" was an imperative of US policy, according to him.

Dr Kissinger's talk was particularly interesting on the topic of non-alignment. He said that he had no problem whatsoever in respecting non-alignment when it reflected the national interest of developing countries, but, he could not quite accept the partisan pronouncements often made. While adding that he had particularly followed the pronouncements of the Group of 77 countries, he had observed that according to them nothing the US ever did was right. The USSR, on the other hand never appeared to do anything wrong. "I believe that the collective impact of the non-aligned countries would be much greater if their pronouncements were more balanced." He did add, however, that to be "non-aligned like India, you need someone who is aligned."

The Kissinger visit went off well and left a few smug smiles in South Block, but its timing left a bit to be desired. The visit coincided with the dramatic arrests of several key government officials on charges of espionage: especially of Mr Kher, the personal assistant to the Prime Minister's principal private secretary, Dr P.C. Alexander. The expose of the existence of an espionage ring right has generated a great deal of speculation and it is being said the spies were working for Western powers including the CIA

Madhu Jain, New Delhi



Henry Kissinger (right) with Romesh Bhandari

POLITICS

Feud in the AIADMK

Minister resigns in protest

The first major discordant note in the AIADMK was struck at 11.30 am on 16 January by minister S. Thirunavukkarasu. At a much-delayed press conference, he announced his resignation from the caretaker ministry adding that he would personally go to New York to clarify certain issues with the convalescing Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran. With his announcement, the 35-year-old "trusted lieutenant" of MGR brought the hidden cracks in the AIADMK into the open. Mr Thirunavukkarasu was resigning in protest against a "group" that has emerged in the party and has allegedly contrived without M.G. Ramachandran's knowledge, to strip the young minister of his major portfolios of excise (which brings in revenue of Rs 220 crores) and handlooms and textiles, leaving him with only commercial taxes and the noon meal scheme.

State finance minister V.R. Nedunchezian returned from New York after meeting MGR and handed over two letters from MGR to the state governor Mr S.L. Khurana. The first letter stated that he would return and assume office by the first week of February. The other dealt with the reallocation of portfolios following the resignation of two ministers: P.M. Kolandaivelu because he had been elected to the Lok Sabha and M. Vijayasarathy because of his defeat in the Assembly elections. The noon meal scheme which was handled by Kolandaivelu was transferred to Thirunavukkarasu while the other portfolios handled by him—highways *gramdan* and *bhoodan*—have been transferred to Mr Nedunchezian. While Mr Thirunavukkarasu has been allowed to retain his commercial taxes portfolio, the others, excise, handloom and textiles have been taken by Mr Nedunchezian.

From the time MGR took ill, a group under the leadership of R.M. Veerappan has emerged as a powerful coterie in direct confiict with the Jayalalitha faction. Mr Veerappan, a shrewd tactician, roped in Mr Nedunchezian into his group as the latter's presence gives the manipulations of his coterie a legitimacy as Mr Nedunchezian is the de facto chief minister in MGR's absence. The other prominent members of this group are: transport minister Mr Muthuswamy and the chief of the MGR fans association Musiri Puthan. Mr Thirunavukkarasu was one of the few ministers who reported directly to Jayalalitha when MGR was active. However, since MGR's hospitalisation, he was the only minister to continue to do so and also explicitly supported her. Electricity minister Panruti Ramachandran and education minister C. Aranganayamak also supported Jayalalitha. When the AIADMK high command led by P.U. Shunmugam was keen on keeping Jayalalitha out of the election campaign, Thirunavukkarasu was the only one who declared openly that Jayalalitha should be allowed to campaign for the AIADMK as she was the biggest crowd-puller in the party in the absence of MGR. His support to Jayalalitha earned the wrath of the Veerappan and P.U. Shunmugam groups. As soon as the election results were announced it was clear that Thirunavukkarasu would be punished by the coterie which has allegedly been taking decisions on behalf of MGR.

Thirunavukkarasu did not wish to identify this "group" in an exclusive interview with SUNDAY, but it is common knowledge that his arch enemy is Mr Veerapan. Thirunavukkarasu resigned because "he suspects that his "demotion" is the work of the coterie without MGR's knowledge. He will, however, continue to be an active party member. An alarming feature in Tamil Nadu politics played up recently by S. Thirunavukkarasu, is what decisions and statements are being attributed to MGR by the ruling coterie. In fact, fearing this, Rajiv Gandhi had suggested to the delegation of AIADMK leaders who called on him in Delhi that it was better for a group of ministers to go abroad to hold discussions with MGR regarding the formation of the new government. However, MGR apparently sent a telegram directing that only Mr Nedunchezian and the chief secretary of Tamil Nadu need meet him at New York.

Mr Thirunavukkarasu has decided to seek remedial measures by going and meeting MGR himself. But it is possible that Mrs Janaki Ramachandran, MGR's wife, may not allow him to meet the CM, particularly as he is a close associate of Jayalalitha. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that Mrs Janaki Ramachandran, being closest to MGR now, is in a position to dictate terms. While she does not have any political ambitions, she is likely to support Mr Veerappan just to ensure that Jayalalitha's chances are destroyed. Both Mr. Veerappan and Mr Nedunchezian have begun cultivating her as they have the same common enemy: Jayalalitha. All documents and papers for MGR have to be routed through either Mrs



Nedunchezian

Ramachandran or the personal assistant and at the moment she is playing the role of a kingmaker.

But the Jayalalitha faction is also not without its support. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that Rajiv Gandhi is more in favour of Jayalalitha though at the moment he would not like her to play a very dominant role in politics. SUNDAY also learns that there is no love lost between G. Parthasarathy and Mr. Veerappan's coterie. Thirunavukkarasu says in his interview, they will look to Delhi for support. Jayalalitha group also maintains a good relationship with Vice-President R. Venkataraman.

Before the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, Mr Veerappan's was the stronger group in the party, and he had around 65 MLAs with him. But during the election campaign, Jayalalitha got oaths of allegiance from the MLAs whose constituencies she campaigned in. The balance has now tilted in her favour according to reliable sources. Out of the 133 AIADMK MLAs, 60 are with Jayalalitha, 40 with Mr. Veerappan, 15 with P.U. Shunmugam, K. Rajaram and Madhavan who have got together to form another group which is closer to Mr Veerappan than Jayalalitha. The rest of the MLAs prefer to remain neutral and it remains to be seen who will swing to the winning side. Technically, Jayalalitha can form a coalition government with the support of the Congress(I). But Rajiv Gandhi is not keen on this at this juncture with



Veerappan

MGR still very much alive. Meanwhile, the centre is exerting pressure on the ruling coterie through the Governor Mr Khurana who has pointed out in a letter to MGR that the latter has not replied to his letter dated 3 January in which he had specifically raised the point of appointing an interim chief minister should MGR's recovery take a long time. In MGR's reply, brought back by Mr. Nedunchezian, this question was neatly sidestepped. The Governor prudently described it as an "inadvertent omission" but sources close to the Governor told SUNDAY that he was fully aware that the ruling coterie was buying time. The Governor has also hinted that he would have to be satisfied probably by means of a physical verification, that MGR was fit enough to take over as CM. The Governor's constitutional powers regarding this issue is not clear but the picture which emerges is: pressure will be mounted to ensure that the new government is installed as early as possible. The Governor is also fully aware of the fact that the administration has come to a total standstill in the state since 6 October, 1984. The span of a 'caretaker government has to be limited as it is not empowered to take major decisions. In this context, Mr Khurana is also vexed that the caretaker government has been taking major decisions such as the ad-hoc payment of Rs 200 to Rs 300 to government servants as promised in the AIADMK election manifesto.

At the moment, there is a regular slanging match going on in the AIADMK with S. Thirunavukkarasu questioning Mr Nedunchezian's propriety in showing to pressmen photostat copies of the confidential letter between MGR and the Governor. Meanwhile, Mr Veerappan has launched a vicious campaign against Mr. Thirunavukkarasu, deliberately distorting the latter's statements regarding MGR's health.

MGR is expected to return on 4 February and at the time of going to press there was no indication when the swearing-in ceremony would take place. From all indications it would seem that MGR will be sworn in as chief minister without portfolio. His portfolios would be distributed among other ministers but the popular belief is that the ruling coterie would step in to distribute it among themselves while attributing the reallocation to MGR. There is nothing really that the Governor or the centre can do regarding this as changes in the cabinet are a party matter. And, neither does Delhi have the jurisdiction to intervene. This is only the beginning of the machinations of the ruling coterie and already one has to confront the absurd situation of Mr. Nedunchezian handling a host of portfolios including finance, legislature, collections, youth, price control, servicemen, public administration, home, molasses, public archives, excise, highways, *bhoodan, gramdan,* harijan welfare and handloom and textiles.

Anita Pratap, Madras



Jayalalitha

"My Resignation is Not a Protest Against MGR"

S. Thirunavukkarasu told SUNDAY

Q: *Did you have an inkling that you would be divested of some of your main portfolios?*

A: No, I didn't expect it. It came as a shock.

Q: But you were the only minister to repeatedly assert that status quo should be maintained and that no changes should be made in the cabinet.

A: Yes, from the time MGR was hospitalised, I have been repeatedly saying that no changes should be made either in the cabinet or in the party. Only after the chief minister returns should decisions be taken.

Q: The very fact that you were the only minister to harp on this and that you were the only one to be divested of your portfolios proves that you had expected this to happen.

A: Actually, in a way I expected something to happen. Some people have formed a group in the party and from the time MGR was hospitalised, this group has been wanting to neglect some people in the party like Jayalalitha and some ministers like me. They have been wanting to drive us away, divest us of our portfolios and party posts. I knew they were trying to do something which is why I kept on saying that status quo should be maintained.

Q: Would you care to identify this group that has emerged in the party?

A: No.

Q: Would you agree that this group's action is directed more against Jayalalitha than you?

A: Maybe, but there could also be other reasons. Maybe they have something against me also.

Q: They probably want to punish you for supporting Jayalalitha.

A: Yes, they wanted to neglect her but I supported her from the beginning because my view is that nobody in the party, particularly the promising leaders, should be neglected. Jayalalitha is a top leader, our CM has accepted her well and given her a prominent role in the party. So, I felt that in the absence of MGR his name alone would be enough at the time of the elections. I felt so too, because there was sympathy for him. But still Karunanidhi had to be neutralised and the tempo had to be maintained throughout the period of campaigning. Since Karunanidhi attracted crowds our party and people also liked to have bigger crowds at our meetings. Only in this way could the tempo be sustained. But this group opposed my suggestions. My feeling was proved to be correct. For 20 days Jayalalitha like MGR, did a tremendous job of campaigning.

Q: Would you say then that Jayalalitha is the truest representative of MGR today?

A: That is for MGR to say.



Thirunavukkarasu

Q: What happened during your meeting with V. R. Nedunchezhian (the finance minister) who informed you of the decision to divest you of the portfolio?

A: Nedun (Nedunchezhian) told me that the chief minister had taken a very, very serious view even my comments on Kotteeswaran's statement. Kotteeswaran is a senior member of the party and the most

A: Yes, but if MGR had given it to me I would have been only too happy. Any portfolio given by the CM is acceptable to me. Even if he left me without a portfolio I would not have minded. I would still have worked hard for him and the party. But I doubt sincerely whether this decision (to take away his portfolios) has been taken by MGR. I don't understand what the need is to change the portfolios in a caretaker government. Moreover, the CM is returning soon. Whatever changes he wanted could have been done after he returned to Madras. This group is playing a role to take revenge on me, in MGR's name. My resignation is a protest not against MGR but against this group. If MGR is conscious, if he retains his memory power and if he is vigilant and says that he wants to take away portfolios from me I would not have minded at all.

Q: Are you then convinced that this decision was taken without MGR's sanction?

A: Yes, because the CM was very kind to me right up to 2 October 1984, when I met him last. On 3 and 4 October, I was in Madurai and on 5 October MGR was hospitalised. So, till then he was very close to me. He gave me important portfolios. MGR never praises his partymen openly. Yet, he said at public meetings and to the press that he considered me to be his trusted lieutenant. He said he had confidence in me. That same CM was in hospital and for nearly two months he was unconscious. Even though he was recovering, he was not told of Indira Gandhi's assassination or the death of Madurai Muthu (a senior AIADMK partyman) only very recently. He was not told because he was not in a condition to absorb shocks. There is a [illegible] that the CM was pressured [illegible] by this group and to [illegible] divest me of [illegible] doubt this [illegible] fetch [illegible] him [illegible]

ORISSA

Ministers at Loggerheads

Biswal and Niranjan Patnaik clash over poll results

Even after a comfortable victory in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the Congress(I) remains unable to close ranks and face the electorate unitedly. With just a few months to go before the state Assembly elections, the hastily papered-over cracks in chief minister J.B. Patnaik's cabinet reappeared with the two most powerful leaders—Basant Kumar Biswal and Niranjan Patnaik— renewing their bitter rivalry. The all-important issue this time is the allotment of Congress(I) tickets for the Legislative Assembly elections. In order to increase their influence in the state legislature party, both Biswal and Patnaik are actively lobbying to get tickets for their nominees. But Mr Biswal, the ambitious minister for works, mining, urban development and sports, and referred to as the "super chief minister" has found the state power and irrigation minister Niranjan Patnaik a harder nut to crack than the other anti-Biswal ministers, chiefly because of Mr Patnaik's family ties with chief minister Mr J. B. Patnaik.

Niranjan Patnaik, who has resented Biswal's importance and proximity to J.B. Patnaik, had been maintaining a low profile for the last few years because his adversary had proved to be a more effective political manager. But Niranjan Patnaik who had to eat humble pie when the Congress(I) lost a substantial number of seats in last year's *panchayat* elections in his native Keonjhar district (as opposed to Biswal's successful campaign in the Assembly constituency area of Tirtol in Cuttack district in the Lok Sabha elections), got the opportunity to turn the tables on Biswal. Today Niranjan Patnaik has reason to claim that he has done a much better job than Biswal since the Congress(I) retained the prestigious seat of Aska where he was the campaign manager by defeating the prominent Janata Party candidate Ram Chandra Rath by over one lakh votes. However, in the other key constituency of Kendrapara, which was under Biswal's charge, the Janata Party leader Biju Patnaik won by a margin bigger than in 1980. In Jagatsinghpur, another constituency left to Biswal's managerial skill, the Janata Party candidate Rabi Ray lost only by a slender and controversial margin of 1,087 votes. In contrast, the second constituency under Patnaik's charge—Keonjhar—was comfortably won by the Congress(I) by a margin of over 84,000 votes.



Basant Kumar Biswal

After the reverses in the Lok Sabha elections, Mr Biswal's angry explanations at the recent PCC(I) meeting resulted in a clash with two other ministers: Gangadhar Mohapatra, minister of education and Basudev Mohapatra, the revenue minister who have been at loggerheads with him for his "overbearing manners." Biswal claimed that the education minister did not redress the grievances of the teachers who were active campaigners against the ruling party in the constituencies under his charge. The education minister, however, pointed out that the policy on how to deal with the striking teachers was drawn up only at the chief minister's behest. Biswal's charge that the revenue minister's supporters in the Jagatsinghpur constituency humiliated him during the campaign has further strained the relations between them, so much so that the revenue minister was not invited to an important foundation-stone-laying ceremony organised by Biswal's urban development department on 12 January. Biswal also repeated his old charge against Niranjan Patnaik. The latter, he said, although holding some important portfolios, was neglecting the Congress(I)'s financial needs. Hitting back, Patnaik reminded him of his successful efforts to ensure the party's victories in both the constituencies left to his responsibility.



Niranjan Patnaik

The reports that Biswal's relations with his mentor, J. B. Patnaik have soured acquired credence after Biswal's charge at the PCC(I) meeting that the chief minister did not pay heed to his counsel to change the state's chief electoral officer, Pyari Mohan Mahapatra, whose open disapproval of the government's poll-eve programmes of foundation stone-laying ceremonies created an anti-Congress(I) feeling among the educated section of the electorate. The chief minister, who was present at the meeting, however, preferred to remain silent.

Both Biswal and Niranjan Patnaik are trying to field as many candidates "loyal" to them for the Assembly polls with the aim of playing an effective role in the post-elections power struggle. The leaders are also trying to ensure party tickets for their family members. Biswal is lobbying for nominations for his maternal uncle Nityananda Samantaray, a special class contractor from Patkura constituency and his aunt Sashiprava Samantaray from Govindpur to form his power nucleus. Similarly, Niranjan Patnaik is trying to secure tickets for two of his brothers, Saumya Ranjan Patnaik (chief minister's brother-in-law) and Amiya Ranjan Patnaik for Khurda and Rourkela respectively to strengthen the anti-Biswal group.

Meanwhile, chief minister J. B. Patnaik and his wife Jayanti Patnaik who have been desperately trying to strike a balance between the Biswal and the Niranjan Patnaik forces, appear to have, of late, started leaning towards the Niranjan Patnaik faction. But according to political observers, Jayanti Patnaik known to be a promoter of Biswal's interests, is likely to make her last attempt to keep him within the family fold with the argument that a feud of such proportions will ultimately spell disaster for the party in the state.

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

PUNJAB

Bhajan Lal's "Greater Punjab"

Controversial proposal is strongly criticised

The Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal's new proposal to solve the Punjab imbroglio has triggered off a major national controversy. His proposal deals with the merger of Haryana and parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh with Punjab taking the situation back to where it stood just before independence.

Understandably, the proposal has evoked strong but conflicting reactions from different political parties and even from different sections within political parties. On the one hand, the Akali Dal, the CPI and the CPI(M) have opposed the suggestion but for different reasons while on the other, the Congress(I) in Punjab appears to be divided along communal and religious lines. Other political parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Janata Party and the DMKP, seem confused as their different state and central units are taking different positions.

Rajinder Kaur, president of the Istri "Akali Dal said: "Mr Rajiv Gandhi's statement that Bhajan Lal's proposal of 'Maha Punjab' would be considered by the ministerial panel only proved that this proposal has been made with the prior consent of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister wants to aggravate the already surcharged communal atmosphere in Punjab to consolidate the support of the majority community behind him before the Assembly elections. This cannot be dismissed as frivolous. My doubt is further confirmed," she said, "by several Congress(I) leaders supporting the proposals. The communal Hindus opposed the principles of demarcation of state boundaries on a linguistic basis in Punjab (after all the Indian states) because the Sikhs were likely to gain a numerical majority in this new Punjab redemarcated on a linguistic basis. The Sikhs had agitated for a long time to get 'Punjabi Suba' and during this agitation the voices of 'Maha Punjab' were raised by communal Hindus to reduce the Sikh strength and make them a political nonentity."

Rajinder Kaur adds, "This proposal is the renewal of the old communal stance of the majority community. The Sikhs will consider it as a challenge to their self-respect and a great danger to their religious entity and will oppose it with all their might. Mr Gandhi is advising the Sri Lanka government to solve the Tamil issue at a political level and not rule by force but he has done nothing to solve the Punjab problem at the political level and is ruling Punjab by force."

The Punjab Congress(I) Legislature Party chief whip, Bir Devinder Singh, has described the merger proposal by Bhajan Lal as a "rotten egg." He, however, has sought to keep his options open by suggesting that a bigger Punjab might be acceptable to his party provided the Punjabi language enjoyed a dominant position. However, former chief minister Darbara Singh and non-Sikh members of the CLP(I) like Om Prakash Gupta, the Ludhiana District Congress chief have supported Bhajan Lal's suggestion for merging the states that emerged following the reorganisation of Punjab on linguistic lines in the mid-Sixties.

Talks with some non-Sikh members and leaders of the state ruling party with SUNDAY reveal that the party is far from united on the issues and betrayed symptoms of a split on religious and communal lines. Senior party leaders belonging to both Hindu and Sikh communities in the Congress(I) were not certain whether Bhajan Lal's suggestion had support from the party high command and are maintaining a discreet silence.

However, the Akali Dal ad hoc committee president Surjan Singh Thekedar and the SGPC (Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committe) acting president Prem Singh Lalpura have rejected the proposal maintaining that only the Anandpur Sahib resolution could be the basis of any dialogue between the centre and Akalis and as a pre-condition the entire jailed Akali Dal leadership and the thousands of Sikh youths against whom there are no charges should be released unconditionally. The Punjab CPI secretary Avtar Singh Malhotra, while rejecting the merger suggestion wondered whether the suggestion had the tacit support from the powers that be. Malhotra offered a five point formula to solve the Punjab problem.

The proposed formula by the CPI envisages the release of all Akalis and the Sikh youths against whom there are no charges, condemnation by Akalis of all extremists and Khalistani activists, protection of property and lives of Sikhs living in other states and the initiation of a dialogue between the centre and agitating Akalis. The Punjab unit of the CPI(M) has urged Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi not to attach any importance to the merger proposals. CPI(M) politburo member Harkishan Singh Surjit has said the suggestion was not only farcical and funny but if accepted could open a Pandora's box.

Haryana DMKP leader Virendera Singh too, has opposed the merger proposal saying that if accepted it might lead to the slow-down of development in Haryana but also a loss of cultural identity. He described the suggestion as one trying to divert attention from the real issues before the people and the state. Other political parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Party are continuing to vacillate on the merger proposal that has stunned the people of strife torn northern India.

Ritu Sharma, Chandigarh



Bhajan Lal

BUREAUCRACY

Changes at the Top

Efforts to tone up the administration

With Ramachandra Dattatraya Pradhan, former chief secretary of Maharashtra taking over as union home secretary on 15 January, Maharashtra will, in the literal sense of the word, administer Delhi. Mr S. B. Chavan, union minister of home is from Maharashtra, as is Delhi's police commissioner, Mr S. S. Jog. Mr Pradhan's appointment came as a surprise because even Maharashtra chief minister Vasantrao Patil was caught unawares. He did not know of it until the last moment. Speculation initially was centered around other officers including the chief secretary of Himachal Pradesh, C. Pandeya.

Mr Pradhan, a seasoned bureaucrat with 32 years of civil service experience was appointed home secretary after the incumbent, Prem Kumar, special secretary in the home ministry, was appointed commerce secretary in the place of Abid Hussain, who has been made a member of the Planning Commission. Incidentally, Prem Kumar's stint in the home ministry lasted just over two months. He had taken over after the previous incumbent, M. M. K. Wali became the Lt. Governor of Delhi on 4 November after the Delhi riots.

One of the reasons for the selection of Mr Pradhan is probably his efficient handling of law and order and administration in Maharashtra after he was made chief secretary in 1982. Those were the years of political instability when A. R Antulay and Babasaheb Bhosale were chief ministers and communal riots and serious droughts had plagued the state. According to informed sources, Mr Pradhan's efforts at streamlining administration in Maharashtra were also responsible for his new appointment.

Mr Pradhan was director-general of shipping from 1979 to 82 before becoming home secretary of Maharashtra. Even before that he was also a senior consultant to the secretary-general, UNCTAD (United Nations Council for International Trade). He



S.S. Jog

was director, UNCTAD secretariat and as the man in charge of technical assistance to developing countries of the UNCTAD and UNDP, he has led several delegations abroad.

Meanwhile, in Delhi there is suspense over the coming game of musical chairs which will take place over secretarial "seats." After Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi split several ministries, more department heads are now needed. Moreover, when the appointment of the new cabinet secretary is made, there is bound to be a minor shuffle amongst the existing secretaries. Mr Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib, retires on 28 February this year, but he may be asked to go on leave earlier and look after Assam before he takes up his post as executive director in the World Bank.

The seniormost among the secretaries is K. V. Ramanathan, presently member secretary in the Planning Commission. But seniority has not always been the only criterion in the selection of the crucial post of cabinet secretary. Other contenders include A. S. Gill, secretary, petroleum, R. M. Kaul, finance secretary and Mohinder Singh, secretary, mines. Mr Gill retires in six months.

Mr Gangopadhaya, secretary, food, is due to retire at the end of this month. Secretaries will also be needed in the departments of culture (with culture delinked from education) which has as its head at present, Dr Kapila Vatsayana, additional secretary. The department of civil supplies has been separated from sports and youth affairs (which is presently headed by B. N. Swaroop), the department of forests, which has an additional secretary as its head, and the department of women's welfare. The Energy Board also needs a new Chairman after K. C. Pant was appointed minister of Education.

Thus, speculation continues and surprises are expected because the new Prime Minister keeps his cards close to his chest. Some of the senior bureaucrats are not accustomed to the no-nonsense style of the young Prime Minister, who in one of his initial review meetings with secretaries snubbed a senior secretary by telling him not to give a "*babu* answer" to his question about an international collaboration.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

Thus Spake the Parsees

New plans to strengthen the community

The renowned cancer specialist Dr D.J. Jussawalla has exploded the commonly held belief that the Parsis as a community are more prone to cancer than other communities. In a paper on the subject presented at the recently-concluded Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay, Dr Jussawalla said, "To begin with, we found that the age composition of the Parsi population was quite different from that of other communities, as the majority were found to be in the middle and older age groups. The total population of Bombay on the other hand had much larger numbers in the younger age groups. Furthermore, a much higher percentage of the Parsi population was found to be in the age groups beyond 50 in men and 30 in women. According to our findings, all diseases which are known to occur at the older ages, should be more common in the Parsis. However, as far as cancer, a disease of the middle and older age group is concerned, its incidence in the Parsis is surprisingly lower than that seen in other communities." Dr Jussawalla added, "Another unusual fact to come to light was the lower cancer incidence in men as compared to women, upto the age of 65. Only after this age do Parsi males present higher incidence rates than the females. In all other communities in Bombay, as well as in other countries, the incidence of cancer is known to be higher in women." He also said that "the breast is the commonest site affected by cancer in Parsi women as is the prostrate in Parsi men, whereas in other communities the mouth of the womb (cervix) is the commonest site for cancer in women and the mouth cavity and throat in men."

The four-day conference was a significant event in the history of the

Parsis. There were 1,300 registered delegates of which 250 were from abroad. Jamshed Gazdar, a successful city businessman and chairman of the reception committee, said, "We were most impressed by the participation of students (there were nearly 200 students). The Parsis now feel that their future can be successfully shaped by the community's leadership and the Parsis staying abroad are confident that the Parsis in India have not forgotten them and that they would be continuously supplied with *dastoors* (priests) and information about the Parsi religion, rituals and practices."

One of the most important decisions taken was to form the World Zoroastrian Organisation based in London to handle problems of the community on a worldwide basis. There are about 10,000 Parsis who have settled abroad and the older ones are worried that their children have not had any exposure to the religion, its customs and rituals. One of the issues discussed was how the Parsis staying abroad, could help those from India who would like to study abroad. "Today," said Mr Gazdar, "it costs around 10,000 US dollars to study abroad and of this, about 6,000 US dollars have to be spent on lodging and boarding. If a system could be found whereby Parsi students could be accommodated by Parsi families staying abroad it would help Indian Parsi students to go for higher studies on a larger scale." Another interesting outcome will be the strengthening of the Parsi Marriage Bureau run by the Parsi *panchayat* of Bombay which is the oldest *panchayat* in the country.

About 150 young boys and girls are listed confidentially with the bureau and the Conference has now decided to have a foreign section. The Parsi leadership in Bombay is keen that like the Hindus, young Parsi boys and girls must come to India to find their brides and grooms. The Parsis feel that their community will be 'non-existent' if the practice of marrying outside the faith continues. To encourage early marriage among the Parsis, the *panchayat* which is one of the richest in India, has decided to put up 1,000 flats in Bombay for young couples wishing to get married. They have found that Parsis marry late because they cannot get accommodation. Today the *panchayat* owns about 3,800 flats in the city and half a million square feet of FSI (Floor Space Index) on which they can build flats. They are also custodians of about 1,200 trusts throughout India.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

TAMIL NADU

India's Answer to Disneyland

Industrial group to build a 1000 acre "Wonderland"

Where Robert Clive of Plassey once raised a secret army, an industrial group will build one of the most ambitious entertaintment projects in the country. On Secret Island or Marmathivu, an islet in Madras, will come up a 1000 acre "Wonderland," an Indianised version of the American fantasy world "Disneyland." The project planned by the VGP group of industries in the Seventies was finally cleared by the state government of Tamil Nadu in mid-1984. Work has already begun on the 10 crore project which is likely to be ready by 1990.

Initially, Mr V.G. Paneerdas, the chief of the VGP group of industries, had planned for another Disneyland-like attraction complete with roller-coasters and miniature zoos, but his final plans indicate that "Wonderland" will be a totally Indianised version with an emphasis on the projection of 2,000 years of Indian culture and Hindu mythology.

Work on the project site is going on and the construction of a complete set of 22 modern cottages and a whole range of entertaintment facilities are progressing. Massive concrete structures have already been constructed in a 100 acre site which will serve as the reception area. Modern electronic systems, gadgets for utilising solar power and space research programmes have been planned. The progress of ancient Indian science, in mathematics, astronomy and medicine will be demonstrated through sound and light shows, murals and exhibitions. The management also hopes to ensure the participation of the local people in demonstrations of weaving and basketmaking techniques and pottery-making. Children's parks, toylands, museums and an acquarium have also been planned. A regular ferry service will transport the visitors to the island. There are also plans to use helicopters in the near future.



Models in medieval Indian costumes

According to Mr Paneerdas, "The main object of the project is to depict the cultural heritage and technological advances made by India so that Indians and foreign tourists learn more about the country. It will also help to create goodwill and earn a considerable amount of foreign exchange.

Despite the fact that the plans had been submitted to the state government in the Seventies, the project was cleared only in the middle of last year and Wonderland Limited was incorporated as a separate company only on 26 September 1984. Another major problem had been the acquisition of the 1,000 acres of land. The efforts of acquire land belonging to the Nithyakalana Swami Devasthanam, Thiruvidanthai and Sri Nemili Alawanadar Naicker Charities, Mahabalipuram under the control of Hindu Religion and Endownment Charities (HR and CE) department of the state government were not successfuland the application made in 6 September 1979 was turned down in 1981 by the HR and CE commissioner. "By then we had lost a precious amount of time," said a spokesman of the company. The Madras Metropolitan Development Authority has also objected to the development of the project without getting the whole plan approved.

Mr Paneerdas said, "The Gujarat government and some other neighbouring states had offered the necessary land but we did not agree because we wanted the project to be implemented in Tamil Nadu."

T. Raman, Madras

SRI LANKA

Gunboat Diplomacy

Indo-Sri Lankan relations deteriorate

There was a time, and not too long ago, when India and Sri Lanka shared a close and fruitful relationship. The deterioration in the relations between the two countries which began in 1977 when J. R. Jayewardene assumed office, plummetted to an all-time low on 11 January 1985, when the Indian Coast Guard vessel *Jijibai*, chased and intercepted an intruding Sri Lankan patrol boat P-448 with its crew of seven within India's territorial waters. The seizure was made at Kodikadal, between Rameshwaram and the Pamban lighthouse, said to be roughly five miles within India's border. India has taken a "serious view" of the encroaching Sri Lankan gunboat (the well-equipped 60-feet vessel has been described as a miniwarship) particularly because the cases of harassment of Indian fishermen operating in this area by the Sri Lankan Coast Guard has escalated to alarming proportions in the last few months.

In fact, it was allegedly the harassment of the Indian fishermen by the crew of this particular vessel that led to its capture. Apparently, about 50 fishermen who were returning with their catch, were given chase by the Sri Lankan boat, which overtook the fishermen and opened fire, wounding four Indian fishermen. Several others were allegedly beaten up by the crew with rubber truncheons.

The fishermen's catch of 500 kg of prawns was confiscated as were the expensive fishing nets. Some of the fishermen who managed to elude the Sri Lankan vessel succeeded in alerting *Jijibai* which was plying nearby. On ascertaining the location of the incident, the far more sophisticated Indian vessel pursued the P-448, intercepted it and brought it along to Mandapam. The Sri Lankan craft captained by Lt. Gunatilake surrendered without a fight. Apart from the prawn catch and fishing nets a cache of arms including automatic rifles, light machine guns, sub-machine guns of Chinese make and an Indian self-loading rifle were recovered. There were also 906 bullets and magazines.

News of the seizure spread like wildfire and the local fishermen from all the adjoining villages converged at Mandapam to give vent to their anger and hostility. Shouting anti-Sri Lanka slogans, the fishermen threatened to take law into their own hands but the police had summoned constables from all the police stations nearby to provide security for the Sri Lankan vessel and its crew. Over the past few months, the wrath of the Indian fishermen has been steadily rising due to the harassment by the Sri Lankan patrol boats: their catch and nets are frequently seized and they are often chased away even though they fish well within India's territorial waters. Sometimes their boats are sunk. On two occasions on 10 December '84 and 7 January '85, Sri Lankan vessels opened fire killing three fishermen. The Fishermen's Association has repeatedly complained to the government authorities who have promised additional coast guard vessels to protect them as well as check the Sri Lankan vessels. The capture of the vessel thus came as a great morale-booster to the fishermen who had threatened to agitate in order to make the government take action.

The Sri Lankan crew was handed over to the state police who lodged them in the government Arts College in Ramnad. Later, they were sent to Madurai. The crew, handed over to the naval authorities for interrogation, can be tried under both civil or military law. The state police have registered a number of cases against them under Sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapons), 331 (voluntarily causing greivous hurt to compel restoration of property), 332 (causing hurt to deter public servants from their duties) of the IPC and 6 (A) of the Indian Passport Act, Section 25 and the Arms Act. Under the Navy Act, the crew can be booked for trespassing.

Meanwhile, Colombo swung into action denying that their vessel had encroached upon India's territory. Their official version claims that the Indian Coast Guard vessel chased the patrol craft in Sri Lanka's territorial waters and commandeered it into Mandapam. The Sri Lankan government also denied that the patrol craft crew had opened fire on the Indian fishermen. Thirdly, they decried that India had no jurisdiction to arrest and begin proceedings against the crew of a state vessel as it had immunity from Indian authorities and demanded the "unconditional release" of the vessel.

India on the other hand is willing to settle the issue on a *quid pro quo* basis. The Sri Lankan boat and crew will be returned only on the immediate release of the 17 Indian fishermen who were captured by the Sri Lankan Navy about three months ago for allegedly poaching in Sri Lankan territorial waters and are undergoing trial for trespassing in Sri Lanka. In fact, it is an indication of the failure of Indian diplomacy that India chose to lie low over the arrest and trial of the fishermen.

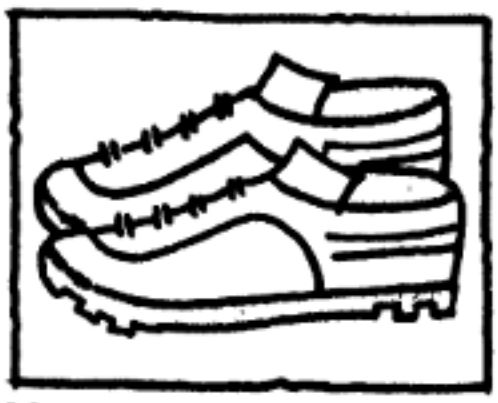
Sri Lanka is not inclined to settle the issue on a *quid pro quo* basis arguing that the two incidents are separate. The Sri Lankans have suggested that the Indian government release the patrol craft before the Indian fishermen are released. A simultaneous release has been vetoed by Sri Lanka on the plea that the Sinhalese masses, terribly agitated by the seizure of the vessel, would jump to the conclusion that Sri Lanka has been browbeaten into capitulation. This, it was pointed out, would undermine the political stability of the Jayewardene government.

The government-controlled Sri Lankan media has since July 1983 deliberately created a war psychosis in the island by consistently raising the bogey of an Indian invasion. Any incident is immediatelyexaggerated and distorted to give the impression that India is about to invade Sri Lanka. President Jayewardene has stated that even if India invades, and Sri Lanka is defeated, she would lose with dignity. More recently, there was a rumour that India would invade Sri Lanka on Pongal, 14 January, the day of the popular Tamil harvest festival. Having been exposed only to the distorted versions the Sinhalese masses are justified if they feel that their government would be capitulating should Sri Lanka agree to a *quid pro quo* arrangement.

At the time of going to press there was hectic diplomatic activity with the Sri Lankan ambassador, Bernard Tilakratne being summoned to Delhi and K.R. Sinha, the acting Indian high commissioner being summoned to Colombo. However, it is clear that both nations are keen on settling the issue at the diplomatic level. But it is also clear that India will release the Sri Lankan boat only on a *quid pro quo* basis after a warning to Sri Lanka not to enter Indian territorial waters and harass Indian fishermen. If Sri Lanka refuses, India will proceed with the trial of the crew.

Anita Pratap, Madras

Track Shoes Are Useless



Athletes and joggers, there is a chance that your running shoes may have to be thrown away. The world's first medical conference on sports footwear held at Munich recently revealed that about one in three running shoes and ski boots in the market is practically useless. Moreover, soccer boots are particularly underdeveloped. A Swiss doctor specialising in sports medicine has revealed that the beds of the shoes were often designed as though the heel hit the ground at the same time as the instep. In reality, the outside of the heel is the point of impact. Air cushions might be good as shock absorbers, but they also tend to make the wearer feel he or she is floundering a little. Properly designed running shoes must help to absorb the shock of impact, support the joint and lead the rolling movement of forward motion.

Mental Problems

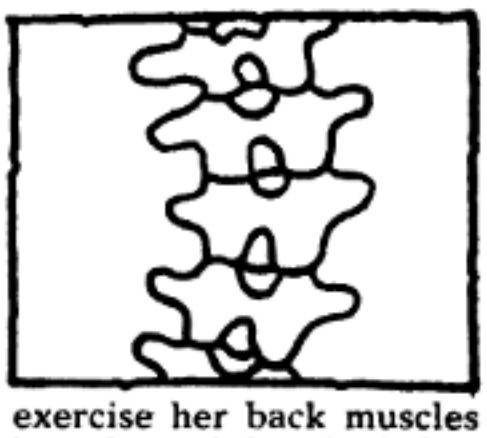
Over a third of hospital patients suffer from mental problems, according to a Volkswagen Foundation survey conducted by H.W. Kunsebeck and others at Hanover medical college, West Germany. The team checked the mental health of 322 patients in various wards and found that 20.5 per cent claimed to feel depressed while 25.5 per cent suffered from serious social anxiety. Women suffered more frequently than men from mental upset, and lower classes more than upper. There were fewer cases of mental disturbances among the acutely ill than among the chronically sick. In the neurological wards, according to an article in the *British Medical Journal,* 39 per cent of patients suffer from mental trouble that in three cases out of four is not recognised as such by the doctors in charge.

Olfactory Power



A woman's sense of smell is sharper than man's, according to a report in *Science.* Between the ages of 20 and 40, most people's sense of smell is most acute. Non-smokers have a keener sense of smell than smokers. A study conducted by Dr Richard Doty and his colleagues of the Clinical Smell and Taste Research Centre at the university of Pennsylvania and the department of statistics, Wharton School, Philadelphia, USA, showed that elderly people—those between the ages of 65 and 80—showed seriously impaired ability to detect odours. Given these findings, it is not surprising that it is mostly old people who complain that food lacks flavour; moreover, they account for several accidental gas poisoning cases each year. Dr Doty emphasises the importance of the human sense of smell for detection of fire, dangerous fumes and polluted environment, in addition to the more enjoyable job of determining flavour and palatability of foods.

Scoliosis: The Spine-Breaker



By day, Marlene Kandall, 16, is a busy dancer who hopes to perform one day with the Joffrey Ballet in New York. But at night, she is a different picture: she applies two electrodes to one side of her back, switches on a battery-operated generator, and lets the machine exercise her back muscles while she sleeps. She does this so that a deformity in her spine doesn't worsen. She is a victim of idiopathic scoliosis.

This disease is a potentially crippling side-to-side curvature of the spine that strikes one out of every 50 children in the United States, mostly girls. Three out of 200 victims have spines that curve less than 20 degrees (a measure of how much a section of the spine has bent to one side or the other from an idealised vertical spine). The disease usually strikes between the ages of ten and 13, when the skeletal frame is developing most rapidly. Left untreated, scoliosis can have terrible effects. As the spinal curve increases, the vertebrae (joints of the backbone) rotate toward the inside of the curve, twisting the backbone and causing the ribs attached to each vertebra to shift. The ribs on the inside of the curve squeeze together, while those on the outside splay apart. Eventually, the entire rib cage narrows, crowding the heart and lungs and impeding their ability to function. Yet, for all its painful results, the ailment is rarely fatal.

Early detection of the disorder is the key. Most children with curves upto 40 degrees can be treated without surgery if the scoliosis is detected soon enough. Some doctors use a technique called Moire topography. The patient stands behind an illuminated fine-lined grid that throws a symmetrical pattern of shadows onto the contours of his back. If he has scoliosis, the pattern will be asymmetrical. Like Marlene, a good number of girls use electronic bracing, a simple electrical treatment, used only at night, that can check mild scoliosis. However, such a technique does not work with some patients. For such people, surgery is the only way out.

Since the Sixties, doctors have used a technique called the Harrington rod implant. The surgeons hook a metal rod with a ratchet mechanism like that of a car jack to the vertebrae above and below the curve, then straighten the curve by lengthening the rod with the ratchet. To form a supportive bony column, they place pieces of bone, usually taken from the patient's hip, along the centre of the vertebrae.

Chromosome Trouble

A good number of illnesses can be traced to one cause: a break in a chromosome. That break can be seen only when scrutinised under a microscope. Recent laboratory work with tissue cultures in America has identified a large number of chemicals which will cause breaks to occur. When those findings are coupled with other research, there is accumulating evidence that such defects in chromosomes are a possible cause of turning cells from a normal to a cancerous state. Fifty one previously unknown weak spots on human chromosomes have been found.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

What do *Yogeeta Bali, Moushumi Chatterji, Rekha, Meena, Bindiya Goswami* and *Kajal Kiran* have in common? *Vinod Mehra*. They were all either married to or had affairs with him and all of them found that the sweetness of his face was deceiving. Vinod Mehra does not seem to have learnt many lessons after all these torrid days. Who is next?

It needed just one film for the south Indian producers to write away the much sung-about *Moon Moon Sen*. The makers of *John Jani Janardhan* signed her after seeing and reading a lot about her. She did a sizzling dance number, took of as much clothes as she could but just could not act. She looked a perfect dumb seductress. But that is not what the producers wanted. She spent three days with the unit before she was given the hint. *Poonam Dhillon* was summoned and what a hit the film turned out to be.

What happens when filmstars come down to earth? *Sarika* literally came down to earth recently when the autorickshaw, yes autorickshaw, in which she was travelling, overturned. The driver ecstatic at being able to take Sarika for a ride, obviously lost control. Sarika was injured. "What was more painful was the curious look on peoples' faces. They couldn't believe that I was travelling in an auto. Instead of trying to help me they tried to touch me to see if I was real. It was a very nasty experience," murmured Sarika nursing her physical and mental wounds. She could not report for the shooting of two films causing losses to the producers. "But I will make up for their losses," she says. *Nirvaan* the film in which Sarika appears semi-nude for the first time is due for release. Asked if their were any chances of patching up differences with her mother, Sarika replied: "No" and, she sounded very firm indeed.

If half of what *Anita Raaj* says is right, she is the queen of the stars. "I have got good films. I am working with all the big heroes and directors. I am out of the gossip press and that is why people think I don't have any work," she affirms.



Pinku Upadhyay

Moon Moon Sen with husband



Dungarpassad

Vinod Mehra with Shabana Azmi



Anita Raaj: in a dream world

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debasitha Deb

MADURAI: A man attempting to impersonate a woman voter was reported in the Madurai West Assembly constituency. Pandian (21) of Arappalayam was arrested on the charge that he attempted to impersonate Nagarathnam, a voter of West Ponnagaram, in a booth on A.A. Road on 24 December 1984. Pandian was perhaps under the impression that Nagarathnam was a man. The presiding officer, Mr Mariappan, detected the impersonation when Pandian came to the booth, claiming to be Nagarathnam, who had been listed in the rolls as the wife of Thangavelu—*The Hindu* (S. Murali Krishnan, Tanjore)

CALCUTTA: Nearly 15 officers of a firm at Kamarhati in the 24 Parganas were allegedly stripped and made to march some yards towards the factory gate on 4 January. The incident created a stir in the factory and its management informed the police and a few ministers of the state government. Mr R.K. Bhattacharya, director-general of police, said that the incident was apparently a sequel to the dismissal of an employee of the firm. At about 8.30 am, a group of armed men, suspected to be followers of the dismissed employee, assembled near the factory. When the bus carrying the officials arrived, the gang intercepted it and forced the occupants to get off. The officials were then made to take off their clothes and walk up to the factory's gate—*The Statesman* (A.K. Guha, Bettiah)

LUCKNOW: Fifty men and women of the Tharu tribe in Balrampur constituency did not cast their votes as none of the contestants was willing to offer them a bottle of liquor. The tribals, attired in colourful costumes, led by their chief, went inside the Sukhrampur polling station in the trans-Rapti areas and expressed their demands. Since no contestant was willing to strike a deal they returned saying, "If a vote is dear to you, liquor is dearer to us"—*Indian Express*(Narain Dass, Chandigarh)

CALCUTTA: Mr Rajiv Gandhi might have won a massive mandate from the people of India but there is still a category of persons who aren't too sure who he is. At least this is the conclusion reached by the union law minister, Mr Asoke Sen, after an experience on the morning of 4 January. While watching the England-India cricket match at the Eden Gardens, Mr Sen received a message that the Prime Minister, Mr Gandhi, wished to talk to him. He immediately booked a call to the capital, telling the operator, "This is the union law minister and the call is for the Prime Minister." Pat came the reply, "Name please?" Slightly taken aback, the minister replied, "Asoke Sen." To his even greater surprise, the next question was, "Name of the called party?" Mr Sen immediately shot back, "Don't you know who the Prime Minister is?" He received a typically curt response, "If you do not disclose the name of the called party, the call will not be connected." A rather chastened Mr Sen then informed the operator that the Prime Minister's name was Rajiv Gandhi, after which his call was put through—*The Telegraph* (Jatan Lal Parakh, Calcutta)

BHUBANESWAR: Two ballot boxes containing several hundred votes of a polling booth in Kendrapara constituency fell into a river while being brought in a boat after the polling on 24 December 1984. The polling officer also feil into the river but was rescued—*The Hindustan Times* (Jaya Satyam, New Delhi)

HYDERABAD: The CPI mistakenly paid homage to the film actor-director, Peter Ustinov, instead of the late Soviet defence minister, Marshal Dmitri Ustinov, in an official press note released in the name of the party general secretary, Mr C. Rajeswara Rao. The CPI leaders were apparently confused between the popular actor Peter A. Ustinov who was shooting what turned out to be the last film of Indira Gandhi when she was assassinated at her residence, and the Soviet defence minister. The press note said comrade Peter Ustinov had played an important role as a minister, a Communist Party leader and party politburo member—*The Times of India* (Arun Khaitan, Padrauna.)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Victory deludes; and absolute victory deludes absolutely—Minhaz Merchant, on Rajiv Gandhi's landslide victory, in *Gentleman*

I was relying most of all on one caste—that which is gradually becoming extinct—of Indians—Amitabh Bachchan in *Probe India*

Antulay is an individual evil. Congress(I) is an institutionalised evil—H.N. Bahuguna in *Debonair*

Unless three old men—Morarji Desai, Jagjivan Ram and Charan Singh—retire completely from politics there is no hope for the country—Ram Jethmalani in *Bombay*

We have been left behind for 300 years in the Industrial Revolution and if we miss today there will be a gap of another 300 years—Rajiv Gandhi, on the need for introduction of new technology, in *The Hindustan Times*

I started my career as an actor and I must die as an actor with the tricolour draped over me. I am already a useless MP—Sivaji Ganesan in *Sunday Mid-day*

God is certainly not an Indian, he is an Englishman—Sunil Gavaskar, when asked about India's performance in the second innings against England at Madras



Durgaprasad

I am not modest—it takes a lot of guts to be modest—Rekha, in a CBS television programme, *60 Minutes*

Give a politician a live audience of a lakh or two and he is in his element...but put him in front of a *single* television camera and he would freeze as if faced with Yama himself—Anil Dharker in *The Sunday Observer*

prize Rs 30 for the entry given first

BEGINNING 27 JANUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) If you can curb your extravagant habits, you will be able to weather this bleak period. At home your children may be demanding but do not lose your temper and deal with them diplomatically. Businessmen are advised not to invest in risky ventures. Professionals, too, should be careful while dealing with their superiors. Your health will add to your worries during this period.
Good dates: 27, 30 and 2
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: South

TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This week businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business. Professionals will also be rewarded for their sincerity. Students will get opportunities to study abroad. This is also a good week for lawyers and politicians. Financially, most of you will gain through inheritance. The period is also favourable for love and marriage negotiations.
Good dates: 31, 1 and 2
Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: East



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This week one of your close friends may let you down. Businessmen in particular should check all important documents before signing them. Professionals, too, should guards against their colleagues. Your economic position may worsen, but avoid borrowing money. Postpone marriage plans. Those above the age of 50 should be careful about health.
Good dates: 29, 30 and 1
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Financially, this is not a good week. you will have to borrow money to see you through this bleak period. If you are planning to change your job, do so only after consulting your elders. At home someone close to you may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial problems. Businessmen are advised not to make fresh investments.
Good dates: 27, 28 and 29
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is an extremely lucky week for lovers: if you have plans to get married this is the opportune time to do so. The week is also favourable for those employed in government concerns: a promotion is in the offing. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business. A journey towards the end of the week will prove financially profitable. But watch your health.
Good dates: 29, 31 and 2
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Stellar influences make this an extremely lucky week for all. Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. Students are advised not to fritter away the chances that come their way. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. On the financial front, some of you may gain money from unexpected sources. However, keep a sharp eye on your health.
Good dates: 28, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North-east



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is not at all a good week for you. Students are warned not to neglect their studies. If you are in business and planning to expand it, postpone such plans by at least a week. Professionals too will have to weather adverse circumstances. Enemies will be active during this phase. Your health too will bother you.
Good dates: 28, 30 and 31
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Lovers will find their parents extremely sympathetic to their cause this week. Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway. At home, your children will perform extremely well in their examinations. However, you may be misunderstood by an elderly member of your family. Your health will continue to bother you.
Good dates: 27, 30 and 1
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Financial gains from unexpected sources are in store for you this week. A word of advice: save something for the rainy days ahead. A promotion cannot be ruled out for professionals. However, businessmen should avoid risky ventures. If you are unemployed and looking for a job there are chances that you will find one. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans.
Good dates: 28, 31 and 2
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Professionals are advised to deal with their superiors diplomatically. Businessmen should guard against deception. This is not a good phase to settle disputes regarding property matters. This is also not a favourable period for lovers. However, the week is good for creative artists and sportsmen.
Good dates: 30, 31 and 1
Lucky numbers: 1, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: South-east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Financially this is a lucky week and you will be able to repay most of your debts. But refrain from lending money. The domestic front will remain peaceful. Friends and relatives will prove very helpful this week. On the professional front, however, you are likely to face opposition from your colleagues. Love and marriage are not well signified.
Good dates: 27, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North-west



PISCES (15 March—14 April) The stars are favourable to all of you this week. Professionals and businessmen are advised to push their efforts to the utmost. For those in love, this is the week when you could decide on marriage. At home your children will be a source of inspiration. Social engagements will keep you busy during the week-end but keep a sharp eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 30, 1 and 2
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: South

For those born on the 28th, 29th and 30th of any month:

Most of you are egoistic by nature. Your propensity to dictate over others arises from your leadership qualities. This, to an extent, makes you unpopular. Some of you tend to indulge in fanciful thoughts and spend a lot of time daydreaming: you do not hesitate to take crucial decisions. Women born during this period are usually extremely fair and they make good housewives.

VARIETY

CHESS

Despite the proliferation of chess literature during the past decade or so, the number of major carriers of chess news has scarcely changed. At the end of last year a new attempt was initiated to provide an effective and regular information and news service for chess enthusiasts, in the shape of *Chess Express*, a fortnightly newspaper written by chessplayers for chessplayers. One can only hope that it will be able to establish a viable circulation.

Published by Panther House, Mount Pleasant, London W1, at 65p or £14 annually for 26 issues, it is fairly priced and strongly to be recommended for those with an active interest in the game. The opening issue featured all the games from this year's BBC2 series 'The Master Game', including the following typically powerful display by the world champion.

White: A. Karpov. Black: W. Browne. Hedgehog Defence.

1 P–QB4	P–QB4	2 N–KB3	N–KB3
3 N–QB3	P–K3	4 P–KN3	P–QN3
5 B–N2	B–N2	6 O–O	B–K2
7 P–Q4	PxP	8 QxP	P–Q3
9 B–N5	P–QR3	10 BxN!	

Browne (Black)



Karpov (White) to move

Andersson's idea, which makes Black's life in the hedgehog a real misery

10 . . .	BxB	11 Q–B4	QBxN
12 BxB	R–R2	13 KR–Q1	B–K4
14 Q–Q2	O–O		

An early game in this line between Andersson and Browne went 14 . . . R–B2 15 P–QN3? P–QN4 with advantage for Black, but 15 N–K4 is a clear improvement.

15 QR–B1 P–QN4?! DIAGRAM

Apparently securing easy equality for if 16 PxP PxP 17 NxP RxP. Karpov quickly dispels the illusion

16 Q–K3!	R–Q2	17 PxP	PxP
18 P–QN4!	BxN	19 RxB	P–Q4

20 Q–B5

White already has a virtually won game. The QNP is a fatal weakness.

20 . . .	Q–B3	21 R(Q)–QB1	P–Q5
22 R–Q3	P–K4	23 QxNP	Q–K3
24 R–B5	R–K2	25 B–Q5	Q–Q3
26 P–QR4	K–R1	27 Q–B4	Q–Q1
28 P–R5	N–Q2	29 R–B6	P–K5

A desperate attempt to swindle an exchange (after which Black would still be lost). Alas, it does not even work.

30 RxP N–K4 31 Q–B5! Resigns.

After 31 . . . NxR 32 BxN Q–B2 33 R–Q7! wreaks havoc.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

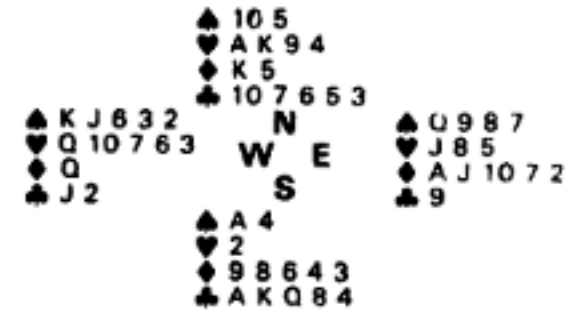
Your side is vulnerable and you hold as South:

♠ A 4
♥ 2
♦ 9 8 6 4 3
♣ A K Q 8 4

The bidding begins:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
—	No	No	1♦
2♣	dble	No	2♦
No	2♠	4♣	No
?			

West's double of Two Clubs was of the negative kind, so presumably he holds spades and hearts. How do you assess the position now? Note that partner passed the double of Two Clubs but has now leapt to Four Clubs. Does that sound particularly weak? I don't think so at all. This was a critical deal near the end of the semi-final between France and Italy in the world championship.



South passed Four Clubs, missing an easy game. Phillip Alder wrote in the *Bridge Magazine:* 'Of course the error was Mosca's (North's) in passing the negative double of Two Clubs.' It is true that North might have redoubled, but surely, if he had been weak, he would have jumped at once to Four Clubs. I think that the missed game was entirely South's fault: with his five low diamonds, the suit bid on his right, the hand was surely going to play well.

It looked as though the Italians had missed a chance, but it didn't turn out that way. At the other table West opened 2NT, which apparently signified a major two-suiter, and East jumped to Four Spades. South bid 4NT and North, not unreasonably, responded Six Clubs. This was beaten by the lead of ace and another diamond. Unlucky for the French; if they had played in Five Clubs they would probably have won the match.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What do Prussia, Estonia, South Vietnam, Lithuania and Tibet have in common?
2. In astronomy, what are Brown Dwarfs?
3. Who is the oldest man to play first-class cricket?
4. Where in the human body is the patella?
5. What are jarns, quimp, grawlix and nittles?
6. Which town or city is known as the Venice of the East?
7. Whose dying words were: "I thank God I have done my duty"?
8. Name the largest manufacturing company in the world.
9. Which indoor game was invented in 1931 by Alfred M. Butts and developed by James Brunot in 1948?
10. Where in India is Kanha National Park?
11. What is the longest palindromic word in the English language?
12. With which British governor-general in India do you associate the Doctrine of Lapse?
13. What does the term "to have a broken feather" mean?
14. Name the oldest known walled town or city in the world?

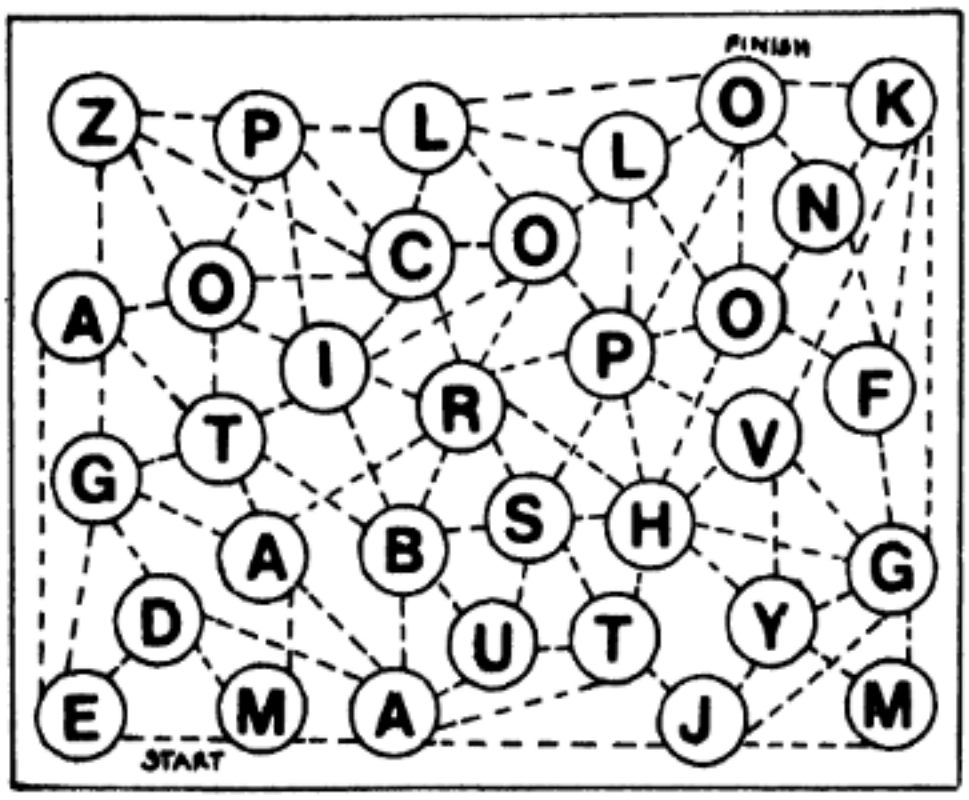
ANSWERS

1. They are all countries which lost their independence in the 20th century.
2. Stars smaller than the Sun, formed of gas which have failed to ignite.
3. C.K. Nayudu at the age of 68 in 1963.
4. In the knee. It is actually the medical name for the knee-cap.
5. Different kinds of squiggles used by characters in comics to denote abusive language.
6. Alappey, in Kerala.
7. The English naval hero Horatio Nelson.
8. General Motors Corporation, the car manufacturers.
9. Scrabble.
10. Madhya Pradesh.
11. Redivider—9 letters. The word Malayalam also has nine letters.
12. Lord Dalhousie.
13. To be associated with a scandal.
14. Jericho or Arlha, believed to be over 10,000 years old.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Personality Plus



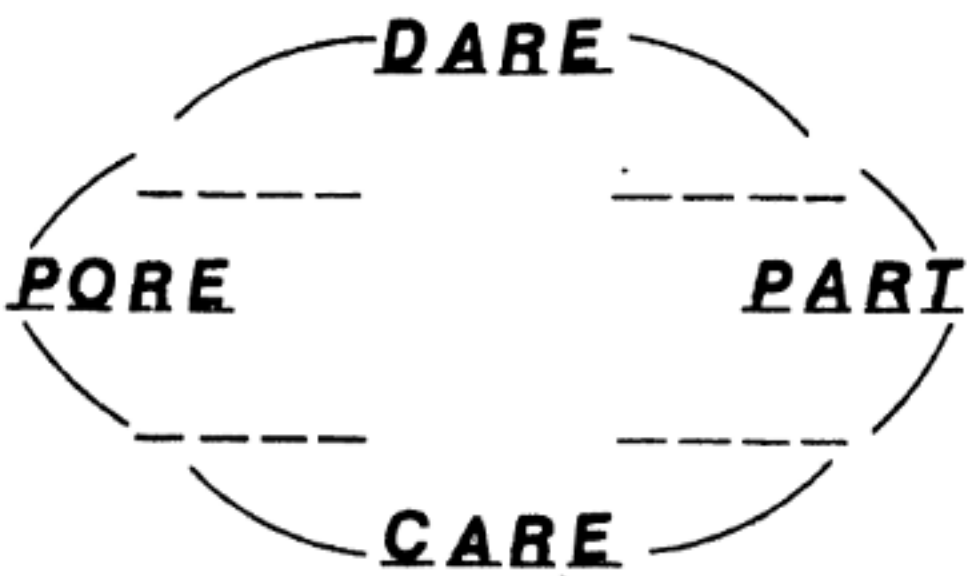
The name of a famous person can be spelt out in the maze above by proceeding from the start and moving on to adjacent letters, without backtracking. The clues given below may help. Can you name the person?

1. This personality was born a Venetian in 1254 when both his father and uncle were in China.
2. Later, when he was 21 years old he accompanied his father to China and ended up as the governor of Yangchow.
3. He returned home by way of Sumatra, India and Persia in the train of a Mongol princess.
4. He commanded a fleet fitted out against Genoa.
5. He dictated an account of his travels while he was a prisoner.

Give yourself points according to the chart:

Without any clue (within a minute)	30
Without any clue (longer than a minute)	26—29
With first clue:	21—25
With second clue:	16—20
Third clue:	11—15
Fourth clue:	6—10
Fifth clue:	1—5

Word Power



Can you complete this chain of words by filling in the blanks, changing only one letter at a time?

What's in a Word

Here's food for thought. Can you replace the blanks with something edible to finish the words? For example S — — — POO, becomes S H A M POO with the blanks replaced with H A M

S — — — — L E
— — — — A N T
— — — G L E
S — — — — — E D
T — — — — P S

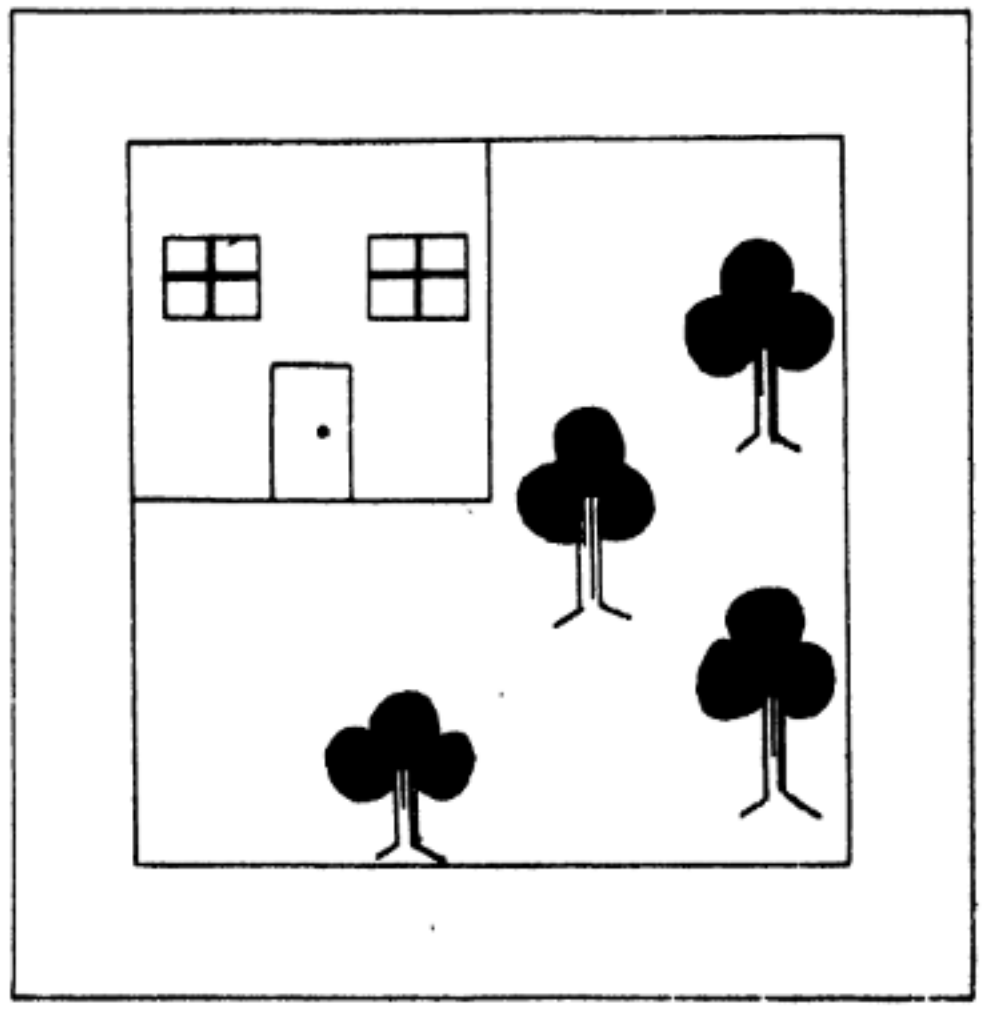
Witsharpener

Three couples live in the same area but it is not clear who is married to whom. The names of the husbands are Govind, Rajiv and Aditya, while the wives are called Priya, Bina and Gayatri. We know that:

a) Rajiv lives next door to Priya and works in a shop.
b) Bina's husband is the only one who lives next door to his place or work.
c) Aditya's son used to cycle across to help Bina's children with their homework.
d) All the men work in the same factory

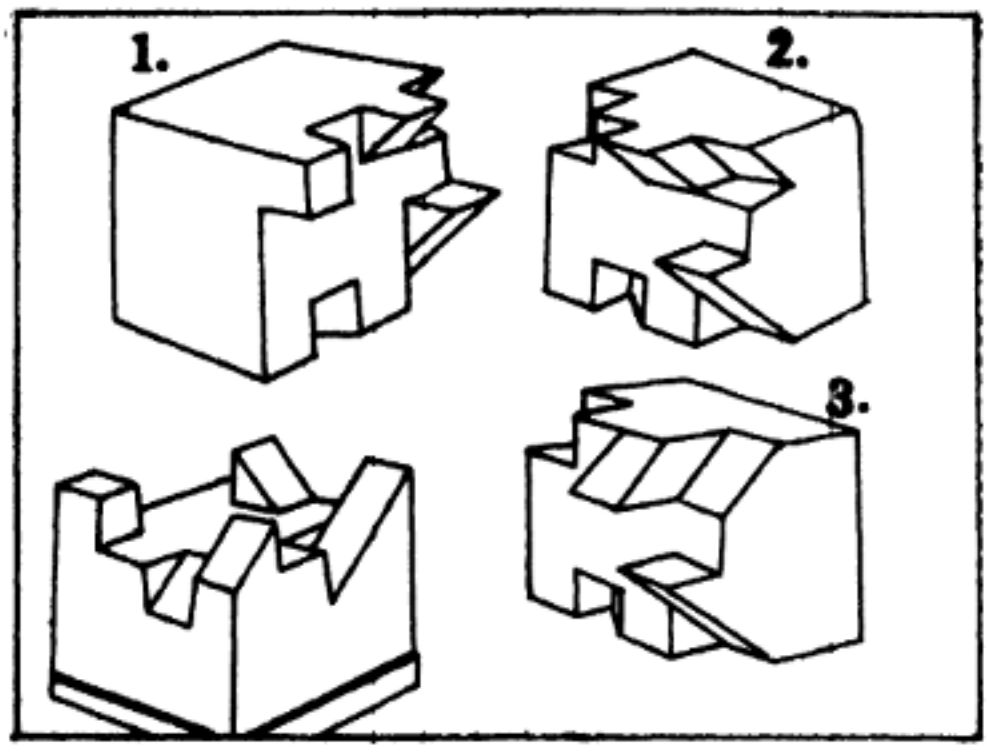
Can you work out who the couples are?

Figure it Out



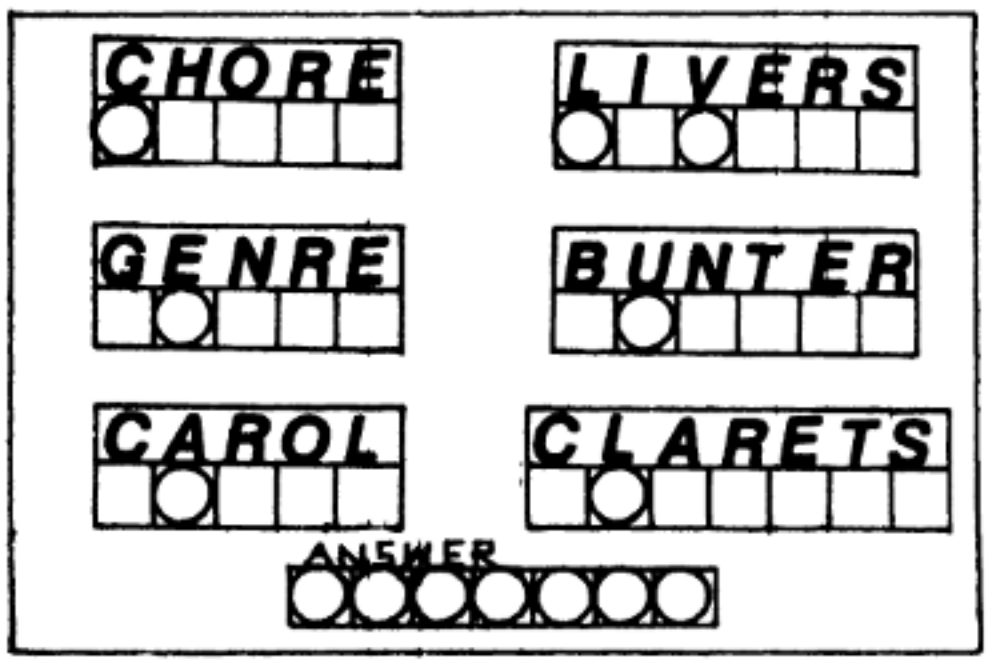
When Mr Saighal died, he left his property to be equally divided among his four sons. This property consisted of a large house situated in one corner of a square plot, and in the garden grew four mango trees. His sons found that they could very easily divide the house into four identical flats. However, the division of the land proved to be more difficult. But in the end they figured out a way of dividing it into four equal plots which were not only alike in shape but also contained one of the mango trees. Can you figure out how they did this?

Shape Sleuth



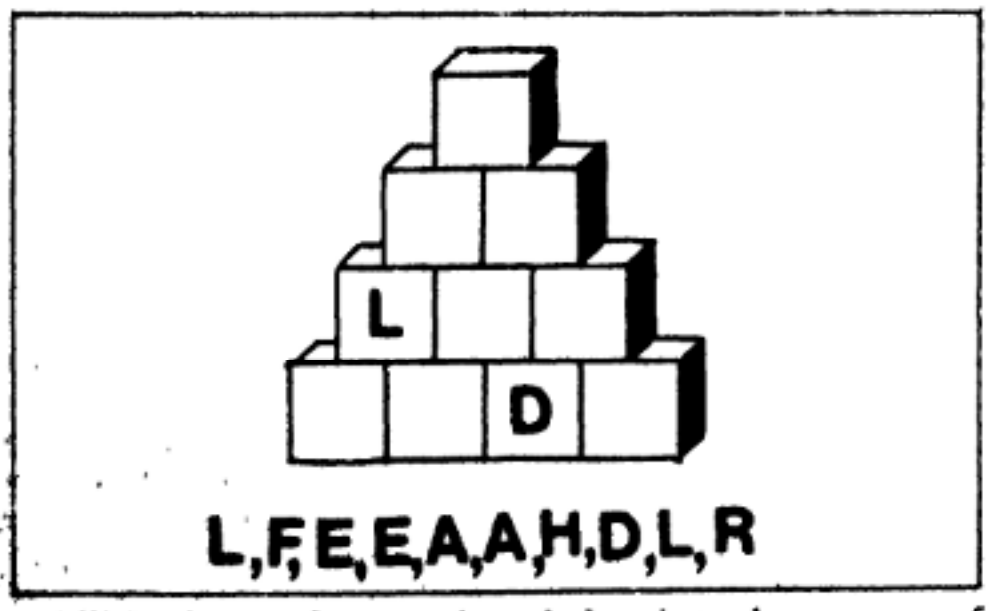
A marble pedestal has broken into two. The base is easily recognised, but can you say which of the other three numbered pieces will fit into it?

Scrambles



Unscramble the letters in each line to form six (6) words. When you have done this, the circled letters rearranged will give you an idea of what all this is about.

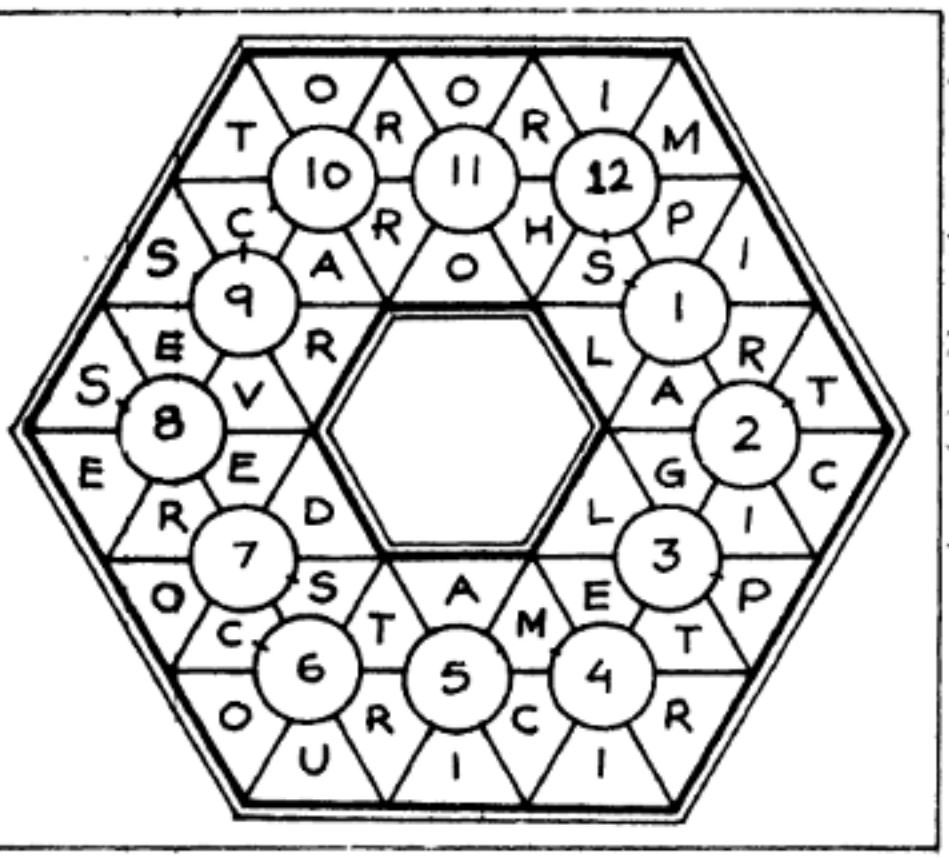
Blockbuster



Fill in the ten letters given below into the squares of the blank pyramid so that these form eight four-letter words reading downwards.

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Wordplay:



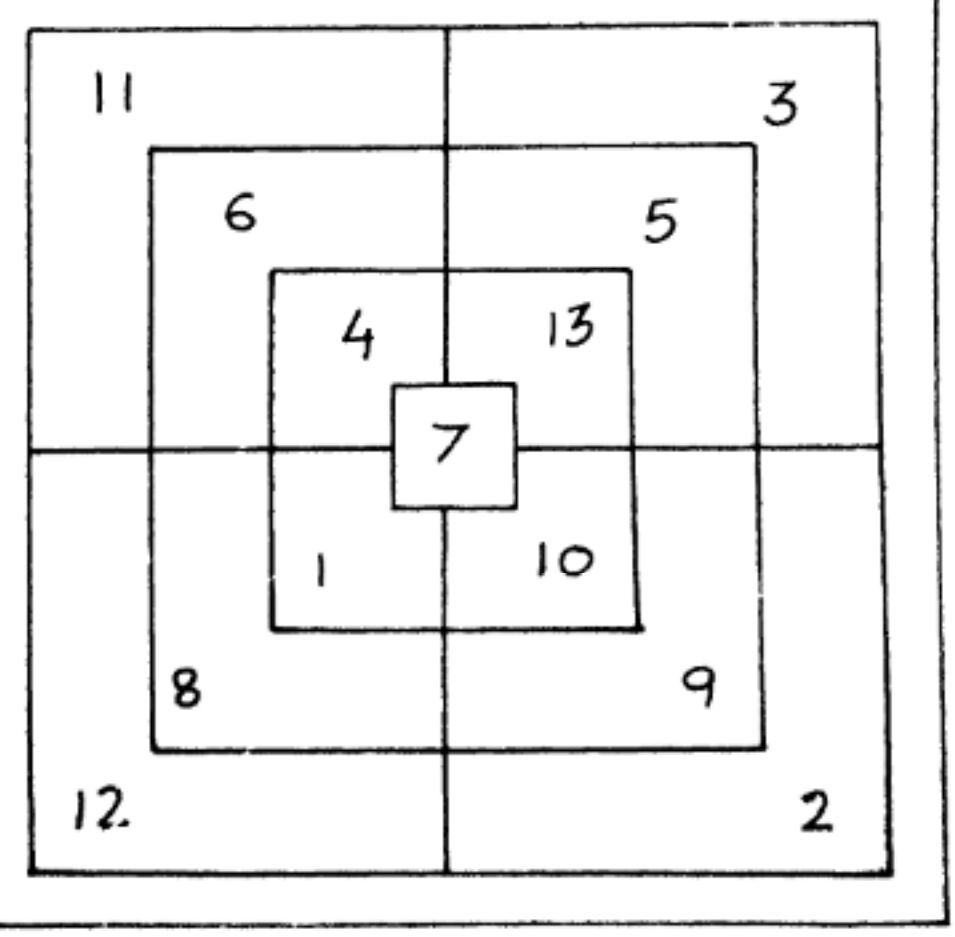
Namegame:
Indira Gandhi
Mark Spitz
Carl Lewis
Nadia Comaneci
Lady Diana
Amitabh Bachchan

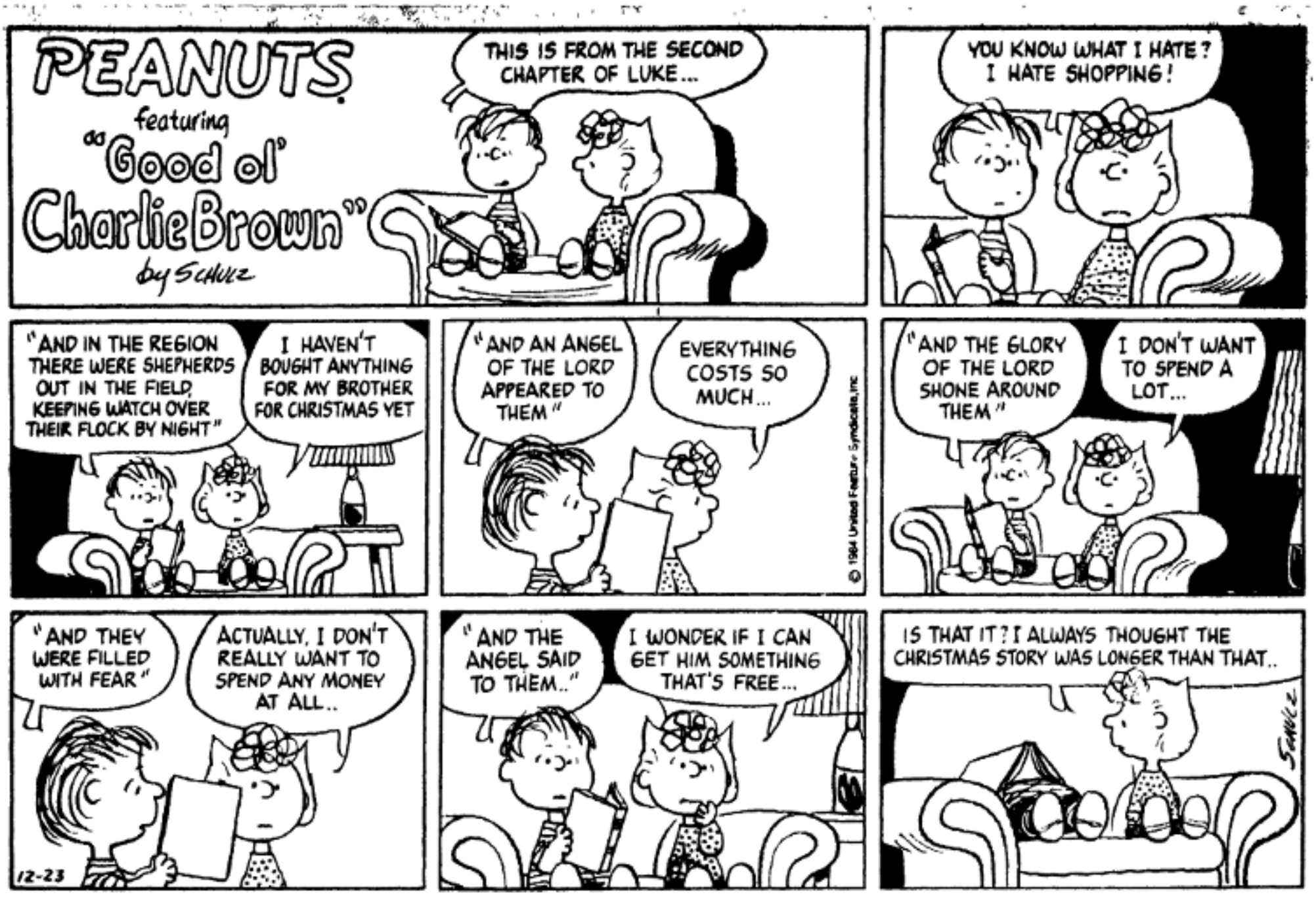
Quizbizz:
Some of the items are: sandals, shoes, skies, ski-boots, skates, socks, slippers, sneakers, snowshoes, stockings, spurs, soles, etc.

Wit Sharpener:
If a traingle with a thin outline falls inside a triangle, then it belongs to Group 1. The solitary figure, therefore, belongs to Group 2.

What's in a word:
Lemon: A dud, specially a car.
Prune: Cut down, as in a plant
Bananas: To go bananas, means to go slightly mad.
Apple: A satellite or a computer company.
Pineapple: A hand grenade.
Mandarin: An officer under the Chinese empire.
Raspberry: Black eye.

Figure it out:





SCIENCE

Eat Olives to Purge the Body

Scientists joke that Americans are no longer fit to be eaten, because of the unnatural chemicals quartered inside them. A recent study of 3,000 Americans found at least one kind of insecticide in the blood of 99 per cent of those surveyed.

The study used a new technique, called computer-assisted gas-chromatic mass spectrometry, which can detect one part per billion of fluid—akin to pin-pointing a grain of salt in a large swimming pool. In one sweep, it can check for 19 chlorinated insecticides (eg, DDT), a range of chlorinated phenols (PCPs), various herbicides and fungicides and so called volatile organics. The company that invented it, Enviro-Health Systems of Dallas, Texas, USA, went public this week in Britain and Canada, hoping to raise over $1m for an issue of 850,000 shares.

The company thinks patients will pay to be told about the toxins they harbour in their bodies, because of increasing evidence that even very tiny doses of certain chemicals may be mildly harmful. A recent paper in the journal *Clinical Ecology*, co-authored by Dr William Rea, a private doctor, and Dr John Laseter, pioneer of the Enviro-Health tests, claimed a connection between slightly higher levels of chlorinated insecticides in the blood and lower scores on IQ tests.

The Enviro-Health tests take a small sample of blood, and strip out a particular fraction (exactly how depends on the chemicals being sought). The residue is then turned into a gas and run through a microscopically thin, 100-metre-long glass tube lined with a liquid designed to extract chemicals in order of their volatility—a sophisticated version of the process commonly used to distil spirits. Each chemical compound can be counted by a machine called a mass spectrometer. The price of a test is $75.

Dr Jean Munro is using the technique at London's Nightingale Hospital. In tests for chlorinated insecticides she is finding relatively high levels of DDT-derived chemicals. Yet DDT is banned in Britain. She says it probably piggy-backs in on imported foodstuffs and lingers in the food chain for years.

Given time the body purges itself. But instead of passing out of the body, foreign chemicals sometimes lodge in the fat, where they can reach concentrations 300 times as high as in the blood. Contaminated fat needs to be replaced through a regime of exercise and fasting. This increases the flow of toxins in the blood and, in theory, out of the body. There are two snags, however.

First, while such chemicals lodging in the fat are fairly harmless, thrown back into the bloodstream they can be lethal. So the rehabilitation must be gradual. Second, the fat-loving toxins would prefer to return to the fat. What are needed are chemical escorts that are harmless to man and that will grab the toxins but will not themselves be absorbed by the body. Vegetable and mineral oils seem to work well. Because they resemble fats, they entice the toxins to bind on, and be swept out of the body. The Enviro-Health tests can be used to measure how well different oils work. The moral. eat olives.

***By arrangement with* The Economist**

Asterix

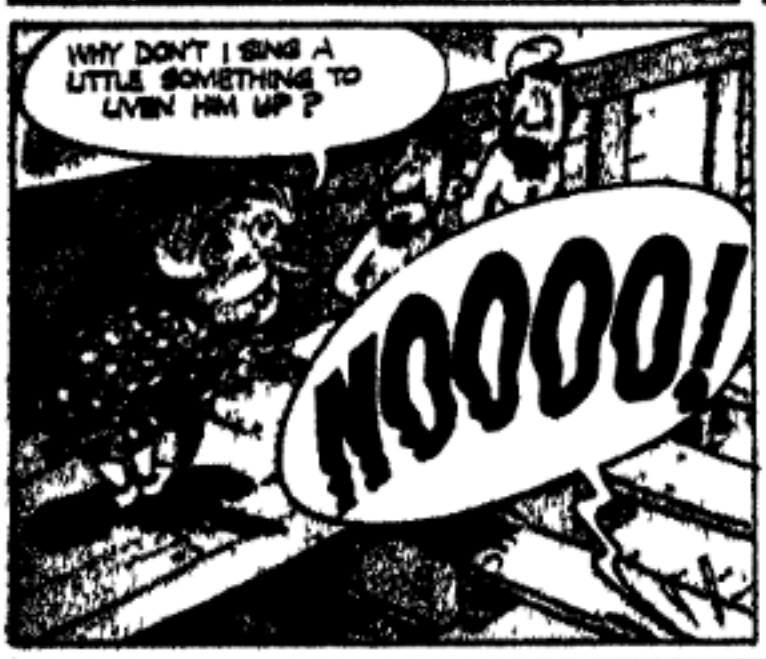
THE GLADIATOR BY GOSCINNY AND UNDERZO











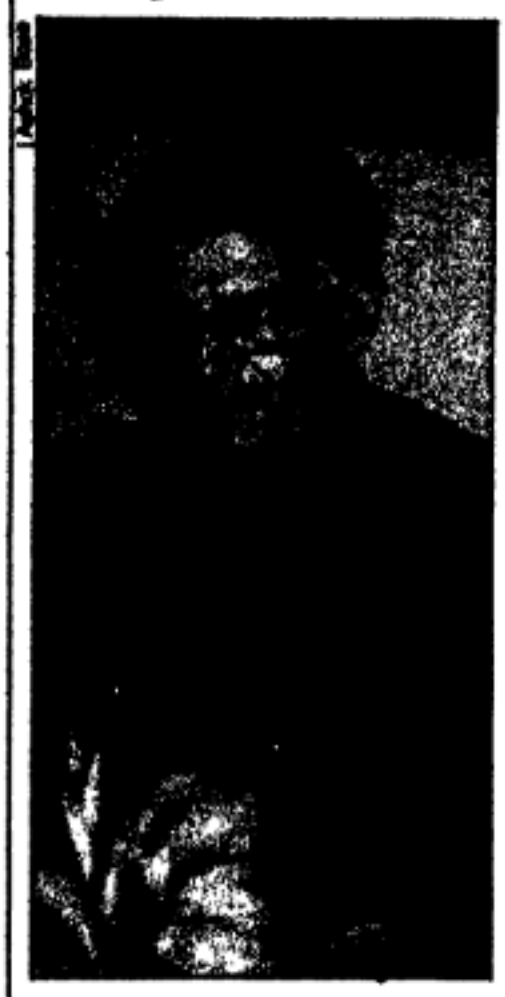






DELHI DIARY

Babysitter



Khurshid Alam Khan

The only ministry which looks confused today is the foreign office. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is the external affairs minister and Khurshid Alam Khan is the minister of state. The cabinet-ranking chairman of the policy planning committee, G. Parthasarathy, popularly known as "GP," is the de facto ministerial boss. One of the three parliamentary secretaries, Oscar Fernandes, is also likely to be assigned to this ministry. This has left the officers confused. Whose orders should they seek? Meanwhile, there is also confusion about the level of representation in the forthcoming Indo-Soviet joint commission meetings. From the Russian side, so far Deputy Premier Arkhipov has chaired. If Khurshid Alam Khan is nominated, then the Soviet representation will also be downgraded. If G. Parthasarathy is sent, then Mr Khan will have to look after GP's baby in Parliament, without having any role in the meeting itself. According to the diplomatic grapevine, Mr Khan is GP's "babysitter."

Descendant of Raj

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is a descendant of Raj. "Raj" here does not refer to the British rule. The first "Nehru," whose clan has now almost become a hereditary (elected) ruling family, somewhat on the lines of the Hapsburgs of Europe, was called Raj. In 1716, the Mughal ruler Farukhsiyar visited the Kashmir valley and was impressed by a Kashmiri scholar, Pandit Raj Kaul. He invited Raj Kaul to settle down in Delhi and the family was granted a *jagir* of a few villages and a house next to the *nahar* (canal), which ran through the imperial capital then. Thus the "Nehru" or "Kaul-Nehru" family was born, which was to one day rule over the country from Delhi. Pandit Raj Kaul, however, did not have an easy time in the city. Within three years of his migrating to Delhi, emperor Farukhsiyar's reign came to an abrupt end and political patronage of the Kaul-Nehrus was short-lived. When the mutiny broke out in Delhi in 1857, the then head of the family Ganga Dhar Nehru, was a police officer. After the British recaptured Delhi, Ganga Dhar Nehru, father of Motilal Nehru, migrated to Agra. From there the family, after brief periods of stay at Khetri (Rajasthan) and Kanpur, moved to Allahabad. The history of the descendants of Pandit Raj Kaul after they settled down at Allahabad in the late nineteenth century, is almost the history of India: Motilal, Jawaharlal, Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi having dominated the politics of the subcontinent in their historical periods.

Whose Symbol?

The symbol-tussle in the opposition has begun all over again. In Maharashtra, the Janata Party wants to contest the forthcoming Assembly polls in alliance with Sharad Pawar's Congress (Socialist), Peasants and Workers' Party and the Communists. The BJP is anathema now but it wants all opposition candidates to have a common symbol: the Janata's *"chakra haldhar."* Sharad Pawar has offered the *"charkha"* of the Congress(S) as an alternative. But he is on a weak wicket. While the Congress(S) is a national party recognised by the election commission, its general secretary, Ambika Soni, lost her deposit at Meerut recently on the Janata symbol. If a general secretary of the Congress(S) can accept the Janata symbol, why can't Sharad Pawar?



Sharad Pawar

Diplomatic Move

The appointment of Dr Arjun Sengupta as India's executive director at the International Monetary Fund's office in Washington is a diplomatic move. Dr Sengupta was special secretary in Mrs Gandhi's team, looking after economic matters. He was a student of George Shultz, the present American secretary of state, at Harvard. Dr Sengupta's tenure in Washington, therefore, may see some improvement in Indo-US ties. During Mrs Gandhi's last trip to the USA, Dr Sengupta's Shultz connection had been put to good use. Arjun Sengupta is no stranger to diplomacy, having served in the Seventies as economic counsellor. One hopes better Indo-US understanding will be an outcome of this.

The Stable One



Arun Singh

While Arun Nehru has been deprived of his self-assumed number two position in the Rajiv Gandhi hierarchy, has Arun Singh been demoted? When two more parliamentary secretaries were sworn in addition to Arun Singh, there was talk in some circles that he too had been demoted. While two youth leaders, Oscar Fernandes and Ahmed Patel (both were joint secretaries of the AICC) have become parliamentary secretaries, the person who is going to sit in the room next to the Prime Minister in South Block is Arun Singh. He remains as important as before. Only his burden has become lighter, with Fernandes and Patel also helping out the Prime Minister with parliamentary work.

S.E. Nizamuddin

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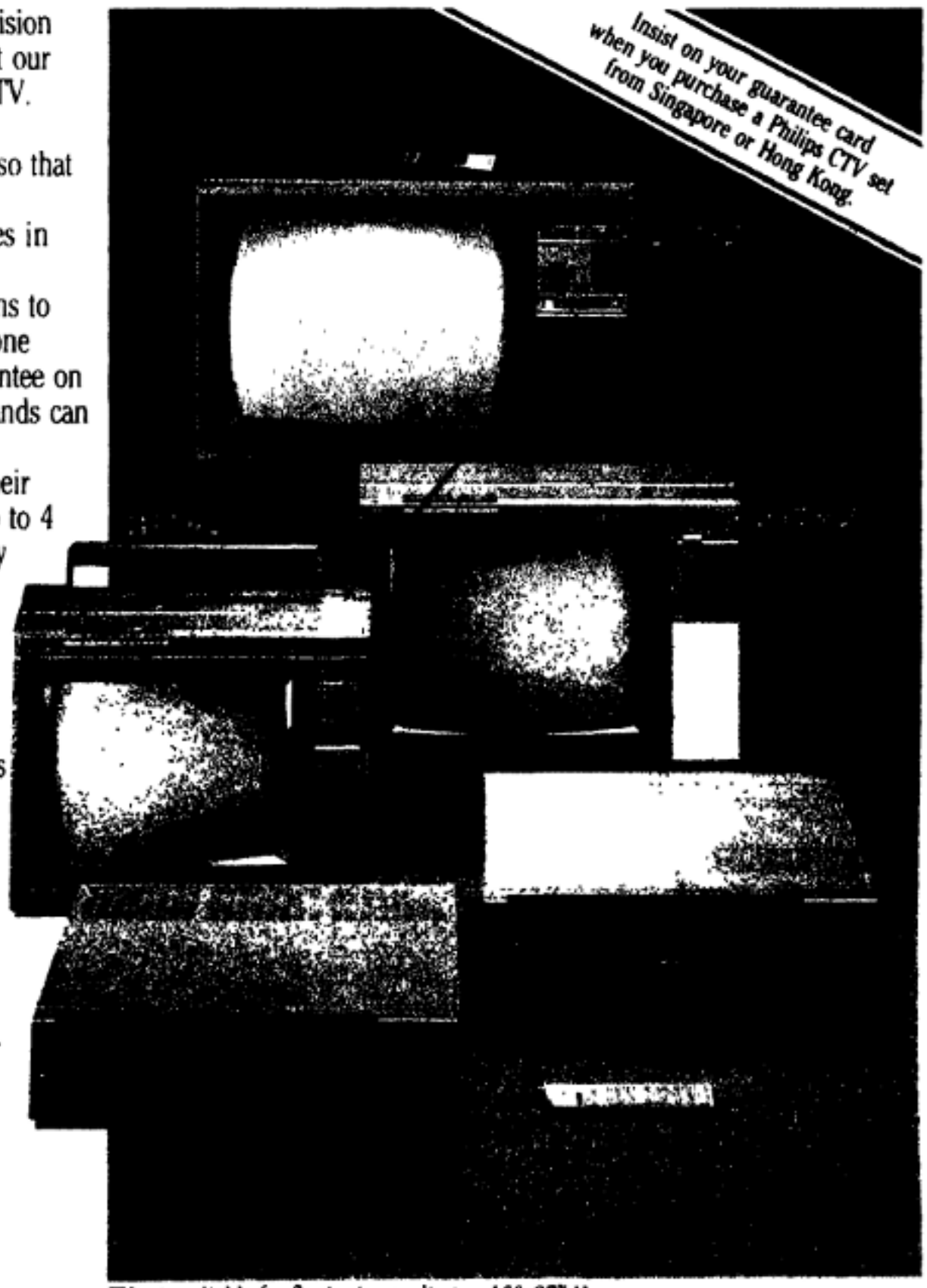
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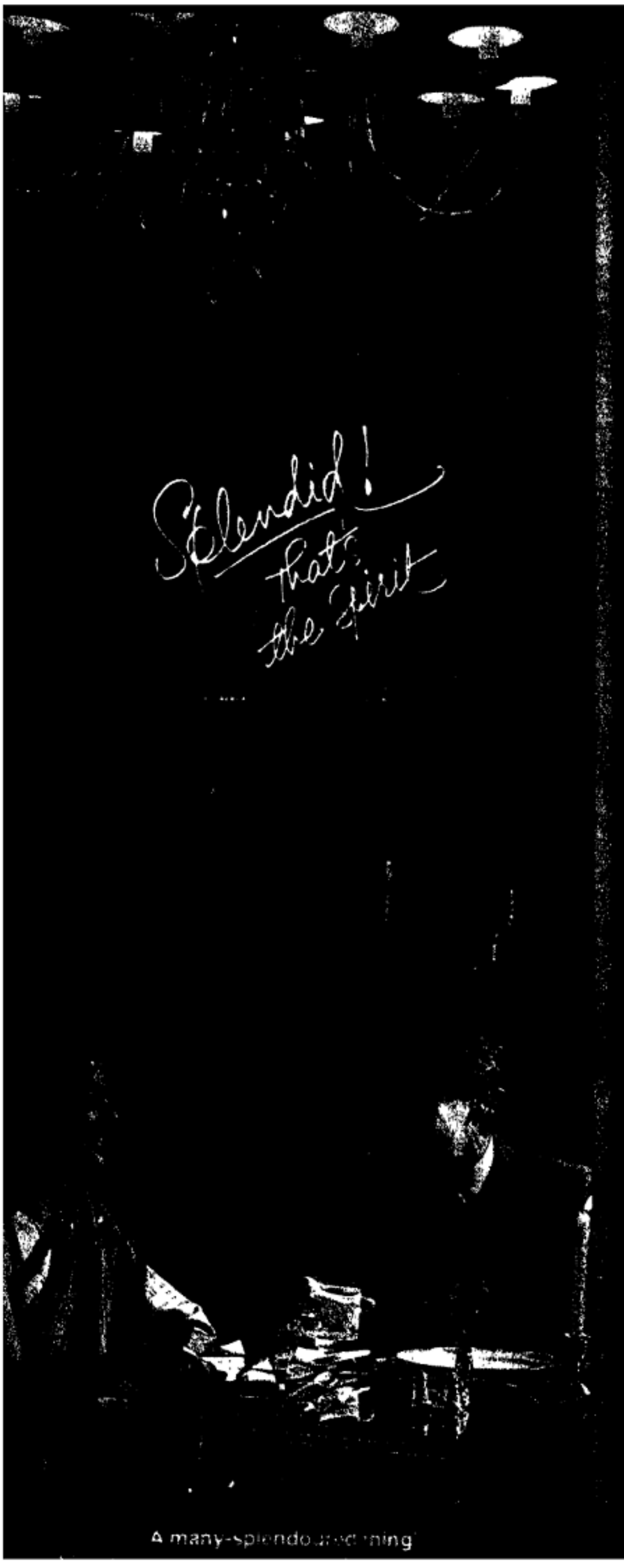
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Tariq Ali writes on Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi in this extract from his book, *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty*.



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SPECIAL REPORT 32

Jayalalitha's Revolt

On 20 January the infighting within the ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu came into the open with Jayalalitha being stripped of her status as deputy leader of the AIADMK parliamentary group. Jayalalitha hit back by accusing the ruling coterie of misusing their powers. A report from Anita Pratap. Plus an exclusive interview with Jayalalitha.

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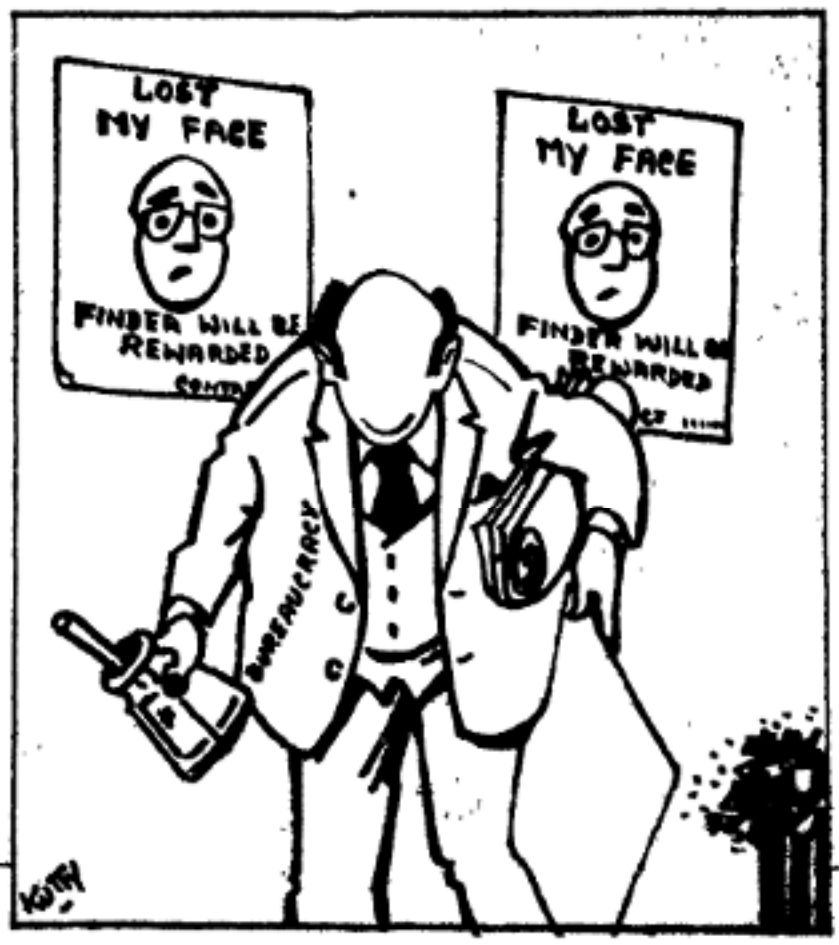
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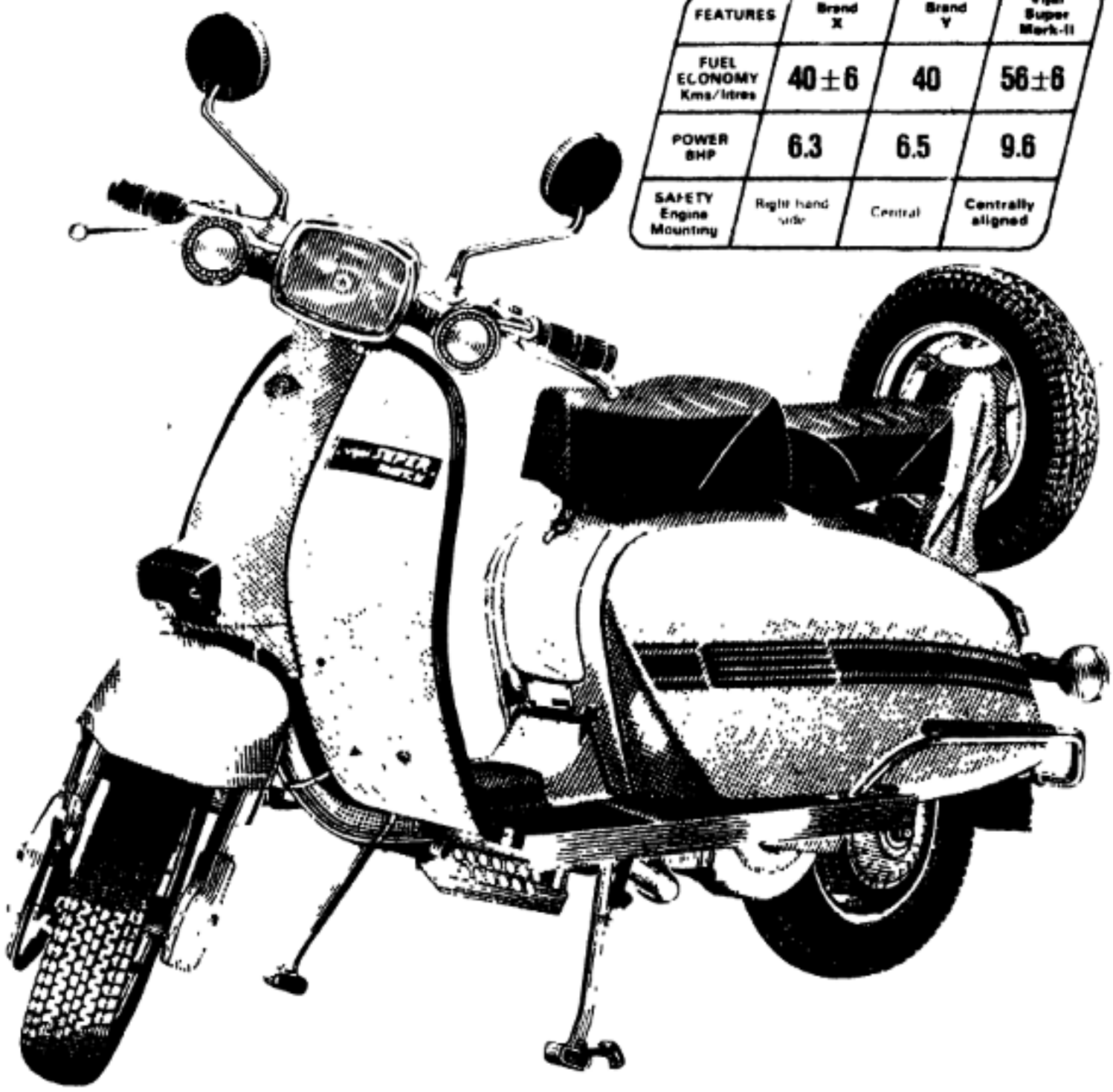
THE NEW

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THE NEW

Vijai SUPER mark II

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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Calcutta: It may not be very much compared to the Himalaya-touched cold of Delhi, or the waves in the night air which sets the land north of the Ganga shivering, but we have our little winter in Calcutta and make an excellent job of our one-sweater season too. There is just the nip in the atmosphere which makes some spirits go up and other spirits go down with equal ease. Calcuttans reserve all their parties for the spell from mid-November to early February. The maidan on holidays is a swarm of smiling faces, people literally enjoying their moment in the sun before they return to the monotony of a difficult existence in the congested lanes of powerless Calcutta. The city's zoo must be the most crowded in the world, particularly around the time of *makar sankranti* when the Biharis in particular choose to make their annual pilgrimage to both the confluence of the Ganga and the sea, and the zoo. Christmas: New Year's eve: the midnight services at St Paul have been adopted by Calcuttans as part of their cultural history: only Calcutta, perhaps, could make these occasions so truly secular. Middle-class Bengalis queuing up to buy cakes is a sight good enough to sustain the Ray-media industry for a while more. This city, after all, was where the Ray was born even if, early this century, it decided to take its lustre elsewhere. (It is interesting that as long as the British capital was Calcutta, the empire kept expanding. As soon as it went to Delhi, its decline started.) And though the economy of Calcutta may no longer be able to match the interest and consciously felt need among its citizens for the best books and the best bookshops, the Calcutta Book Fair still remains the jewel in the crown of the publishing industry. The world of writers and booksellers still marks this out as the high point of activity. This year, among other visitors, we had a group of the most eminent poets of Bangladesh visiting us, and the reception and warmth between the writers living on two sides of the border proved once again that culture is still much more powerful than politics. My own relations with creative writing (or indeed reading fiction) are extremely tenuous, so I cannot claim to be any kind of commentator on the subject, but it did not need enormous powers of observation at a well-lubricated dinner party hosted by Ananda Publishers to see that Shamsur Rehman and Sunil Gangopadhyaya were talking the same language in more senses than one. The publishers, it often seems to me, show far more dedication to books than authors. The writer gets cash in the bank, liquor in his hand and, most of all, enormous doses of massage to his ever-expanding ego. The publisher gets the dirty work—from proofs to invoices to distribution to collection and, on top of it, treating the author like a spoilt brat.

If in Delhi the winter goes out with the *bhang*, colour, bantering and fire of Holi, then Calcutta's less intense but immensely more elegant season ends with the Book Fair. Suddenly, as you wander through the stalls or relax at the open air cafes or chatter with friends unseen for months (everybody goes to the fair), the sun becomes Indian, and the heat begins to seep through between the collar and skin.

The party's over.

Shock, surprise, horror. Dr Ashok Mitra, whose lash of tongue and needle-sharp quill have done more to damage relations between the Left Front and the centre, has actually praised the Rajiv Gandhi government. After so many years of dealing with fellow Bengali Pranab Mukherjee, The Man Who Gave You The IMF Loan, he finds soft-spoken, sober Vishwanath Pratap Singh a sensible soul. There is none of the confrontation in the new union finance minister's letters, said the state finance minister: in fact, Dr Mitra was stunned to discover that a dialogue was at all possible. Those who know Vishwanath Pratap Singh will not be surprised that he has managed to woo even the acerbic Dr Mitra. His reputation as a decent human being—apart from being a good minister—is widespread. Rajiv Gandhi was sending out a deliberate signal when he made a gentleman like Vishwanath Pratap Singh finance minister of his first government, after giving him charge of the vital Uttar Pradesh election campaign. V. P. Singh is perhaps the first chief minister of Uttar Pradesh to actually leave the job willingly (Mr Narayan Dutt Tewari, another decent soul could well be the second). And nor had Raja Sahab, as he is popularly known, been offered anything at the centre in exchange or promotion. In fact, Mrs Gandhi was upset when he resigned. But he did so because, as he himself explained, he had not been able to fulfil his promise to solve the law and order problem of dacoit-ridden Uttar Pradesh. Not many people know that Mr Singh's elder brother, a judge, was shot dead by dacoits.

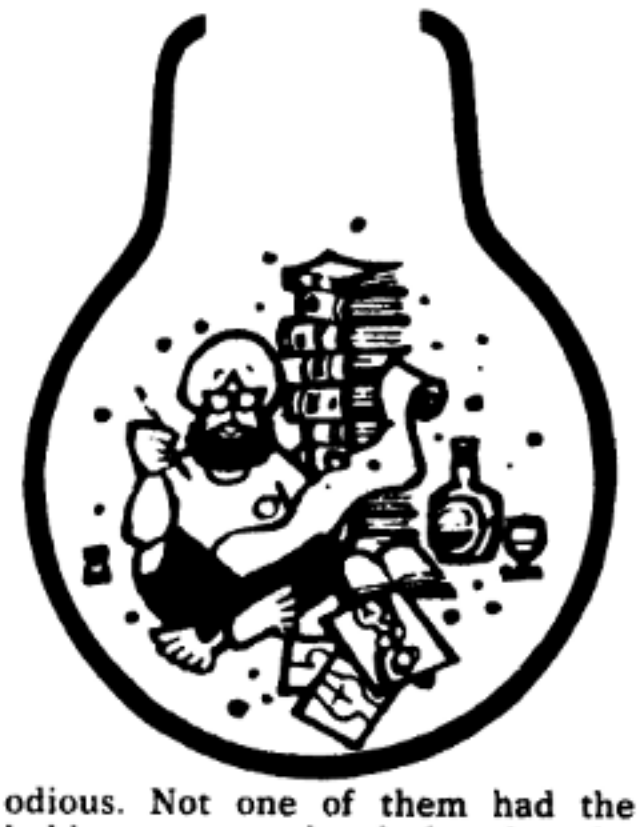
We could easily, in our office, begin a Times of India Alumni Association; quite a few of us began our career there before shifting over to Calcutta or Delhi to work for SUNDAY or *Ravivar*. Now, for the first time, the reverse journey is being made. One of the finest talents among the journalists of our generation, Surendra Pratap Singh, is leaving the editorship of *Ravivar* to take over as Resident Editor of *Navbharat Times*, that hugely-circulated Hindi daily from the Bennet Coleman stable. With a modesty uncharacteristic of his profession, and an ability uncommon among his peers, SP has quietly fashioned a serious political newsweekly which has acquired the very highest reputation in the Hindi-speaking world. Obviously it was the maturity of the editing which prompted Dr Ram Tarneja, managing director of the company, and Mr Rajendra Mathur, editor of the paper, to hand over such a challenging responsibility to him rather than to the numerous seniors who had been expecting to fill the post. Clearly too the generational change is coming about in the *Times*; the topmost jobs are no longer the preserve of only those who are near their retirement. The extraordinary success of Pritish Nandy in *The Illustrated Weekly* must have set at rest whatever doubts the owners and management might have had about the wisdom of young people at the top.

As if his achievement in journalism was not sufficient, SP (with the same self-effacing silence he showed in his editing) wrote the dialogue for the award-winning film *Paar*, an effort which has brought him a deluge of offers from the more sensible part of the film industry. We will miss him at the Calcutta office. Our loss is clearly Bennet Coleman's gain.

New Parliament

I wish the opening of the new session of Parliament was televised. It is a colourful ceremony when everyone of the 700-odd members of the two houses is dressed in his or her Sunday best and is at his and her best behaviour. This is for the simple reason that those present are meant to be seen and not heard. The rostrum of Central Hall is beautifully decorated with masses of Gladioli. Six giant-sized lancers of the President's bodyguard dressed in blue-and-gold flank the throne chair holding their beribboned spears aloft. On the stroke of eleven the fanfares sound and everyone stands up. Pigeons take fright and fly around the hall. Led by six-footer bodyguards come secretaries of the two houses, the President, vice-president, the Prime Minister and other officials—all save the Prime Minister look very diminutive by contrast with their uniformed escorts and all very conscious of their inability to march in step. They take their seats and stand up again as the band strikes up the national anthem. The President clears his throat, takes a sip of water and begins to read the address prepared for him by the government in Hindi. It takes him 40 minutes with two gulps of water to go through the text. Vice-president Venkataraman takes less than 19 minutes to read its English translation. It's all over in one hour. And once more the national anthem strikes and the President, vice-president, Prime Minister and secretaries troop out painfully out of step with their gigantic bodyguards.

The opening day in both houses was a sad affair devoted to tributes to the late Indira Gandhi. It was an opportunity for members to say something which could be quoted for times to come. Alas! Not one speech in either house came up to expectation because no one had taken the trouble to think of something memorable to say. A Jawaharlal Nehru or a Radhakrishnan would have spent hours polishing bejewelled phrases to use at the occasion. Here we had lost one of the most remarkable women in the annals of world history in a classic betrayal of sacred trust, a woman who had been chosen by a nation of 750 million people to hold the reins of their destinies in her hands for over 14 years. And all these second-raters could do was mouth banalities and boast how close they had been to her. Indira Gandhi and any comparisons with her would be



odious. Not one of them had the boldness to say that before her the Caesars of Rome and the Tsars of Russia, the Bonapartes of France and the Monarchs of England, the Presidents and Prime Ministers of our times dwarf into littleness. She was not of this age but for all time. We will not see the like of her again. She will be for ever honoured, for ever mourned.

Mrs Gandhi had no political philosophy nor did she subscribe to any dogmas. She could be petulant. She could be petty. But she was committed to any ideal to keep the country united. She had convinced herself that only she or one of her sons could ensure it. That persuasion and belief ripened into faith and became a passioned intuition.

Since the nation has chosen Mrs Gandhi's son as her successor, whatever reservations the more educated of us may have about dynastic succession, we have to accept it as the will of the people. We have also to admit that he has made a promising start. If he treads the right path, it is our duty to support him. At this stage our prayer should be:

"Today he puts forth the tender leaves of hope,
Tomorrow may he blossom and may the fruits of honour come thick upon him."

A Pakistani View

A book written on the Sikhs problems by a Pakistani will naturally arouse a lot of interest in India. No sooner Syed Shabbir Hussain's *Sikhs at Crossroads* was received, I put all my other work aside to delve into it. As is my habit, when it comes to books on Punjab or the Sikhs, I first take a look at the bibliography to see the material the author has consulted. Of the 17 in his selected list only two are Indian: Pran Chopra's *Second Liberation of India* and *The Sikhs* by me (coffee-table pictorial with a very brief text). Thereafter I turn to the index to see if I have been quoted, misquoted or maligned. I was not disappointed: the author has taken chunks from my books, some acknowledged, others just lifted without the courtesy of inverted commas; plenty of misquotations and some abuse as an "self-opinionated intellectual". These are small matters. What is more reprehensible is that of the 154 pages if extracts from Indian newspapers and magazines are excised, the book would be reduced by a third. Another third has little or nothing to do with the Sikhs but with the transfer of power from British to Indo-Pak hands. So we are left with 50 odd pages on Sikhs at crossroads. This does not speak very highly of Pakistani scholarship or political journalism.

Shabbir Hussain has no pretensions to objectivity. He describes Mountbatten as "the partisan viceroy"; accuses Sikhs for being "responsible for the largest massacre of Muslims during the partition riots"; and for forgetting that they were not Hindus and making themselves over to Hindu India and not accepting Mr Jinnah's generous offer to them to join Pakistan. Like many half-baked Pakistani journalists, Shabbir Hussain discovers the root of all that is evil in India in "Brahmanic arrogance" and strives to debunk India's claim to secularism which in his opinion is a "theocratic state in the worst sense of the word, intolerant of every non-Brahman culture or creed whether scheduled caste, Muslims, Sikhs or Buddhists wielding the big stick while insisting it is a carrot." He sets out to examine "this fascism of caste Hindus, now at rampage in almost every part of the country." Pakistan, he maintains is the greatest gift an Indian fascist could have hoped for. He can now exploit permanent sense of injury and, at the same time, channel it against the Jews of Modern India—the Muslims, large enough to count as respectable enemy, week enough to be attacked with impunity." He sees the Congress party during the British *raj* as "almost entirely Brahman." The only exception being Mahatma Gandhi who he describes as a *Veshnu* (it is not clear whether he means a *Vaishnav* or a vegetarian). With great glee he quotes Lord Wavell's opinion of the Mahatma as having "more of malevolence than benevolence in him." The Sikhs, he castigates for

having "played a major role in the 1971 war"! Shahbeg Singh for training the Mukti Bahini, J.S. Arora for having defeated the Pakistanis. Both Generals paid the price: one being killed in "Operation Bluestar," the other "sulking in agony and wilderness at the destruction of the Golden Temple." Sikhs having performed such "slavish acts under the direction of their Hindu masters" are now victims of "Gandhian malevolence, caste-culture and random use of force."

Chapters on Operation Bluestar and an interview with Jagjit Singh Chauhan who describes me as "Indira's showpiece" are lifted in totality from Indian journals. The only people who come in for praise are Khallistanis living abroad: Chauhan and Ganga Singh Dhillon.

The biographical blurb describes Syed Shabbir Hussain as a "veteran journalist known for his perception of internal and regional situations." It is evident that he has no perception of the problems of the Sikhs and is fast declining into dotage. It is a small mercy that his book is not likely to be available in India.

Gaffes of 1984

Last year yielded a rich harvest of gaffes from the mouths of celebrities. The winner was of course Ronald Reagan. When giving a voice-test for a nation-wide broadcast which unfortunately for him went on the air, he said "My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you that I have signed legislation to outlaw Russia for ever. We begin bombing in five minutes."

His voice was okay. Later he tried to explain that he was jesting and did not realise he was in the air. The Russians did not see the joke and maintained that the mindless gaffe revealed the inner workings of the American President's mind. Russians don't have a sense of humour.

A charming slip of the tongue came from Italy. It was the mistranslation of a blurb of a fashion-designer who wanted to advertise a new cut for ladies dress as one which would rouse men's libido. The English version read: "Shaped to be raped". Women's libbers were up in arms but apparently the new design was a great sales success.

From America again came a vituperative attack by Mrs Bush against the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Geraldine Ferraro. "She is a four million dollar...I can't say it, but it rhymes with rich."

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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Appeasing the Sikhs

The government is once again on the wrong track while seeking a solution to the Punjab problem, which is now a Sikh problem. Therefore, the search has to be to find a way to bring back the Sikhs to the national mainstream for they feel hurt and humiliated. The Sikhs today, have developed an inferiority complex in their own country.

The merger of Chandigarh in Punjab or the reference of the waters dispute to a Supreme Court judge is not what can make allies of the Sikhs; nor can a discussion on the Anandpur Sahib resolution. If these important matters had been tackled before the army operation in the Golden Temple at Amritsar, it might have satisfied the Sikhs. At present, the question is how the Sikhs can be brought into the mainstream because they are now living in a world of their own, exaggerating their grievances and imagining the worst.

The ministerial committee, appointed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, is reportedly discussing the pros and cons of the Akali demands. It is being said that the Anandpur Sahib resolution is not on the committee's agenda since the last Lok Sabha poll is taken as a verdict against it. The committee is also indirectly sounding the Akali leaders to know their stand.

But the Sikh sentiment has gone beyond the demands, beyond the control of even the Akali leaders. Even Harchand Singh Longowal, the Akali chief, who still has the strongest hold on the Sikhs, may not matter much in assuaging the Sikhs' feelings. Nor does Prakash Singh Badal, former chief minister, or Gurcharan Singh Tohra, chief of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). G.S. Tohra is considered the villain of the piece. Tomorrow when they are released, they would be denounced and might even be forced to leave their moderate line and become hardliners; moderation does not appeal to a large segment of the Sikh community, particularly the youth, who are in a defiant mood.

Therefore, the problem needs a careful and psychological handling and it is no use rushing things or talking of a time-bound frame. The ministerial committee should first tackle the aftermath of the military operation, not the Akali demands as such. I recall that at a Sikh gathering the other day when I talked about the resumption of talks on Chandigarh, the river waters and the Anandpur Sahib resolution, there was an uproar even at the suggestion of starting negotiations. The entire congregation stood up and said that they had no demands. Obviously, the hurt is too deep, too recent.

That is the reason why the thread must be picked up from Operation Bluestar. There are allegations of atrocities and deliberate killings; there must be an inquiry into these charges because with the passage of time even wild stories are believed. What I heard when I visited the Golden Temple in the end of June is a fraction of what I heard a few days ago.

There is no question of going into the operation part because how an army acts is dependent on the judgment of the commanders on the spot. But the allegation that innocents were killed within the precincts of the Golden Temple is too serious to remain unchallenged; this is not fair to the army and its name. There are allegations that the army has made indiscriminate arrests since the operation; only an independent inquiry into these will bring out the truth. Meanwhile, all those who are in custody without any charges against them, should be released

What has angered the Sikhs most is the rioting in Delhi and elsewhere in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination. An omnibus inquiry to find out who are guilty would be ideal but it may not be possible. At least the rioting in Delhi must be probed into because officials put the number of deaths above 2,000. Important revelations have been made by the Public Inquiry Committee, headed by S.M. Sikri, former Chief Justice of India, and by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the People's Union of Democratic Rights (PUDR).

Names of H.K.L. Bhagat, Jagdish Tytler, Lalit Maken, the three Congress(I) MPs from Delhi and of Sajjan Kumar and Dharam Das Shastri, former MPs, have been mentioned, apart from a few others. A judicial inquiry presided over by a Supreme Court judge must be held to look into the rioting in Delhi and also assess whether the allegations against the present and former MPs and the other Congress(I) leaders are true.

Once the events following the military operation and the rioting are properly looked into, the Sikhs may come round to believe that those who indulged in murder, looting and burning have been taken to task and that the law knows no Hindu or Sikh; all Indians are equal before it.

However, the Sikhs should also try to woo the Hindus in Punjab. The representatives of the two communities must sit across the table and try to understand each other's point of view and sensitivities. The Akali leaders have thus far been shy of meeting the Punjab Hindu leaders. And I have still not found one good reason why the Akal Takht, the highest Sikh body, has not issued a *hukumnama* (edict) that killing the innocent is against the tenets of Sikhism. The five high priests should start the process.

A judicial inquiry must be held to look into the rioting in Delhi and also assess whether the allegations against the present and former MPs and other Congress(I) leaders are true

New Promises

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya had rightly described *The New Wave Government* (6—19 January '85) headed by Rajiv Gandhi as "a judicious blend of youth and experience." While selecting his new cabinet, the Prime Minister has placed merit and performance above all other considerations. I also appreciate the secrecy maintained regarding the selection of the ministers and the portfolios allocated to them. Even Arun Nehru, who is so close to the PM, was kept in the dark. At the first available opportunity, Rajiv Gandhi has shown that he is a capable and shrewd administrator.
Ms Lakshmi, Mysore

• My best wishes to Rajiv Gandhi and his new team. The Congress(I) led by Rajiv Gandhi has virtually wiped out the opposition. More than anything else, failure to unite proved to be the opposition's undoing. Instead of criticising each other, the opposition leaders should now try and form a stable, united opposition. I cannot think of democracy without any strong opposition.
Faiz Ahmed Faizi, Calcutta

• I agree with Shubhabrata Bhattacharya that the massive mandate in favour of the Congress(I) was a vote for the integrity of the country (*Why the Opposition Lost*). Indians were convinced that the country could not be kept united by an opposition that was busy fighting among itself. People trusted the opposition in 1977. But the leaders did not respect the people's verdict. This time the electorate thought that only the Congress(I), with young and clean leaders like Rajiv Gandhi, could pull India out of the present crisis. The opposition leaders should draw a lesson from the debacle and try and serve the people in a more meaningful manner.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

• Unless the opposition unites there is very little chance for its comeback. The opposition failed to come out with any constructive programmes. The image they put up was that of a house divided. No wonder the people rejected them. On the other hand Rajiv Gandhi successfully gave the impression that his party alone could keep the country united.
Nirjhar Das Gupta, Calcutta

• Best wishes to Rajiv Gandhi and the newly elected members and my sympathies to the opposition. With



the Congress(I)'s landslide victory, a new era in the country's political life has begun.
Ranjan K. Talcher

• The results of the Lok Sabha elections have taken me by surprise. A comfortable victory for the Congress(I) was on the cards, but the complete rout of the opposition came as a bolt from the blue. Several factors went against the opposition parties, the most important among them being the massive misleading propaganda by the ruling party that the country's unity was in danger and that the opposition leaders were siding with the secessionist elements in Punjab. This time our gullible masses did not vote in a rational manner. The shocking defeat of most of the opposition leaders is a grave threat to the future of democracy. There is no one to check the despotic rule of the Congress(I).
Smita Narang, New Delhi

• Tarun Ganguly's assessment of the CPI(M)'s debacle in West Bengal (*Stemming the Tide*) was correct. However, here are a few more reasons, in addition to the ones mentioned by the author, that were responsible for the CPI(M)'s poor showing at the polls: the Left Front government failed in such vital areas like power, transport and law and order. Moreover, the high rate of professional taxes and the imposition of entertainment tax for TV users were resented by the people.
Ms Raj Kumari Tripathi, Howrah

• The personal ambitions of the opposition leaders led to their downfall in the Lok Sabha elections. Right from 1980 when the Janata Party broke up, the opposition remained splintered. Efforts were made to patch up the differences, but in vain. Every opposition leader wanted to become the Prime Minister. They placed their interests above the nation's. Why should people vote for them?
C. B. Sahai, New Delhi

• The Indian electorate have raised their hands to bid goodbye to the opposition. While the Congress(I) candidates were sent to the Lok Sabha, most of the opposition members were sent to the *Parlok* Sabha.
Sandip Mukherjee, Patna

• I was disappointed to go through the list of ministers in Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet. In choosing his team, the new PM has maintained his family tradition: axing men who pose a threat to his ambitions. The dropping of Pranab Mukherjee and Ghani Khan Chowdhury is certainly a loss to the administration.
Rajesh Sahay, Hazaribagh

• The near total rejection of the old opposition leaders expresses the electorate's desire for youthful dynamism as symbolised by Rajiv Gandhi. But what is disturbing is the fact that the total decimation of the opposition may lead to a gross misuse of power by the ruling party.
Susanta Biswas, Calcutta

• The historic sweep by the Congress(I) indicates that the people of India has given dynamism and stability precedence over infirmity, sluggishness and instability. The cover story discussed at length most of the ministers in the Rajiv Gandhi cabinet, but a glaring omission was the health and family welfare minister, Mrs Mohsina Kidwai.
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• The Congress(I) should now read as Congress(R).
Mahesh Kumar, New Delhi

• I had never known that the people of this country were so emotional. Even while exercising their franchise their hearts ruled over their heads.
Prabhakar S. Harsole, Indore

• The heading of the cover story was justified. The sympathy wave was so strong that women and even men were swept away by it. The immediate problems facing the country took a back-seat. It would be foolish to expect the opposition to do well in such circumstances.
M.H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

Wanted: Discipline

Ashis Ray's special report, *Sunil Gavaskar versus Kapil Dev* (30 December '84—5 January '85) was illuminating. I was surprised to go through Sandeep Patil's reaction. Such irresponsible statements will only serve to harm the interests of Indian cricket. Now that Indian cricket is passing through a trying phase, I hope that all the players will forget their differences and unite to regain past glory.
Akhaya Kumar Hota, Puri

• I felt proud when I watched on television Kapil Dev holding aloft the World Cup. But that is past. Now I watch with anguish India being humiliated at every step by a relatively weak England side. At this juncture, Ashis Ray's report on the differences between Gavaskar and Kapil was an eye-opener. What is lacking in the Indian Test team is not talent but discipline.
Dilip Kumar Sharma, Nagpur

Angrezi Mein Kehte...

M. J. Akbar's prediction regarding the political future of Amitabh Bachchan was wide off the mark (*Dateline*, 9—15 December '85). The article was written with a biased, pre-conceived notion. It would be wrong to condemn Amitabh's efforts only because he is an actor.
J C. Sharma, Oman

• H. N. Bahuguna has got a pasting in Allahabad. *Allahabad ki Hindi mein kehte hei ki "jeetna itna aasaan nahin," par angrezi mein bhi kehte hain ki* "poll predictions are not so easy to make."
Vineeta Prasad, Patna

More Information

I read with much interest the article, *A Quiet Revolution* (*News*, 25 November '84) However, I do not agree with the author on certain points. Tapash Mukherjee had said that '20-odd Santhal families of the village are beginning life anew.' I am sure that there is no Santhal family inhabiting that village. Moreover, the Singhivita Adivasi Joutha Khamar Society (SAJKS) is not in Jalpaiguri district but in Darjeeling district. It is also not true that at least one member from each family of the village have spent some years in jail for extremist activities. I would like to add that at present 24 families are involved with the affairs of the Society.
Shyamal Debnath, Siliguri

Unkind, Unjustified Attacks

I was appalled to read some of your correspondent's unkind and untrue outbursts against Khushwant Singh (*Opinion*, 23 December '84). Mr Singh, alone among the many prominent Sikhs, had the courage to speak his mind openly in the period between Operation Bluestar and the nightmare that followed Mrs Gandhi's assassination. I have not heard Khushwant Singh's BBC interviews but his CBC TV interviews in Canada were balanced. Cosmopoliton bigot is a contradiction in terms. Khushwant Singh has a strong sense of identity, individuality and a sense of belonging. Although I have no exact figures, it appears that about 95 per cent of the adult Sikh males in Canada are clean-shaven and I understand the trend is the same in Punjab. There is an identity crisis among the Sikhs in Punjab and hence the rise of the Bhindranwale phenomenon.
B.A. Kamath, Merritt, Canada

• I read with sadness and amusement the reactions to Khushwant Singh's articles published in SUNDAY. Most of the readers felt that Mr Singh was siding with the Sikhs and against the Hindus. As I live in Punjab and happened to be in Delhi during the riots following Mrs Gandhi's assassination, I know the situation better than anyone else. Most of the people, on the other hand, gathered their impressions from newspaper and magazine reports which were biased. The Sikhs were never against the Hindus. If sweets were distributed on the day Mrs Gandhi was assassinated, it was just a reciprocal gesture as Hindus had also distributed sweets after Operation Bluestar.
A.P. Singh, Hoshiarpur

• The views expressed by readers in response to Khushwant Singh's articles were alarming. Some of them have justified the killing of Sikhs throughout the country by the logic that Hindus were suffering in Punjab at the hands of the Sikhs. They have conveniently ignored the fact that extremists and anti-socials were responsible for the killing of Hindus in Punjab. There were cases when Sikhs too were killed by the extremists because they did not fall in line Anyone who raised his voice against Bhindranwale, irrespective of the fact whether he was a Hindu or a Sikh, was eliminated.
Harpinder Kaur, New Delhi

Eveready to Kill



Let us begin this new year with a firm resolve to fight the killer Union Carbide, who murdered and maimed thousands of our brothers and sisters at Bhopal. Let us fight with all our might the multinational blood-suckers who exploit the Third World poor.
Dr B. Ekbal, Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad, Trivandrum

Not True

My attention has been drawn to Yubaraj Ghimire's analysis of the election results of Bihar (*The Sweep*, 6--9 January '85) wherein the author says that "the CPI national council secretary, Jagannath Sarkar, announced that the CPI would work for the defeat of Karpoori Thakur, the DMKP leader, in Samastipur." This is not true The CPI had extended its support to the Lok Dal candidate Baidyanath Mehta in Samastipur. The party had never given any call nor worked for the defeat of Karpoori Thakur. For the benefit of readers I am quoting the relevant paragraph from our press hand-out:

"Since the DMKP leadership was chiefly instrumental in preventing adjustment of seats among the left, democratic and secular opposition parties in Bihar...so the CPI was compelled to support the Lok Dal candidate in Samastipur." The hand-out made it clear that the "CPI had to do this only to register its protest against the disruptive tactics of the DMKP leadership in Bihar."
Ramavatar Sharma, secretary, Bihar State Council, Communist Party of India, Patna

Bureaucrat, Diplomat, Industrialist, Spy

It is time to break this nexus

When Mrs Indira Gandhi lay in state at the Teen Murti House after her assassination, three gates were marked for the different categories of mourners. The general public filed past a gate towards which her feet were placed. By her side there was a gate from where Indian dignitaries and lesser foreign personalities were allowed to enter and pay their homage. Apart from these two, a special gate was kept open for foreign dignitaries and envoys. One Indian industrialist was seen bribing his way through this gate even on that solemn day. This industrialist, who started off as a clerk in a trading house in the Middle East some years ago, today controls a major blue chip company in the stock exchange. His rise to fame has been due to his clout with a former finance minister and bribing has been his forte. Even by the side of Mrs Gandhi's dead body, he did not hesitate for a moment while bribing the guards. He was accompanied by the president of the Congress(I) committee of the western metropolis, which is his base. His liaison man in Delhi, who was close on the heels of this industrialist, was seen extracting his hand from his pocket and shaking hands with a securityman. No one thereafter objected to this blatant violation of protocol while this businessman, who has been known as the fountainhead of corruption in the past few years, sailed through the special gate and paid his last respects to Mrs Gandhi.

There could be no better example of the influence which moneybags wield in Delhi. If this industrialist was able to make his ill-earned money yield dividends on a day when the nation was griefstricken, one can imagine what money can do in normal times. Many Indian VIPs noticed him doing what he did. But no one dared to object. His money reached far and wide. If it was suit lengths (both for summer safari suits and winter suiting) for the securitymen and the lesser staff, the government's influential ministers and Members of Parliament (cutting across party lines) were recipients of his largesse. For the officers, his attractive convertible debenture issues were always available from the business associate's quota. He is a man for all seasons: and men in positions of influence and power serve him for obvious reasons.

We have given the above example to show how vulnerable the system is to bribing. If a security guard standing by the dead body of the late Prime Minister was accepting bribes and people not objecting to it, then some introspection is called for. Have we reached the nadir of human behaviour? The discovery of a spy ring operating in the Prime Minister's office is a shame. If India's national interests are under attack from the very institution which is entrusted with the task of safeguarding it, then something serious has gone wrong over the years. It is a well-known fact that corruption has been growing by leaps and bounds since the early Seventies. The Maruti project, the brainchild of the late Sanjay Gandhi, was the watershed. Irregularities were committed to please the whims of the Prime Minister's younger son. The officers who stuck to the rules of the book had to

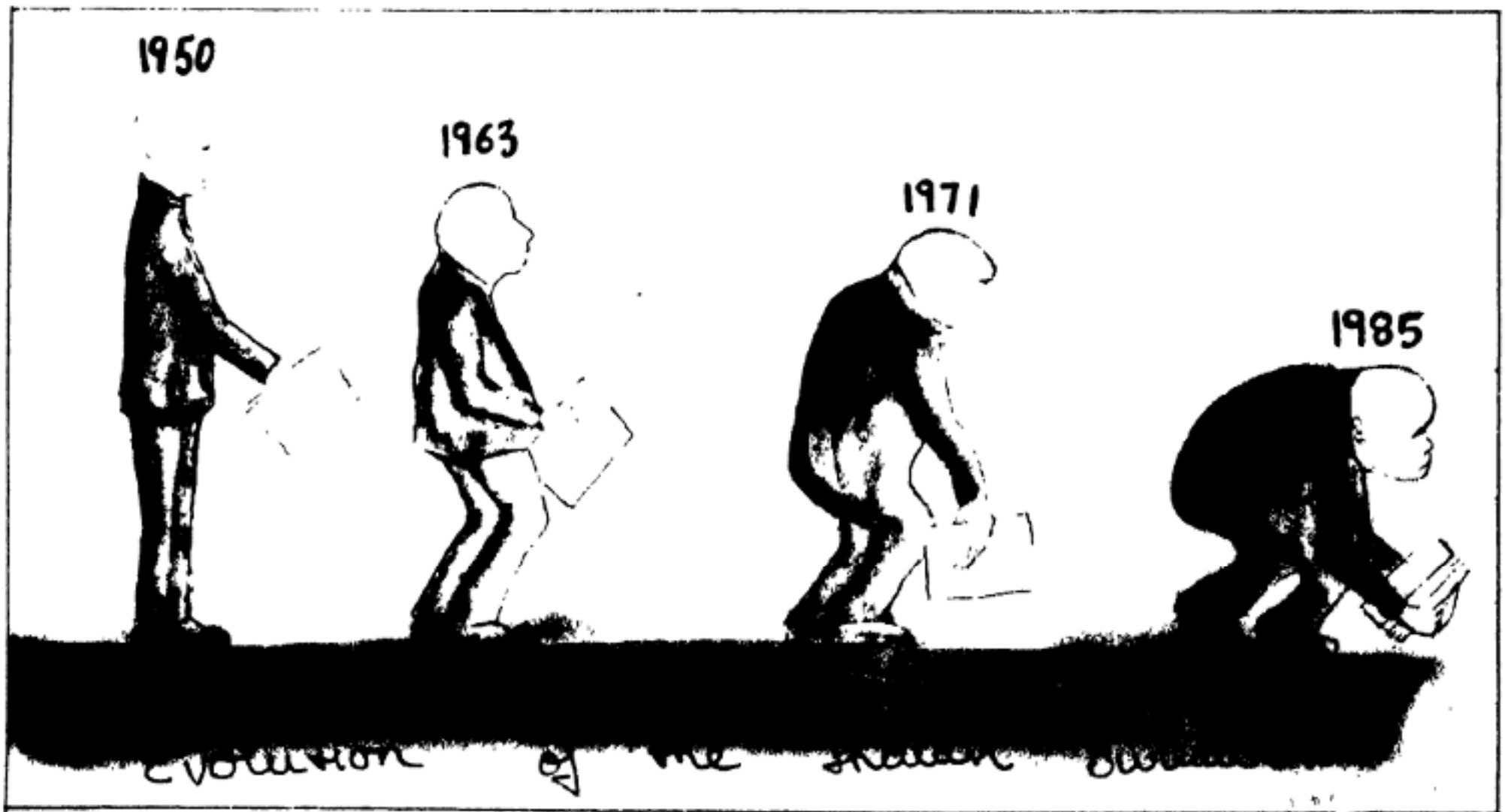


Illustration: Bulbul Sharma

regret such insistence. The Official Secrets Act became a mere piece of badly printed official stationery since the time Sanjay Gandhi became the extra-constitutional authority to whom everyone in the government bowed. Sanjay Gandhi's death was followed by the emergence of another coterie which looked into government files without having the sanction to do so. They did not themselves call for the files. The political and bureaucratic culture had become such that officials and ministers alike went to certain persons whom they thought were near the centre of power and showed the files and sought "guidance." It is another matter that those who were interfering in the matters of state without sanction till a few months back have now been given the mandate to do so. But the fact remains that the provisions of the Official Secrets Act have rarely been observed as a matter of rule in the last several years.

The average Indian bureaucrat is a cautious person. A government servant is largely dependent on his pension, gratuity and provident fund after retirement. If any enquiry be pending against him on the date of superannuation, then these are held up. The bureaucrat, therefore, cannot afford to be blatantly corrupt. There is a very small percentage of daredevils, who either because of their moneyed family backgrounds or due to a total lack of fear of God, indulge in corruption openly. Political patronage is the opiate of the bureaucracy. Often currying favour with the political masters becomes the over-riding factor and this leads to the bureaucrat indulging in activities which violate the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and the Prevention of Corruption Act. Corruption in the bureaucracy does not mean big money. Money plays a role, but rarely does an average Indian bureaucrat build a house or buy property from money earned through corrupt practices. Corrupting a government servant in India is a comparatively cheap exercise. The government's pay and allowances are such that it sometimes seems that corruption has been inbuilt into the system. While on tour, a government servant is given an allowance of Rs 22 in normal towns and Rs 37.50 per day in metropolitan towns. This amount is supposed to cover the cost of boarding, lodging and transportation in the place of deputation. It is easy for businessmen to corrupt the officers on such occasions by offering them transport and the use of the luxury guest houses. In New Delhi, the headquarters of the Government of India, if an officer has to travel between two ministries on official work and the official pool staff car is not available, then the government rules lay down that they have to use autorickshaws and not taxis. This innovation in the rules was made sometime during the tenure of Pranab Kumar Mukherjee as the union finance minister. There have been instances when three officers had to travel and they hired a taxi. The bill was not passed. Had they hired three autorickshaws and thereby spent more for the trip than by hiring a taxi, the bills would have been passed. Transport of businessmen and liaison agents is made available to willing officers on such occasions. Even then, an average bureaucrat rarely uses such facilities. But the fact remains that unimaginative rules of the government lay open the bureaucratic portals for corrupt influences.

More than monetary corruption, it is the politicisation of the bureaucracy over the last decade-and-a-half which has threatened the fabric of Indian bureaucracy. The overcentralisation of power in the Prime Minister's office, which is a phenomenon which had its origins during the regime of Indira Gandhi, has been the bane. In the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, there was no centralisation of power in the Prime Minister's office. His aide, M.O. Mathai, tried to become the overlord of government affairs, but this was resisted and Nehru's democratic manner became the biggest safeguard against such aberrations. It may be argued that there is nothing wrong if the PM's office were to become the real centre of power, as it has become in the last decade-and-a-half. The fact which is often overlooked is that the Constitution envisages that "there shall be a council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister." The Prime Minister is the head of a council of ministers, with every minister having his own entity. It is another matter that today all ministers are not of the calibre of the cabinet ministers of the time of Jawaharlal Nehru. Once Maulana Azad had telephoned Nehru, and Mathai, without consulting Nehru, told him that the Prime Minister was busy. The powerful cabinet minister had burst out in anger and pointed out to Mathai that when Maulana Azad telephoned Nehru, Mathai was no one to sit in judgment whether the two should talk or not. Today, not only are ministers bowing before every pillar of the PM's office, but in the last days of Mrs Gandhi, Nathuram, a cook who rose to be the personal attendant, also became a centre of power. (He was removed in the first week of this year, after Rajiv Gandhi cleaned the old moss which had gathered around the PM's office and residence.)

The very fact that sensitive plans like the anti-nuclear strike plan (to destroy the enemy's nuclear installations), cipher code, defence plans and confidential documents of the economic affairs department have been found missing after the spy ring was busted shows the inherent fallacy in trusting the under-secretaries and such junior staff with sensitive documents. One wonders why Dr P. C Alexander did not take the precaution of storing these papers under his personal care.

The seniormost bureaucrat in the government is the cabinet secretary. The creation of a post of principal secretary to the PM which was done to accommodate Mr P. N. Haksar by Mrs Gandhi in late 1971, was the beginning of a parallel centre of power, bypassing the cabinet secretary. P.N. Haksar was a rare bureaucrat. He did not seek extensions when he had retired on reaching the age of superannuation on 4 September 1971. But his services were recalled by Mrs Gandhi and as Haksar had been succeeded by an eminent economist, P. N. Dhar, as the secretary to Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi created the post of principal secretary to PM for Haksar. But Haksar ran into rough weather soon, as he was unwilling to accept the role which Mrs Gandhi was slowly assigning to Sanjay Gandhi. The early Seventies had seen the last of the tall men in Delhi's power hierarchy. While Haksar was not willing to defend Sanjay Gandhi's Maruti adventure, there were cabinet ministers like Mohan Kumaramangalam and D. P. Dhar who did not appreciate Sanjay Gandhi phoning them on the secret Rashtrapati Bhavan exchange (RAX) telephone. Unfortunately for Mrs Gandhi and the nation, while Haksar left the service in disgust in early 1973, Kumaramangalam died in the summer of that year. D. P. Dhar, who had been shunted as the ambassador to Moscow, died on 12 June 1975—the day on which the Allahabad High Court set aside Mrs Gandhi's election and the country began drifting towards the Emergency, its aberrations and the aftermath, which was even more unsavoury.

The post of secretary to PM, which was the precursor to the principal secretary's post, was created by Lal Bahadur Shastri. Lakshmi Kant Jha was appointed to this post. When Mrs Gandhi became the Prime Minister, she retained Jha for a while and later replaced him with Haksar, who was in

the foreign office till then. Haksar's successor was P. N. Dhar. After Haksar quit as the principal secretary in 1973, there was no principal secretary till Morarji Desai became the Janata PM and appointed a retired civil servant, V. Shanker,to this post. Charan Singh appointed a serving bureaucrat, Krishnaswamy Rao Sahab, who continued for a while with Mrs Gandhi after the 1980 polls, till he succeeded the last of the ICS members, N. K. Mookerji, as the cabinet secretary. (Mookerji had the distinction of not only being the last ICS to retire from service, but also serving under three Prime Ministers: Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Mrs Gandhi.) Dr P.C. Alexander was brought out from retirement (which he had sought voluntarily after the Janata came to power) and made the principal secretary in 1981 He was to have retired soon, but the spy scandal rocked his boat and he had to resign on 18 January 1985.

The major fallout of the present expose is that the civilian bureaucracy has been shown in bad light. Just two years ago the Larkins' case had been busted. The two Larkins brothers, both retired general staff officers of the armed forces were found acting as agents of foreign powers. Their access to the headquarters of the army and the air force had helped them to gather classified information. The entire security system of the defence headquarters had to be revamped after the Larkins case. Some years ago an entire brigade of the army posted in Jammu and Kashmir had been arrested for having spied for Pakistan. After the January arrests this year, there has been a tendency among some military top brass to create an impression that while civilian bureaucrats were caught spying, the military was above such allegations. No section of the government machinery can be singled out for disrepute when spy rings are busted. There are parallels between the Larkins case and the Coomar Narain case. Immediately after the arrests were made in the present case, Delhi was agog with rumours, most of them wild. One leading daily went on to say that a dozen secretaries to the government were being interrogated. On a particular day, it was said that the defence production secretary, Mahesh Chandra Sarin, was being sacked because his personal assistant (PA) had been arrested in the spying case. The fact was that at the time when this propaganda about M.C. Sarin was being done, he was attending a meeting in the defence ministry. No effort was made by the government spokesmen to counter these rumours. Perhaps, no one in the government realised that when press reports said that 12 officers of the level of secretaries were being suspected of being spies (without specifying who the "dirty dozen" were), the morale in the government offices was affected. For over ten days officers looked over each other's shoulders trying to spot a spy. Government work suffered.

There are many stories being planted about the extent of damage done by the spies. In these stories there is an underlying effort to malign the civilian bureaucracy as a whole. While there is no doubt that some junior officers have been nabbed, the effort to show the nascent political bureaucracy (represented by the parliamentary secretaries) or the military as being "clean" at the cost of the civilian bureaucracy can be dangerous. After the assassination of the former Prime Minister, the special security district in the capital has been placed under the charge of a lieutenant colonel and two majors (as if no one among the 3,000-strong IPS cadre could be trusted any more). The civilian bureaucracy may be in a state of deterioration, but it is not an evil; it is a necessity in our democratic setup.

Industrialists, to further their business interests, use bureaucrats and military officers alike to spy on the government's affairs. The defence ministry is a major buyer not only in the domestic but also in the international market. The early Eighties have seen a sudden spurt in India's purchases abroad: armaments, aircraft (both civilian and military), petroleum, cement, electronic kits, power plant equipment and many other items. Many bureaucrats have come in contact with foreigners in the process. Frequent trips abroad have become a matter of routine for some officers. Indian industrialists not only keep the politicians happy but also the bureaucrats and lesser functionaries. The old joke among bureaucrats is that while a secretary is not a permanent person in any ministry, the stenographer or the peon is. The industrialists realise this and the lesser functionaries are kept in good humour. Liaison agents for the industrialists operate in Delhi in a big way. Fortunately in India there are festivals throughout the year unlike the annual Christmas in the western world, which is an occasion for giving gifts. Losing money in a card game to an influential officer is the expertise of a successful liaison man. The Diwali and Holi gifts are not given out of mere affection: a retired officer soon realises that the large posse of wellwishers who used to throng his house while in service disappears as soon as he is out of the saddle.

Industrial espionage is in its infancy in India. But industrialists keep a close tab on the government files. In the pre-budget days, some businessmen are known to influence the budgetary exercise in such a way that their competitors find the going difficult after the budget is announced. The industrialist to whom we have referred earlier, the one who bribed his way through the foreign dignitaries' gate at the Teen Murti House after Mrs Gandhi's death, is a specialist in this field.

The bane of this country in the past few years has been that the line of differenciation between the friendly foreigner and the spy has almost disappeared. The wife of the Prime Minister being an Italian, this particular community in Delhi has of late wielded power. Mrs Sonia Gandhi's sister is married to a Spanish diplomat.' This gentleman was suddenly posted by the government of Spain to Delhi after Rajiv Gandhi became active in politics in 1981. The family of Mrs Sonia Gandhi has been off and on staying as guests of a Sicilian-born Italian businessman in Delhi, Ottavio Quattarochi, who represents Snam Progetti. Even after Mrs Gandhi's death, the Maino family from Milan were guests of Quattarochi in Delhi. The special aircraft which flew over the Himalayas scattering the ashes of Mrs Gandhi carried many Italians. This is not to say that family ties have to be ignored. But when at the highest places foreigners have easy access, lower functionaries of the government are confused. And when corruption is declared as a "world phenomenon" by the highest of the land, spies are bound to take advantage of this "global trend" and exploit this country.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

G.S. Bajpai: ideal bureaucrat



The Decline and Fall of the Indian Bureaucrat

It has been a long journey downhill since the days of Jawaharlal Nehru

On 23 November 1984, all the officers of the government of India received an official circular, saying, "Please find enclosed a copy of the article from the book entitled *Management in Government* on the role of civil service, then and now, by Dr P.C. Alexander, principal secretary to the Prime Minister." Ironically, by 16-17 January 1985, his entire office staff were behind bars, awaiting trial in the biggest spy case the country has ever witnessed since independence.

Dr Alexander stresses at the beginning of his discourse that he was one of those few selected for the central pool of service on whom rules of tenure (i.e. fixed period of deputation from the state to the centre) did not apply. Thus, he had the unique opportunity of participating in the process of decision-making at all levels of the civil service in Delhi, from under-secretary upwards. At the outset, he says he would like to deal with the general allegation that there has been serious deterioration in standards of quality in the present-day civil service compared with the civil service in the pre-independence days. But, according to him, this deterioration is more because we have not been able to understand the fundamental changes that have taken place in the last few decades.

Compared to the older generations, we are now living in the age of instant communication, computers, shuttles and guided missiles. As a result, according to Dr Alexander, if both the old and the new generations make a sincere effort in understanding the implications and importance of these changes, there will be better understanding of each other and less complaints about the deterioration in standards or quality (in the civil service). Every year no more than half a dozen used to come into the Indian Civil Service. The examination was stiff and the education very expensive for anyone to pursue. There are more than 150 recruited in the IAS every year, besides other allied services, where the entrants run into several hundreds in number. When people speak of deterioration in standards, the dimension of numbers is generally highlighted. We start with the assumption that large numbers mean lower standards. It is because of higher education at low cost and wider opportunities to appear at the competitive examinations, coupled with the dimensions of the administration in post-independence India, that larger number of civil servants are required to be recruited. From simple administration, during pre-independence days, of law and order and the revenue-oriented service to a period of the whole range of development-oriented service, it was a real giant leap forward. Negotiations for trade agreements, UNCTAD, IMF, World Bank, export promotion, management of public sector, family planning and a variety of other tasks which the civil service of today has to discharge are quite new and highly complex, demanding great versatility and competence on the part of the officers.

At which point of time did the deterioration in standards set in, as far as the civil service is concerned? According to Dr Alexander, this is of recent origin and there are some distressing trends. Devoid of political sensitivity, the civil servant becomes a wage earner. He, therefore, observes that it will be a sad day for development administration in our country as well as for the civil service if civil servants take their tasks without involvement. In other words, "committed civil service" is the order of the day rather than an exception. Another area identified by Dr Alexander is the creeping cynicism about the tasks one is called upon to do. According to him, even some new entrants to the civil service have fallen victims to a tendency to be hypocritical and cynical about everything. Finally, a new trend in civil service which has come up during the last three or four years is the tendency to dilute the responsibility for decision-making. Even when there is no need to refer a file to another ministry or officer for comments and views, many civil servants now indulge in this special art of pushing files vertically and horizontally, or raising queries not relevant to the subject in an attempt to involve others also in the exercises.

An excessive tendency to keep every file secret or confidential is yet another new trend. Very often this false system of labelling files only leads to leakage of information which should have been secret and to unnecessary secrecy of information which should have been open. With these profound words of wisdom, we are taking a look at what the civil service was yesterday and what it has become today.

There was a time when a minister combined in himself political strength with expertise in the portfolio he handled. Jawaharlal Nehru as minister for external affairs literally trained the hard core of our foreign service. Those who worked under him say that as and when cables and messages from our missions abroad reached his table, he used to dictate the replies to them and even indicate the level at which a reply should go. He was indeed a one-man training centre for the first generation diplomats. Yet, for a civilian like R.N. Banerjee, then secretary general, ministry of external affairs, the preparation of the brief for the Kashmir debate coming up before the United Nations and the nomination of Gopalswamy Iyenger (father of G. Parthasarathy), it became a matter of such heated argument with Nehru that Banerjee resigned in protest instead of being persuaded by Nehru. Later events proved Banerjee right as it was a disaster for India at the United Nations.

N. R. Pillai and Girija Shankar Bajpai laid down the rules of recruitment to the Indian Foreign Service as R. N. Banerjee did as the chairman of the UPSC for recruitment of officers in the IAS. Such was the approach to the basic structure in these services without any interference from any of the political masters that these standards of recruitment remain valid even today. Under such personalities as Sardar Ballavbhai Patel and Govind Ballav Pant as home minister, the relationship with the civil servant was one of mutual trust and admiration. It is said the S. G. Basu Mullik, then district magistrate, Lucknow, was very fond of playing chess and never missed a chance of catching someone even at the back of a shop to have a game. As chief minister of UP, Govind Ballav Pant knew about it but had no occasion to catch the young officer; such was his trust and respect. The comments given by him were enough for Basu Mullik to rise to the rank of

secretary to the government of India in the ministry of commerce.

There were instances of a clash of personalities as well. Bhaktavatsalam, then chief minister of Madras did not see eye-to-eye with his home secretary, J. M. Lobo Prabhu, and transferred him as the district magistrate to Nilgiri Hills, the smallest district in the state. Lobo Prabhu resigned in protest. When B. N. Subba Rao, another brilliant ICS officer, started living with his sister-in-law, leaving his wife, Prime Minister Nehru himself sent for him and asked him to resign. He did not accept the argument that it was a private matter. A civil servant was supposed to live an exemplary life before the people. Through public service, quite late in life, Subba Rao became the mayor of Kanpur.

The first time the country was rocked by a scandal was in the mid-Fifties when Feroze Gandhi made a revelation in Parliament on what came to be known as the Haridas Mundra case. By deft manipulation of bogus shares on huge loans from the Life Insurance Company of India (LIC), nationalised only a few years ago, Mundra was cornering one-big company after the other, leading to jealousy among industrialists. It was said that at the age of 32 years, Mundra's personal wealth was around Rs 35 crores at that time. Even Nehru as Prime Minister could not withstand the allegations of corruption with complicity at high places of the government, between the entire ministry of finance and Mundra. So, in one stroke, the finance minister, T. T. Krishnamachari, the governor of the Reserve Bank of India, H. V. R. Iyenger, the finance secretary, H. M. Patel and the chairman of the LIC resigned and took the blame upon themselves

After a few years again the nation was shaken by another event which came to be known as the pipeline scandal, leading to the resignation of the minister for petroleum, K. D. Malaviya and the secretary, P. R. Nayak.

The people still had faith in the political leadership and the structure of the civil service. Was it not Nehru who recognised the brilliance of the finance secretary, C. D. Deshmukh, who later became governor, Reserve Bank of India? Nehru made him resign from the ICS and contest the general election from Bombay to make him his finance minister. The socialist pattern of the budget was left to such a man to frame and pilot in the Parliament session for quite a few years.

Yet the biggest jolt to the bureaucracy by the political masters came during 1961-62 in the wake of the Chinese aggression. The then defence minister of India, V. K. Krishna Menon would listen to no one, either from the armed forces or in his ministry. He was the most intelligent among all and it was a one-man ministry, receiving orders from him only. The Chinese aggression was a national disaster and it is now a part of history. Gone were the days of complementary roles for the minister and his officials. This was the beginning of the era of wily politicians and chosen bureaucrats. It was said that only after a severe reprimand by the then President of India that Nehru agreed to ask Krishna Menon to resign. National humiliation was ignored with a mere resignation of the minister.

This was the period when the civil servant found out that by currying favour with politicians, he could not only avoid leaving Delhi, but come to prominence in important assignments in the government of India. For such chosen civil servants, a central pool was created to perpetuate their stay and influence in Delhi. Dr P. C. Alexander and P. K. Kaul, the present finance secretary, belong to this group. There was nothing to worry about the continuity of the children's education, change of residence, etc.

This was also the time to get rich quickly, by sharing the fortune with the politician on the rise. One morning there was a theft at the house of S. K. Patil, minister and treasurer of the Congress party. He was out of Delhi when it happened. So, the police was called and V. Shankar, ICS, the guide and mentor of Patil was also informed. Before the police could begin an inventory of what was stolen from the house V. Shankar scolded everyone in the house and no police was allowed inside. The steel cupboards were filled with currency notes and in the absence of the minister, it was the duty of the eminent civil servant to protect the good name of his master.

This tendency also spread to the states, bringing in manipulations in general elections. It was a world of give and take. The post-Nehru era saw the spread of the cancer of corruption without any check in all the important government depart-



S. Shankar's residence at the President's estate

ments. Tulmohan Ram, a Member of Parliament became a symbol, thanks to his association with Lalit Narayan Mishra, minister of foreign trade and later commerce. It was a common talk of permit-*raj* in Mishra's ministry. In course of a debate in Parliament, Atal Behari Vajpayee sarcastically commented once: "For our honourable Prime Minister, Srimati Gandhi, everywhere in the government, it is the same: *ham do, hamare do*—mother and son (Sanjay Gandhi), Lalit Narayan (Mishra) and Tulmohan (Ram)."

Such was the inflow of loose cash that L. N. Mishra's special assistant resigned his job and became a leading film producer/distributor with *Mughal-e-Azam*. He has also produced the recent film, *Razia Sultan*. The special assistant also became a leading local representative of multinational companies like Mitsubishi of Japan, etc. The private secretary of another prominent minister, Jagjivan Ram, a mere stenographer, also quit his job, after 15 years of service at a ripe young age, to become the owner of a guest house in Vasant Vihar, a posh locality of Delhi, besides becoming the sole selling agent of a leading paper industry in the country. He also became the local representative of a number of East European companies dealing in arms and aircraft. What more could a civil servant look for when he was in association with such an eminent minister?

There has never been a looking back thereafter. Either the minister's wife or son or brother-in-law became the business partner with the secretary or additional or joint secretary and it all became a household affair in government business. The businessman from within the country or abroad had only to look around in Delhi as to who was whose contact to finalise a deal, with manipulation in the tender papers, local or global, mark-up in price, managing the negotiating committee, etc.

Giving small tips and presents to the village *patwari* or the police constable for small mercies has been the age-old practice in India. But the national examples of corruption made the control and supervision of the civil servants down the line disappear. With ever-increasing recruitment of candidates from all sections of society, the temptation to get rich quickly became the sole motive of many after joining the service. Being the district magistrate, the civil servant also became the president of the local Rotary Club with the neighbouring rice mill owner and the petrol pump dealer as his two vice-presidents. At times of inter-state smuggling of rice or hoarding of petrol, the approach to the district magistrate became simple and fast, thanks to the Rotary spirit.

To cite a real life example, a 1970 batch IAS district magistrate of Lucknow was given additional charge of the post of commissioner of the local municipality. By means of membership of the local club, the owner of a huge residential building, where the district magistrate's office was also located, under notice from the Urban Land Ceiling Act, got a certificate under the hand and seal of the district magistrate and commissioner of the municipality that it was a commercial establishment and, therefore, the Urban Land Ceiling Act did not apply. To the surprise of the state government, the owner showed this order in the court and got the case adjourned. Consideration for this official favour was said to be a crore of rupees to the young officer who took so much upon himself. Yet, in course of a vigilance enquiry against him, he got himself posted to a district, on the neighbourhood of Delhi. Here again, he managed a piece of land in his in-law's name, about 50 acres, for Rs 25 a square yard, though the price at that time was around Rs 500 a square yard, took about half a crore of rupees as loan and started a poultry farm. By spending some money, he got his resignation letter from the IAS accepted by the state government and has settled down in a posh locality in Delhi with a few chauffeur-driven cars. It is said this officer is a man worth about five crores of rupees now and is a strong aspirant for the Congress(I) ticket for the ensuing Assembly election from UP. Everyone in the state government knows about this case but political proximity can do wonders.

The distinction of facing the first adjournment motion in 1980, soon after Mrs Gandhi formed her government, went to the then energy minister, whose special assistant, an under-secretary in the central secretariat service, was granting special favours by issuing coal permits to a particular group of dealers in West Bengal. Not only did the government vigorously defend such action by a junior official but the minister was heard boasting later on that the entire opposition could not do what this officer was doing: generating about Rs 20 lakhs a week for the cause of the party The same arrangement continued through the same official when the minister shifted to railways. When the activities came to be well known, the official was suddenly made the chairman of a public sector undertaking, without the re-



A securityman guards Dr P.C. Alexander's house

The CIA's Operations

In the late Sixties, Mr Y.K. Sharma (the names mentioned in this incident are fictitious for obvious reasons) an Indian government official was posted in a western capital. During his stay there he admitted his son to a school in the city. The young boy naturally made a number of friends and among them was an American named Harry. Many years later Mr Sharma rose to occupy an important position in a sensitive department in Delhi. Meanwhile, because of the nature of the work he was handling, the Americans started investigation into Mr Sharma's past, found out about his posting in the western capital and discovered that Harry had studied with his son. Next, Harry, who was then working in the US government, was asked if he wanted a posting in Delhi. In Delhi, Harry renewed contacts with his old friend and persuaded him to copy secret information from the files his father used to bring home from office and hand them over to him. Fortunately, this was discovered by the IB. This is just one example of how the CIA operates in this country to ferret out information.

The kind of information the CIA is interested in relates more to the Soviet Union than to India: principally, details of Soviet equipment in the Indian armed forces. It is aimed at finding out more about Soviet arms development. It is simpler for a CIA agent to operate in a country like India than either in the Soviet Union or any of the East Bloc countries. It is easier and often cheaper, to obtain information from the Indian defence ministry (as has been proved from the recent spy scandal) than it would be from any of the East Bloc countries where a strict tab is kept on visitors from the West.

That the West is largely interested in details of the Soviet arms in this country has been further corroborated by disclosures in the French publication *L'Express*, following the recent spy scandal involving Alain Bolley, who has been accused of spying for the CIA. According to *L'Express*, French agents had a meeting with an Indian engineer in a Paris hotel and negotiated the purchase from him of exclusive documents relating to the latest supplies of Soviet military equipment to India. In the Larkins' case what the Americans wanted to know related to electronic, avionics and other fittings inside the MiG-25 and specialised equipment in T-72 tanks. Again, the information that both J.S. Gill and Lt Col Singh were passing on to the CIA from the defence library related to Soviet equipment.

It has been claimed that after Pakistan's crackdown on East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) three crucial Indian decisions: to intervene militarily, to sign a treaty with USSR and to declare a cease-fire became known to the CIA before they were made public or even implemented. Henry Kissinger, in fact, said that a member of Mrs Gandhi's cabinet had revealed that there could be a possible attack by India on Pakistan in 1971. But how much of this is true?

Saumitra Banerjee, New Delhi

quired approval of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB), as indicated by the cabinet secretary seeking approval of the Prime Minister. It was duly approved.

In recent years, with the crack of dawn, the commissioner of police, Delhi, the vice-chairman, Delhi Development Authority, the president of the New Delhi Municipal Committee would start jostling with all and sundry in front of the Prime Minister's residence with some file in their hands to catch a glimpse of either "Madam" (as the Prime Minister was fondly called) or Sanjay or Rajiv (who as a pilot did not have any clue to such solicitations). Many times, it was a fruitless wait, but showing the face first thing in the morning at the first house of the city was important, and part of the official duty. "Close to the house" was a phrase coined at this time, meaning the proximity to the house of the Prime Minister, where even the cook of the family, Nathuram, was a powerful person, arranging *darshan* on split-second signal. Of course, such a favour was not for the asking and, surely, not without a consideration.

After the death of Sanjay Gandhi, the entire arrangement of such *darshans* and favours were more streamlined. Every room at 1, Akbar Road, later at house number 2A, Motilal Nehru Marg in Delhi had an expert. Whether a secretary to the government, the cabinet secretary, chairmen of some public undertakings or banks, trooped in with all kinds of papers, secret or not secret, for urgent discussions and directions, they were dealt with promptly. The air was full of awe and expectation, for getting the attention of Rajiv Gandhi, who pondered over the fate of the nation, through such "informal" consultations and till then undecided about joining politics. No one in the civil service ever dared to ask, even in a remote roundabout way, to whom they were showing such papers and having such discussions, and whether such disclosures amounted to anything under the Official Secrets Act.

About a fortnight before the Republic Day parade in 1981, it suddenly occurred to the intelligence bureau and other similar agencies that as the President was going to take the salute and the entire government of India right from the Prime Minister to the mid-level officials would sit and watch the parade, if a rolling tank was suddenly taken round, it would be death for all there. Neither human hands nor rifle bullets could stop such a tank. No one would be able to run to safety since at the back of the place was a stretch of water. The chief of RAW, accompanied by the director of the IB and the director of Military Intelligence discussed the contingency plan, not among themselves but with someone, who is now an important parliamentary secretary, then an executive of a private company, standing on Rajpath at about eleven o'clock.

Dr Alexander in his recent discourse did not find much of a deterioration in standards, except understanding the nature of the problems facing the civil service in its proper perspective. He glossed over the painful distortions in the service under his very nose during his entire stay as the principal secretary to the Prime Minister. If there have been distressing trends among the civil servants, he has not been able to identify them in his otherwise excellent essay on the subject. However, he concluded with a snide remark, which seems to have more meaning than one: A foreign diplomat, who was a great friend of India once told him that in this country, there were three categories of files, "secret," "top secret" and "open secret."

How true since we have discussed only the open secrets in the government today.

A Special Correspondent

Admirable Bureaucrats

There are few heroes among bureaucrats in the pantheon of the Indian civil servants. Ask a civil servant today who the men he admires are and it will be a long time before he comes up with a name. Many ICS officers of the past, the "chosen people" trained by the British to be the "guardians" of society are often thought to have been good administrators and good men, but only in parts. The same is true of the civil servants of the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) who, perhaps, had and have a more difficult task because the Indian political masters of the mid-60s began to impose themselves upon the bureaucracy. The latter-day bureaucrats, considered to be no less in terms of ability, although, perhaps, occasionally in intellectual prowess, might appear to be lesser men. But that is only because the times have changed. Decay has set in the body politic and with the decline in public morality, the decline in the standard of the bureaucracy has come about. Decline, but not fall, insist the bureaucrats.

Civil servants cited most often are Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, India's first secretary-general, Sir N.R. Pillai, H.V.R. Iyengar, V.P. Menon, Bhagvan Sahay, H.M. Patel, Dharam Vira, R.C. Dutt, N.M. Buch, R.P. Narona, B.K. Nehru. L.K. Jha, K.B. Lall and others from the golden age of bureaucracy. Some of them became larger-than-life figures in the post-independence period. The qualities for which their successors admire them the most are decisiveness, integrity and that now rare ability to talk back to the masters: political or bureaucratic. It was a quality which required independence of mind and a certain toughness. It has now eroded over the years, especially after the Emergency. The Emergency is considered a cut-off point for the independence of the bureaucracy.

Among the civil servants admired from more recent times although not without qualifying reservations are Mahesh Buch from the Madhya Pradesh cadre and P.S. Appu, the former director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration in Mussorie. The former is admired for his brilliance and his unconventional manner: he did not believe in the PA system, leaving his doors wide open, the latter for having resigned from the service over a matter of principle.

The man who is idolised, and perhaps the only one to whom the formidable P.N. Haksar "pays homage" is Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai whom Jawaharlal Nehru chose as secretary-general in the ministry of external affairs. A graduate in science from the university of Allahabad, Mr Bajpai later read history at Oxford. He sat for the ICS examination in England and was later to become the service's youngest secretary. He was, as were many in those days, a man of many parts. His son, Mr U.S. Bajpai, formerly of the Indian Foreign Service, describes him: "A keen collector of carpets, voracious reader, he religiously read Gibbon, was a master of the English language and was extremely fond of good clothes. In fact, when he became secretary-general, Panditji (Jawaharlal Nehru) took him to his tailor in London to get his *sherwani* made."

The advice Sir Girija gave his son on how to be a good civil servant stood him in good stead. "When my father was secretary-general and I was a young under-secretary," remembers Mr U.S. Bajpai, "he told me, 'The only advice I can give you is do not sit on papers. Take decisions one way or the other and be prepared to take the rap if it goes wrong Nothing is worse than postponing decisions. Time might eventually resolve the problem but you will not be doing your job.' The other bit of advice he gave me is: 'Do not write reams and reams on files. Be precise and get straight to the point.'"

Nor, as what soon became the norm, did Sir Girija stand outside the PM's door and wait. Recalled Mr U.S. Bajpai, "Mr M.O. Mathai, Panditji's private secretary started writing on the papers my father used to send to the Prime Minister. My father told the PM, that he would rather leave. Mr Mathai stopped writing on my father's papers. Nor did he go through Mathai or stand and wait outside the PM's door— as did many people."

The decline in the bureaucracy was really set in motion in the post-Emergency phase when civil servants came to be divided into "our men" (meaning loyal to the party in power) and "their men" (meaning those in the opposition). In 1977, the Janata government carried out its cleaning-up exercise. In 1980 when the Congress(I) came to power, its broom moved briskly, in fact in 1981, 48 of the 52 secretaries of the government were changed. Purges became the order of the day. The late Seventies saw the unhappy phenomenon of bureaucrats hitching themselves to politicians: to MLAs in the states and MPs at the centre. Since merit was fast becoming an old-fashioned virtue—currying favour with those at the top or those who knew people at the top became the almost full-time activity of many bureaucrats. Appointments and transfers became important levers for the politicians. The ambitious bureaucrats in the middle and lower rungs soon learned to play the game. Says a young bureaucrat: "We no longer have the confidence that we will go up the ladder on our own ability. Many of us do not concentrate upon our work but on contacts, on getting to know so and so. Work gets neglected."

What is more serious is the sense of insecurity prevalent amongst the bureaucrats. "In the days of the *raj* the babu knew that he would end up with the title of a Rai Bahadur or at least a house. Today we cannot survive. There is nothing to look forward to. Nor are we martyrs, or Gandhians in days when there are no Gandhis around." Another bureaucrat is more direct: "The IAS man today can't afford his daily glass of whisky. The ICS could afford his Scotch. Frankly, I would say that the biggest snare for the bureaucracy is drink."

So, with neither security, nor incentive, nor praise for good work—in addition to being in a sort of straight-jacket which does not allow him to question the boss—the bureaucrat does feel increasingly frustrated. To say that the civil servant of today is worse than his predecessor is unfair and simplistic. With changing times, the present-day bureaucrat has more challenging tasks. He has come closer to the people, than – in the time of the British. But with the task of nation-building and development, his job has been enlarged. With development has also come more money to "deal with," hence the opportunity for making more money.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan –Hospital

An Appeal for Funds

□ Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan is a charitable maternity hospital run under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, Dakshineswar, Calcutta 700076, a religious body registered in 1960 under the Act 1860.

□ Started in 1950 with only 10 beds, this hospital has been growing steadily. At present, there are 64 beds, 32 of which are free, an operation theatre, a labour room, a clinical laboratory, outdoor clinics and special baby clinics. Medicines are supplied free to needy patients and children.

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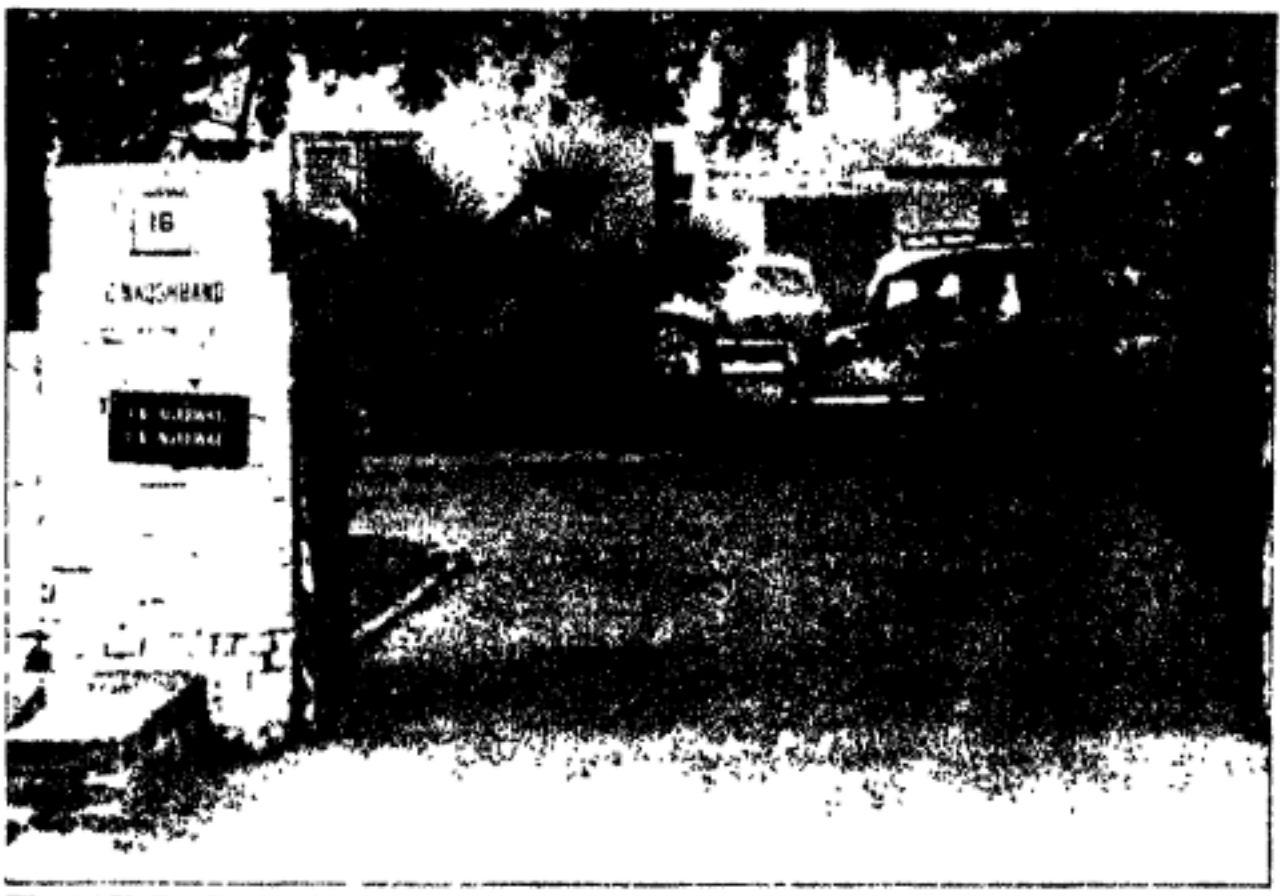
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General Secretary
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The Salesmen

Many a bureaucrat's omissions during servicetime are compensated by commissions after retirement. Deferred payments are not unknown in the world of liaison agents, who dominate the corridors of power in Delhi. In the past few years, India's purchases abroad have steeply increased. The importance of the liaison agency business has gone up correspondingly. The liaison agent is not a legal entity. Any Indian individual or foreign organisation dealing with its foreign counterpart requires full disclosure of information to the Reserve Bank of India, under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA). Postfacto approval is banned. But the foreign firms maintain "reference offices," which can't have monetary transactions in India. The monetary deals are mostly done abroad, nearer home in Nepal, Hongkong or Dubai. It is not possible for most foreign firms to maintain a regular office in India. They prefer to operate through Indian businessmen who have the right connections and in lieu of these services, the liaison agent gets money from his principals abroad. In many cases, especially in defence deals, the government pays agency commission to the Indian agents. They are cheque payments, made in Indian rupees. The principal, if he so desires, can give extra commission to the liaison agent, but the government on its own, while making payments for purchases abroad, makes cheque payments to the recognised agents. The payments made in Indian currency in fact save that much of foreign exchange component in the deal.



The 16 Hailey Road office of SLM-Maneklal

Liaison agents have come under a cloud following the arrest of the Delhi regional manager of the SLM-Maneklal group, Coomar Narain. Two years ago, when the Larkins' case was exposed, another businessman working as a liaison agent, Jaspal Singh Gill, was arrested. A few years earlier, when the Thal Vaishet deal was exposed in Parliament, the liaison agents for the American firm, C.F. Braun (which had been recommended for the grant of the fertiliser plant contract by two highpowered technical committees but bypassed on political considerations; Italy's Snam Progetti bagged the order) were also accused of "spying." In that case, a former sheriff of Bombay, Narendra Kapadia, and his nephew Nanak Sheth (the son of retired ICS officer, G.L. Sheth, former defence production secretary), were arrested because a member of Parliament, K.P. Unnikrishnan, had managed to get hold of the secret files to prove the fallacy in the government's decision. (In the Thal Vaishet case, though respectable people were arrested and paraded as spies, till now the CBI has not been able to book anyone. The case has not made much headway, though it made big headlines in 1981.)

Who are the liaison agents? Many retired government officers enter this trade. In some cases sons of influential politicians and bureaucrats take up this trade because of their contacts. Military officers find this trade lucrative after retirement. If any particular section of the government officers enters this business after retirement, it is the retired services officers. Of these, the officers who have served in the procurement or inspection branches of the armed forces are the ones who soon after retirement start peddling the wares which they were either buying or inspecting while in service. It is a vicious circle: the retired officer can easily invoke the old respect he commanded from his subordinates and have his way while the deal is negotiated. For the serving officer, the lure of a similar job after retirement is attractive enough for him to cooperate with his predecessor, the present liaison agent. If an enquiry is held on the number of retired services officers involved in the liaison business, then the results would be revealing.

There is no particular lifestyle that the liaison agents lead. They are courtesans in a businessman's garb. They entertain, they bribe and have their way in the government offices. The liaison agent can be an excellent cover for espionage rings. Suppose a liaison man is selling a particular type of armament, then while he makes enquiry about classified matters from officers in the clubs and even in the offices, it looks innocent enough—it is rarely suspected that the query has come from a foreign hand.

Liaison agents not only entertain in India, but when official delegations go abroad, then the principals take care of the officers who are sent out on meagre allowances. The average Indian officer's conception of corruption is not big money. Good food, liquor and help in making purchases abroad are enough gestures for most of them to feel indebted. The liaison agent's main friend is the politician—apart from entertainment, the politician looks for political funds. Interestingly, during the recent Lok Sabha elections, Indian businessmen operating at home were not asked for funds by the ruling party. The election expenses did not go down. One wonders from where the political funds came from.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

'The Bureaucracy Has Been Degraded'

P.N. Haksar tells Madhu Jain

***Q**: Would you say that there has been a decline in the standards of bureaucracy and bureaucrats?*

A: There has been a lot of loose talk about the decline and fall of the bureaucracy. There is even an assumption that one can dispense with the bureaucracy.. But I would say that as long as you have a state with a capital S—whatever kind of state it is—(a state born out of turmoil, a state born from a revolution....) it cannot function in a vacuum. It has to arm itself. The civil service, army, police force, rent collectors etc.—all these are arms of the state. There cannot be as such a decline and fall of the arms but of the body politic itself. Bureaucracy is a system, it is part of the political administration of a given state or time. If there has been a decline and fall of the bureaucracy, then there has been a decline and fall of political parties, the judicial system, magistracy, the legal system etc. All these are inter-connected.

Q: We are all to blame...

A: If there was something wrong with my arm, the doctor would not amputate it...he would see the body as a whole, would he not? The trouble with us in India is that we see one little thing and come to a false conclusion.

Q: Yes, but all systems do appear to be running down, whether it is the bureaucracy or the police force or...Is something wrong with the basic structure?

A: Things are pretty bad if we start diagnosing... Take (the case of) God. He, according to all religions (whatever its concept of God must have been), created the earth, the moon, the stars etc.— even in Hindu mythology. Now if God created them he could as easily say that they could move according to my whims, but, he felt that this would lead to chaos. They were, therefore, subject to regulations God did not after all make the sun turn around the earth. Bureaucracy is a system which is subject to rules and regulations. Appointments should not be whimsical. Who makes them? The political side of the system makes them. And if the whole system is outside rules and regulations, we are bound to have a decline and fall.

Q: In morality as well?

A: There is this question of public morality. We take it for granted that we are all patriotic But there were Mir Jafar and Jagat Seth who betrayed their countrymen for the East India Company. Today we do not have one Mir Jafar but a spy ring with a lot of people...An antidote to this is patriotism.

Q. What about your own experience as a bureaucrat?

A: I came to bureaucracy from the legal profession...I would say that there is too much political interference in many areas—especially this disease of transfers and postings. My father was in the government service, there was no system of people getting transferred so often. Now this has become the norm: MLAs are even given quotas for transfers; bureaucrats have to pay for these transfers. Therefore, some of them become corrupt.

Q: Did not the British by keeping the bureaucrats segregated from the rest of society, by making them an elite of sorts, prevent their being corrupted?

A: If you were in the Indian Civil Service, it was considered a worthwhile, respected profession. The British were ruthless in observing the rule of meritocracy. But, they looked at all Indians as bloody blackies and they wanted the best of the blackies. Today we have parochial considerations—whether you are from the north, south, etc. The Indianness breaks down under parochialism. This used to be the case at the state level, now it is at the central level as well.

Q: Would you say that there was a golden age of the bureaucracy in the past?

A: Golden past it was not. The ICS was part of the system. We borrowed the systems and did not create either the parliamentary or bureaucratic systems. We might have borrowed the steel frame of the ICS but we did not borrow the framework within which it operated. We shifted it to a society with a semi-feudal outlook.

Q: But some of the maharajas did have a system of administration which worked well, an oriental system so to speak?

A: They had a system of personal loyalty. Can you run the whole of India on this? Not all the maharajas had shining examples of good administration. There were some exceptions though.

Q: Do you think that the PM's office has become too big and has completely overshadowed the cabinet secretariat?

A: Nowhere in the world today can Presidents or Prime Ministers do without a group of people to do their staff work. There are so many economic, scientific, technical, financial areas; Prime Ministers and Presidents do not have knowledge on all these aspects. Nehru had a staff, he also had Sir Girija Shankar who was the first secretary general...

Q: Any ideal bureaucrats?

A: I pay homage to one bureaucrat I have met in my life, Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai. The rest are ok. He was a man of outstanding ability. He followed the morality of a civil servant to perfection.

Q: How would you describe this morality?

A: Whoever your master may be for the time being, you should carry out policies with the utmost integrity—provided there is a policy and not tender your advice divorced from the real facts of the case. Nor should you look to what the boss might or might not like. One should disregard his whims.

Q: Should Dr Alexander's resignation have been accepted? There are some murmurs of discontent amongst some sections of the bureaucracy.

A: Dr Alexander's resignation was normal and natural. If I were principal secretary and had three personal secretaries who were implicated (mine were great men, much greater than I could ever be) I would have resigned, the responsibility would have been mine... when that terrible thing took place, when Mrs Gandhi was assassinated the IB chap was removed, so was the police commissioner. Kao submitted his resignation and it was accepted. There should be accountability, one cannot just say that the little fellow did it.

Q: To return to the subject of corruption, what is really the malaise of our society?

A: The corruption is in our soul. We are often corrupted by our own cynicism. Cynicism is the most corrosive, corrupting thing. We live for the day, shrug our shoulders and say it is bound to be like that. There is no goodness, no kindness. Cynicism is an inevitable product of society when it has no purpose, no shared vision. If a society has no shared



P.N. Haksar (extreme right) with Pakistani diplomats

vision of its own future, it is fertile ground for cynicism or what I call philistinism.

Q: Was it not there earlier?

A: Before independence each man and child, even the poor and the wretched, shared a vision of freedom. When freedom came, there was this dream to build something. The ideals gradually eroded. We talk about secularism, we are communalists at heart. We talk about egalitarianism and build rampant inequality....Everyday we violate the fine things in our Constitution like equality, secularism...Look at Bhiwandi, Moradabad etc. First we had Hindu-Muslim riots, now we have Hindu-Sikh riots. Then there is the conflict in Assam...people say it is all regionalism...What is the scheme for diversity as well as unity?

Q: Would you be able to offer any solutions? Is there any?

A: The solution is a common recognition of the problem. I deeply believe there is a solution...but there can be no prescription without a correct diagnosis.

Q: How does one begin?

A: You can't have a complete sweep, the past is there and it has to be understood.. We deal in myths today. We have a Hindu history, a Muslim history and now a Sikh history and now that the great Telugu Desam is going to become Bharat Desam—their history with the Vijaynagar empire... then there is the whole mythology of history of the Justice Party, DK, DMK, AIADMK.

Q: What about the nexus between the bureaucrat and the businessman which exists today? Should the two not be isolated?

A: You cannot live with a chastity belt—it will not work if you feel unsafe from within. The business world is a part of the world. If the people in the business world feel that they are the financiers of the political process, it should be done openly, as it is in the US. I believe in an open system. Companies do make donations here but it is illegal and under the table. Why should it be driven underground? In the US there are these dinners to raise funds—200 dollars a plate or something, but then there are proper checks—let there be public scrutiny.

Q: What about the self-image of a bureaucrat?

A: When I defended the bureaucrat, I wanted to point out that the bureaucrat does not live in isolation, he lives in a real world and works under politicians. During the time of the British, it was under imperialism. Now the surveillance is by MPs and MLAs...in the changing world of business, commerce, trade, international trade one should know that temptations exist in such an environment. Moral standards, standards of public morality should be set at the highest level, it has to trickle down—not the other way round. "*Jaise raja, waise praja.*" Public life has been degraded and along with it the bureaucracy.

Q: Religion keeps getting mixed up with politics, often to achieve political ends ..

A: Religion is a good thing, a sacred matter but it is between human beings and their creators—it is a private and personal matter...Religion is also the last refuge of political scoundrels.

Q: Are you optimistic about our future?

A: I am always optimistic..We still have in the age group of 40 to 50 very dedicated, fine human beings in our services who cannot be corrupted.



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The Russians are Here

How the KGB operates in India

India is believed to have one of the largest concentration of KGB men in South Asia. The KGB, the successor of Stalin's dreaded Cheka, carries out an important range of secret operations in this country through its first chief directorate (the foreign directorate). In Asia, India has become the key target of the KGB, not so much because it wants to engineer the overthrow of the government but primarily to ensure that it does not swing away from the USSR in policy matters and remains a "friendly" nation. Of course, in addition to this the KGB continues its efforts to capture enemy secrets and to infiltrate opposition intelligence agencies. (India provides a seat to monitor the activities of the CIA in South Asia).

In addition, the KGB has come to perform a number of other, more explicitly political functions: Moscow has broadened its efforts to win friends and influence people. In this it adopts a number of measures: military and economic aid programmes, official propaganda and the grant of scholarships for study in the USSR.

However, there is another level of operation: KGB agents work quietly through leftist politicians and students. And it is here that the KGB has an advantage in India: the presence of communist parties in this country. In the party member the KGB man often finds a kindred spirit, ready to help in furthering ideological goals. Such a person may, without realising it, be helping the KGB man in gathering information and may still regard himself to be as patriotic as any other citizen. It is only his ideological commitment to communism which may make him a willing tool in the hands of the Soviet agent. Besides, finances from the USSR, through various concerns engaged in exporting goods like tobacco and cotton, makes the party a willing ally.

KGB agents too believe in what is regarded as "persuasive conversion." Apart from normal diplomatic contacts, KGB agents develop informal relationships with local people they consider important and occasionally take the opportunity to "remind" them about the "military minded Americans" and the "profit seeking capitalists." And it is usually from such informal contacts that opportunities come to cultivate them more seriously either as spies or as agents who would "help" the KGB whenever required. These people can range from the publisher who would happily accept Soviet embassy advertisements to keep his publication going to a "liaison" man who would willingly work on a monthly salary as an intermidiary in negotiating contracts or simply as a conduit for passing on important information. Friends can also be cultivated by contributing to the election funds of an MLA or by greasing the palms of a senior government official who gets his "cut" out of a trade deal with the USSR.

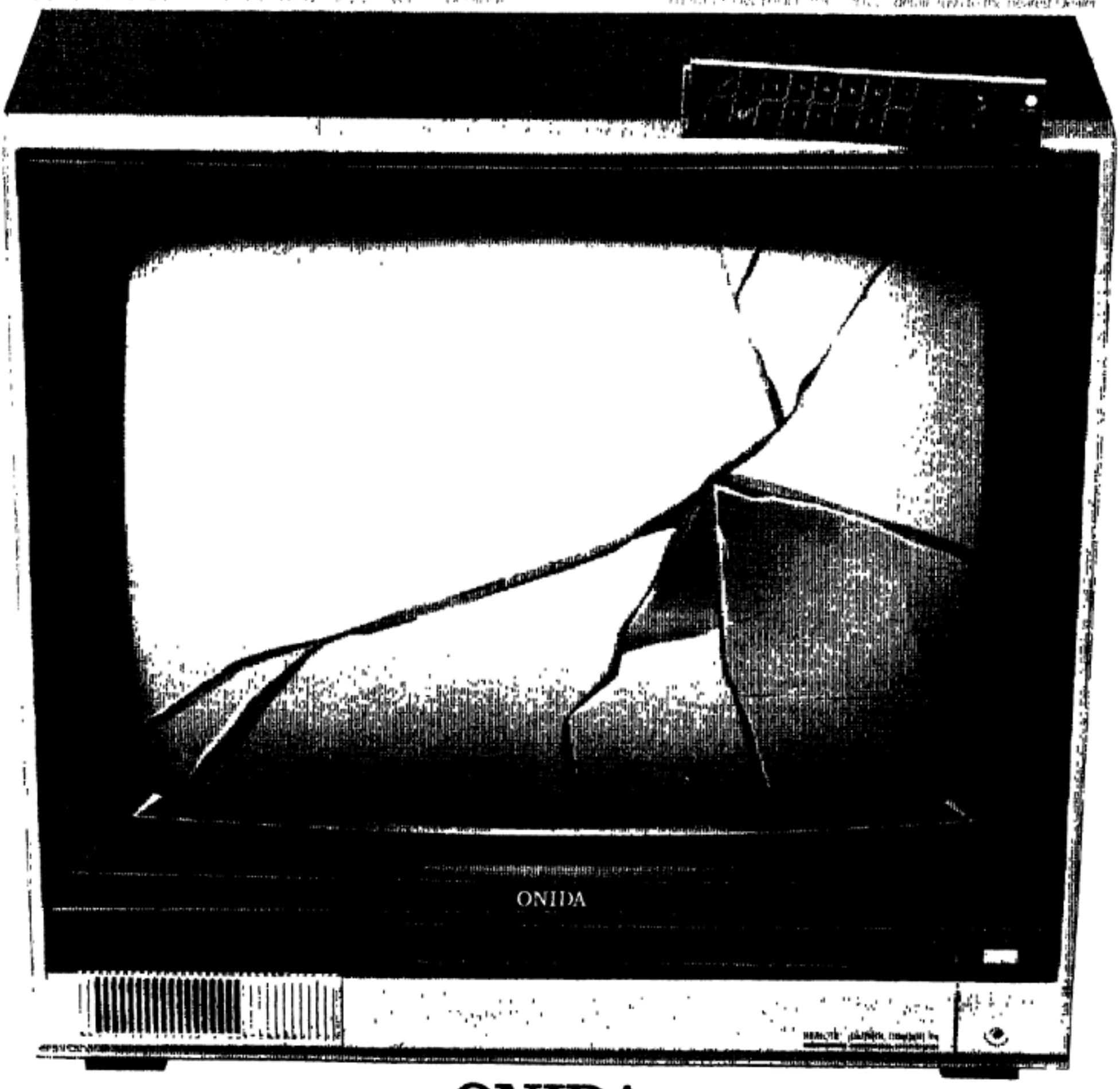
However, the KGB is known to adopt blackmail as a method to gather information in case its contact refuses to be pliable. For instance, Harry Rositzke, the CIA station chief in Delhi from 1957-62, in his book, *KGB: The Eyes of Russia*, describes the incident of an Indian embassy employee in Moscow, who was photographed in a drunken orgy and blackmailed into spying for them on his return to India. He was, however, discovered by the IB.

The KGB has been helped in its operations in India by the rupee trade arrangement, while the CIA took advantage of the PL-480 funds which were available in lieu of the wheat imports from the USA in the last decade. Rice and tobacco exports from India were handled by some select firms, run by former communists. Chinar Exports, the largest export house in India, is owned by a group of former CPI cardholders. The editor of a leftist newspaper from Delhi (which has of late been known for its pro-government line) along with an opposition personality, who was active in the World Peace Council activities, too operated on



Illustration Bulbul Sharma

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the trade-cum-espionage front. The progressive credentials of these operators made it difficult for the IB to catch them. The Congress(I) in the last few years hit at the root of this source of Russian funding when rice and tobacco exports were routed through trusted businessmen of the ruling party rather than the traditional CPI-sympathising businessmen. How important these funds were for the CPI can be gauged from the fact that while Moscow has been admiring the Congress(I) over the last few years, the CPI has been vociferously in the opposition camp. While pro-Moscow journalists have been singing hallelujahs for Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, the CPI has not been appreciating this line. Moscow's support to the Congress(I) became apparent in October 1983, when the present Indian ambassador to the USSR, Prof. S. Nurul Hassan, presented his credentials. That day *Pravda* wrote an inside-editorial praising the Congress(I).(Front page editorials are a matter of *Pravda* routine, inside-edits are exceptions, meant to highlight an issue.) In that editorial *Pravda* praised Mrs Gandhi not only for her international stance, but also for her domestic policies. Despite this the CPI remained in the opposition unity talks.

The Soviet funding pattern was simple: the leading firms which dealt with the USSR trade counsellor's office were supposed to contribute to the funds of the political parties (apart from the CPI, others too received such funds; many leading Congressmen and even some socialists were funded) liked by the KGB. At one stage the jewellery shop in a leading five-star hotel on Sardar Patel Marg in Delhi became the centre of KGB-trading. Some Russian diplomats were seen regularly visiting this shop, apparently to buy jewellery. This shop became the contact point for businessmen whom KGB wanted to cultivate. The "innocent" meetings between these diplomats and KGB operatives led to the businessmen getting their deals through and KGB the information it desired.

The KGB resident in Delhi is not difficult to identify. Any Russian diplomat seen often with the umpteen delegations which flood this country from the USSR can be a KGB operative. And if among them you find a person who drives a luxury car and leads a better lifestyle than most Russians, then the person is a senior KGB hand. The present KGB resident in Delhi holds the rank of first secretary. At times, till two years back, he was seen driving a red Volkswagen "Golf-S"(popularly also known as "Rabbit"). This by itself showed his important status. He was often seen playing golf in the Delhi Golf Club with a senior government functionary. Dr P. C. Alexander has been sent off because his entire office staff was caught spying. In case of the KGB contact man, he took the precaution of taking a quiet walk on the golf course, talking to his Russian friend in the open, where none could overhear the conversation. This Russian diplomat was alarmed when a press report obliquely referred to him and his red luxury car around the time the Non-Aligned Summit was held. Even during NAM, he was seen active in the media centre. Even at Prime Minis-

The Spies from Pakistan

Pakistan monitors the activities of India more closely than any other country in the sub-continent. Given the past relations between the two countries, it is hardly surprising that it does so. For espionage in India, Pakistan has one obvious advantage: it is virtually impossible to distinguish between an Indian and a Pakistani and a citizen of Pakistan can mingle easily with Indians. One of the simplest ways to enter the country and establish contacts is through Pakistani visitors to India (about a lakh of them every year), some of whom belong to the Pakistani intelligence. According to intelligence sources in the capital, those who are sent normally have relations in India so that an initial contact can be built up, through whom the agent gets the opportunity to meet other people to ferret out information. There are, however, other ways for Pakistani agents to enter the country. A commonly used method is to clandestinely cross the border and merge with the local population. Detection becomes difficult and the agent can position himself outside an airbase (to keep a track of the kinds of aircraft leaving the base, the people keeping a watch on airbases, disguised as vendors, are normally from the Pakistan air force), or in cantonment towns to monitor the movement of troops.

As far as recruiting land agents or Indians to spy for Pakistan are concerned, the Pakistanis are supposed to be poor paymasters. Foreign agents remain on the lookout for meagerly paid personnel in defence and intelligence establishments handling sensitive jobs. An example is that of S.D. Pachbahve who was arrested in 1980 on charges of spying for Pakistan. He was a poorly paid dark room assistant in the photography section of the naval headquarters in Delhi. Another example is that of Tikka Ram, a clerk in the defence ministry who had apparently been on the Pakistani payroll for over two decades for as little as Rs 1,000 a month.

Saumitra Banerjee, New Delhi



Coomar Narain's office in New Delhi after the police raid

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"We Were Shocked"

To the managing director and staff of the Bombay-based SLM-Maneklal Industries Limited, the daily newspapers bring a new facet in the life of their employee, Coomar Narayan. Narayan (61), who has been with the company for the last 26 years was basically a liaison man in the Delhi office of the firm. "We were shocked," said Yogesh Maneklal, manging director of the company that has most of its manufacturing operations in Ahmedabad. "Suddenly CBI officials swooped on our offices only to find nothing. They took only two telex messages," said Mr Maneklal.

That Coomar Narayan is probably the most important spy in independent India, is something the company cannot understand. "I read for the first time that he had a farmhouse in Delhi," said Mr Maneklal. "I had never been to his farmhouse nor his house in Delhi. I met him just once or twice a year. We had a very professional relationship. When I went to Delhi, we would meet the officials concerned with our business and that was it. He had very good connections which was part of his job, with the officials in the commerce, industry, defence, shipping and transport ministries." Mr Maneklal said that neither he nor his firm's managers found anything suspicious about the activities of Mr Narayan. "What he did after 7 pm, I do not know. But, he never seemed to misuse our office for anything, at least nothing is obvious to us." Narayan obviously led an exciting, mysterious double life, shuttling between the hub of Delhi and the plush luxury of his Mehrauli farm.

The only French connection that the firm had officially was its collaboration with the French firm Teclemet. A joint venture for the manufacture of hydraulic rubber hoses, the four-year-old company has a turnover of Rs two crores and is based in Baroda. It is a division of SLM-Maneklal Industries Limited which has most of its manufacturing activities in Ahmedabad and a turnover of Rs 33 crores. The company has three major manufacturing lines: industrial rubber, heavy engineering and textile engineering equipment. It is currently negotiating an agreement with an American company for the manufacture of equipment for oil rigs.



Yogesh Maneklal

SLM-Maneklal itself was started in 1946. It was a joint venture with a Swiss company, Swiss Locomotive Machine Works which merged with Maneklal. The company manufactures compressors, pumps, locomotives, plastic machines, etc. and exports to West Germany, East Germany, the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the African countries. SLM-Maneklal's wide-ranging activities gave Coomar Narayan ample opportunity to meet government officials. In the last ten years the company has been often given contracts by the defence department for the manufacture of floats. The job, said Mr Maneklal, was shared by four other competitors in the field.

There has been no communication between Narayan and Maneklal as the former is presently in the custody of the police. So, said Mr Maneklal, " there is no question of his apologising for what has happened or sending in his resignation. It has caused us a lot of embarrassment as there are many people who have nothing better to do than talk a lot of nonsense without knowing the facts. We get a lot of nasty phone calls and queries. Fortunately, it has not affected our business and our shareholders' confidence in us."

Olga Tellis, Bombay

ter Indira Gandhi's press conference at the conclusion of NAM, this Russian diplomat sat among the journalists and took copious notes. (Certainly it is not the job of a diplomat to attend press conferences.) While the spy ring was busted in January 1985, this diplomat was seen merrily moving among journalists in Parliament House. He has now stopped using the luxury car, uses a Russian-made vehicle instead, but the distinguished number plate of his car singles him out. He also often uses the vehicles of other socialist embassies in Delhi.

India's foreign policy helps the KGB to operate in the country. By all standards, Russia has been India's friend. It has helped India economically (while helping Pakistan in the same vein to set up a steel plant, the Pakistan steel industry, which provides sinews to a developing economy and defence production base, has not been set up by the western powers, but by USSR). Russia has also helped India with arms. Russia has stood by India on the Kashmir and Goa issues and more recently, in 1971 when the Americans foolishly sent the Seventh Fleet to "help" the retreating Pakistan army in Bangladesh. India has been with the USSR on most international issues. Even on a sensitive issue like the Czechoslovak crisis in 1968. India supported Russia in the UN Security Council. Despite grave reservations on the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, India has not taken an anti-USSR stance. The foreign policies of both are complementary to each other. This helps the KGB to maintain its "friendly" presence in India. Even if KGB links are detected, due to reasons of state, these are not exposed. Only during the Janata regime was a KGB spying busted. This was done on the eve of Premier Alexy Kosygin's visit to India. By some coincidence, 17 January 1985 was the day when US leader Henry Kissinger was in Delhi. For India to embarrass the west is easier—the west's lack of appreciation of India's role in world politics and the west's pro-Pakistan tilt coupled with the west-China honeymoon are reasons enough for western spy rings to be busted whenever they are detected. In the case of the KGB detection does not always lead to exposure.

TAILPIECE: The Counter-IntelligenceActivity Cell in the IB is known as the CIA cell. Perhaps, that is the reason why the KGB often goes undetected.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya and Saunitra Banerjee, New Delhi

Jayalalitha's Revolt

Will the centre intervene in the affairs of the AIADMK?



Jayaladitha: 'The AIADMK is my party'

Jayalalitha has burst out to wreak vengeance upon her tormentors and political detractors who, she claims, are "holding the people of Tamil Nadu to ransom." The three-and-a-half months of silence (from the time M.G. Ramachandran was hospitalised) during which time she privately seethed in indignation detonated into a fusillade of acrimony.

On 20 January 1985, the lid of the boiling cauldron blew, exposing the rivalry in the AIADMK. At the meeting of the AIADMK Parliamentary Board, Ms Jayalalitha, the party's Rajya Sabha member and MGR's heir-apparent was deprived of her status as the deputy leader of the AIADMK parliamentary group. Jayalalitha lost no time in convening a press conference and identifying the "ruling coterie" in the AIADMK, which was playing a diabolical charade of issuing bogus letters in MGR's name. Decisions purported to have been taken by MGR were being implemented to annihilate the enemies of the ruling coterie—namely, Jayalalitha and her band of supporters—she said. Jayalalitha then identified R.M. Veerappan, the information minister as the kingpin of the coterie. The other main conspirators, according to her, were finance minister V. R. Nedunchezian, Mr Musiriputhan, the president of the All World MGR Manram (fans' association) and the "lady in New York," Mrs Janaki Ramachandran, MGR's wife.

From the time MGR was hospitalised on 5 October, the coterie started to sideline, humiliate and insult Jayalalitha. There was little she could do to fight back the onslaught. However, at the behest of Rajiv Gandhi, she was roped in to campaign for the elections. Expecting the coterie to once again keep her on the sideline, after she had served her purpose, Jayalalitha began mobilising her supporters. She reportedly collected oaths of allegiance from the partymen for whom she canvassed. She also began seeking support from the centre. Today, she has good working relationships with Rajiv Gandhi, G. Parthasarathy, Arun Singh and R. Venkataraman. Jayalalitha needed the centre's help because though she has a majority of the rank and file supporting her, the ruling coterie's strength lies in heading the AIADMK: V. R. Nedunchezian heads the government, P.U. Shunmugam heads the party and Veerappan is in charge of information dissemination. As for Mrs Janaki Ramachandran, she is the one who is

next to MGR and on whom he is helplessly dependent. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that all visitors and documents for MGR are routed through Janaki Ramachandran. Today, the one thing that binds the coterie together is their fierce hatred for Jayalalitha, who at one time, had bossed over them. The coterie, it is believed, has formed a neat ring around MGR preventing any outsider from communicating directly with him. At the moment, MGR is the most crucial figure because it was he and not the AIADMK that received the massive mandate. Therefore, in order to survive, Jayalalitha had no alternative but to go to Delhi for help. Ironically, the hastiness with which the coterie intended to annihilate Jayalalitha has exposed the charade, strengthening her position and offering a *locus standi* for Delhi to intervene.

Jayalalitha's press conference of 20 January was a stirring experience even for the most cynical of journalists. Her uninterrupted harangue against the coterie lasted for over an hour. She was consistently cogent, precise and clear in what she had to say, which she did in good English. Her statements were incisive and trenchant. She said she "was 100 per cent convinced" that the letter depriving her of her status did not emanate from MGR. The coterie was producing letters as and when they wanted to take revenge on her or her supporters (Thirunavukkarasu had been earlier stripped of his important portfolios). The coterie, she announced, produces letters as a magician produces rabbits out of a hat.

"You doubt one letter, you doubt all. If MGR is in full possession of his mental faculties, if he is able to issue instructions and answer questions, why are they afraid to let me or anyone close to me, see him? While we are prevented, how do they allow Vardaraj and Bhagyaraj to go and see MGR? If MGR is coming in a fortnight why this hurry to effect these changes?" she asked. Jayalalitha then continued, "I don't want an answer from Veerappan, Nedunchezian or Janaki, I want an answer from MGR because it is he who brought me into the party, he made me the MP and deputy leader. In control of the party now are the deadwood who were earlier sidelined by MGR. After MGR went into a coma, these people resurrected themselves to grab power for themselves. They tried to defeat official AIADMK candidates who supported me by pumping money for the opposition candidates? They say I am going to join the Congress. Why



Jayalalitha with President Zail Singh

should I? The AIADMK is my party. I galvanised it for three years. Who is Veerappan to make statements concerning the party and government administration? The centre cannot remain silent when a dangerous charade is being perpetrated by a few corrupt scheming individuals."

Nobody could have exposed the "dangerous charade" that was beginning to cause alarm to the public as effectively as Jayalalitha. As she says, the centre is not going to remain silent. Already the state Governor has set a deadline for the swearing-in ceremony: 7 February. His letters to MGR, though couched in officialese, carry an unmistakable warning that this game cannot continue for long. While the feud between Jayalalitha and Veerappan is undoubtedly an intra-party affair, Delhi is inclined to intervene on the grounds that the charade is being extended to interfere with the administration. In all fairness it must be pointed out that the coterie's actions involving the administration has not been detrimental to public welfare, yet. However, there is a popular feeling that what they are doing is, in principle, wrong. Now that it suits them, the centre is likely to expose the true status of MGR's mental condition. Like the ruling coterie the centre too can start a "war of letters." It would not be difficult to procure a letter from an American doctor certifying that it would be inadvisable for MGR to function as CM as his convalescence must be given top priority. MGR would thus be got out of the way without wounding the sentiments of the people and also thwarting the criticism that the centre was an accomplice in the initial stages of the charade.

The real reason why the centre would like to intervene in Tamil Nadu is that it would like the state to be in the hands of the pro-Congress faction in the AIADMK: in other words the Jayalalitha lobby. Veerappan and Nedunchezian have never been in the good books of Rajiv Gandhi and G. Parthasarathy. The centre is afraid that Veerappan and the others, having evolved out of the Dravida movement, may in a situation revert to their movement to cling to power. They could even join hands with Karunanidhi to drive the Congress out After having recorded an impressive performance in the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls after an eclipse of 17 years, Delhi is in no mood to relinquish Tamil Nadu to the Dravida forces. There is a keen desire to bring the state back into the national mainstream (or, in other words, the Congress-I). In this gambit Jayalalitha is perhaps, the most reliable because she has been nurtured in an ethos untouched by the Dravida consciousness. Her mentor is MGR, who has diluted the Dravida movement and paved the way for Tamil Nadu to join the national mainstream. Jayalalitha is an ideal choice because she has a mass base as well. She is firm, decisive, intelligent and articulate. Above all, she has no allegations of corruption surrounding her. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that Delhi has struck a deal with Jayalalitha. The centre will support her totally in her bid to gain power in Tamil Nadu and emerge as the chief minister. Jayalalitha is confident of forming a government. She feels that a vertical split can be

"The Ruling Coterie is Afraid of Me"

Jayalalitha told SUNDAY

Q: *Why do you think the actions of the ruling coterie are directed against you?*

A: Because I threaten the interests of a few selfish individuals. The party is with me, the public is with me. That is why they are afraid of me. They have neither. They have only their current proximity to MGR and their positions in the government. They are afraid because truth and justice are on my side. That is why they are trying to liquidate me.

Q: You have said that the centre cannot remain silent. What jurisdiction does the centre have to intervene in what is essentially an intra-party affair?

A: When it came to depriving me of the deputy leader's status, it is an intra-party affair. But when the actions of the coterie interfere with the administration, then the centre cannot be an idle spectator because it is a fraud on the Constitution. It is no longer an intra-party affair when it concerns the administration of the state. Once the government is formed, those who are in charge of the administration are not accountable merely to the AIADMK, but to the people and the centre When it involves interfering with the state government, it automatically involves the Constitution and, therefore, the centre comes in.

Q. But as far as the administration is concerned, their decisions are in keeping with the party manifesto. For instance, giving the Pongal gift to the government servants and so on.

A: Yes, that is only one, there are others.

Q: The others are against you and that is an intra-party affair.

A: One has to look into the genesis of the matter. They are acting in someone else's name. When the whole thing is a hoax, is not the matter very serious? Is not a fraud being perpetrated on the Constitution itself? They are holding everyone to ransom.

Q: The de facto *split in the party has become* de jure *with you openly identifying R.M. Veerappan as the kingpin of the coterie that is perpetrating this fraud. The AIADMK is beginning to crumble. Isn't this going to benefit Karunanidhi?*

A: Why should it? These four individuals do not mean the AIADMK. And these individuals are isolated from the rank and file of the party. Removing these few corrupt scheming individuals at the top, who have nothing to do with the party, will in no way benefit Mr Karunanidhi.

Q: You have said earlier that Janaki Ramachandran did not entertain political ambitions for herself. In that case, why should she connive with the ruling coterie?

A: She may not have had political ambitions earlier, but she may have now. These ambitions may have been put into her head after October (1984). Earlier, what did she have to do with the party? She does not know anything about politics. She is only a housewife. Janaki Ramachandran is being manipulated by the coterie. She is only too willing to be manipulated. I cannot understand how she can be a party to this cruel hoax when these people are selfishly exploiting the person who is supposed to be her husband.

Janaki Ramachandran may not have had political ambitions earlier, but she may have now. These ambitions may have been put into her head after October 1984 ... She does not know anything about politics. She is only a housewife. She is being manipulated by the coterie.

When MGR was active she would not have dared to entertain such notions. Now, how can she stake claim to the mantle of leadership by merely being his wife? I am not interested in embroiling myself in controversies of a personal nature. My fight is a political one directed against a political entity. And, as far as I am concerned, Janaki (Ramachandran) does not exist as a political entity.

Q: You have been humiliated—on a few occasions publicly—from the time MGR was hospitalised in October. Why is it that you are coming out so forcefully now?

A: I was determined not to be rash, hasty or intemperate. I was willing to give them the benefit of doubt. But their actions became more and more intolerable, more and more inconceivable. I was forced to break my silence and protest. And, I must protest because it is not merely me who is the victim of this injustice and manipulation. A fraud is being perpetrated on the people of Tamil Nadu and on the Constitution. Unlike these so-called leaders, I have toured the stateintensely and canvassed for votes. I promised the people that MGR would return. They reposed their faith and trust in me. I have a moral responsibility to them.

Q: You have questioned Bhagyaraj's (the cine actor) credentials asserting that for the three days of campaigning he did, you have done three years. The same thing could be said against you by the ruling coterie who have been in politics for decades.

A: Yes, but there is such a thing as deadwood. Nobody doubts their contribution to the AIADMK in the beginning. But subsequently, they have changed, their attitudes have changed. Just because they put in good service a long time ago, should they be rewarded now, particularly when their performance in the last three years leaves much to be desired? Don't forget these were the people who were shunned and sidelined by MGR himself. He could not cut off the deadwood just like that because of his sentimental attachments. He relegated them (to the background) but he could still not bring himself to throw them out. Exactly like Mrs Gandhi, who because of certain sentimental attachments, could not bring herself to throw the deadwood out of the

Congress(I). But Mr Rajiv Gandhi has done so, Mr Rajiv Gandhi has done a commendable job and he has deservedly got the credit for it. In fact, it was because MGR could not rely upon these people that he brought me into the party. It was because they were disloyal and indulging in anti-party activities that MGR felt it necessary for me to join the party. And, when I joined the party there were so many splinter groups. I was an unifying force. And, today there are only two groups: the Veerappan group and the Jayalalitha group. That is why the rank and file support me and the ruling coterie stands isolated in our own party.

Q: What do have to say about the popular feeling that you are going to join the Congress(I)?

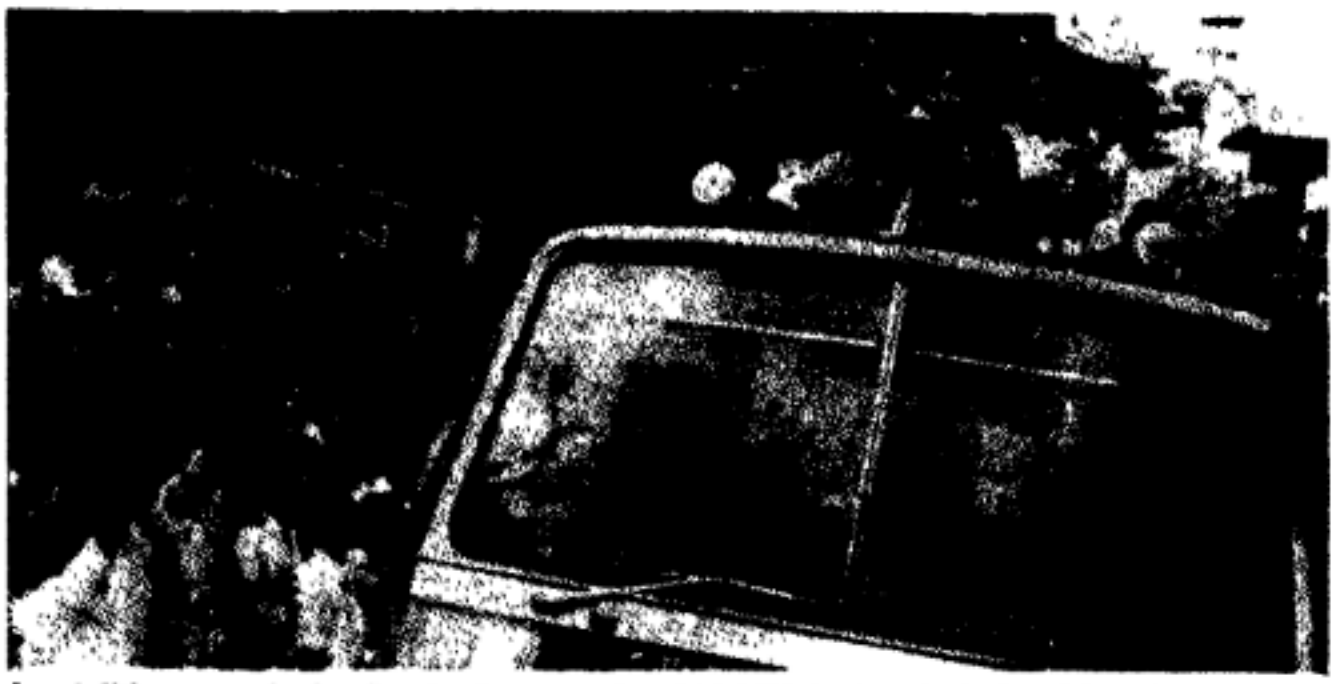
I was forced to break my silence and protest. And I must protest because it is not merely me who is the victim of this injustice and manipulation. A fraud is being perpetrated on the people of Tamil Nadu and on the Constitution.

A: I have said this before: why should I leave the AIADMK? It is my party. It is I who galvanised it. The party has been my creation for three years. I did it with MGR's blessings because he was so busy with the administration.

Q: It is said that with the centre's help you are trying to become the chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

A: How can the centre possibly interfere with that? It is an intra-party affair. Anyway, I am not willing to entertain this question now because MGR is at present our chief minister. Therefore, the question does not arise now. Such a question will have to wait till MGR returns and until the truth is known for an answer.

Interviewed by Anita Pratap



Jayalalitha campaigning for the Congress(I)-AIADMK during the Lok Sabha elections

avoided by winning over Veerappan's loyalists. A few individuals like the members of the coterie would be axed. That would still leave her with about 120 of the 135 AIADMK MLAs. At the moment she has the support of 60 MLAs, Veerappan has 40, P.U. Shunmugam 15 and the rest are neutral. Veerappan is using all his skills to completely isolate Jayalalitha. Already an impression is being created that Jayalalitha has turned against MGR. If this seed of suspicion germinates, Jayalalitha's mass support will crumble because the people are not likely to forgive her. In the meantime, Veerappan is busy promoting popular cine actor K. Bhagyaraj (MGR has gone on record to say that Bhagyaraj is his successor in the film industry) who has at last joined the AIADMK. This is a shrewd move by Veerappan because Bhagyaraj is no threat to him being young, inexperienced and busy in film commitments. At the same time Bhagyaraj too has a large following which would ensure crowds in Veerappan's meetings. The fact is that no other leader in the AIADMK except Jayalalitha attracts crowds. Thus, it is in Veerappan's interest to mould Bhagyaraj as his successor.

According to the same sources, Delhi's price for helping Jayalalitha to become the CM is that she must ultimately join the Congress(I) and bring with her the bulk of the AIADMK infrastructural network. One does not know if Jayalalitha is well disposed to this proposal but she has already started delinking herself from MGR. It was significant that while all the pictures of MGR were not removed in her residence, she chose to remove her own photograph placed next to MGR's near the stairwell. The placement of the two photographs had earlier tempted one to believe that MGR was the man of the house. Is removal of the photographs Jayalalitha's way of heralding the future course of events? It could be. But then she has learnt a lot and she could well be indulging in a charade of her own.

There is, however, a section in the Congress(I) that is wary of Jayalalitha. They are in favour of supporting S. Ramachandran, the electricity minister who is supposed to be in Jayalalitha's camp, as the interim chief minister as the leaders feel that the public is not yet ready for Jayalalitha. But the pro-Jayalalitha lobby in the Congress(I) point out that Panrutti (as S. Ramachandran is popularly called) is undecided about his intentions. Undoubtedly, the centre is going to play an active and decisive role in the politics of the state. But, henceforth Rajiv Gandhi is going to proceed cautiously particularly as he does not want a repetition of the Andhra episode under any circumstances.

The immediate problem of the Jayalalitha group is to come out with an impressive majority in the AIADMK so as to stake its claim to the chief ministership of the state. Jayalalitha has gone on record to say that her only weakness is the lack of money and that this was the weapon that Veerappan was using to vanquish her. Only time will tell what the outcome will be.

Nevertheless, the centre is going to proceed cautiously because as far as Rajiv Gandhi is concerned, nothing should tarnish his government's reputation. Thus, he is likely to bide his time and settle for Nedunchezian (undoubtedly the only person acceptable to a majority of the AIADMK and Congress-I) as the CM, till the Assembly elections are over in March. For Rajiv Gandhi, wresting power in Karnataka from the Janata Party is far more important than propping up a pro-Congress(I) government in Tamil Nadu.

Anita Pratap, Madras

"Jayalalitha is a Danger to the AIADMK"

Agriculture minister Kalimuthu, part of the anti-Jayalalitha 'coterie,' talked to SUNDAY. Excerpts:

***Q**: What do you have to say about Jayalalitha's outburst?*

A: Whatever it (throughout the interview Kalimuthu referred to Jayalalitha as it) has been saying is totally false. It is acting against the principles of the party. It has even said things against our leader. I think it is better that she goes out of the party. If it continues to be within the AIADMK, it won't be given any respect.

It has been said that the CM is not mentally alert. The public will come to know on 4 February when the CM returns. On that day the people will come to realise that her statements are all wrong.

Q: But there is a popular feeling that Veerappan and others are playing a charade.

A: That's not true. They are our party's senior leaders. They are functioning only as per the CM's instructions. They are not making the CM act according to their wishes.

Q: It is difficult to believe that the decisions MGR has been taking have all been directed against the Jayalalitha lobby.

A: The party leader has every right to effect changes any time he wants. Certain decisions have to be taken quickly for the effective functioning of the party.

Q: But what was the hurry to bring about the changes that affect only Jayalalitha and her supporters?

A: Its activities have been tracked since the time MGR was hospitalised in October. When MGR was in Apollo hospital he was unconscious so he did not know what was going on. After he recovered he has been getting reports on how these people behaved in the interim period. Based on this report he is making these decisions. As a party member, it is proper and correct that one accepts all his decisions.

Q: This is precisely what Jayalalitha is alleging. She says the CM has been given false reports about her?

A: She calls these reports false because the decisions affect her.

Q: Is it true that at the general council meeting in September, MGR had regretted inducting Jayalalitha into the party?

A: Yes, it is true. The general council was called to take action against S. D. Somasundaram. At that time it (Jayalalitha) was removed from the post of propaganda secretary. Even before the CM started talking, some people—Jayalalitha's supporters—raised slogans that she should be reinstated. In response to that, the CM spoke very firmly. He said, "It was wrong on my part to have given her (Jayalalitha) this responsibility. The task was too much for her age.



Agriculture minister Kalimuthu

She was not able to cope up with the responsibilities of the job. At Delhi, she has started talking to some people conveying views about the party which are detrimental to the interests of the party. She issued all kinds of statements claiming that they were authorised by me, when the were not. She stopped consulting me. I think very soon she will switch over to some other party. If those who support her want to leave along with her, let them. I don't care. I am not running this party with her help. We have won so many elections without her," and so on.

Q: Can Jayalalitha ever be the chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

A: (*Laughs derisively.*) The state won't accept it. The people of Tamil Nadu will not accept it. It (Jayalalitha) hasn't got the qualifications to hold the job. It has not got the honesty. It hasn't got the sense of responsibility.

Q: Why are all the leaders in the AIADMK against her?

A: Because all the genuine leaders of the party want to protect the party and they all know that it (Jayalalitha) is out to destroy the party. They are convinced that she is a great danger to the party. She is a very arrogant woman. Her behaviour, her way of speaking was intolerable. She treated even senior leaders of the party as her servants, ordering them around. She never showed any respect to anyone. She had the audacity to ask Somasundaram and Madurai Muthu for explanations. She tried to throw P. U. Shunmugam out of the party. In a party, there will always be differences of opinion. But she had certain ambitions. There is unanimous opinion in the party that Jayalalitha is a danger to the AIADMK.

Q: There is a feeling that the centre may support Jayalalitha because she represents the pro-Congress section in the AIADMK.

A: She is trying to give that impression, but the centre will not yield. One thing I can say with full confidence, if it leaves the party, not even one AIADMK MLA will leave with her.

Q: Do you think this is the end of Jayalalitha's political career?

A: Yes. The party will not accept her after her comments about MGR. What little respect she had has also evaporated. It (Jayalalitha) will have to go elsewhere. And wherever it goes she is not going to get the kind of respect that it got in the AIADMK. And don't forget wherever she goes she will foment the same type of confusion.

Q: But she does attract the crowds.

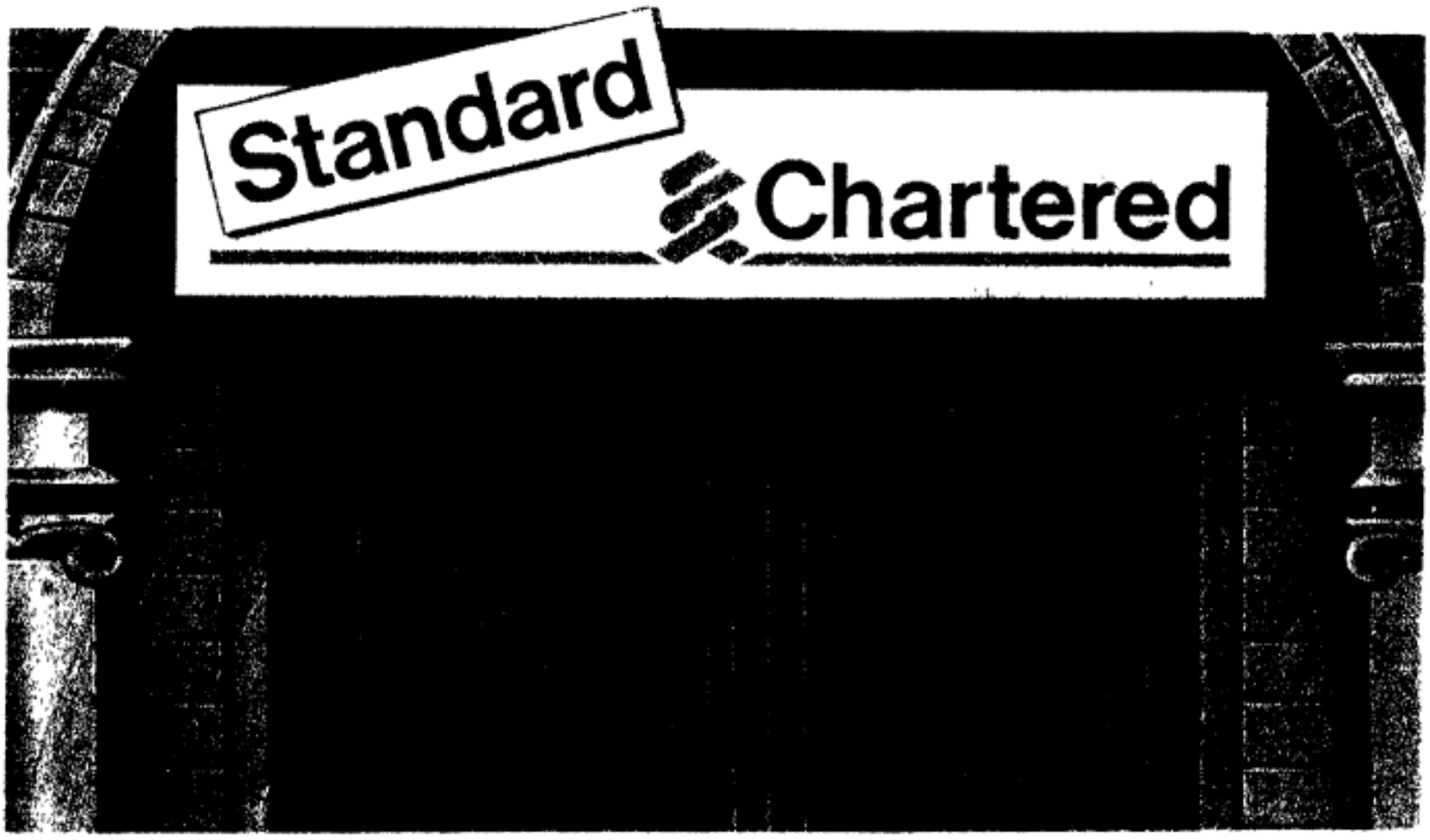
A: Crowds came to her meetings because she was in the party.

Q: But other leaders in the party did not attract such big crowds.

A: Because the others do not have the cinema glamour. Moreover lot of ladies come to her meetings. There is a keeness to see her because she acted as the heroine to our CM in many films. These films are still running in the rural areas. The minute she leaves the party, the crowds will stop going to her meetings.

Interviewed by Anita Pratap

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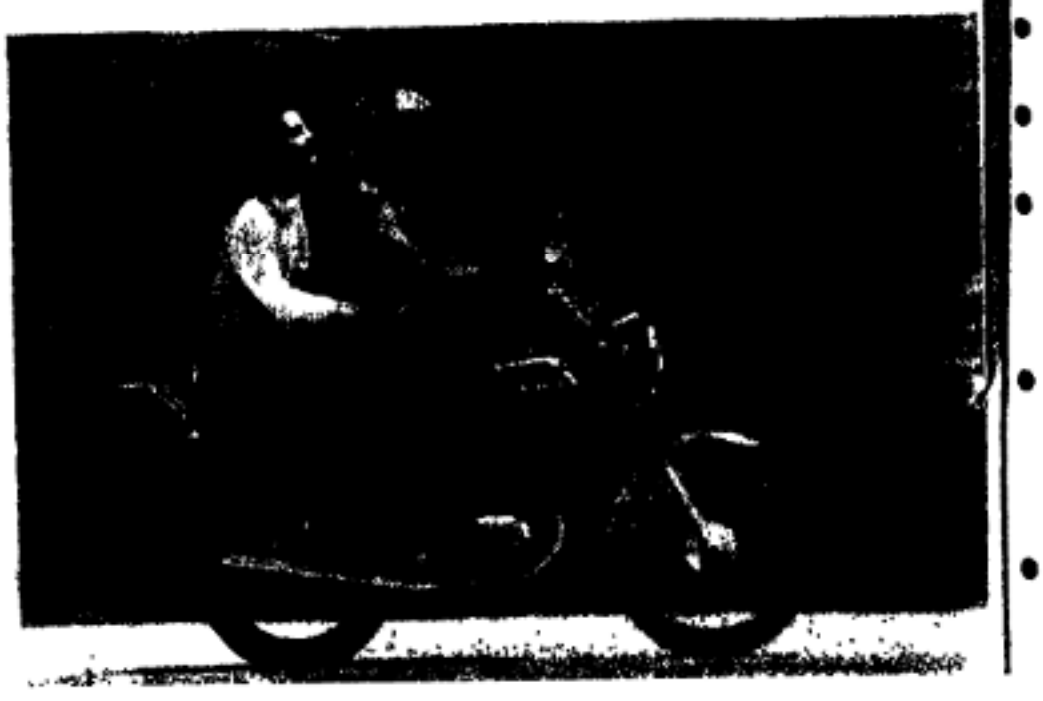
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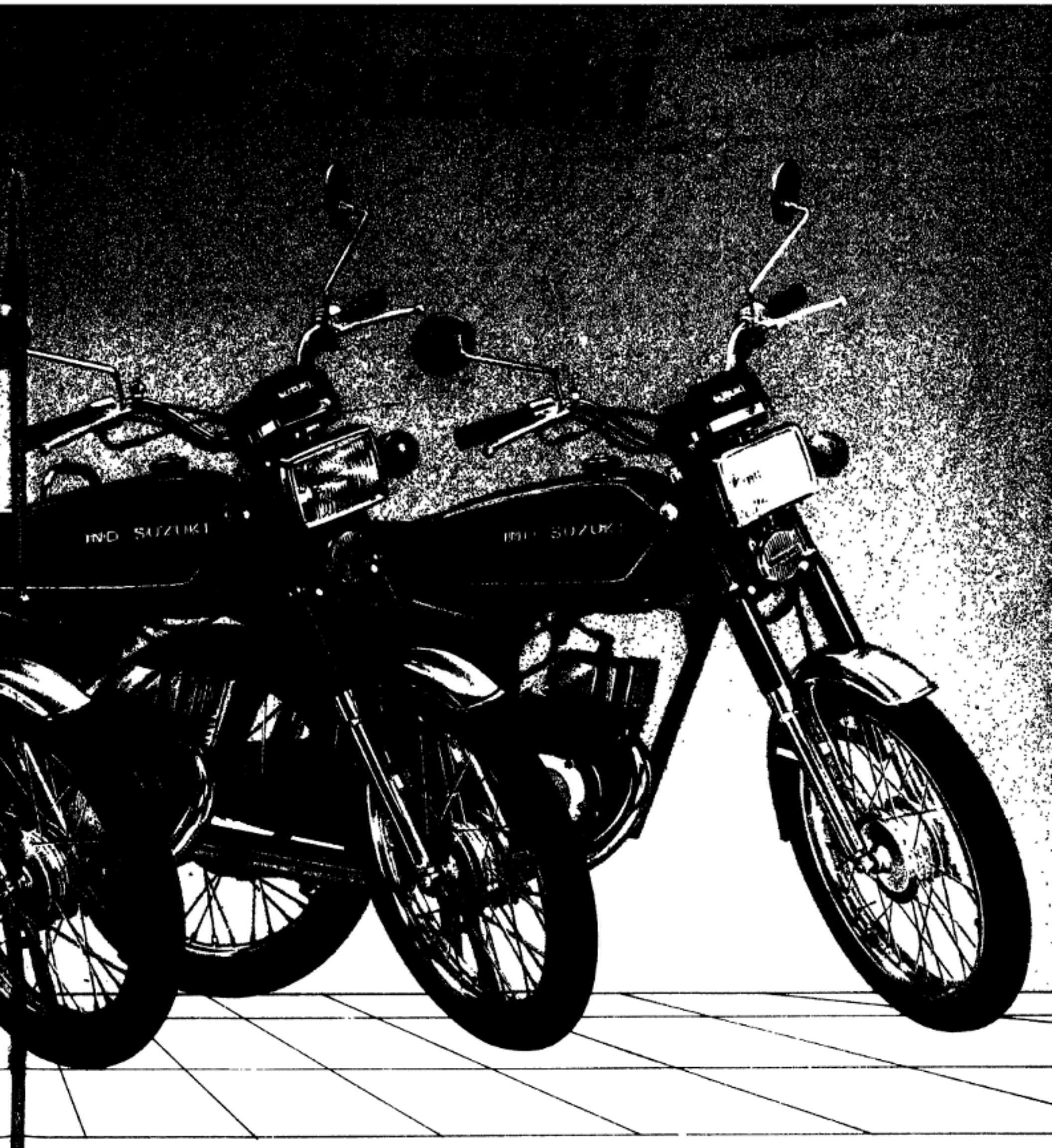
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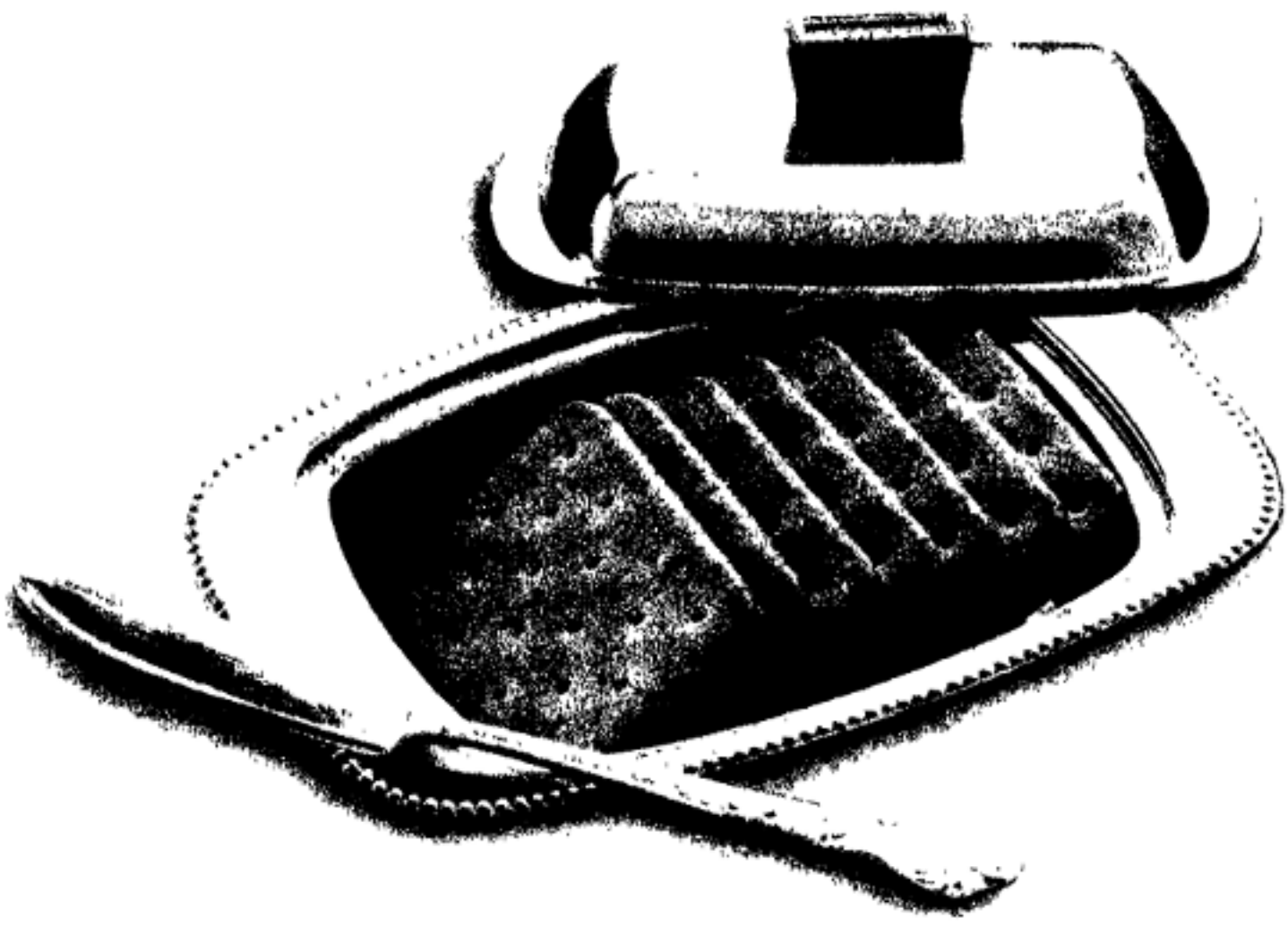
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INVESTIGATION

Murder of a Candidate

Who killed Harswaroop Bajpai, the independent candidate from Rae Bareili?

Late in the evening of 23 December 1984, the day before the recent parliamentary polls, a battered and bloodied human form, curled up like a foetus, its hands and feet bound together with a strong rope and its neck strangulated with black insulated electric wiring, was found lying on the Lucknow-Rae Bareili road near the village of Pahurawan between Bacchrawan and Rae Bareili. The pale-faced and frail victim was 52-year-old Harswaroop Bajpai, an independent candidate contesting the Rae Bareili Lok Sabha seat. The next day, Mr Bajpai's 18-year-old nephew, Vijay Shukla, a probable witness to the assault on his uncle, whose whereabouts he had known, was found missing.

Interest focused immediately on the time of the candidate's death because of its bearing on the fate of the polls in Rae Bareili: if it could be technically established that it took place after polling commenced at 8 am on 24 December 1984, the election would be undisturbed, if it had happened before the start of polling the election would stand countermanded by law. As it turned out, the elections did proceed unhindered but only after the police and district authorities, after fumbling initially, spent seven hours keeping the body aloof from the public and delaying its admission to the Rae Bareili district hospital where the victim was pronounced dead at 8.50 am. The next day, although Mr Bajpai's widow, daughter, neighbour and friends say they were informed by the local police themselves as early as 8 pm on 23 December 1984 that he had been murdered and they were taken to see his corpse—the police did not allow them to go near the body—bleeding and tied up for hours together, almost in the condition it was found without the police making any attempts to free it of its bonds. Even when the body was taken to the Bacchrawan police station in a jeep and kept there, the district authorities stoically maintain, he was alive throughout that time. He was alone when he was found lying on the road with a head injury at around 11.30 pm ("We cannot tell you the exact time," they say) on 23 December 1984 and he was finally admitted to the Rae Bareili hospital under heavy police guard at 3.10 am the next day where he was apparently put on oxygen and glucose for a long time before being declared dead, a good 50 minutes after polling had begun, the time mentioned in his health certificate.

From what the authorities say they appear to have struggled for five hours to save the life of the parliamentary candidate but the irregularities in their versions are laid bare by the evidence given by numerous people including Mr Bajpai's next of kin, his friends and the government doctor. Were the district authorities, probably under orders to see that nothing went wrong with the polls, then responsible for concocting the timing? The authorities did not hand over the body to his family after the post-mortem. In fact, the body disappeared completely from their sight once it was taken into the hospital.

After the death was declared on the morning of 24 December, it was put in a vehicle and despite the widow's loud protests and entreaties driven off to Dalmau and secretly disposed off on the banks of the Ganga. Also all official records relating to the death were ordered sealed. Perhaps, one of the first persons to be informed by the police about the candidate's murder was Baba Jagprasad, a *chillum*-smoking *sadhu* who lives in a small tent he has pitched beside the main road, in front of his house at one end of Bacchrawan. An unlikely landlord, Mr Bajpai paid the *sadhu* Rs 60 a month as rent for the two rooms on the ground floor of the house which served as his election office too. Being nearer to where the body was found, the police thought of trying out Mr Bajpai's office for the directions to his house. "It was between 7 pm and 8 pm, I should think before 7.30," said Jagprasad, "when they arrived. 'Bajpaiji *koi hai*?' they asked aloud, peeping into my tent. First I said there was nobody around but I could help them if they wanted. Then I asked them what they wanted. They said it was about Bajpai. He had been killed.

Mr Bajpai's family were at home in the village of Rampur Samodha when the police arrived in the evening of 23 December 1984. "A jeep came," said Saroj Tripathi, the murdered candidate's married daughter. "There was sepoy Pathak and a constable, Yadav, whom I recognised as someone from the village next to ours. They knocked on the door. I was asleep. I asked who it was. They said, 'Daroga Sahib.' I opened the door and saw Pathak. He wanted me to come to the *thana* (police station). What is the matter, I asked. He said it was urgent. I told him I would not come out at night but in the morning. But he kept insisting. Then he said my father Bajpaiji was calling me. I found this suspicious. Why should he want to call me at night, I thought. The sepoy must have been lying. When he found me adamant, Pathak turned to Shuklaji (a teacher from the village who had by then joined the crowd of people standing outside the door of the house) and said to him, 'Should I tell her?' I told him to tell me the truth. 'Don't worry I will tell you everything,' he said. *'Aisa hai ki tumhari Bapuji ki katal ho gai hai.'*

Gargi Prasad, the Bajpais' next door neighbour and a good friend of the politician, had also witnessed the scene. "There were two of them in the jeep," he recalled, "Pathak had come along with another person who looked like a home guard. They came between 8 pm and 8.30 pm. They must have been here about half-an-hour; after that everyone got into the jeep, the policemen and the women and I."

Was there just one jeep? "No, there was our police jeep in which the two policemen and I and Bajpai's widow, Kamala Devi, and his daughters, Saroj and Ranno, sat," said Gargi Prasad. There was also "the Congress election vehicle in which sat another group including Shuklaji, Ram Krishan Tiwari and others from the village," he recalled. "In all there were about 12 to 15 of us in two vehicles which drove to the spot."

At what time did the vehicles leave the village? Around 8.30 pm. And when exactly did they reach where the body lay on the road? At the most ten or 15 minutes later for it is not very far. Most descriptions of the body, the state it was found in and the time it was sighted, tally remarkably. Apart from being tied up the body had a deep wound on the right temple which bled profusely. Blood from the wound and the nose had been flowing over to the side of the road. Saroj, though shattered by the experience, still remembers what she saw there.

"When we went to the spot where the body was lying, we were stopped near it. The people in the jeep were asked to get off. I do not know who all were there. Of course, as I later learnt, everyone was there. Another Congress vehicle had accompanied the police vehicle. It was about 9.30 pm when we reached Pahurawan. It took ten minutes to reach the place from our village. After some time the body was kept behind the vehicle. We were asked to get off. My little sister Seema had gone there near the body. She saw it from quite close and threw herself on it. But she managed to get close to my father. There was some confusion and the villagers pushed the policemen aside. My mother also ran forward. I was in such a state I had got off the jeep and collapsed on the road."

According to Gargi Prasad and several others, the jeep carrying Mr Bajpai's widow and daughters and himself arrived at the Bacchrawan police station between 9 and 9.30 that night. Saroj Tripathi remembered, "Ram Sagar Verma (a CPI activist and friend of her father) was there. We were made to sit outside first, then brought onto the verandah. We kept weeping and screaming for hours, 'Where is the body? Give us the body. Where is my Bapu? Where is he?' But no one moved. No one cared whether we shouted or ran about or sang or did anything." Exhausted by then, all the family could think of doing was inform relatives about the death. "I sent my younger sister to tell my *mama* (maternal uncle) and to inform his younger sister. My father's sister was in Hardoi. One of the policemen, however, kept questioning the women about their village. I don't know who it was: Pathak or Mishra. He kept asking us who lived in our village and we told him whatever he wanted to know. He could ask Vijay (her cousin, the son of her father's sister) in Hardoi. He would come in the morning to our Bapu's house (on the main road).

Alas! Vijay too was reported missing. He had been with Mr Bajpai last in the night of 22 December and probably on 23 December and was also believed to have been kidnapped by the murderers. "I don't know who brought the body to the *thana*," said Gargi Prasad, who had been sitting there with the women. "But it was lying in the jeep parked near the front entrance to the compound. It lay in the *thana* till midnight and was brought there at 11 pm. Since it was cold the two of us, Yadav and I, decided to go away. We walked back home."

Once they left the police station, Mr Bajpai's widow and daughters never got to see his body again. Asked if she was sure her father was lying dead on the road, when they were taken by the police to see him, she replied almost angrily, "*Arrey bilkul* (Absolutely)." Was he not rushed to the primary health centre, as the police claim? "No, no, Dr Salahuddin (who was on emergency duty that night) has given his evidence. You can ask him. Nobody came. And who would bring a corpse to the PHC? These are blatant lies. Stories that have been cooked up to ensure that the election is not postponed."

Could Mr Bajpai not have been lying unconscious? If he was, his family would have been shown his body and would have been allowed to take him to hospital and get him treated so that he was revived. And if he was unconscious why was his neck not untied? Several other people including the CPI activist, Ram Sagar Verma, had gone on bicycles to see the body after receiving news of Mr Bajpai's death. Mr Bajpai, who was himself a former CPI worker, was a close friend of Verma and had been meeting him frequently till a couple of days before his death. Said Verma, "On 21 December Bajpaiji told us that he was going to Lucknow to campaign for Mayapati Tripathi (one of his friends). He left Bacchrawan at 10 am. I don't know if he went by train or bus. He had on a *kurta pyjama* and an old coat and a sleeveless sweater. He was last seen outside the government hospital in Rae Bareili, having tea in a stall, with Kapil Awasthi. Then on 23 December I was busy with a bicycle rally in the evening from Bacchrawan to Mohanlalganj to support our party candidate for the election there, Bhikhalalji. When we returned, we stopped at Pandeji's hotel for tea. It was around 7.15 pm. B.N. Agnihotri, one of those who had taken part in the rally, had his house nearby, and instead of joining us for tea, had chosen to go home straight. In a short while he came back to us looking alarmed. 'Have you heard?' he asked. We said we hadn't. He told us that Bajpaiji had been murdered. His body was lying near Pahurawan, two km from Bacchrawan on the main road."

Ram Sagar Verma contends that it was the SDM of Maharajganj, Kurli Manohar, who first saw the body lying on the road at about 7 pm in the evening of 23 December. "Along with the body was a cloth bag full of election agents' forms. There was a brown coat, but no sign of his footwear. One assumes the body was brought in a vehicle from Rae Bareili because it was dumped a little off the centre of the road." Verma said that the ground did not show any signs of a struggle because except for the stream of blood and the coat and the bag lying on the ground there were no other marks. "We were informed of the death at 7.15 pm when we reached the spot. Ten of us, Ramsagar Verma, Swar Mandal Shukla, Ashok Bhorti Uppal, Brijender Agnihotri, Randhir Singh, Chandman Singh Azad, Chandrashekhar Shukla, Ramanuj Vajpayi, saw the body lying there. It was about 8.45 pm." Also present were sepoy Harish Chandra Mishra, Ram Lakhan Bajpai (Mr Bajpai's guard) and the Congress(I) block chief. A group of Congress(I) workers was also there. They kept shouting, "*Sanjay Manch walon ne marwa diya* (Rashtriya Sanjay Manch workers have killed him) " and threatened to take photographs. They were abusing the security guard loudly (Bajpai) for not protecting the candidate.

Incidentally, Mr Bajpai had himself asked his two security guards not to bother about shadowing him. "I am an old man, why bother about me?" he said. "And when security guards have killed the Prime Minister herself, how will you protect me?" he is reported to have told them. "As we stood there," Mr Verma went on, "the police took down our names and the names of some villagers from Pahurawan: 20 to 25 in all. We stayed there. Afterwards, the station officer of Bacchrawan police station, Ram Deo Mishra, and Pathak arrived. Mishra told Pathak to go and inform the family while he waited. Pathak took the police jeep. We waited. We were there a full two-and-a-half hours. The body remained where it was, in exactly the same condition as we saw it, when we came it was getting cold. We came away." Mr Verma said he never imagined a dispute to rise over a body that had been lying dead for so long in full public view from 7 pm in the evening. And hence he had not found the necessity of recording evidence on the spot. A group of Rashtriya Sanjay Manch workers who had received a telephone call in Rae Bareili from Bacchrawan drove down to the Bacchrawan police station around 11 pm. Among them was Ram Bardhan Singh, Parmanand Mishra and 10 or 15 others. At the police station, they found a crowd: the body lay in the jeep and the police were not allowing anyone near it, they say. "This group was later joined by another group including our candidate from Rae Bareili, Mr J.N. Mishra, " aid Mahesh Sharma, a party worke: This was

around 12.30 am.

However, after several hours at 3.15 am on 24 December 1984, in between 12.30 am and 3.15 am Mr Mishra had taken away Kamala Devi, Mr Bajpai's widow, to a friend's house to console her. When the group returned to file the report around 3 am, the body was gone. The family alleges that the SP of Rae Bareili, Rajendra Singh Dhillon, had taken it away to the district hospital around one am. Of course, the official version is entirely different. It rests on a few premises, each of them vital. That the body was discovered on the road in a critical state between 11 pm and 11.30 pm on 23 December 1984 by the Bacchrawan police; it was taken first to the police station, then to the PHC, where no doctor was to be found, and then back to the police station and later to the district hospital at a little before 3.10 am; that Mr Bajpai died at 8.50 am on 24 December 1984; that it is not the common practice to keep a record of time in such cases and that getting a body to hospital is not just a simple matter—even if the nearest hospital is just 30 kms away (it might even take over three-and-a-half hours)—and that even if a person is alive and found with a head injury from which he is profusely bleeding. It does not matter much if his neck and hands and feet are tied with rope or electric wiring for any length of time and of course, giving over dead bodies—whether they be of parliamentary candidates or anyone else—to the next of kin after a post mortem when the family is screaming for it is best avoided in controversial cases, where bodies are best burnt up quickly and all records sealed.

Getting to R.S. Dhillon, SP, was difficult. A telephone call to his residence brought the reply, "He has gone out with the DIG and we cannot say when he will be back." A visit to his residence was more fruitful. The policeman on duty said he was in fact at home all day. Mr Dhillon himself apologised. Asked if the investigations into the murder of Mr Bajpai and the kidnapping of his nephew had yielded any result, he said, "No. We get to know anything only when we are in touch with the CID which is handling the case." What was his version of the events of December 23-24 1984? "The body was found between 11 pm and 11.30 pm approximately. The station officer at Bacchrawan picked him up and brought him to the *thana* from where he was taken to the Rae Bareili hospital." When exactly? "We cannot say; he picked him up, from there he went to the *thana* and from there he went to the PHC. There was no doctor there so he brought him back (to the *thana*). Then he brought him to the district hospital. "Does he not have a precise idea of when exactly he visited these places with the body? That we cannot say (*smiles*). It is not something that everybody records at that time. From 11.30 pm to 3.10 am we cannot pinpoint what happened. 3.10 am was the time of entry in the registers of the hospital emergency department. Obviously it was taken to the hospital a little earlier. What condition was Mr Bajpai in when he was found at 11.30 pm? "His hands and feet were bound. And he had a head injury." Was he aware of the electric wiring around his neck? "No, as far as I know the hands and feet were tied." Was there a deep gash on his right temple? "There was a head injury but I am not sure exactly what was the nature of the injury. After 3.10 am he was given proper treatment for several hours." But where was the question of treating a person who as his widow and daughter had been informed by the local police had been murdered, and whose dead body the police had taken the family to see? How could he insist that such a person was alive, when his family along with the police were satisfied he was dead? The reply was cold. "We are nobody to decide whether a person is alive or dead. It is the doctor who decides." True. But even if the person was alive, why leave him in that state for so long—from 11.30 pm to 3 am? "No. The distance from here (Rae Bareili) to Bacchrawan is about 35 kms, and all this takes time. It is very easy to say for four hours or three-and-a-half hours what you were doing. The point is if somebody first tells you that somebody is lying three kms from here, you travel for three kms, look around, then you go back to get another vehicle. You go there and pick him up from there. Then from there you...it's not something that's clockwork." But why was he not freed of his bonds for long? Could that affect his state? "No. If his hands and feet were tied it had nothing to do with his head injury." Indeed if it is true then that Mr Bajpai had died much earlier...as scores of people who have seen him claim (and one is not speaking of a point of law)—and the death certificate gives the wrong time, can the post mortem report be considered a proper reliable document? If it cannot, can the police be depended upon to find out Mr Bajpai's killers, their motive and the missing Vijay Shukla's whereabouts and thus do justice to the bereaved family? Notably, neither the CID nor the Bacchrawan police made any progress so far.

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow



A woman casts her vote in Rae Bareili

Out of the World

Three-day meet of godmen in Delhi

"Do wait a few moments. Pilot Baba will go into *samadhi* right after tea..." said the lady with the batting eyelashes and the big eyes which had, according to their owner, "drunk in the beauty of meditation."

It was tea break on the cold, foggy morning of 19 January 1985 shortly after the inauguration of the three-day international conference on spiritual renaissance, organised by Bharat Nirman. We stood in the sea of Rajneesh orange and magenta, the less startling saffron of lesser international *gurus*, the milk-white safari suit and electric blue badges and trimmings of the man from Fiji, the brown and saffron of the Buddhist monks and the lush Kanjeevaram splendour of the many women attending or part of the organising crew of the international festival of spiritualism. There were Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jews, Sufis, Muslims, Rajneeshees, Bahai's, disciples of Mahesh Yogi, Tibetans and the omnipresent Brahmakumaris.

It was an all-out effort to put spiritualism in its right place. The inauguration was done no less by a personage than the union minister of steel, coal and mines, Vasant Sathe. Dr Nagendra Singh, a judge in the International Court of Justice, was the chairman of the reception committee. The valedictory address was delivered by Dr M.L. Shahare, chair-



man of the Union Public Service Commission. And the distinguished speaker, addressing this conference to a packed Mavlankar hall (filled with lawyers, judges, bureaucrats or the "literate" as one of the participants described the audience) was India's vice-president and former union minister for defence, R. Venkataraman.

But to get back to the main event that day which was Pilot Baba going into *samadhi* for 72 hours. That was taking place backstage. On stage, were some people from industry and, of course, a sprinkling of star *swamis*: the Flying Swami from Canada (originally Kerala), Taj Baba from Brindaban, Mahatma Sampoorna Nandi, Brahmakumari Chandramenji, Yogi Manohar Harkari and others.

Formerly an air force pilot, Pilot Baba (who was earlier flight lieutenant Kapil; he flew in the Pathankot sector for the air force during the 1965 war) went into *samadhi* a little before lunch: at one o'clock to be precise. The black curtain rose a few minutes before 1.00 pm. Behind it was a wooden airtight rectangular box, six feet by four feet in size. Three of its sides were wood while the front panel was made of glass. Pilot Baba stepped into what was going to be his home for three days and two nights and immediately put himself in the "relax" pose. He was out of the material world within seconds. While people noisily tried to fit the back panel, he went deeper within himself.

Meanwhile, the conference continued. The next day's highlight was Taj Baba, who had some words of advice about the right kind of gastronomical diet. But he did something quite dramatic: he put most of the audience, in the words of one of the organisers, "into a deep state of meditation." Another participant had used the word "trance." Elaborated the articulate young lady again: "The *kundalini* was awakened. It was like a torch being shone on the eyes. I had tears in my eyes when Baba took people into meditation. It was as if we were being churned inside. The soul feels it is being cleaned." The Baba's dietary description for health, mind and body was not that easy to follow. No food before noon and that too only salads, sprouts and juices. Pilot Baba, who at 70 looks at least 20 years younger, advised the people to choose only lentils, vegetables and *chapatis*. The Baba was, however, an optimist. He compared the state of the world to a "bad tummy." It would all be worked out of the system, he said. The *toofan* of sex and violence would blow over.



On the final day we heard the Flying Swami, who has a little plane he flies for peace and nuclear disarmament. Last year, the plane could not take off from one of the Indian cities because the petrol was not pure enough. The Swami with his large following even tried to persuade Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to follow the path of peace. The final day was also when Pilot Baba was to emerge from his *samadhi*. His last words to us before he had gone into the wooden box on 19 January were: "See you on the 21st." The Baba looked much the same when he came out. He said that he could "preserve" his energy, ideas and thoughts "as in a freezer" and when he emerged, it seemed he had done just that.

At the end of the spiritual conference, Bharat Nirman passed some resolutions: the decision to launch a spiritual movement throughout the country "to control violence, hatred, disunity, disintegration," according to the press release issued by the conference convener M.C. Bhandari. But clearly many among those who attended the conference had not "surrendered to the divine" as had the dynamic organising secretary, Dilraj Bedi. Bedi had even taken a group of 11 women from the Taj Health Club to a spiritual retreat in Rajasthan last March. Meditation apart, the portly ladies of the club actually lost from three to five kilograms of weight each. Said Bedi, "It was cold but we were sweating in the ardour of our meditation, we were burning our calories."

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

Illustrations: Bulbul Sharma

BOOK EXTRACT

Captain Rajiv



In the concluding extract from his book, The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty *(published by Pan Books in association with Chatto and Windus and distributed in India by Rupa and Company, 15 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 700 012; price £ 2.50), Tariq Ali assesses Sanjay and Rajiv Gandhi as politicians.*



During the Janata years there had been a detailed enquiry into Sanjay's financial deals. The Maruti firm had, especially been scrutinised in great detail, but there was no evidence to convict. Much of the money that Sanjay had gathered for the Congress had, in any event, been cash in hand supplied by the godfathers of the smuggling industry in Bombay. This 'black money' was never registered anywhere in the first place, so evidence was not easy to obtain. Colonel Anand, Menaka's father was questioned about some of these matters during this period. He had been upset and complained to his friends about the indignity.

Then one day he was found dead, with a revolver in his hand. Was it murder or suicide? He had left behind a cryptic note containing the words 'Pressure Sanjay Unbearable'. Every media commentator now became a temporary detective. Did the words indicate that Sanjay's pressure on the dead man had been unbearable? Was Sanjay preventing him from speaking, the truth in court? In that case was the murderer engaged by Sanjay? Others argued that Colonel Anand had been depressed by the Janata government's pressure on his young son-in-law and that is why he had killed himself. The truth became a matter for conjecture, depending on the political views of those who engaged in speculation. No evidence was ever found to suggest that the colonel had been murdered, leave alone by his son-in-law. The press, nonetheless, made sure that the incident left a murky impression. They very fact, however, that Sanjay's guilt was believed by large numbers of ordinary people requires no extensive commentary.

Sanjay was now portrayed as something of an enigma. He still had his supporters, but they were not large in number amongst the intelligentsia, a layer he loathed. It is easy to describe him as an assemblage of grotesque incongruities: perifidious and dedicated; selfish and generous; cruel and kind; crafty and simple-minded; intelligent and stupid; villain and hero. The problem with this sort of description is that it could easily be applied to Hitler or Stalin. It is a mystification, but it was in wide circulation during the Nehru-Gandhi family's years in exile. In fact Sanjay's politics were coherent, logical, but marked a definitive break with the populist consensus projected by the Congress Party. What he wanted to do in India was the equivalent of what Thatcher did in Britain and Reagan in the United States. The problem was that such a sharp turn in Indian conditions might well have provoked a hydraheaded backlash, which would have weakened the Indian Federation and its political structures. Indira, in her own way, was aware of this fact, though she perceived the problem with which Sanjay was trying to grapple. Her own solutions were typically pragmatic and their outcome was a multiplication of tragedies throughout the sub-continent.

For the 1980 elections, Sanjay, had prepared his own complement of new, model Congressmen. He was determined to change the physiognomy of the Congress Parliamentary Party and prepare the way not simply for his own accession to office, but for a totally different Congress Party. His friend and colleague, Akbar Ahmed spelt this out very clearly after Sanjay's death. The word youth is a code for the new congressman:

> Sanjay was one of the few people in India who really gave youth a chance. In 1980, in both the Parliamentary and Assembly elections, a substantial proportion of seats went to youth. In Uttar Pradesh over 200 seats out of 425 were given to youth. In today's politics nothing will get done till we get rid of the people who've been for donkey's years...To build India we need a change. And only youth can change things...
>
> Sanjay was one person who wanted to liberate Indian industry from the stranglehold that there were. He wanted to lay emphasis on agriculture, on programmes that would be implemented and wouldn't just remain at the planning stage.

Sanjay's wife Maneka was a tiny bit more critical than Akbar Ahmed. In her picture book on her husband, she describes how she was sometimes forced to communicate with him via a set of poems. She would write one and leave it on his table. One of these was later reproduced by her and provides a glimpse of what life with him must have been like:

> Sanjay Gandhi, ferocious being
> Who never looks without seeing.
> Whose facts are almost always right.
> Whose judgments almost always bite.
> Who's so totally work-oriented.
> That he's driven his wife demented.
> With his fact and figures and complete knowledge.



Sanjay Gandhi with Ambika Soni

And his refusal to indulge in 'lollage'.

Sanjay Gandhi computer man.

Why can't you be more human?

Sanjay's reply to this was not recorded, though he must have relented a bit, for Maneka bore him a son in 1979, Feroze Varuna. When asked by a reporter whether she had waited so long after her wedding to encourage birth-control, she confessed merrily; 'Rubbish—I wanted to wait ten years—this baby's not planned. I wanted to have my husband to myself.'

Sanjay remained extremely busy trying to re-organise the country's politics. He still had no official post in the government, but was behaving more and more as if he were the prime minister. He was planning a large-scale purge of the civil service in order to replace senior administrators with his own tested loyalists. He was also busy ensuring that his new crop of Congress MPs were properly represented in the new government. One reason for Indira to wait a long time to stabilise her 1980 Cabinet was because of the relentless pressure from the 'Sanjay Caucus'. Soon she would be without Sanjay, and Maneka would not regret the lack of family planning that had given her young Feroze.

Just prior to the emergency, Sanjay had learnt how to fly and obtained his pilot's licence. The Maruti disaster had cured him of the car-mania. From then on it was planes, like Rajiv and Jawaharlal. After the defeat of 1977, the Janata Government had taken away his licence on the grounds that he might fly himself and his mother out of the country to escape retribution. He had now got it back. A close acquaintance of his, Karan Thapar, once accompanied him as a passenger in his two-seater. It was a terrifying experience as Thapar reported to a London magazine, the *Spectator*.

I remember flying with him on one occasion in a single-engined plane, attempting every type of loop of which the little aircraft was capable. After exhausting the pleasures of aerial acrobatics, he set out to scare the local peasants working in their fields by aiming the aircraft straight at them, swerving dramatically upwards at the last minute. Whatever view one takes of such a sport, it requires nerves of steel and tremendous self-confidence.

On 23 June 1980, Sanjay Gandhi left 1 Safdarjung Road at 6.30 a.m. and drove to the Delhi Flying Club. It was early, but he wanted to avoid the heat that began to envelop the city soon after sunrise. He had an appointment with Captain Subhash Saxena, who was going to accompany him on the red Pitts S-2A, a light two-seater American plane. Saxena had not wanted to fly that day. He was due to have a hernia operation and was not feeling too well, but he allowed himself to be persuaded by Sanjay. The flying club's chief instructor advised Sanjay not to fly the Pitts, since it had only been used for the last few days and had not even been test-flown by the club's expert mechanics. 'I must take up this red bird today,' Sanjay had insisted. The discussion had ended.

The Pitts had been the centre of a long controversy. It had been despatched to Sanjay as a 'gift' during the Emergency, courtesy of the British-Asian industrialist, Swraj Paul. By the time it had arrived in India, the Congress had been defeated and Janata was in power. The new government decided to investigate the 'gift'. The American firm panicked and said they would happily withdraw the 'gift' and re-export the plane back from India. While the negotiations were taking place, the Indian electorate had returned Mrs Gandhi to office. The whole investigation was dropped and the firm was happy for the Pitts to become a 'gift' once again.



Sanjay Gandhi: ruthless politics

So on that warm summer's morning Sanjay and his less-than-enthusiastic passenger, Subhash Saxena, flew into the Delhi sky. Sanjay had clearly wanted to impress Saxena, who was an experienced pilot, with his flying skills. He flew the plane over Safdarjung Road and Willingdon Crescent. Then he started at a thousand feet, to demonstrate a few somersaults. The Pitts never came out of nose-dive. It crashed just behind Willingdon Crescent into some trees. Sanjay and Saxena died instantly. The once and future leader was no more. There was a great deal of sympathy for his young widow and his grief-stricken mother and the infant boy.

If the truth be told, there were many former victims of forced sterilisation and 'slum-clearance' who made no secret of their belief that it had been an 'act of God'. It was these people who upheld Voltaire's dictum that: 'One owes respect to the living. To the dead one owes nothing but the truth.' This had been practised in the early years after independence. Indian communists, in particular, had declined to pay posthumous homage to their political enemies. During the late 1950s, CP members of the West Bengal Assembly had refused to stand in silence and pay homage to dead Congress politicians. Apart from the press, there had been no outcry. In fact the West Bengal CPI had gained respect amongst the poor for not indulging in sentimental hypocrisy.

Times had changed. In 1980 it was much more than condolences for Sanjay's mother and wife. What took place was a grotesque act of hypocrisy. Men who had denounced Sanjay endlessly as a 'fascist', a 'Rasputin', 'a hooligan', who had demanded that Doon School should, in honour of Sanjay, be renamed Goon School, were now competing with each other to pay tribute to the departed Caesar. The devil was being transformed into a god

Charan Singh, who had launched a particularly nasty and vindictive witchhunt against mother and son when they were out of office, said: 'It is a tragedy that a young man who dreamt about the greatness of this country is no more with us.' Atal Behari Vajpayee, supposedly a man of principle, albeit a communalist and at the helm of a semi-fascist party, declared: 'Mr Gandhi's death has brought darkness at noon.' The other Mr Gandhi had, it is worth remembering, been assassinated by men who were politically inspired by Vajpayee's own mentors. Indrajit Gupta of the CPI, a party which had been denounced as 'corrupt' by Sanjay declared that: 'All political controversies are still in the face of death'. The other Communist Party's Chief Minister of Tripura announced that Sanjay's loss was not just that of the Congress, but was shared by the country as a whole!

Given this barrage from his enemies, the courtiers had a hard task ahead of them, but old Khushwant Singh managed a personal tribute, which established a certain pattern:

> We bid farewell to our young departed leader with tears that will take an age to wipe off our eyes. His dying has made us rarer gifts than gold (sic). He has laid the world away and poured out the red wine of his youth, and given up the years that were to be his. The best tribute the nation can pay him is to create the India of his dreams: green with teeming forests, cleansed of all the filth in its cities; with small healthy families and smiling happy girls freed of worry over their dowries.

If some enterprising Indian magazine had instituted a 'Golden *Chamcha* of the Year Award', there is little doubt that the writer quoted above would have been a strong contender for the title in 1980.



Mrs Indira Gandhi near Sanjay's body

Sanjay was embalmed for a day while Rajiv and Sonia returned from Italy for the funeral. Indira had wanted him cremated on the same spot as her father, but at this the opposition protested. For Sanjay's dead body to be set alight by Rajiv on the same spot where the dead man had lit his grandfather's funeral pyre? It was a sacrilege, said the opposition. Rajiv agreed. Sanjay was burned well behind the Nehru site. His ashes were sprinkled into the Ganges near Allahabad.

Maneka and her mother, Mrs Anand, felt that as Sanjay's wife, she should succeed him as MP for Amethi. Wl.en Indira asked Akbar Ahmed: 'Who do we put up in Amethi?' Sanjay's closet friend claims he replied: 'Put up Rajiv.' To be given the following answer: 'Don't be silly. His politics are not like ours. I don't trust him.' When he suggested Maneka's name the response was that she had fourteen months to go before she fulfilled the age requirement. All this changed the minute Rajiv was persuaded to give up flying and enter politics. Maneka felt humiliated. Sanjay's few close friends were also put out in the cold. Most of them had lost their influence overnight, but they accommodated to the new situation.

Sanjay loyalist, Akbar 'Dumpy' Ahmed was angry at the defection. Even 'Roly Poly' had gone. 'I feel sorry for them,' declared Dumpy, 'because they are neither here nor there. Kamal Nath just chickened out, poor chap...He was close to Sanjay and should have stood up when Sanjay's people were being isolated and Sanjay's name was being wiped out. Now Jagdish Tytler is just another *chamcha* in the Congress 'set-up'.

Dumpy tended towards sentimentality. Most of the Sanjay intake of Congress MPs had been personally loyal to the dead man because of what he promised them



Rajiv campaigning



The leader meets the people

Sanjeev Prem

in terms of politics and economics. Their fondness for Sanjay's style was not based on any aesthetic appreciation of the man, but because he promised to defend their material interests. That had been his main attraction. It was, of course, considered tasteless to say this aloud soon after his death, but it was said, though not by any mainstream publication. In a narrow, old Calcutta street, Mott Lane, and old Bengali Marxist intellectual and one-time poet, Samar Sen had his headquarters. All he did was to produce a weekly magazine, *Frontier*. He had been a sophisticated supporter of the Chinese in the years that immediately followed the Sino-Soviet split, and his magazine had always had to swim against the tide of public opinion. After Sanjay's death it was *Frontier* which printed an account that would outlive the mawkish banalities of almost everything else. It was entitled 'What Sanjay Meant'. Its author had preferred to remain anonymous. After describing how the streets of the city where he was had not betrayed any signs of emotion or distress at the news of the heir-apparent's death, the author described how as he was boarding a half-empty plane for Delhi he caught a glimpse of Sanjay's men. His account of these men remains the best description that I have so far read.

> The plane was getting ready when there was fresh activity. Suddenly new passengers started climbing up and pouring in a unending stream of dazzling white, freshly-pressed Sanjay suits, each with a jagged strip of black ribbon pinned either on the arm or the chest. There would be at least a hundred of them There wasn't a seat left any more.

They were noisy, these late entrants to Congres politics and they talked a lot. *Frontier's* anonymous correspondent observed them silently. As the plane went up, he started to pen the following despatch:

It was then time to make a leisurely survey. This new group of a hundred and more Sanjay suits were all men—hardly a woman—of between 30 and 45, stout and gross, with a fullness of uncouth confidence, reeking of Old Spice, their stomachs round and tight as drums. These were the type I have seen in Andhra's districts, owning homes partly airconditioned and barns large as playgrounds, large and medium farms of tobacco, rice, oilseeds, new and neatly run agroprocessing factories. These were the same men I had seen sitting on the boards of cooperative banks and other government financing institutions engaged in siphoning off money drawn in the name of hundreds of real or imaginary small



Priyanka with her father at the Asian Games

beneficiaries, to profitable investments and shuffling them over a wide range of portfolios in and away from Andhra Pradesh. These were the men who owned most of the new medium and small-scale industries in town and struck profitable business and marriage alliances in the city, acquired themselves brides in the image of Telugu and Tamil films, each bound by ties of marriage, caste and inheritance with the older generation which had done well and completed the first and most crucial stage of primitive accumulation. They represented the new interacting triangle; the landed gentry in the village, the industrial entrepreneur in the city and the new intelligentsia that belonged to both. Few of them in the plane at all bothered to sidle up to Chenna Reddy or Narasimha Rao as is customary when such dignitaries travel. They kept their own company. Wiping out whole Harijan villages of an evening without batting an eyelid was as much in the day's work to them as buying off quietly and without fuss a hundred confirmed air passengers and dozens more on the official waiting list at 9 o'clock any morning and taking their places on the plane to Delhi at 12.55. The point in either case was to do it efficiently, if need be ruthlessly, and without fuss. Network and understanding, understanding and network.

Sanjay was dead. His political project, however, was very much alive. And so was his wife.

When Sanjay's death took place, his brother Rajiv had been sitting at the controls of a plane for fourteen years. His friends stated that he was happy. He showed no signs of wanting a change. He had not been particularly happy during the Emergency years. He had little time for Sanjay's politics, but had been helpless to do much about it at the time. He told a friend later that he had not heard too much about the 'excesses of the emergency', but whatever he had been told, he had passed on to the other occupants of 1 Safdarjung Road, who had invariably refused to believe him.

It would be inaccurate to say that he was disinterested in politics. He had held certain views, which were traditional in his circle of friends. He was a liberal-democratic supporter of the Congress. Nonetheless both he and Sonia were totally opposed to his entering the cockpit of Indian politics. At one point Sonia told a friend that she would rather her children begged in the streets than that Rajiv entered politics. She, probably much more than him, regarded politics as filthy, corrupt and riddled with sycophants, whom she disliked intensely. There was, after all, no shortage of them at 1 Safdarjung Road. Whether or not she ever made the comparison between her native Italy and India is not known, but there were many similarities between the Indian Congress and the Italian Christian Democrats. Both parties were in the grip of venal politicians. Both were heavily dependent on both extending and receiving patronage. And then there was the link with the underworld. The Christian Democrats were linked to the Mafia. The Congress was financially in debt to its Indian counterparts. Political protectionism was practised in both instances.

Sonia had not yet exchanged her Italian passport for Indian nationality. After the electoral blow of 1977, Rajiv had informed his mother that he and his family wanted to leave India for a time and settle in Italy. This announcement had created a personal crisis in the household. Indira had pleaded with both of them not to leave her at this time. She had said that she could not bear being without her grandchildren. His mother's pleas had changed Rajiv's mind. Sanjay's cronies alleged that Rajiv and Sonia had regarded the post-Emergency debacle as a catastrophe and had not believed that the family's political fortune could ever recover after such a stunning blow. Rajiv had not participated in the election campaign of 1980, which had been managed by Sanjay. This had been followed by the fatal plane crash. An argument had started over the succession and pressure was brought to bear on Rajiv. There had been two opposing factions. One led by Maneka and her mother, Mrs Anand, and backed by Dumpy which saw Maneka as Sanjay's heiress, who would keep the seat warm for her three-month-old son, Feroze. It was hardly a secret that the two brothers and their families had not been on the best of terms. Sonia and Maneka, in particular, had not even attempted to conceal their mutual dislike. The struggle for the succession with all its grotesque, medieval undertones had started even before Sanjay's cremation. The Man-

eka Caucus had met at Mrs Anand's house and discussed how to retain its hold on the large block of Sanjay MPs and use it as a wedge to press Maneka's claims.

Indira Gandhi and her close advisers opted for Rajiv. Once they had decided this question, then nothing was left to chance. In August 1980, barely two months after Sanjay's crash, 300 Congress MPs called on Rajiv to step into his brother's shoes and contest the by-election in Amethi. Rajiv hesitated. He was not even an ordinary card-carrying member of the Congress. His wife was still implacably hostile to the idea. Several months later, in April 1981, a respected conservative journalist, Sunanda Datta Ray, wrote in *The Statesman:* 'Leaders do not issue orders from behind their mother's skirts...They must operate within the constitutional framework, and be answerable to the people for all they do...Mr Gandhi should, therefore, either legitimise his position or be seen to surrender all claims to power...Will the real Rajiv Gandhi, therefore, please stand up and declare himself?'

The following month, Rajiv followed Datta-Ray's advice. He resigned his pilot's job with Indian Airlines and decided to contest Amethi. The seat had been unoccupied for one whole year, a constitutional impropriety since vacant seats need to be filled within six months. It had been Nehru's constituency and after his death it had been filled by his sister Vijayalakshmi, then Sanjay and now Rajiv. Sonia, reconciled to the new plans, quietly gave up her Italian nationality. The crown princess became an Indian citizen.

In June 1981, Rajiv was elected to Parliament in a landslide victory. When questioned about his political ideas he tended to be vague, saying that he supported the Congress manifesto. Yet his differences with Sanjay had not been on fundamentals, but on style. He favoured free-enterprise, foreign investments and modernisation. He disliked corruption, sycophants and gangsters. The problem was that they were not unrelated. Sanjay had discovered this at an early stage and attempted to harness the latter in order to enhance his politico-economic project. Rajiv would begin to discover these hard facts over the next few years. Sanjay's old friend, Dumpy, was enraged by the press descriptions of Rajiv as 'Mr Clean', though even he could not make a specific allegation about Rajiv. What he did say was that:
During the Emergency, Sonia was involved with Maruti Technical Services. If they didn't approve of Maruti as they later claimed then she shouldn't have become a shareholder. It wasn't just that they wanted to help Sanjay. Letters have shown that, during the Emergency, Sonia's brother wanted a liquor contract in India for Italy. Sonia's family was involved in business in India, so how can they say they were not interested in politics?

In 1983, Rajiv took a step nearer to the throne when he was appointed one of the general-secretaries of the Congress Party by his mother. This was his first official post in the party and represented a phenomenal advance given that he had been a member for only three years. After winning Amethi, Rajiv had tasted the fruits of political victory. He confessed to Trevor Fishlock of *The Times:*
Yes, I do feel excited about going into politics. But daunted, too. Look at the people in this constituency. They have so little and there is so much to be done. How do you begin to make improvements? It will be satisfying to make progress, but I have no illusions about the difficulties.

He told Ian Jack of the *Sunday Times* that he wanted to attract a new breed of person to politics—intelligent, westernised young men with non-feudal, non-criminal ideas, who want to make India prosper rather than merely themselves.'

Rajiv's politics may not have been too different from those of Sanjay's, but he rapidly made it clear that his brother's followers would not find much room in the new set-up. Instead he relied on a tightly-knit group of old friends, not too different from himself. Rajiv Dhar, the son of the late D. P. Dhar, a Kashmiri Brahmin, and one of the country's most distinguished post-1974 civil servants, had been a friend of Rajiv's for a long time. Then there was the Doon School/Cambridge connection. Arun Singh, was a scion of a princely family and a senior company executive with Reckitt and Colman. He had been a close personal friend at Cambridge, where he had imbibed his liberalism. 'Oh, we were the Beatles generation', he told an interviewer from Bombay's *Imprint*



Rajiv Gandhi: shy pilot to bold leader

magazine. He also confessed that life as a business executive had become dull and boring. Rajiv's political turn had been an ideal moment for him, too, to change professions. Arun Singh became a political assistant to the future Prime Minister, but expressed the hope that he would soon end up in Parliament, which institution he regarded as 'being fundamental to democracy'. From the Nehru family, a cousin, Arun Nehru, had already been elected to Parliament from Rae Bareilly. Indira has told an acquaintance that: 'The people of Rae Bareilly are not happy without a Nehru.' Arun had been found and elected. He became another member of the charmed circle. It was the two Aruns who, more than anyone else, helped Rajiv to take important decisions such as the allocation of seats for the December 1984 general elections. Sanjay's advisers had included strongmen from the countryside. Rajiv's men were urban university-graduates, with a technocratic bent. Their affection

for computer-predictions and television electoral campaigns did not endear them to the more cautious members of the A-team. The ethos of Rajiv Gandhi and his friends was spelt out by Arun Singh as follows: All the people I know have certain basic things in common. We're all Indians first; we are all secular Indians by any definition. Irrespective of what anybody might say, we operate on a very high level of integrity—personal integrity. I'm not only talking about money, for after all, money is only one of the aspects of personal integrity. Let's say we have a fairly high moral standard, and I think these are assets.

In December 1983, Rajiv was presented to the Congress delegates in Calcutta as the future leader of the country. The city itself had been festooned with pictures of Indira and Rajiv, which fought for space on the walls with the advertisements for Hindi movies. There was also a poster of Rajiv on his own, with the following caption underneath: *'Today's Leader, Tomorrow's Hope'*. One could not help feeling that the Congress's PR men had got this slightly wrong and it should have read: *'Today's Hope, Tomorrow's Leader'*.

The only irritant in this regard had been the public campaign launched by Maneka Gandhi, Sanjay's widow, against Rajiv. Maneka had left 1 Safdarjung Road in a blaze of publicity. She told the world that her mother-in-law had asked her to leave and she paraded herself and her son as the wronged members of the family. The truth was somewhat different. Ever since Rajiv's decision to enter politics, Maneka had been plotting her revenge. She had met leaders of certain opposition groups and had decided that she would try and break Sanjay's followers from the Indira-Rajiv Congress Party. It was widely known that she was out of favour, but Mrs Gandhi had not taken any decision to expel her from 1 Safdarjung Road. Maneka had been complaining bitterly to everyone who listened that she was being ill-treated and ignored by her mother-in-law. When she was asked why she did not leave the house and set up her own establishment, she used to reply that timing in such matters was crucial. In March 1982 she had finally walked out, after discussing the matter in some detail with members of the BJP (the former Jan Sangh). Immediately after her departure she announced the creation of the 'Sanjay Forum', which she said would work for 'socialism, secularism and democracy', none of which had been the strong points of her late husband. A year later she formed a political party and named it the *Rashtriya Sanjay Manch* (National Sanjay Organisation). She also announced that she, Maneka, would challenge the dynasty at Amethi. She would fight Rajiv bitterly for the succession. The Manchies gained a few successes. Dumpy was elected to Parliament in a by-election and the Congress began to take Maneka seriously. She also began to appear at the opposition conclaves and many opposition leaders saw in her a specialised instrument which could be used to damage Mrs Gandhi and her son. Certainly Rajiv and Sonia began to visit Amethi regularly after Maneka's challenge and a lot of money was poured into the constituency in the form of welfare projects. Maneka's main angle at political rallies was to present herself to the poor peasants as a wronged widow, cast out on to the streets by a tyrannical mother-in-law and under the cold eyes of her late husband's cruel elder brother and his foreign wife. This simplistic morality tale was largely a fiction, but it did have an initial impact. The rows between Mrs Gandhi and Maneka over the share of Sanjay's estate and over Mrs Gandhi's legal rights to see her grandson, kept the dispute public. This was used with great effect by Maneka in her public campaigns. In her own way, Sanjay's widow did reveal a certain political flair and gustiness, albeit of a somewhat undesirable variety. With her mother-in-law's assassination, she has lost the most important electoral card in her possession, but she still possesses the Gandhi name. If Indian politics were to continue for the rest of this decade in the same way as they have since 1980, Maneka might be able to exploit her dynastic connections far more blatantly than can be visualised at the present moment.

In the meantime the men of the Beatles generation were beginning to grasp the scale of the problems that confronted them. It was not just the massacres in Assam, the widespread outbreak of communal rioting in places like Bombay or the threatening clouds over the Punjab. It was the state of the Congress Party. The former US Ambassador to India, J. K. Galbraith, had during Nehru's lifetime referred affectionately to the Indian political system as an advanced form of 'organised anarchy'. The Congress Party had by now become an undisciplined anarchy. Sanjay's death had undoubtedly left a vacuum. One of the nastiest demonstrations of this was the conference of the NSUI (National Students



Rajiv with his mother's ashes

Union of India), the student wing of the Congress, in Nagpur in September 1984. The Congress students had become well-known and well-feared since the late 1970s as hooligans without a leash. Sanjay had controlled them for a while, but not for long. The Nagpur gathering was scheduled for only 20,000 'students.' An extra fifteen thousand had turned up. Different groups within the Congress had mobilised their supporters in a show of strength designed to advance their claims for parliamentary representation.

These 'delegates' were not in the least bit interested in the speeches. They looted the shops, raided the liquor dens and fought each other in the brothels. The ordinary people of Nagpur were horrified. Young women were molested and there were a number of reported incidents of rape. The Bombay president of the NSUI, a decent young man, declared that he was extremely worried for the safety of the women delegates and sent them back home. The press reports were too detailed for any Congress leader to rebut the truth. Indira tried to blame the rowdyism on the opposition, by stating that the RSS had infiltrated the session to discredit the government. This was convenient, but false. What had happened was not so different from the AICC session of Congress *adults* in Calcutta in December 1983. Only the scale was much bigger. The explosion finally came in the Punjab. 'Operation Bluestar' was successful, but the cost was heavy. India's Prime Minister was assassinated by her own Punjabi bodyguards.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Caught in the Crossfire

Governor earns the wrath of Telugu Desam and Congress(I)

The Andhra Pradesh government and the Governor are at loggerheads again. For the second time within six months a delegation of Telugu Desam legislators called on President Zail Singh regarding the controversial actions of the state Governor. In August 1984, N.T. Ramarao led his group of Telugu Desam MLAs to Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi to protest against Governor Ram Lal's dismissal of his government and to demonstrate that he had the support of a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. It is now Ram Lal's successor as Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, who is embroiled in a political controversy in the state with the APCC-(I) president accusing the Governor of hobnobbing with the Telugu Desam leaders and acting in their interests while the state government is in an increasingly embarrassing position regarding some ordinances which have lapsed and which Dr Sharma has refused to repromulgate. The newly elected Telugu Desam Members of Parliament met the president to explain the situation which has arisen because of the Governor's refusal to sign the ordinances recommended by the state cabinet.



Vijay Lokapally

N T. Ramarao

There are three ordinances which have lapsed after the state Assembly was dissolved. These relate to the abolition of the posts of village officers, formation of the revenue *mandals* in the state and the amendment of the Andhra Pradesh Payment of Salaries Act to remove the disqualification on a member of the state Legislature from holding the chairmanship of a state government corporation. It is the ordinance regarding the village officers which has put the state government in a difficult position and has generated the maximum controversy, for the former village officers have moved a petition in the High Court on the plea that the ordinance removing them from their post had lapsed and has not been revalidated.

This is the second time in a short period that a Governor's actions have become a subject of major controversy in the state. In August 1983, the then state Governor Ram Lal had been swamped by the controversy over his arbitary dismissal of N.T. Ramarao's ministry and installation of the Congress(I) supported government of Nadendla Bhaskara Rao. The controversy escalated into a month-long agitation in the state by the Telugu Desam party led by NTR and supported by the national opposition parties. The public uproar and the sustained campaign for NTR was highly embarrassing and Ram Lal was recalled to be replaced by the veteran Congress leader, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma. Though the Assembly session was called within a month, Bhaskara Rao could not prove his majority in the House within the period of one month allotted to him when he was sworn in by Ram Lal. Dr Sharma dismissed the Bhaskara Rao government on these grounds and requested NTR to form the new government on 15 September 1984.

Initially, there was much goodwill between Dr Sharma and NTR after the Governor's smooth handling of the state's political affairs in a troubled period, leading to NTR's reinstallation as chief minister. However, the goodwill dissipated rapidly when Dr Sharma refused to sign the ordinances recommended by the state cabinet after the Assembly had been dissolved. The Governor's action was an important issue during the election campaign for the Lok Sabha in December. NTR raised the subject at every public meeting to show how his government's popular policies were being stalled. The state Congress(I) has now woken up to the impact of the ordinance on the public. As a senior Congress(I) leader bitterly complained, both Ram Lal and Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma have between them given the Telugu Desam party 28 seats in the Lok Sabha.

This has led to the extraordinary situation where Dr Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, the state Congress(I) chief has claimed that the state unit of his party was not sure of the Governor's intentions as circumstantial evidence showed that the Governor was not impartial and his actions had "marred the chances of the Congress(I) party in the Assembly elections." The Congress(I) has been bitterly opposing the state government's decision to do away with the system of parttime village officers to the extent of stalling the government bill on the subject in the Upper House where they have the majority. But the party has suddenly changed its stance and urged the Governor not to stand on "some legal formality" for not issuing the ordinance. The APCC(I) chief has now begun claiming the credit for the scheme saying that the idea of abolishing the hereditary posts was first mooted and initiated by the Congress(I).

The state government first issued an ordinance on 6 January 1984, abolishing the posts of village officers. The government bill on the same subject was passed by the Legislative Assembly but the Congress(I)-



Ashok Vahie

Shankar Dayal Sharma

dominated Legislative Council referred the Bill to a select committee. The ordinance was repromulgated four times and the last revalidation lapsed on 6 December, 1984. Some of the part-time village officers whose services had been terminated by the ordinance moved the AP High Court pleading that they be allowed to continue in their posts as the ordinance was no longer in force. The post's part-time village officers were earlier hereditary posts, called *patwari* and *patel* in the Telengana region and *karnam* and *munsiff* in the coastal districts of the state. The village *patwari* and *karnam* were the custodians of the village land records and controlled the revenue accounting. Together with the police, the *patels* and *munsiffs* who administered the police functions in the village, the part-time village officers were the leaders of the village. The Telugu Desam government's decision to abolish the post and appoint full-time village assistants in their place has been a welcome move. It was designed to break their age-old hold on the village administration. However, it disrupted the traditional village caste power equations which the Congress(I) party believe was done to strike at their power base in the villages. The Congress(I) have been vocal in their opposition to the abolishing of the village officer system and also the formation of the revenue *mandal* scheme to replace the *panchayat samitis.* But the response to NTR's making the subject an election issue has forced the Congress(I) to reconsider its position.

Initially, the state government was given to understand that the Governor was not inclined to revalidate the ordinances as the cabinet was only a caretaker ministry and, therefore, not empowered to take any policy decisions. Mr Ramarao countered that it was only the repromulgation of the existing ordinances which had been revalidated before and as such did not involve any policy decision. As the stalemate dragged on for over a month the chief minister wrote to Dr Sharma that his refusal to repromulgate the ordinances would amount to the executive usurping the powers of the Legislature. For, it would mean that the Village Officers Ordinance would have been repromulgated six times. The practice of promulgating ordinances and repeatedly revalidating them had been criticised by the courts as the provision to issue ordinances was to be used only for special occasions. The Governor has raised a point regarding the constitutional propriety of overusing the provision to issue ordinances which has some validity in the context of certain state governments, particularly Bihar and the central government as well, promulgating ordinances just before the Parliament and legislature session. But, in the present case, the Bill meant to replace the ordinance has been passed by the Lower House. The state Congress(I) leaders have called on the Governor to cooperate with the state government, for they apprehend that the controversy will have its impact on the forthcoming Assembly elections.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

KARNATAKA

Congress(I) Wins Over Critic

Firebrand legislator Subbiah to support Congress(I)

Two years ago, even the thought would have been blasphemy. But politics is best spoken in the present tense. When A.K. Subbiah, the firebrand MLC from Karnataka declared in the middle of January that he would support the Congress(I) in the Assembly elections in March, he fully justified the prefix that accompanies his name: maverick.

A.K. Subbiah was arguably the best opposition politician to have graced the Karnataka political scene for many years. His best days were during the Gundu Rao regime between 1980 and 1983, when he exposed major scandals including the ones which forced Gundu Rao's cabinet colleagues, Renuka Rajendran and C.M. Ibrahim to resign. Subbiah had, in fact, terrorised the Gundu Rao cabinet in the Legislative Council and it was natural that he was largely credited with bringing the Gundu Rao government to its knees.

President of the state BJP during the January 1983 Assembly elections, under Subbiah's leadership his party won 18 seats in the state—its highest ever—and lent crucial support to the Janata Party enabling it to come to power. But his woes began soon after when he was hounded out of the BJP, allegedly by pro-RSS



A.K. Subbiah

elements. Subbiah contends that Ramakrishna Hegde saw in him a threat and had him eased out of the BJP in connivance with the pro-RSS elements.

Since then, Subbiah performed the most ludicrous political tricks to survive. First, he started a regional party called Kannada Nadu and when it began to falter, he invited the matinee idol, Raj Kumar, to join him. On the eve of the Lok Sabha elections, Subbiah joined Charan Singh's DMKP and was nominated all India general secretary. But the uneasy relationship broke up after the elections.

The importance of Subbiah's support to the Congress(I) is more psychological than numerical. In fact, Subbiah's public following has dwindled due to his political callisthenics—he contested as a DMKP candidate from Bangalore South in the recent Lok Sabha elections and lost his deposit. But his image is largely untainted and his reason for supporting the Congress(I) is that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has begun cleansing public life.

But Subbiah also invited ridicule by glossing over the corrupt regime of Gundu Rao which he himself had exposed thoroughly. Said Subbiah: "The Hegde government is the most corrupt and inefficient government Karnataka has ever had. By any standards Gundu Rao, Veerappa Moily and K.H. Patil are much better." The statement is apparently a product of exasperation. Since his exit from the BJP his political fortunes has steadily gone down. For this, Subbiah blames the Janata Party and Ramakrishna Hegde, who have undermined his importance and stature as a politician. There is also some truth in Subbiah's contention that Hegde has antagonised and crushed the very forces that enabled the Janata Party to come to power—first it was Bangarappa, then the Raitha Sangha and now Subbiah. How much this will cost the Janata Party, the coming Assembly elections will show.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

MAHARASHTRA

Fighting for the Farmers

Shetkari Sangathana prepares for Assembly elections

The third convention of the five-year-old Shetkari Sanghatana held in Dhule, 340 kms from Bombay on 21 and 22 January was significant because of the veiled conciliatory postures towards Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by Sanghatana leader Mr Sharad Joshi. The majority of the rank and file however, wanted "immediate and prolonged struggles" and opposed participation in the elections, and they made this clear at the working session at Dhule.

Sharad Joshi said that Pandit Nehru with his sophistication exploited the farmers by appealing to their sense of patriotism and undertook industrialisation at the cost of agriculture. Mrs Indira Gandhi was even more direct in exploiting the farmers. The capital base, he said, was increased not only in heavy industries but in consumer durables during her regime.

"I am not against industry" he said. The ploughing back of agricultural savings into industry is necessary, but it must not be at the cost of agriculture. The agriculturalists can probably initiate "industrial development that would be more meaningful to the country and in keeping with the needs of the country," said Mr Joshi.

"Rajiv Gandhi now wants an ultra-modern India and this can only increase the tension in the countryside and this discontent could only be controlled by dictatorial or fascist means. Disastrous economic policies spawn disputes like language troubles or the Punjab problem. There will be a reimposition of tighter rule. Every aspiring Hitler," Joshi added, gets a Parliament House which is conveniently burnt down.

However, Joshi said in a talk later that if the young Prime Minister accedes to the simple demand of the farmers then "we will be willing to revise our stand." Joshi said that he wanted to bring out the fact that he had no sympathies with any particular party. He supported the opposition candidates only to try and see that there was some balance between the opposition forces and the ruling party as it would be in the interest of the farmers. The situation is different now because of the sweeping majority that the ruling party got in Parliament.

Joshi agreed with some of the farmers who said that they could not remain totally out of the elections. He also said that the farmers should know that they can never win elections in the present circumstances because the government, the media, TV and radio and the election machinery belong to the ruling party and therefore the path of agitations should be dropped.

Joshi admitted that since the Sanghatana started in 1979, the farmer has not gained much by way of remunerative prices, but in terms of awakening of the farmer to the exploitation by 'India,' the effect has been tremendous. "Agitation is part of the education process. There is only one solution and that is agriculture must become paying," he said. Joshi also admitted that the "farmers cannot remain in the trenches all the time. At some point of time they will have to come out into the battlefield. But that time and place will have to be carefully chosen by the farmers themselves."



Sharad Joshi

The coming elections pose a dilemma to the Sanghatana as it will have to discard their present ambivalent position and take a stand in some way or other. His farmers belong to different political parties and there is pressure from these farmers to tell them what should be done in the elections. "We have innumerable statistical options" said Joshi, without spelling them out. "If we do not support the opposition parties we may resort to measures like preventing ballot boxes from being kept in our villages."

Joshi had invited all political parties to come and address the third convention of the Sanghatana and all the main opposition parties like the Congress (S), the Janata Party, the BJP, the PWP and other organisations like Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Congress came to the meeting.

The Sanghatana which had kept a low profile in the last two years, came into the limelight during the recent Lok Sabha elections when it debarred people like Mr Vasant Sathe and Mrs Usha Chaudhari and others from entering the Sanghatana strongholds and questioned their performances in Parliament. Though not a single opposition candidate supported by the Sanghatana won, it claims that it helped to reduce the margins by which the Congress(I) won, especially in the case of Mr Vasant Sathe, Mr Gulab Nabi Azad and Mr Vairale. This impression was reinforced by the presence of the opposition leaders who, despite their resentment against Joshi were present at Dhule in the hope of getting his support. Whether this was Joshi's ploy to get the opposition leaders to demonstrate to the farmers the clout they (the farmers) wielded, or whether he was seriously interested in supporting them, is difficult to say. The point is that he has put almost impossible conditions to them for the Sanghatana's support. He has said that the opposition should put up one candidate under one symbol, one manifesto and one leader.

Against this demand, and his vaguely perceptible "give Rajiv a chance" line, Mr Joshi is still keeping his options open. He has appealed to the Prime Minister to include the farmers' demand as the 11th point to his ten point programme which even includes cleaning the Ganga. "The farmers too, are hungry," he said.

"Not all farmers are prosperous," Joshi emphasised. "Prosperity is confined to farmers who are on the ruling party's bandwagon, the political farmers or those getting the side effects of political patronage like the legislator, chiefs etc. Otherwise, the bulk of the farmers of India, for all the sweat and toil he puts into the soil, gets back only indebtedness."

Olga Tellis, Bombay

GUJARAT

Another Sweep?

The Congress(I) expects a repeat of the Lok Sabha polls

The announcement on 22 January of the date for the Gujarat Assembly elections on 5 March left the Opposition in disarray. In contrast the ruling Congress(I), which has swept the Lok Sabha elections winning 24 of the 26 seats, appeared to be optimistic, even complacent.

Within hours of the announcement of the poll date, most Congress(I) men expected their party to easily win more than 130 to 135 of the 182 seats in the Gujarat Assembly. But opposition leaders did not want to predict a result at such an early stage and kept harping on the point that the elections to the state Assembly was a vastly different proposition than the national election, implying that the ruling party may not do as well in the more localised state polls as compared to the Lok Sabha elections. Even the ordinary voters are not too optimistic about an opposition victory. Not one of the common people this correspondent talked to, said that the Congress(I) would lose the election.

Even as the poll date was announced, the Congress(I) has been involved in the process of choosing its nominees. After the recent electoral success, hundreds of aspirants have been knocking at the doors of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress(I) for a party ticket. In fact, political analysts believe, anti-party activities by disappointed partymen could hurt the ruling party in the Assembly polls.

The Gujarat Congress(I) continues to be deeply divided into two camps: the followers of the chief minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, and his opponents, led by Jinabhai Darji, one-time mentor of Mr Solanki. The party high command had taken the easy way out in selecting candidates for the 26 Lok Sabha seats by retaining all but three of its sitting MPs. Selecting nominees for the Assembly elections is much more complicated because all the 142 sitting MLAs would be vying with hundreds of others for a ticket.

In the selection of candidates in 1980, for both the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in that year, the Congress(I) had broadly followed a policy of nominating candidates from among the Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi and Muslim (KHAM) communities as far as possible as they form about 70 per cent of the electorate. The strategy was successful with the party bagging 25 Lok Sabha seats and 140 Assembly seats. The strategy had alienated the populous farming community of the Patels, who form about 20 per cent of the voters but their alienation did not cost the Congress(I) much in the Lok Sabha elections.

Almost everybody, including chief minister Solanki, agreed that the Assembly election was altogether different from a Lok Sabha election. How far the alienation of the Patels could cost was one of the imponderables of the coming elections. The Solanki faction has been claiming that since the CM fell out with Mr Darji, he never subscribed to the KHAM theory.

However, it was also true that a majority of the sitting Congress(I) legislators were supporters of Mr Solanki. His support base within the party could be eroded if the dissidents succeeded in getting a sizable number of new faces who did not owe allegiance to the chief minister. At the time of writing, there was no way of knowing how far this could happen because the feud between the Solanki group and the dissidents has been simmering for the past six months.

The dissidents who suffered a setback when most of the sitting MPs were renominated for the Lok Sabha polls are taking solace from the two setbacks for Mr Solanki. Yogendra Makwana, a dissident, was retained in the new Rajiv Gandhi cabinet, the only representative of Gujarat in the central council of ministers. Then on 10 January, C.D. Patel, MP from Surat and a staunch follower of Mr Darji was made a joint secretary of the AICC, again the only such appointment from Gujarat. Nevertheless, the dissidents have to cope with the fact that the Gujarat Congress(I) leadership is heavily staffed by Mr Solanki's followers. Barring the internal feuds in the ruling party, most Congress(I) men are not apprehensive of going to the polls in March.



Madhavsinh Solanki

Mr Solanki, who had in September 1983 sent a detailed note to Indira Gandhi on how to strengthen the Congress(I)'s image among the poor, has already introduced a mid day meal scheme covering some 50 lakh primary school children. He followed this up with yet another sop for the KHAM electorate. The state government has decided to raise to 28 per cent of the government jobs and seats in education at institutions for socially and educationally backward classes. The decision was based on the recommendation of a commission that looked into the question of such reservation since the 1972 Bakshi Commission which first introduced limited reservation for 82 castes and communities judged as backward. These were in addition to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The total reservation of seats now goes up to 49 per cent. The government, however, did not accept a vital recommendation of the Rane Commission, which suggested that with the increase in number of reservations, a new criteria of occupation-cum-income be adopted for determining social and educational backwardness. It said this was not in the terms of reference of the Commission.

Although this was clearly perceived as a vote-catching device, curiously enough there has not been much of a public uproar. "Even the opposition was wary of alienating the KHAM classes," said an opposition worker. On his part, Mr Solanki has gone about his work carefully. He does not want to alienate the non-KHAM classes and the low key announcement that the quota of reservations was being raised was made by Devji Vanvi, minister of state for social welfare. Past experience shows that the Congress(I) has done well in the Assembly polls when it has fared well in the Lok Sabha elections. The 1985 Assembly elections will probably not be very different.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

THE POLICE

At the Receiving End

All-India session highlights police weaknesses

Rarely has a uniformed force placed its head on the chopping block as did the police recently, in Bombay during the four-day 18-session all-India symposium on police-public relations. The functioning of the police was roundly criticised during the session which the director general of police, Maharashtra, Mr K.P. Medhekar, called a "novel open house" experiment. While guest speaker after speaker criticised the police for what Mr M.G. Khatre, special IG, Maharashtra Police, summed up as "domineering behaviour," regarding the recruitment of policemen on the basis of physical strength and men who are corrupt, offensive and on the side of anti-social elements." The director of the Bureau of Police Research and Development, New Delhi, the controversial Mr P.S Bhinder said "We have discussed our weaknesses, we are aware of them" and added that during his 26 years in the police force the gap between the police and the public is wider than ever before. He said if we can arrest this widening process, the situation would be considered satisfactory.

A very relevant and powerful factor that emerged on the side of the police was that the "police are not their own masters." Mr N.N. Virmani, inspector general of police, Madhya Pradesh said that in 26 years of his career as a policeman he has seen that police-public relations has not made much headway as it ought to have, considering the "various things expected of the police, the sermonising given to the police, projects suggested to the police for taking society in a comprehensive manner." He said "it would be in order, to examine whether the police has an opportunity for self-evolvement, a real opportunity to change its own course of destiny, its actions. Does it really have the opportunity to aspire towards objectives projected by its masters or the society? Is the police its own master? What are we getting all the blame for?" he asked Mr Virmani claimed that in the past 20 years, conferences of inspector generals of police have come up with various recommendations which have not been implemented. He said that there have even been various commissions like the National Police Commission but nothing has been achieved. "This focusses attention on the ability of the police. If the police really has no ability and the real masters lie somewhere else why should we not examine this question. Is it the politicians who do not want the police to change as it will not serve their purpose? Is it other civil services who do not want change because police power and image will be far too different and that it will not serve their purposes. What really lies at the basis of the recommendations not being implemented? Tomorrow if I want funds for training, do I have the funds to do it? If I want more vehicles for police stations to improve mobility in rural areas to change the concept of rural policing altogether can I have them? If I want to formulate programmes vis a vis the press and community to implement social legislation do I have the capacity, means and authority? Where does the blame lie for this? This core issue will have to be examined," he said.

Prof. Panwalkar, head of the department of community development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, one of the eminent speakers, wondered if anyone had the answers to the questions Mr Virmani raised and added a bit of fuel to the already bruised feelings of the police when she said: "Our own experience in the riot areas of Bhiwandi was that the type of confidence people expressed in the army, was not expressed for the police. We are aware that the police force spared no effort and took the major brunt of the situation. But is it to do with the all-India nature of the army which comes out more forcefully as an apolitical system, and somehow the police are not able to project that image because of the state level image?"

Provoked at the comparison with the army, Mr K.S. Dhillon, director-general of police, Punjab, said: "Far too much emphasis is being placed on things which are internal to the police, but over which the police have no control. To say that the army is able to do certain things and the police not able to do, is really begging the question, because the army



D. Ramachandran, special IG(CID) speaking at the conference. P.S. Bhinder is on the extreme right

is placed in an entirely different position in our society. To elucidate: in 1962 during the Chinese aggression, the army had reached a critical stage but at that time the government of India did realise that interference in the policies and actions of the army was going to convert the army into a people who would not be able to defend the country. The police reached this critical point in 1975, during the Emergency. It was later that a greater awareness dawned on the leaders of society and the country that the police should be kept away from pressure groups and interference because they also play a crucial role. Hence the National Police Commission was set up. But it was soon realised that any change or reform is not going to be to the advantage either to the political parties or the civil service. The sufferings of society at the hands of the police, of injustices, the unfairness which is obvious in the functioning of the police are of no consequence to political parties or to the civil services I dare say, because they use the police for their own purpose." Mr Dhillon said that the seminars on the problems of the police have had little effect because the problem is beyond the capacity of the police. "Who is interested in police reform? Not the politician, not the civil service, not the government. If they were interested there were many occasions and opportunities for police reform. We keep on talking about so-called measures like courtesy week, baby kissing by policemen, police clubs, etc. Unless the police have the esteem of society and of their own government and of the law of the land which accords a very low priority and position to the police they can have little meaning. We know what is wrong but are unable to do anything about it. We have listened to the sociologists, psychologists, intellectuals telling us what is wrong with the police. We know what is wrong with us, but are unable to do anything about, it is not in our hands," Mr Dhillon said.

The time for change could not have been thought of at a more opportune time with a young Prime Minister trying to take the country into the twenty-first century. The police, unbelievably are still governed by The Police Act of 1861. As one very young officer at the symposium said: "These seminars are important, but more important and imperative is the social and economic uplift of policemen who are the cutting-edge of the administration, namely, the constables.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

ORISSA

Mismanagement at Jute Mill

Congress(I) interference responsible for labour trouble

The only jute mill in Orissa—Konark Jute Limited—at Dhanmandal in Cuttack district is in dire straits, thanks to the interference in its working by the ruling Congress(I) bosses of the state, purely on political considerations. Set up as a joint enterprise of the state-owned Industrial Development Corporation of Orissa Ltd and the National Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) in 1979, it has already eaten into half its stock of capital. The unit, constructed at a cost of Rs eight crores, has so far suffered a loss of over Rs four crores. With the management playing second fiddle to the politicians, the mill has worse days ahead. In fact, plans to have more jute mills in the state have been shelved because of the dismal performance of Konark Jute.

Labour troubles, a creation of the ruling party politicians, have been the unit's biggest problem. While the public remains unaware of the real cause of the problem, the facts available during the investigations made by this correspondent, reveal the complicity of the chief minister J. B. Patnaik, the local Congress(I) MLA, Sitakanta Mohapatra, and some of their men in aggravating labour relations in their bid to strengthen their hold on the workers for their political ends. The embittered relations between the different workers' groups have resulted in a series of violent incidents, including the murder of a worker, Darshan Mallick, during the last three years.

It was at the chief minister's instance that the Konark Jute Shramik Congress was floated under the presidentship of Sitakanta Mohapatra in 1981. The chief minister's aim was to appease a section of the dissidents of his party, including Mohapatra, who

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER, ORISSA

No. 6213 /CM. 21.10.81
Dated, Bhubaneswar, the Oct.'81.

To

Shri Subal Charan Mohanty,
Working President,
Konark Jute Workers' Union.

Sir,

I am desired to request you to please meet the Chief Minister on 1.11.1981 at 11.00 A.M. at his residential office.

You may please bring with you Sri Ranjan Kumar Khuntia, General Secretary, Shri Ramakanta Pati, Executive Body Member, Shri Laxmidhar Behera, Office Secretary and Shri Akshya Kumar Misra, Vice-President of the Union.

Yours faithfully,
[illegible] 21.10.81
Private Secretary to
Chief Minister.

A letter showing the chief minister's involvement

were with the dissident leader Kahnu Charan Lenka and also to crush the opposition political forces in the area. Then followed efforts to bolster the strength of Mohapatra's union, which, although a minority one at the time of its formation, was accorded recognition and foisted on the majority of the workers. Despite the gross indiscipline and the deterioration in the law and order situation the union has created, the management, at the behest of the politicians, has been protecting it against the interests of the mill.

Following a strike by the rest of the workers, initiated by the HMS-affiliated Dhanmandal Mazdoor Sabha on 8 October 1983, Mohapatra's union forced the factory management to run the mill. The officers in charge of the mill were not willing to run the factory with the help of a few "rowdy" followers of the union but Mohapatra's followers had to be allowed into the factory after "instructions" were received from "Bhubaneswar" Mohapatra wanted to break the strike and browbeat all the workers to join his union and a group of the union's members went on a rampage in the factory after forcing their entry into its premises late in the night of 8 October. They abused and assaulted the officers after their demand for payment of overtime allowances and supply of free food were not agreed to. The general manager (works), S.K. Ghose, the management's seniormost representative at the factory was threatened and was forced to finally concede their demands. However, the police officers present in the factory remained silent spectators.

According to the FIR lodged by S. P. Parija, manager (administration), Konark Jute, at Barchana police station on 9 October, "11 of them (the miscreants) were in a drunken state and armed with deadly weapons like knives and iron rods." The FIR stated that the mob included Bishnu Charan Mohapatra, general secretary of the MLA-led union. S. K. Ghose in a confidential note to the managing director, Konark Jute, on 8 March 1984, had pointed out, "the prime movers of the hostility" also included five of the workers who were repeatedly recommended by the legislator for recruitment in the factory. Mr Sitakanta Mohapatra had, on previous occasions, "insisted and pressurised" the management to absorb some of the "notorious characters" in the mill, Mr Ghose alleged. What was more shocking was the presence of two workers along with the MLA during talks with the management to devise ways to break the rival workers' strike. These two workers, according to another confidential note on 8 February 1984 by S. K. Ghose, "are marked miscreants and were involved in the case (of hooliganism) of 8 October 1983." The mill's top executive has said, "these are the persons on whom the president of the union (Sitakanta Mohapatra) depends for his hold over the workers in the factory."

But Mohapatra and his mentors and supporters have succeeded in their attempts to control the workers and the management through their strong-arm methods, overlooking the effects it might have on the economy of the jute unit. The seven-month-old lockout was used to consolidate the Congress(I)-backed union. The enrolment of workers on political considerations is continuing. The unit, according to insiders, is saddled with over 600 workers more than the optimum level. Though the present strength of the workers is about 2,800, 50 out of the 200 looms of the mill are idle. The unit has a top-heavy administration with over 200 supervisory officials, many of whom are posted at Bhubaneswar. Retired hands from other organisations have also been appointed.

That Mohapatra has been using the labour situation for serving his political ends was clear from a letter of the general manager (works): "He (Mohapatra) had also said (during talks with the management) that he would not make any move for reopening the factory before the election of the *panchayat* chairman, which may be risky for his party." The pressures from the ruling party leaders on the management regarding recruitment were evident from the general manager's letter to the managing director on 20 August 1983. "I am sending herewith a copy of the total number of persons recommended by S. K. Mohapatra and on the body of the letter (is) written—to be appointed as apprentices and *mazdoors*—presumably by the industry minister himself without signature."

The management had, perhaps, no other alternative but to support the S. K. Mohapatra's union since it was formed at a meeting of some workers' leaders at the chief minister's residential office on 1 November 1981. The chief minister's interference is even admitted in a printed leaflet circulated in the name of Mohapatra's union which expresses its gratitude to the chief minister "for having forced the management (to submit) by exerting the state's political pressure."

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

General Manager (Works)
P.O. DML.

Managing Director, M.O.,
BBSR.

KJ/GM/CON/366

08.02.1984

We had a meeting with Congress Union. Mr. S.K. Mohapatra, Mr. Braja Samal, one of his Congress worker, one Finishing Deptt. Clerk, one Spinning Merkman, and one Preparing worker joined on behalf of congress union. The Preparing Worker as well as the Spinning Markman are marked miscreant and were also involved on the case of 8.10.1983.

Sri S. K. Mohapatra at the beginning accused us about not ~~taking the issue of~~ moving the labour machinery for declaring the strike as illegal or unjustified. He said that the Labour Commissioner had sent for him and told him the same thing. He also said that the Dhanmandal Mazdoor Sabha Union held a meeting with approximate participants of 60 to 70 workers, whereas in his Congress Office meeting which was not even propagated, he had an assembly of more than 150 workers. Therefore, undoubtedly he claims that he still has the popularity.

In the question of Piece-rate and wages, his people as well as finally he himself opined that this could not be sold out as instant repulsion from the workmen thinking that the present wages at the present productivity level will be reduced at least by Rs.20/- to Rs.30/-. He also demanded that there must be a positive proposal from us with increase of wages. In each and every case, we declined to accede to his demands and said that there is no possibility of the Mill having any viability unless the level of efficiency rises to 65 % and there is no chance of any increase of workers wages. He, however, wanted another round of discussion on 10th inst. between his workmen and our Departmental people to spell out the pros & cons of the Piece-rate system. This will be held on 10.2.84 at 2.30 P.M. where our Works Manager & Personnel Manager alongwith Departmental Staff will meet them.

He had also sounded that before Punchayat - Chairman Election he would not make any move for reopening the factory which may risk the election.

Part of a letter showing S.K. Mohapatra's interference in the company's affairs

THE SUNDARBANS

Where Teeth and Claws Rule

Most of the men in the villages have been killed/by tigers

Rampada Sau lives in Bijoynagar, a village deep inside one of the largest deltaic forest tracts in the world, the Sunderbans, near the mouth of the river Ganga. Though most of this huge area falls under Bangladesh, there are 119 densely forested islands on the Indian side. The Sunderbans also has the largest concentrations of tigers in the world. Officially the number is placed at 264, but unofficial and more conservative estimates put the figure at around 200, which still makes it the biggest tiger sanctuary in the world.

Rampada lives in crass poverty. He hardly gets any work through the year. The Sunderbans, with its excessively saline soil, manages to produce only one annual crop. During the lean season he works as an agricultural labourer. Sometimes the government digs ponds or repairs bunds and he gets works. But the months of March and April, are extremely important to him. That is when the forest blooms and the entire area is invaded by bees and their honey combs. It is at this time that Rampada with hundreds of his brethren goes inside the forest to collect honey.

He had gone last year too. It had been a gruelling day. He and his friends had scanned large tracts without any signs of honey and were returning to their boats to have dinner. Just then, Rampada saw a tiger coming towards them. Before he could even cry out, the tiger was upon him. "I am very strong *babu*, but what can one do against a demon," he says. His friends, however, hit the tiger and droye it away. Rampada spent six months at the hospital and today lives to tell his tale. But he is more or less maimed. He cannot use his right hand and has four scars on his neck to remind him of that day. But if Rampada lives to tell his tale there are at least 640 of his brethren who do not. Every year they go into the forest as dire need forces them to and each year some of them perish. The same is the case with the fishermen, firewood gatherers and everyone else who goes into the forest.

"The man who goes into the forest," the saying goes "is also the man who gets killed." Between 1969-70 and 1983-84 at least 650 persons have been killed by tigers according to official records and according to conservative estimates, there are another 200 persons who have been killed "unofficially," that is, those who have gone into the forest without the permission of the forest department. Apparently if you do not have a licence and enter the forests, the Tiger Project treats you as if you never existed.

Consequently, something which in ordinary course would have been bizzare, has happened. There are villages just 90 kilometers off Calcutta, where almost all the families have at least one widow. These villages in local parlance are called *Vidhaba Pallis* or Widow's Villages. Arampur, a village near Gosaba, is one such. Each of the 125 families residing there has a woman, whose husband has been killed by tigers. And it is something very normal. "If you go into the forest you are bound to be killed," says 55-year-old Bishnu Syana, who is still alive. "Death," he says "is only a matter of time."

Even though urban ideas are slowly seeping into the area and the villagers do look at the tiger differently, they staunchly believe that the tiger is a god and an unfriendly god at that. The legend goes that all tigers in the Sunderbans descended from a tiger called Dakshinaroy. The jungle was then ruled by three gods called Shahjangalee, Bonobibi, and Gaji Saheb. Once a boy called Dukhe, who fell into the clutches of his wicked uncle, was about to be used as a human sacrifice to Dakshinaroy when Bonobibi saved him and it was he who popularised Bonobibi as the saviour of those who worshipped her.

Today a ceremony before going into the forest is customary and as much a part of the routine as the trip itself. Even the Tiger Project staff, who carry guns, have some sort of a ceremony before going on long trips. What is most interesting is that Bonobibi is a Muslim god but is also worshipped by Hindus.

For Arati Mondal, whose husband Shibapada was carried away by a tiger a few months back, there is no hope. She is 25 and has two young children. The only way out for her is to do menial jobs at other's homes and get Rs 20 to 25 per month for it. Sometimes, the widow's in-laws or her own family give her a place to live in. Otherwise, the widows have to migrate to the urban areas surrounding Calcutta in search of jobs. Some have taken to prostitution and many have crossed the border into Bangladesh and have embraced Islam to get married again.

The Tiger Project does have a system of compensating these widows. But there is a catch. Anyone going into the 2,586 square kilometer Tiger Project area, for any purpose, has at first to take a permit. All permit holders if killed inside the buffer zone of the project are entitled to a flat Rs 2,000. If they are killed in the core area of the project, which is exclusively for the tigers, no compensation is given.

Says Chinta Pramanick, whose husband was killed near Pirkhali, "We have to go into the core area because there is no other way out. To travel from one area of the buffer zone to another we have to cross the core area. And then how do we know which is the core area and which is not. Have they taken the trouble of informing us." Chinta received Rs 2,000 from the Tiger Project as com-



Widows whose husbands have been killed by tigers

pensation, for Pirkhali falls under the buffer zone. Her husband was one of those rare people who did start a Janata accident policy but subsequently did not have the money to pay the premium and the policy lapsed.

But Subhadra Mondal was not as lucky as Chinta. Her husband, Hazarilal, went into the core area and her application for compensation was rejected. In fact it is difficult for her even to get witnesses to prove that her husband was actually carried away by the tigers. Going into the core area is a crime. And reporting Gopal's death would have meant paying a Rs 1,000 fine and also getting her boat confiscated. But Subhadra says, "I know when Ma Bonobibi wants you nothing matters, but who is the forest department to stop us from fishing in a land that belongs to us. After all we have been living here for ages. Don't we have a right?"

And that sums up the attitude of the villagers. Everywhere in this area is an air of inevitability. The residents of the area are devoid of any romanticism that the World Wildlife Fund attaches to the tiger. While the tiger is a god, it is also their enemy. Why the forest department should attach so much importance to the tiger, is totally incomprehensible to them. They nod when told, that after all, it would not be nice if the tiger was wiped off the face of the earth, but they fail to understand why the tiger should live at their expense. "After all it would also not be nice if all our men got wiped out," they retort.



A villager who was maimed by a tiger

Aniruddha Mookerjee

Aniruddha Mookerjee, Calcutta

ASSAM

Earthshaking Events

Victims' wait for aid may be in vain

Even as a large number of westernised urban Indians were attempting to bring in the New Year with the proverbial bang, in the sleepy town of Silchar and the surrounding areas in the Cachar district of Assam the New Year came not only with a bang but an implosion from which thousands of people in the area have not yet recovered. At 5 am on that cold winter morning the sleeping populace were jolted out of their slumber by a "tectonic earthquake" which lasted for five seconds and left in its wake a trail of destruction, death and despair. Spread over a radius of 12,000 sq km covering the four administrative blocks of Sonai, Chhotabanda, Kaptanpur and Kajidahar villages, the earthquake left 20 people dead, damaged at least 3,000 houses and affected 5,000 rural families.

The earthquake, the most severe since 1897 and one of the worst to hit Assam (measuring six on the Richter Scale) has caused panic not only amongst the estimated 30 individuals injured due to walls caving in and thatching trapping oblivious inmates but also inhabitants of the surrounding villages. Afraid to sleep in their propped-up huts, the villagers are huddled in makeshift thatch and wattle structures out in the cold ploughed fields. The telltale signs are evident everywhere though in some cases there are no survivors left to tell the tale. At Kajidahar in his mudwalled hutment, Manajir Ali was asleep with his two sons and two granddaughters when the wall and roof came tumbling down killing them. Forty-year-old Soyen Banu and her two-year-old son are the only survivors of this once seven-member family—only because she had decided to spend the night with her infant son at her father's home. A few houses away, a young widow was asleep next to her five-year-old son. The mud wall tumbled down killing the child. The mother is still recovering from shock. In Sonai, a small fishing village no one died but the earth cracked open in several places and several mud huts were destroyed. "As the tremors began, the cries of roosting birds woke us up and we rushed out of our dwellings and watched them collapse," says Nandalal Das, a carpenter.

Earthquakes in Cachar

Date	Magnitude
10 January 1869	7.5
30 January 1924	6.0
23 October 1926	5.6
12 December 1957	5.6

(Measurements on the Richter Scale)
Source: Government reports

Others have been physically injured. A few houses away thatching from the roof fell on a worker, Naresh Chandra Das's sleeping wife knocking her out "I didn't even know there was an earthquake. I woke up in Sonai Hospital the next day later hardly able to lift my head," she told this correspondent.

And apart from rendering a large part of the rural populace homeless, the damage to the region is worth over Rs eight crores according to one estimate. Large scale subsidence in various stretches along the bank of the Sonai river which meanders through the region have increased its width and affected its course. The river bank near Sonai police station sank ten metres. Two bridges on the Sonai Kachidharam road caved in while three others have developed wide cracks disrupting all communications in the district. Numerous cracks, some over seven inches deep, have appeared all over the affected area and large chunks of disgorged earth leaving left yawning gaps in the paddy fields. However, what has frightened survivors and confounded experts most is the pungent oily black liquid that is oozing out from these fissures. When this correspondent visited the affected



The banks of the river Barak which sank after the tremors

areas, the local populace were wary of going near these pits.

Both the state and union governments and voluntary agencies have quickly rushed aid to the quake-affected people though some confusion seems to have persisted over the nature and quantity of aid to be given. According to Montu Sengupta, an executive officer of the local Red Cross Society and president of the 600-strong Cachar Tea Employees Association, who was in the forefront of the voluntary relief effort in some villages such as Chhotabanda, the only relief provided was that organised by the Red Cross." With the help of the Indian Tea Association, we distributed 400 blankets, some medicines and large quantities of polythene sheets which can be used to cover roofs to a number of quake-affected villagers immediately after the tremors subsided. Once we got a little more organised, we were able to distribute clothing to children and foodstuffs. In fact, we distributed over 900 kg of rice, large quantities of *atta* and some edible oil to some of the victims," says Sengupta.

The victims themselves are not very impressed with the government efforts. "We were huddled in the cold school room for one night without any blankets or protective covers and the next day we were told to go back to our broken, ruined huts Since then we've been here watching and praying, afraid to leave the vicinity for too long should even the shells of our homes that are somehow standing come tumbling down," said one disillusioned farmer. This sentiment appears to be shared by all.

Yet relief was available but on a selective basis to deserving candidates that local political bigwigs signalled out. Touched by the sorry plight of the tremor victims Mrs Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, the general secretary of AICC(I) sanctioned Rs 15 lakhs on the spot. The state government too has done its bit.

The Assam chief minister Hiteswar Saikia and six cabinet colleagues had rushed to the spot and payments amounting to Rs 10,000 per deceased member of a family were made to the next of kin and promises of home rebuilding grants of up to Rs 1000-2,000 were made. Since then, it has been chaos. The smell of easy money has brought in its wake a deliberate distortion of facts and events. Consequently, a large number of villagers not affected by the quake, with the encouragement of unscrupulous politicians, are believed to be dismantling their dilapidated homes so as to claim the home rebuilding grant. According to one report, over 400 families in Lakhipur and Narsingpur block sought shelter in local schools three days after the quake although no reports of damaged dwellings came from these areas initially. Her hefty compensation package has made Soyen Banu the most sought after widow in the neighbourhood—proposals of marriage are coming in every day.

And yet there are people who have remained naive. "The *panchayat pandas* advised us to remove the props and let the huts collapse—we would get more money, they said. But where will we go after that happens?" Naresh Das asked this correspondent.

The overall picture is far from clear. Officially the death-count is misleading since the number of victims is increasing every day. "To ensure the magnitude of the damage and identify the genuine victims, the staff of the state land revenue department are currently conducting a house-to-house survey. "Once we have the correct number depending on the availability of government funds, we will commence giving financial aid," said a senior bureaucrat who refused to be identified.

But onerous promises notwithstanding, the amount of the rebuilding grant is likely to be pegged at the Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 range, which is hardly enough since at today's prices, the cost of rebuilding a mud-and-bamboo thatched structure is not likely to be less then Rs 5,000. The state government's kitty on this account is not likely to exceed Rs 20 lakhs, which will barely cover a small percentage of the total value of the estimated 18,000 claims registerd so far. Given the bureaucratic procedures and political favouritism, the prospects of the victims are bleak.

The fact that this region has been jolted five times by severe tremors since 1869 should be taken into account. A continuous monitoring of the seismic changes in the district's subterranean regions is overdue. Stirred out of its somnolence, the government is now sending geologists to the area to gauge its seismological behavior. Lengthy reports and erudite academic treaties will surely emerge from this overdue exercise. But for those hapless victims of the fateful New Year's night, the trauma of the tremors is not yet over.

Debjani Sinha, Silchar

THE NORTH-EAST

Predictions of Doom

Experts warn about violent earthquakes in the Eighties

Will a series of high-intensity earthquakes wipe out large parts of the country's North-east region in the near future? The New Year Eve's severe tremor in eastern Cachar has come as a grim reminder of the periodic warnings by geo-scientists that the entire North-east, a siesmologically-vulnerable zone, may fall victim to severe earthquakes in the Eighties.

At least on two occasions, the experts have warned about earthquake disasters in the North-east. At an international workshop on Strong Motion Instrumentation at Honolulu in Hawaii in May 1978, the geophysicists unanimously agreed on the possibility of violent tremors in North-east India in the "next few years." The Regional Research Laboratory (RRL), Jorhat, has officially stated that tremors, similar to those being periodically experienced in California, will strike the region in the Eighties. According to Dr M. M. Saikia, deputy director of RRL, over 200 micro-tremors hit the region every year. Dr Saikia told SUNDAY "The time has come for the people in the North-east to realise that it is neither flood nor ethnic insurgency, but the quakes which are the potential threat for them."

According to the geologists, there are at least three factors which have made the North-eastern region earthquake-prone. First, the rocks in the region are geologically quite young. For instance, rocks in Cachar mostly belong to the 70 million years old Tertiary age. Stresses occur in such young rocks which eventually lead to ruptures along the established lines and surfaces of weakness, which are geologically known as faults. Second, tectonic activity in the earth's crust is common in the North-east, which falls under the siesmologically active Trans-Asiatic earthquake zone. Third, the continuing northwesterly tilt of the Indian plate (the earth's crust is made up of a number of plates) has been creating major subterranean tensions in the region. In fact, the Indian plate is gradually sinking under the Himalayas.



Land subsidence near the river in Cachar after the earthquake

Surprisingly, little has been done regarding the drawing up of a siesmic map of the region pinpointing the vulnerable zones, even though forecasts of doom are common. One reason is the lack of relevant geological data. Dr B. K. Rastogi, an assistant director of the Hyderabad-based National Geo-physical Research Institute (NGRI) told SUNDAY that the Institute would soon increase its number of surveillance stations in the North-east to 14, by setting up six more centres for monitoring the siesmic activity in the region's underground rock folds. He said the NGRI, basing its work on the new data-stream, would soon update its siesmic map of the North East, which only shows two major faults (Dawki and Red river) and four major thrusts (Mismi, Lohit, Naga and Disang).

The Shillong Siesmological Observatory's inability to correctly pinpoint the epicentres of the tremors was revealed during the Cachar earthquake. While the observatory has pinpointed the epicentre in the Surma valley in Bangladesh, the NGRI and the RRL scientists, following a preliminary geologic post-mortem, pinpointed it in eastern Cachar, which bore the brunt of the damages of the tremor.

The absence of any multi-disciplinary approach to the problem of earthquakes in the region has come in the way of proper siesmic monitoring and any possible earthquakes prediction. Dr Saikia is in favour of deploying zoologists in the task of earthquake predictions, along with siesmologists. He said that Prof. Tsunei Rikitake of the Tokyo Institute of Technology recently carried out a statistical analysis of 159 cases of unusual animal activity before 47 earthquakes in Japan. Quoting Rikitake, he said mice disappeared before the Nobi tremor in 1891 and catfish leapt out of the rivers in panic before the Kanto earthquake in 1923. A study of animal behaviour also helped the Chinese to successfully predict an earthquake in Liaoing province in 1975.

The Cachar earthquake is the fifth in a series of big tremor-disasters in the North East region in the past 115 years. However, it would seem insignificant if compared to the 15 August 1950 earthquake in Upper Assam, wich damaged life and property over a 39,000 sq km area. The 1897 earthquake killed over 1000 persons in the Cherrapunji hills alone. The Cachar tremor, which measured 5.6 on the Richter scale, killed a dozen persons in house collapses and damaged over 2,000 mud and thatch dwellings over a 80 sq km area. The underground impact of this tremor was, however, severe. According to Dr Rastogi, it was 30 times heavier than the impact of the atom bomb on Hiroshima during World War II.

Santanu Ghosh, Silchar

CHILD HEALTH

Taking Care

More aid for children

The controversial CARE (Committee for American Relief Everywhere) aid programme which had been the centre of many controversies a few years ago, after complaints of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds, has now been linked to the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), another aid programme of the United States. This kind of joint venture is the first of its kind in any American aid receiving nation and the move is expected to strengthen the utilisation and monitoring of aid. At the height of the CARE controversy, questions had been raised about permitting voluntary organisations to work within India and handle millions of dollars in aid. Many of the voluntary agencies, it was claimed were funded by the CIA and the Americans had threatened total withdrawal of the CARE programmes and the closure of the food-for-work programme employing over 1.18 million people at that time. Such problems, however, are now over.

"The CARE-ICDS link-up will be developed as a model to show how the future American aid programmes should be structured," Miss Julia Chang Blough, an assistant administrator in the Agency for International Development (AID), claimed in Madras. An extra 15 million dollars have been added to the funds for programmes this year. "The American thinking on the subject of aid had always been to help the recipient nations to stand on their feet and the time has come to review the US-Indian aid relationship," said Miss Blough a naturalised Chinese American. "The aid relationship will slowly give way to that of trade links in course of time" Miss Blough was quick to add that she represents a new and young generation of American aid officials and it was their desire to establish stronger ties with all nations for mutual benefit. "The one billion dollars of aid to sub-Saharan Africa should speak volumes for the US stand on aid commitments," was her spirited reply.

According to a recent UNICEF report on the state of world's children, three million children die every year due to oral dehydration and for want of immune injections, in India.

T. Raman, Madras.

BURMA

Need for Economic Reforms

Insurgency and Ne Win's policies have spelt doom

Burma remains another conspicious example of a potentially affluent Third World country steeped in poverty. Despite the best efforts of the policy makers, the once flourishing economy continues to be sluggish, and the gap between promise and fulfilment is rising. While Burma's Gross National Product (GNP) is now one of the lowest in Asia, the increase in population at an annual rate of 2.3 per cent is also causing major problems. With the intelligentsia representing only a small percentage of the population, the country's political future is also not very encouraging.

According to the 1984 World Bank report, Burma's annual average growth of per capita GNP in the period between 1960 and 1982 was only 1.5 per cent. The per capita income in Burma of 190 dollars (1982



General Ne Win

figure) makes it one of the poorest countries in the world. The main reason for the economic decline of this rice-timber-oil rich country are the insurgency operations which have been plaguing Burma for the last three-and-a-half decades. The movements which began after Burma attained independence in January 1948 are led by both communists and ethnic groups.

Burma, before World War II, was the world's largest exporter of rice which till recently, was the leading foreign exchange earner. Indeed, even now, the fertile mud flats still produce despite the insurgency operations enough rice to feed the 26 million people of Burma and leave a surplus for export. But over the years, rice production has declined steadily and export earnings have been reduced considerably (from 487 million dollars in 1982 to 378 million dollars in 1983) mainly because of convoluted economic thinking, irrational priorities and obsolete methods of farming.

The industrial sector which accounts for only about 11 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), has not been able to adequately utilise the abundant natural resources like oil, timber, particularly teak and minerals. Oil production has also slumped; from 9.2 million barrels in 1979-80 to 7.4 million barrels in 1983-84.

Not only is the economy losing ground, but the strongly regimented political system appears to have exhausted its capacity to innovate new policies and handle crises. Burma had suffered a major political setback just before independence when General Aung San, the father of modern Burma, and most of his cabinet members were assassinated, but for a period parliamentary democracy had flourished. Apart from Israel, it was the only Asian country to experiment with democratic socialism and the band of young democratic socialists who ruled the country in the early 1950s were courageous enough to undertake radical reforms.

But with the increase in aid and assistance to the insurgents by both the USSR and communist China, the country—especially Upper Burma—became almost ungovernable. In 1958, the Burmese Prime Minister U. Nu invited General Ne Win to help him put the country in order. Ne Win, then PM U Nu's second in command, was voted to office by the Burmese Parliament and steadied the country's political situation before the elections in 1960, which U Nu won by a big margin. But Ne Win seized power in 1962, in a bloodless coup and since March 1962, has been firmly in charge. Although the 74-year-old general relinquished his position as President sometime back, he is still the chairman of the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party, the only political organisation which the regime allows to function.

But all is not lost. Recently, the government decided to revamp the languishing economy by extensive economic reforms. Much, however, will depend on when the ageing Ne Win decides to bring about changes in the stagnating political superstructure of the country.

Bhola Chatterjee, Calcutta

A Watery Problem

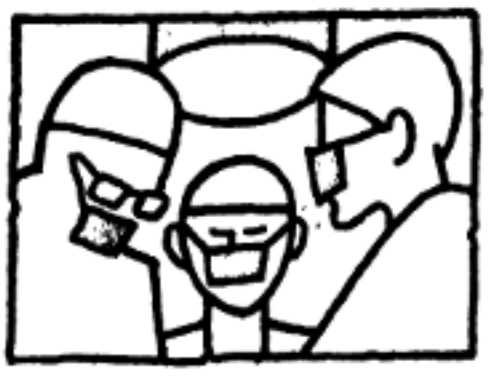


Mothers, here is a piece of advice; do not give too much water to your babies. For, if you do, there is a possibility that they may suffer diseases ranging from simple restlessness to convulsions. As Robert E. O'Connor of the Wilmington Medical Centre in Wilmington, Delaware, USA, puts it, if infants are fed with excessive amounts of very diluted formula, they may develop an extremely rare but fatal disease called water intoxication. Here, body cells swell and cellular metabolism is disturbed. Symptoms are restlessness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, weakness. But, Dr O'Connor warns, giving infants too little water when they are ill could lead to dehydration.

Not Just for Coffee

Caffeine, which is present in coffee may be useful in pest control. New research shows that caffeine in plants helps defend them against bugs by giving insects a chemical jolt that kills them. James Nathanson, a neuro-pharmacologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, fed caffeine or a synthetic compound similar to it to tobacco hookworm larvae, and found that the chemicals triggered a deadly build-up of cyclic AMP, a substance that conveys messages through the insect nervous system. When the caffeine-like compounds were used along with commercial pesticides, the effect was ten times as powerful as either of the toxicants used separately.

A Revolutionary Operation



Julie Hunt, an 11-year old girl, could go down in the annals of British medical history, as the first girl to have performed a unique operation: the affected thigh section of her leg was removed and replaced with the lower part of the limb. The operation, which was first pioneered in Austria was performed at Sunderland General Hospital by an Amsterdam surgeon, Dr Jan Van Der Aiken.

Julie's ankle and foot will beused as a knee joint, and a false lower leg and foot attached to allow her complete freedom of movement. During the nine hour operation, Julie's right leg was completely separated from her body after about 90 minutes. The complete calf, ankle and foot section were separated from the diseased part, moved up and connected to her hip to replace her thigh and knee. All that was retained of her original thigh were the nerves, blood supply system and tendons.

Normally, patients like Julie would have had to undergo an amputation. In Julie's case, a very high amputation would have been necessary and an artificial limb would have been almost impossible to fix.

The Power of the Brain



All of us are familiar with the classic experiment of Ivan Pavlov, the Russian physiologist: dogs salivated when a bell rang because they had been trained to so that their brains associated the sound with the presence of food. Now US scientists have evoked a conditioned reflex to show that the brain can exercise direct control over cells of the immune defence system, the body's main bulwark against disease.

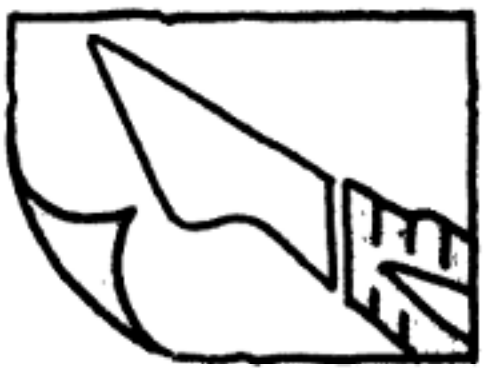
One series of experiments has shown that the activity of certain immune defence cells called natural killer cells can be greatly enhanced by the brain's trained response to totally foreign stimulus: a strong odour.

In the experiments, mice were exposed for three hours at a time to the odour of camphor. This had, however, no perceptible effect on the immune system. Some of the mice were also given injections of a synthetic chemical called poly I:C (for polyinosinic-polycytidilic acid) which is known to enhance the activity of natural killer cells. The exposures were repeated nine times in a strategy similar to Pavlov's experiment. In each session, the mice were exposed to the odour and given injections of the chemical. Then, in the tenth session, the mice were exposed only to the odour of camphor. They received no injections at all. Yet, every mouse showed a large increase of natural killer cell activity.

Useful Waste

In China, farm slurry, human waste and leftovers from food processing provide the food source for a flourishing network of fish ponds. In the integrated farms, manures from pigs, ducks, geese, chickens, cows and sheep are fed into the pond to provide plankton. The pond-bottom humus is later employed to fertilise crops grown on adjacent dykes.

Away With the Scalpel



Surgeons can now do away with the scalpel. Researchers at London's Hammersmith hospital have discovered a new surgical technique that can make the scalpel redundant. Prof. David Allison, director of diagnostic radiology at the hospital's medical school, said the technique involved ultra-fine tubes "armed" with a variety of tiny implements and guided along veins and arteries to the kidneys, liver, brain and other parts of the body. He said the tubes can be used to seal arteries after stabbings, road accidents or in the treatment of ulcers. Kidney stones and gallstones can also be removed using the new technique, and blocked arteries in the limbs, kidneys and even the heart can be cleared.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

The way some of the stars from Bombay behaved at the inauguration of the Delhi film festival was shocking. It looked like they had never faced a dignified audience. Some of them said they were almost taken by force to Delhi. *Salma Agha*, *Asha Sachdev*, *Arti Gupta* were noticeable because of their revealing dresses and grotesque hair styles. Even cheap fashion shows have better dressed showgirls.

Smita Patil has bagged one of the most challenging roles by signing for *J. Om Prakash's Asisa Kyoon*. The script is written by *Dr Achala Nagar* who had also written *Nikaah*. Most of Bombay's leading stars vied for the role and when Smita Patil bagged it, the back-biting started. Said one of the stars who is now sulking: "I don't think Smita will be able to do justice to the character. I would have done it better. Omji will realise his mistake when he sees the ultimate results and then regret his decision." The comment reached Smita but she refused to be drawn into another long cold war. "I know who must have said that. It is very obvious," was her reply.



Smita Patil: prize role

After getting a wife, all *Kumar Gaurav* needs now is a new life as an actor. His latest release *Hum Hain Lajawab*, a flop, has almost put him out of the race. Today, distributors are not willing to touch Kumar Gaurav films even with a bargepole and many of his films are now gathering dust instead of money. All hopes of salvation now rests on the up and coming director *Mahesh Bhatt* who is directing two Kumar Gaurav films, *Aaj* and another to be produced by Gaurav's father *Rajendra Kumar*. But Gaurav exudes optimism: "I know I have it in me."

Sunil Dutt is finding it difficult to live the dual role of saviour of the masses and of film producers. He is busy giving finishing touches to two films, *Yash Chopra's Faasle* and *Sanjay Khan's Kaala Dhanda Goray Log*. People in my constituency are expecting miracles from me. I have to find time for them. I can't give up films. They give me my daily bread," says Dutt.



Sunjay Dutt and Tina Munim ; new life

The new *Sunjay Dutt* has started concentrating on films. There was a time when he could not live without drugs but his stint in an American clinic has done him a world of good. "Life was just a series of motions of the body. There were times when I did not know whether I was coming or going or whether I was sleeping or awake. Now I feel like a new man." Prakash Mehra has signed Sunjay to play the lead. Does Mehra see a potential number one in Sunjay?

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration Dropsy's Den

POLUR: Residents of Kelur, a small village ten kilometres from Polur (in North Arcot district) woke to the sounds of chairs being pushed about, books and files falling with a thud and metallic containers being thrown down inside the building of the Indian Overseas Bank's branch on the night of 9 January. Obviously a thief was operating inside! In a trice, almost the whole population of the village surrounded the bank, ready to tackle the intruder when he tried to make good his escape. The police were quick to arrive too. The branch manager, who was residing in a neighbouring village, also duly arrived with the office keys, by two in the morning. With the villagers standing on the alert, the bank building was opened and lo! Out came the 'thief' who had caused the turmoil—a joyously barking dog. It sprang out and bolted before anyone could stop it. Some of the villagers developed stomach pain with the nonstop laughter that ensued—*Indian Express* (K.C. Fazal Ahmed, Kilvisharam, Tamil Nadu)

NEW DELHI: A cat led the fire brigade to a merry dance in Connaught Place on 10 January. It had been trapped in the second floor of the N Block post office since the previous night. The chowkidars tried their level best to scare away the animal. In desperation they called the fire brigade which, accompanied by a police patrol car, rescued the animal—*The Hindustan Times* (A.V. Ramamurthy, New Delhi)

BOMBAY: A special arrangement—a zero watt bulb glowing when a censored scene or a word appears on a screen—was made at the request of Mr Justice Kania of the Bombay High Court to enable him to see "cuts" suggested by the censor board. "Please stop that. Let me enjoy the play," the judge told the person operating the switch, Mr Kamlakar Sarang, the producer and director of the controversial play by Mr Vijay Tendulkar, *Sakharam Bainder*, when it was being staged before him. Mr Justice Kania was hearing a petition on the play—*The Times* (Waheed Khan Bawadiwale, Hubli)

ANANTAPUR: Officials of the Anantapur district society for self-employment scheme were surprised when none applied for the three-month training programme in tailoring and masonry. The society had called for applications to impart training to 60 harijan men and women. A stipend of Rs 125 a month was offered but even that failed to lure anyone—*The Hindu* (M.V.S.S. Prasad, Kakinada)

BANGALORE: The city police have played the role of a match-maker for a girl residing in Bharathinagar. The girl was to be married on 6 January, but just before the marriage ceremony, the boy's parents allegedly picked up a quarrel and walked out. On her father's complaint that the bridegroom's family had walked out with some valuables presented to them earlier, the police not only succeeded in getting back the gifts but also found another groom for her—*Indian Express* (Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, Dehra Dun)

HYDERABAD: A teenager here held his own parents to a Rs 25,000 ransom to satisfy his urge for a luxurious and faster life. The 17-year old Sreenivas Rao, a first year Intermediate student, had even sent a typewritten note to his parents residing in Himayatnagar, specifying the way in which the money should be delivered. While his parents were agitated, the boy proceeded to Hanamkonda in Warangal district to bide the one-week time given to deliver the ransom money, which was "to be kept on a rack in the backyard of the house." Meanwhile, the boy's reluctant father contacted the Narayanguda police who kept a vigil on the house. When the boy returned home to collect the ransom, he was caught red-handed by the policemen while he was searching for the money in the box which, however, contained only waste paper—*Indian Express* (Avula Ramesh Chander, Hyderabad)

WITHOUT COMMENT

They (the opposition) are not the conscience keepers of the nation. We are the conscience keepers of the nation—Rajiv Gandhi in *The Hindustan Times*

The opposition is suffering from a generation-gap crisis—Ramakrishna Hegde, Karnataka CM, in *Herald Review*

The Indian electorate is the most sophisticated in the world—M.V. Kamath in *Surya*

If I have to choose between politics and poetry, I will opt for the lattet. If poetry is taken away from me, I will commit suicide—Srikant Verma, AICC(I) general secretary, in *The Sunday Observer*

I have always been a Congresswoman at heart—Vyjayanthimala in *Femina*

A tidal wave starts with a ripple, it takes time for some storms to gather—Jayalalitha, after she was dropped from her post as the deputy leader of the AIADMK parliamentary group, in *Indian Express*



Dumpsreak

No minister should be there for more than five years, because people run out of ideas—Swraj Paul, on the dismissal of Pranab Mukherjee, in *India Today*

I want to listen to advice but suddenly one isn't a child any more. People say that when you're 21, but I think it's when you hit 40—Princess Michael of Kent, on reaching 40, in *The Times*, London

For me, even now a five paisa coin has as much value as it did say seven years ago—Rati Agnihotri in *Savvy*

prize Rs 30 for the entry given first

BEGINNING 3 FEBRUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a good week for academicians and businessmen Professionals, especially those employed in government service, will benefit from the gesture of their colleagues. The domestic front will remain inspiring Financially, this is not a good phase avoid speculative and risky ventures This is also not a good time for lovers

Good dates: 3, 5 and 7
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: West



LEO (15 August—14 September) Professionals are likely to get transferred to a better place. If you are planning to change your job, do so only after consultations with elders. Financially, this is a good week some of you may even win a lottery. However, businessmen should be careful while dealing with their customers. Love and marriage are ill signified Watch your health closely

Good dates: 4, 5 and 7
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 February) This is a week when you will have to be on the alert, since your enemies will be looking for an opportunity to harm or defame you. Professionals and executives, however, are likely to perform well. Good news for those unemployed Jobs are in the offing. A letter from abroad will bring good tidings. Those in love are advised to postpone marriage.

Good dates: 4, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is not a good week for lovers postpone marriage plans The professional front is also discouraging some of you may have to quit your jobs. Enemies will be active during this period. do not believe even your close friends However, some of you will gain money through inheritance. A pleasure trip towards the end of the week will prove financially profitable

Good dates: 4, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is not a good week for those in service be wary of a colleague who will be working to embarrass you. At home your children will be demanding. Financially this is not a good period. you may have to borrow money to tide over this lean phase. Your health will also add to your financial burden. The time is also not favourable for love and marriage negotiations.

Good dates: 5, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is a favourable week for most of you. Officers and company executives, you may come in for a lot of criticism from your superiors. But do not lose heart Businessmen, avoid speculation The atmosphere at home will remain peaceful Keep an eye on your health and diet. Lovers, this is not the opportune time for marriage Avoid pleasure trips this week

Good dates: 3, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen push your efforts to the utmost and do not waste time on socialising Friends and relatives will prove very helpful The time is equally favourable for those connected with the fine arts. On the economic front, some of you may gain money . Lovers should avoid adventurous plans

Good dates: 5, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: North-east



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is a favourable week for students most of you will be successful in your examinations. This week will entail a good deal of expenditure but curb extravagance. For those in business, you can go ahead with your plans. Take care of your health. Problems may come from unexpected quarters, but do not be disheartened.

Good dates: 6, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: East



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This will be a very good week for you. Speculators and gamblers will benefit from this lucky phase. Money may come from an unexpected source, but avoid extravagance. Problems in the house, financial or otherwise, will be solved Do not hesitate to seek favours from influential persons A lucky phase for those in love and intending to get married.

Good dates: 5, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) A word of caution for those in love and intending to get married do not take impulsive decisions. Professionals are warned to be careful while dealing with their superiors. Your health will add to your worries this week However, the period is good for businessmen do not hesitate to take risks The domestic front will remain peaceful Avoid pleasure trips this week

Good dates: 3, 4 and 6
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is a week of all-round progress. Sportsmen in particular will make much headway. Businessmen will be successful in their ventures, but guard against deceit. Youngsters should listen to elders. Lovers, you can go ahead with matrimonial plans. Letters will bring good tidings. Poets and novelists will also be successful during this lucky phase.

Good dates: 3, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South-east



PISCES (15 March—14 April) The week begins on a bright note for you. Businessmen will continue to be successful in their ventures. Some of you might even win a lottery or gain through inheritance Those in service will continue to be in the good books of their seniors You will tide over your problems in the family. A pleasure trip is in the offing. Keep a sharp eye on your health.

Good dates: 4, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: West

For those born on the 5th, 6th and 7th of any month:

Most of you are very practical in all your dealings. You also possess an adventurous spirit The wonders of the unknown fascinates you You are also gregarious by nature you love to be surrounded by friends and relatives. Financially, you are extravagant but you live within your means. Most of you enjoy good health. Women born during this period are extremely fair and they make good housewives.

VARIE

CHESS

Chess openings are very fashionable and fashion starts at the top. The major theme of the past two world championship cycles has been the re-emergence of the TMB (Tartakower-Makagonov-Bondarevsky to give it its full name) defence to the Queen's Gambit as the brick wall upon which players of 1 P–Q4 are invited to bang their heads.

The risk of brain damage led to the search for alternative methods for White, of which the Queen's Gambit with B–KB4 (instead of B–N5) found most favour and thus prompted most examination.

White: A. Miles. Black: A. Belyavsky. Queen's Gambit. Wijk aan Zee 1984.

1 P–QB4	P–K3	2 N–QB3	P–Q4
3 P–Q4	N–KB3	4 N–B3	B–K2
5 B–B4	0–0	6 P–K3	P–B4
7 PxBP	BxP	8 Q–B2	N–B3
9 P–QR3	Q–R4	10 R–Q1	B–K2

11 R–Q2!?

This alternative to 11 N–Q2 had been secretly put under the microscope many moons ago, but never wheeled into the

Belyavsky (Black) to move



Miles (White)

field of battle. Tony discov

11 . . . N–K5! 12 Nx

BRIDGE

The deal below looks interesting but not specially remarkable. Yet there were strange events at three tables in the semi-final of a national tournament.

Dealer West Love all

	♠ J 10 9 ♥ A 4 3 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ K 10 8 5	
♠ A 8 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 6 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ 8 2	N W E S	♠ K Q 3 ♥ J 10 9 8 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ A 7 3
	♠ — ♥ K Q 7 5 ♦ A 10 9 5 3 ♣ Q J 9 4	

The first table was the quiet one. After a transfer response to 4NT North became the declarer in Five Diamonds. Playing it carefully, he was satisfied to make eleven tricks.

At the second table of bidding went:

South	*West*	*No*
—	3♠	N
4NT	No	5
6♦	No	N

South ruffed the ace of s two rounds of trumps wit queen.



ORNELL." Can you find what other words are

c) therefore his wife ya. That leaves Gov- nd Bina as the last e. To summarise, the es are: Rajiv and ri, Aditya and Priya Govinda and Bina.

net, Scarlet, Coral

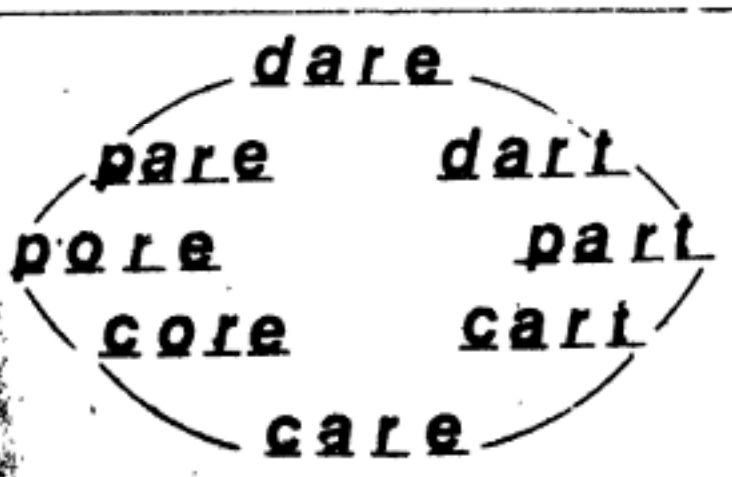
Answer: Colours

Sleuth: Number 3

Blockbuster:



Power:



QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What do the following have in common: helium, radon, argon, krypton and xenon?
2. Cricket bats are traditionally made from the wood of which tree?
3. The secretion of *Coccus Lacca* is an industrially useful product. What is it?
4. What is a sextant?
5. Who is at present the head of the Church of England?
6. In the *Mahabharata*, whom did Lord Krishna forgive a hundred times before killing him?
7. Sabena is the national airline of which country?
8. How is the laughing jackass better known as?
9. What is Abstract Expr
10. The well-known scie *2001: A Space Odysse* Kubrick was based on a Arthur C. Clarke. Name th
11. What is the study timepieces?
12. What is the "official" la Gypsies?
13. How is Lord Greystoke figure in comics and pop better known as?
14. Lee Harvey Oswald President John F. Kenne Oswald?

ibles:

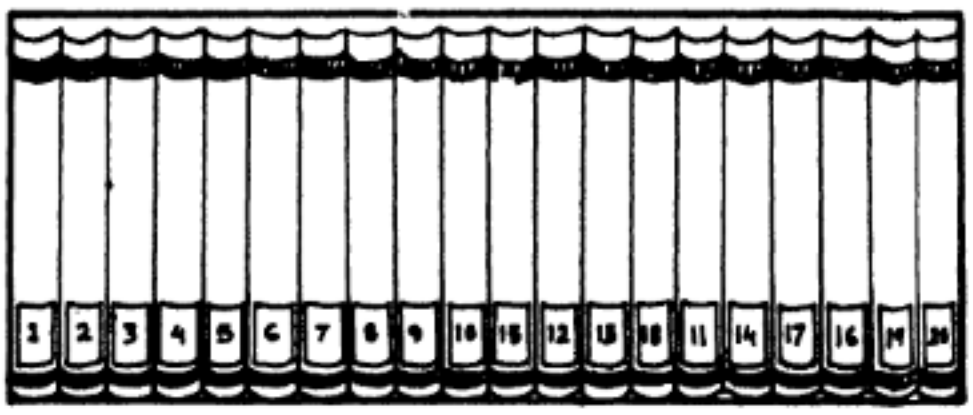
, Silver, Green, Bur-

Power:

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Mind Bender



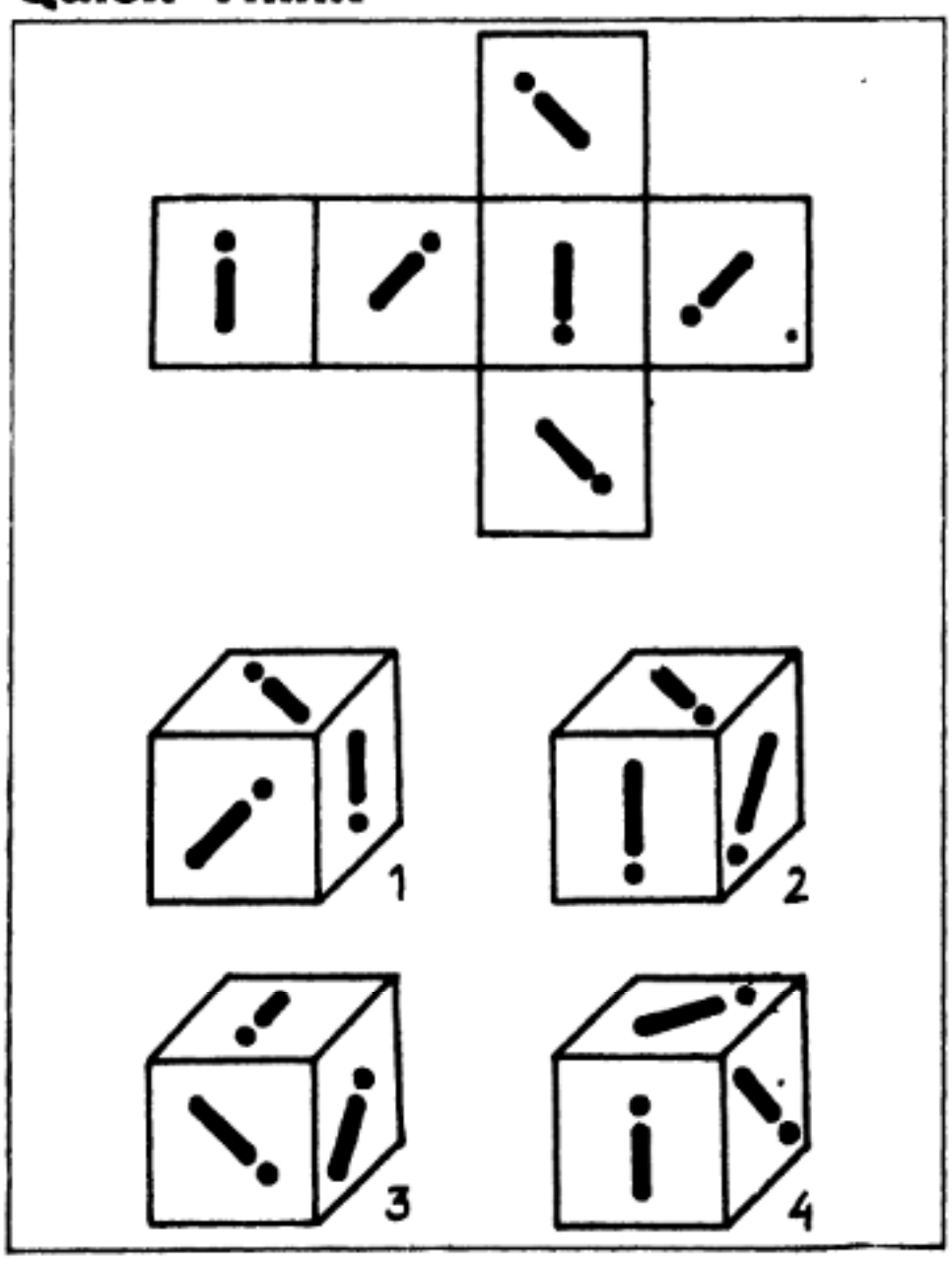
In a library, the readers have not put the volumes of the Encyclopedia in order If two books are interchanged each time, what is the minimum number of moves required to put this set of encyclopedias in order?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 12 13 18 11 14 17 16 19 20

Wit Sharpener

Study the price list below, and complete the prices of the last two items:

Wonton	**Rs** 2.00
Christmas tree	**Rs** 3.00
Fur coat	**Rs** 4.00
Mixers	**Rs** 6.00
Fishing net	—
Vanilla essence	—

Quick Think



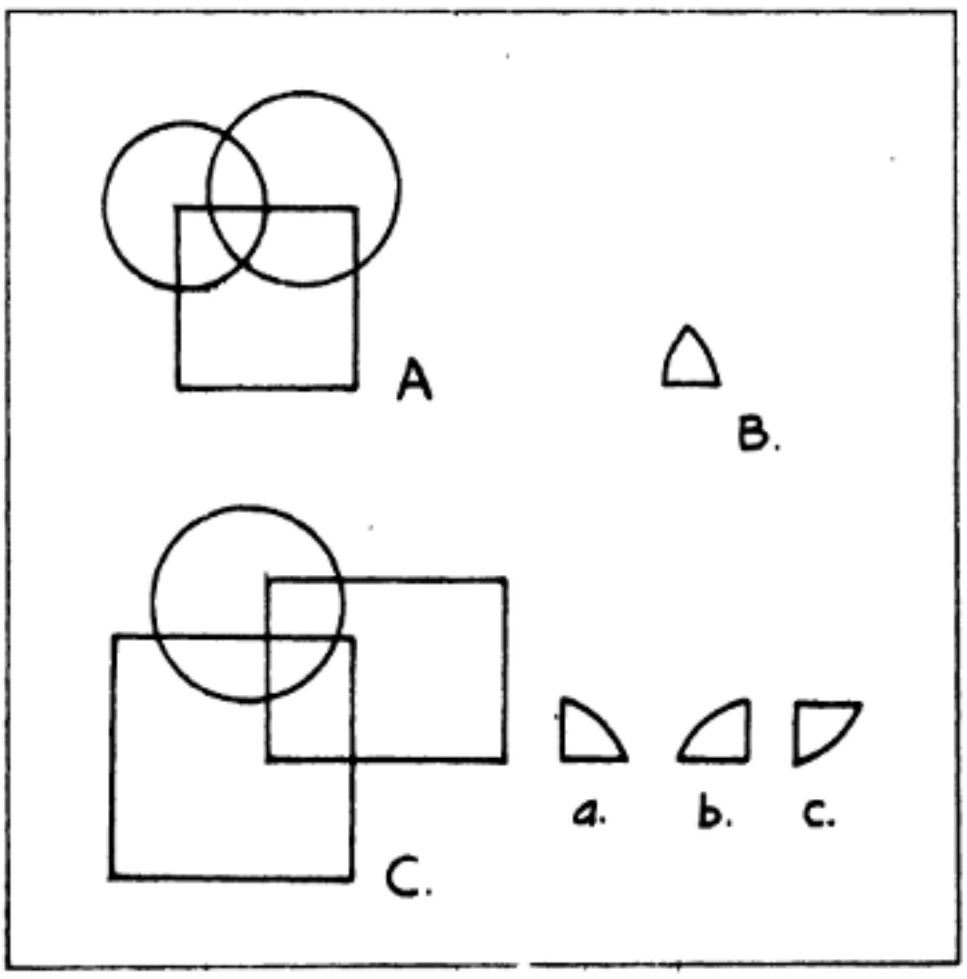
When the 'net' shown here is folded into a cube, which of the four numbered dice will it look like?

What's in a Word?

Insert six Greek letters in the blanks below to form six common English words:

1. **Taurus**
2. **— ––lately**
3. **Ca———cum**
4. **———ef**
5. **— ––mbus**
6. **D———in**
7. **S––nal**
8. **A––al**

Figure it Out



In this analogy, Fig A is to Fig B, as Fig C is to a), b) or c).

Missing Link

Insert the same three-letter word in both sets of blanks below to make two sets of two new words each.
Example: **PL———LER GR———IQUE**
Insert **ANT**, and the words formed are: **PLANT, ANTLER** and **GRANT, ANTIQUE.**

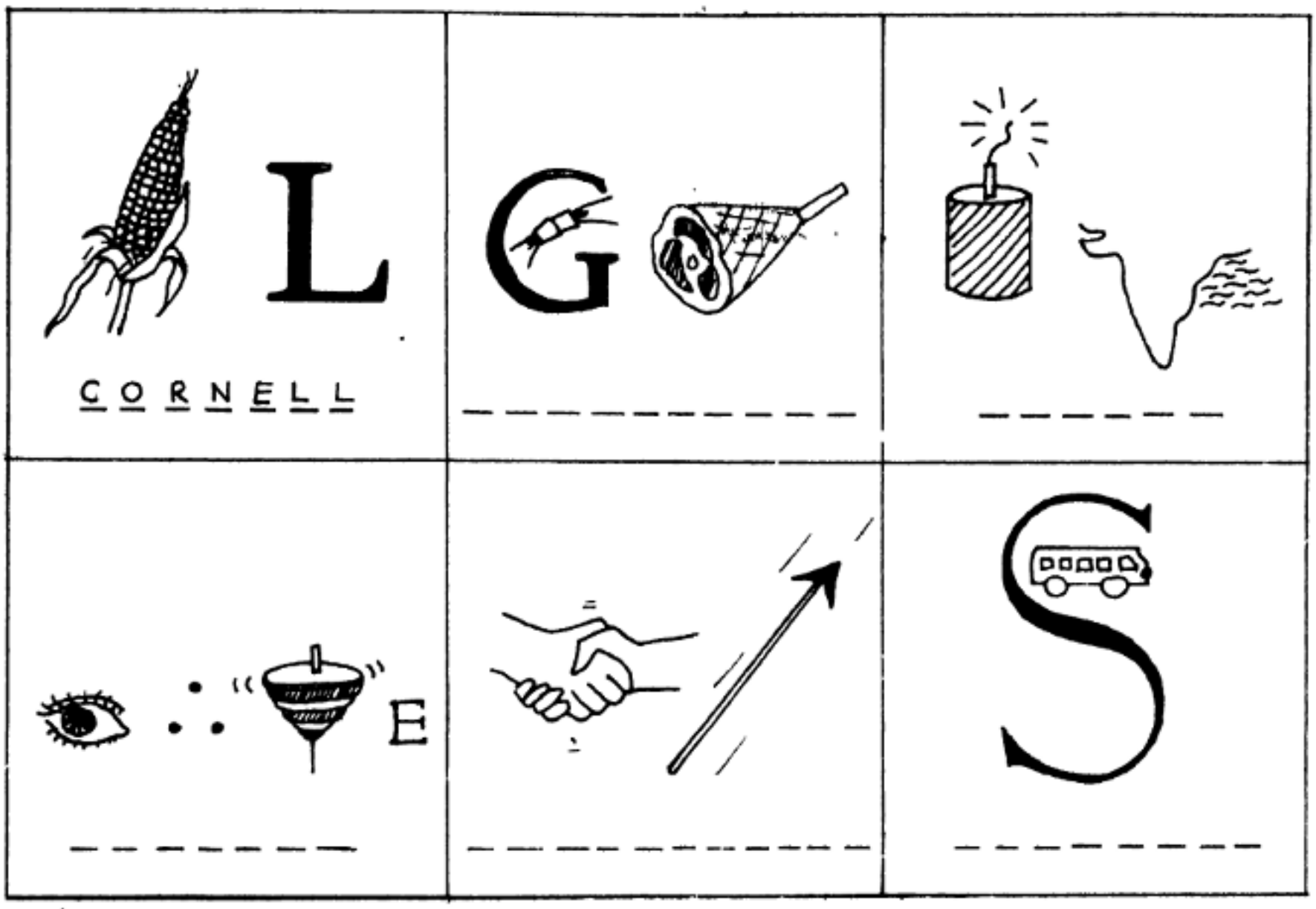
i) **GAT———MIT** ii) **F———UAL** iii) **PR———NESS**
MAS———ON **TR———OR** **C———ROUS**

Word Power

The answer to each clue is a common two-word phrase or a compound word that has two rhyming halves, like "SOOPER—DOOPER." The initial letters of the two halves are provided:

1. Sleight of hand	H— P—
2. A mixture	H— P—
3. Masses	H— P—
4. Trickery or mischief	H— P—

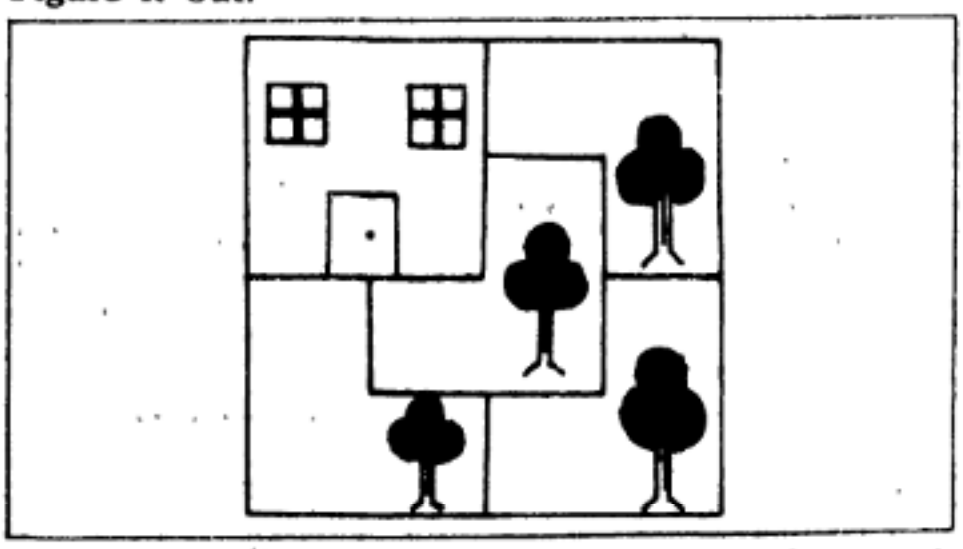
Shape Sleuth



Each figure above tells a story. The first one, Corn and L say "CORNELL." Can you find what other words are represented by the illustrations?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Figure it Out:



Personality Plus: Marco Polo

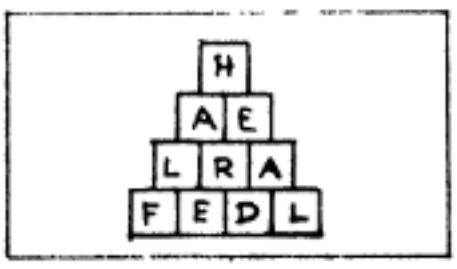
What's in a Word:
Startle, Peasant, Bungle, Screamed, Triceps.

Witsharpener:
Since Rajiv lives next door to Priya (clue a) they are not married to each other. Also since he lives next door to Priya and her husband, he cannot be Bina's husband (clue b). Therefore Rajiv must be married to Gayatri. Aditya is not married to Bina (clue c) therefore his wife is Priya. That leaves Govind and Bina as the last couple. To summarise, the couples are: Rajiv and Gayatri, Aditya and Priya and Govinda and Bina.

Shape Sleuth: Number 3

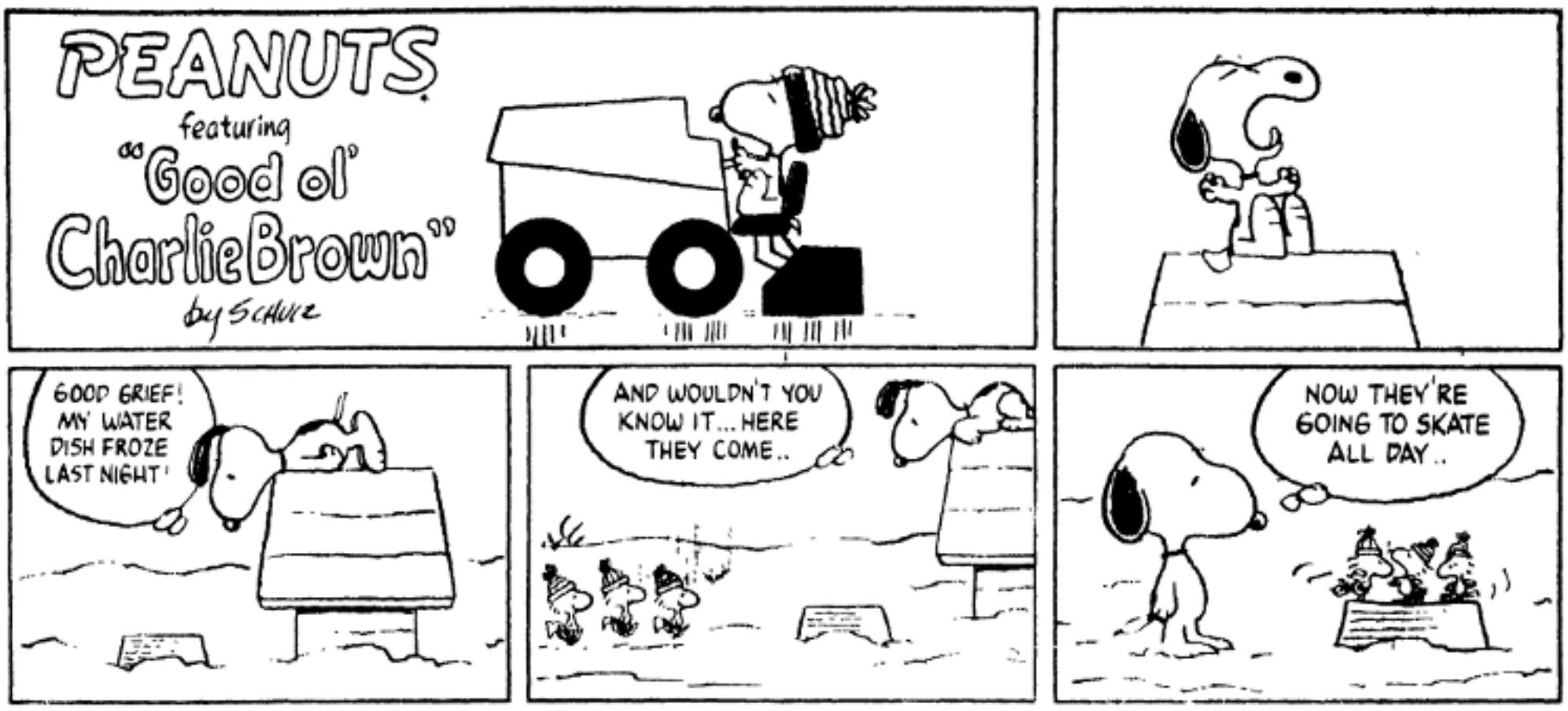
Scrambles:
Ochre, Silver, Green, Burnet, Scarlet, Coral
Answer. Colours

Blockbuster:



Word Power:





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COMICS

Asterix

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DELHI DIARY

Superstar



Sunil Dutt Durgaprasad



Vyjayanthimala Gopal Shetty

Of the three filmstars elected to the eighth Lok Sabha, who will be the superstar? On the opening day, 15 January, Amitabh Bachchan stole the show.

Dressed in a black high-neck suit, he sat in the first block of the treasury benches, behind the cabinet ministers. He was flanked by the minister of state, Madhavrao Scindia, and Balram Jakhar on the sixth row. The first block is occupied by important ruling party members. (There are six blocks of seats in the Lok Sabha, of these more than four are now occupied by the treasury members.) Sunil Dutt, wearing a light coloured western-style suit, occupied a seat on the seventh row of the third block.

Murli Deora, Bombay Congress(I) chief, sat next to him. Vyjayanthimala Bali was on the tenth row of the fourth block. She wore a saffron-coloured shawl, which made her look somewhat like the Telugu Desam members, who had donned yellow outfits.

Efficient Bureau

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) under U.C. Tiwari has put commercial newsagencies to shame. The PIB had set up a computer analysis system for the Lok Sabha elections and within three days of the results of all 508 seats coming in, produced a neatly printed 57-page document called, *Lok Sabha elections 1984: a computerised analysis.* The professional agencies charged Rs 77,000 for the service which PIB offered free. During the counting, the PIB issued daily analyses and backgrounders.

Their record put All India Radio and Doordarshan to shame. Now it has been decided that during the forthcoming Assembly polls, the PIB will be relied upon by AIR and Doordarshan. In the past the PIB used to take six months to compile similar data. The highlight of the booklet is an analysis on "shift of parties under regional bias," both in terms of seats and ballots. U.C. Tiwari's PIB certainly reflects the performance of the new wave government.

The Odd Man

Most Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Lok Sabha members chose to take their oath in their mother-tongue. This made the swearing-in of the largest opposition group see empty visitors' galleries since only a few understood Telugu. A young TDP leader, Ananda Gajapati Raju, however, chose to be sworn in in English. Perhaps, due to this, there was not much of cheering from his partymen when he finished reading the oath. He was a successful minister in the N.T. Ramarao team before becoming an MP. His father, P.V.G. Raju, was in the Lok Sabha for many years. Among other distinguished sons of former MPs who took the oath in the eighth Lok Sabha were Vijay Mishra (son of the late L.N. Mishra), P.Rangarajan Kumaramangalam (S. Mohan Kumaramangalam's son), Hari Kishore Shastri (Lal Bahadur Shastri's son), and, of course, Rajiv Gandhi (son of Feroze and Indira Gandhi).

Changed Times

Some new members reached Parliament House on 15 January without the basic document—the returning officer's certificate—which entitles them to enter the hallowed portals of Parliament and the right to be sworn in. Union ministers Chandulal Chandrakar and Arif Mohammad Khan were among them. Priya Ranjan Das Munshi realised his mistake after entering the House. But no one had stopped him from entering the House in 1985, as was the case in 1971. A 25-year-old, the youngest-ever member then, Das Munshi had been stopped at the gates in 1971 despite the returning officer's letter being in his hand. The watch and ward staff could not believe that he was an MP. Young faces are, as a rule, not exceptions now. In the eighth Lok Sabha, there are around 50 members who were in the Youth Congress when Das Munshi was the all-India president, between 1972 and 1975.



Arif Mohammad Khan



Priya Ranjan Das Munshi

Training Strains

The move to streamline the education policy has been welcomed. According to a story in the capital's grapevine, there were two brothers: one was trained for politics, the other for flying aircraft. Their respective trainings did not help them. The one trained for politics attempted to fly and failed. The pilot reluctantly landed in politics and succeeded. Did education matter after all?

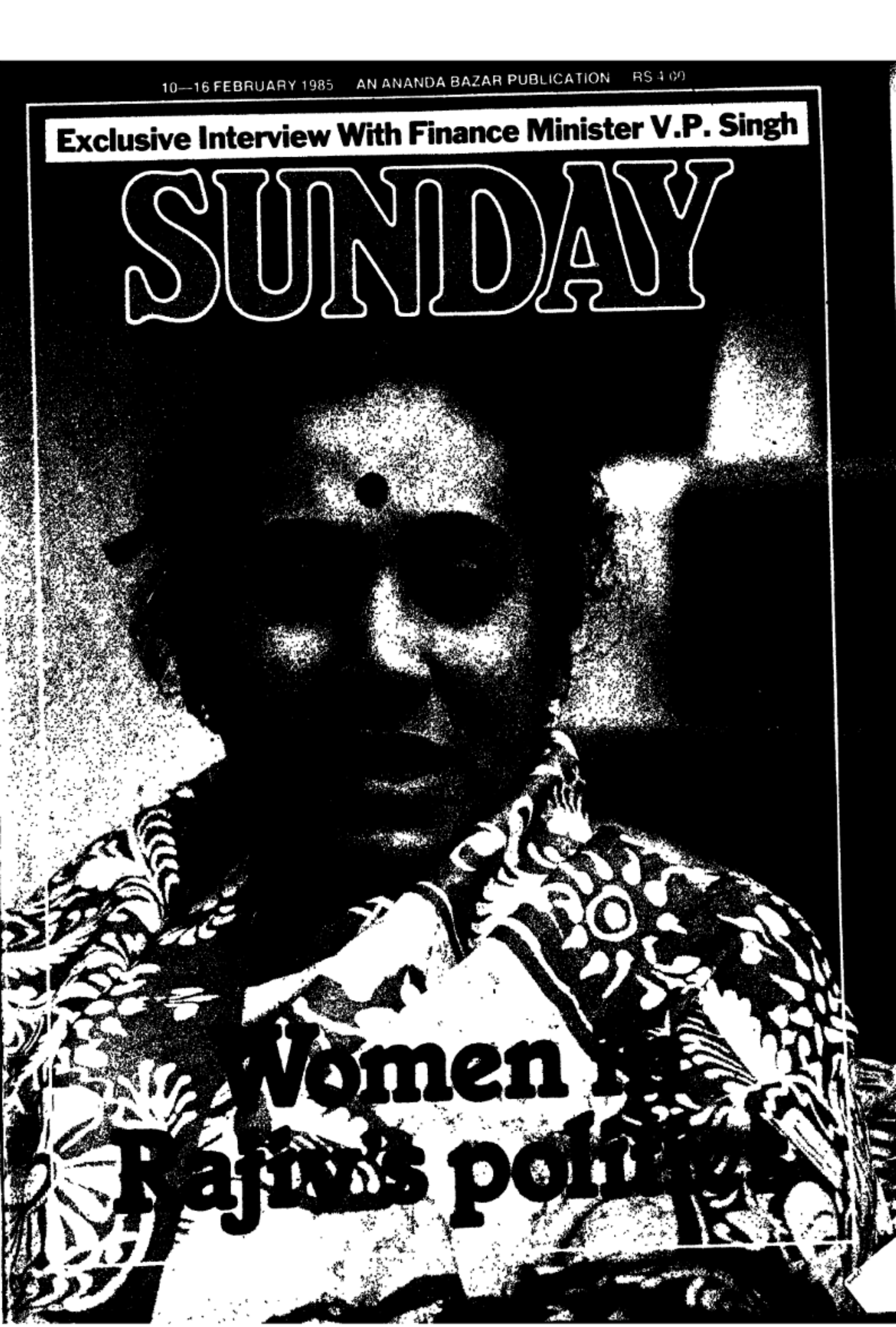
TAILPIECE: What is next best to being the country's finance minister? Doing a round of the temples, it appears. At least that is what discarded finance minister Pranab Mukherjee plans to do.

D.E. Nizamuddin

10—16 FEBRUARY 1985 AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION RS 4.00

Exclusive Interview With Finance Minister V.P. Singh

SUNDAY



Women in Rajiv's politics

Stop bad breath. Fight tooth decay.



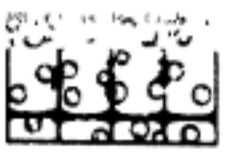
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Women in Rajiv's Politics

After acknowledging the support the Congress(I) received from women during the Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi announced a number of welfare schemes for them, besides setting up a separate ministry for women. Will women play a more important role in Indian politics under Rajiv Gandhi's prime ministership? Madhu Jain takes a look at the women in Rajiv Gandhi's politics.

ESSAY **44**

Envy, Jealousy and Hate

Envy, jealousy and malice are all basic human chracteristics which transform into hate. Khushwant Singh in his essay analyses these psychological traits with the help of anecdotes and quotes from great thinkers.



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CONVERSATION **30**

Interview With V. P. Singh

In his first-ever interview as union finance minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh discusses with M. J. Akbar the economy of the country and the problems facing him.

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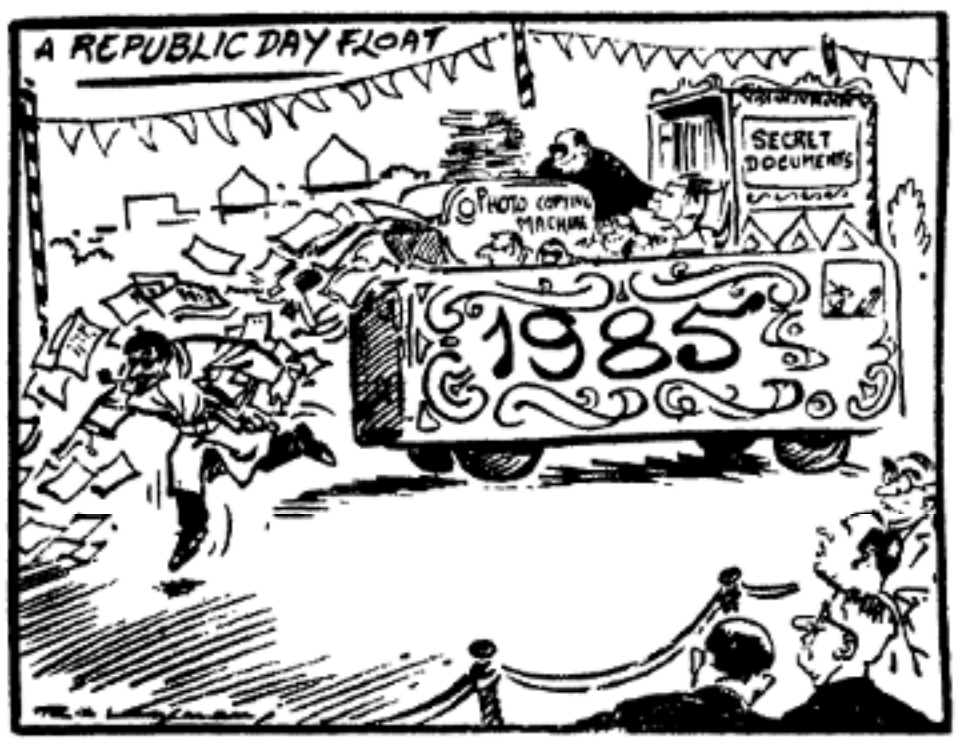
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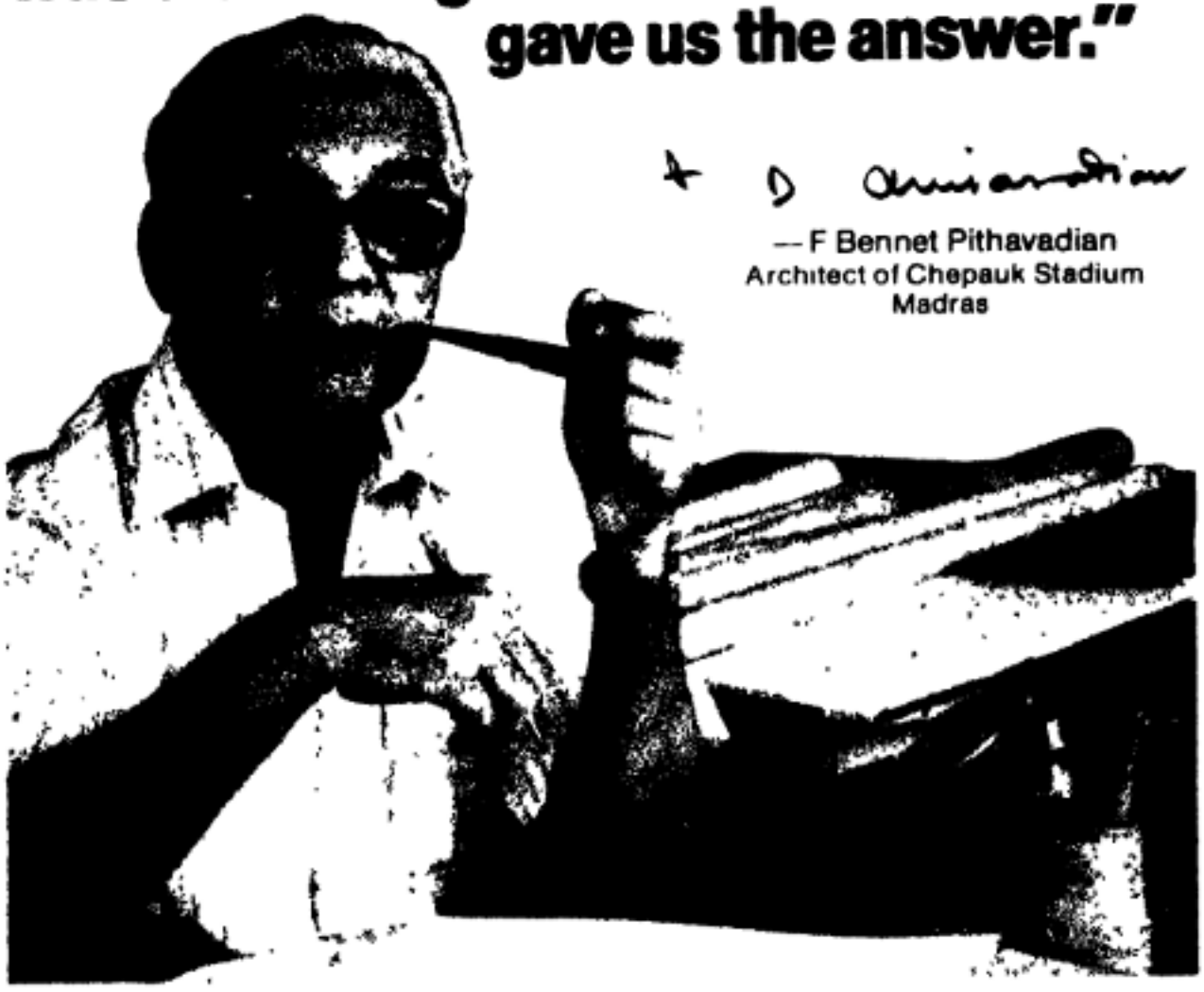
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Cover Transparency:
Jagdish Yadav

"The structure of the large stadium was a challenge...and TISCON gave us the answer."



— F Bennet Pithavadian
Architect of Chepauk Stadium
Madras

Mr Pithavadian, with several major projects in India to his credit and who has served as a Consultant in Bangkok, Jordan and Cyprus, strongly believes that good architecture depends as much on materials as on design. While working on the Chepauk Stadium he undertook challenging innovations because he could depend on Tiscon reinforcing bars for the structural solution he needed. Let's find out from him why he found Tiscon suitable.

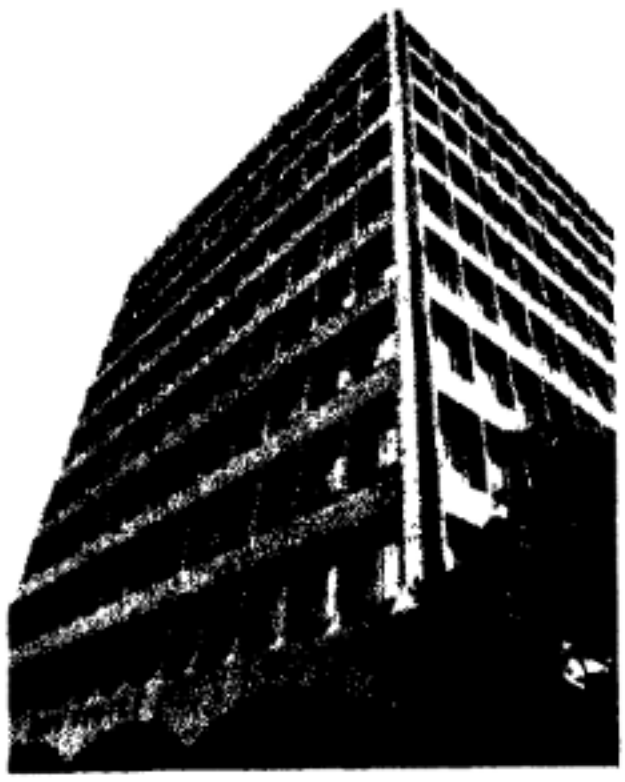
"They made the pillars strong enough to withstand the heavy load."

"You see, we had this 28 metre span roof. But we couldn't place any supporting pillars in front of the gallery as they would block the spectators' view. We decided to place pillars only along the centre of the gallery. This called for a large cantilever span. Which meant a great portion of the roof had to be left without any support. And that's where Tiscon bars proved their worth. They made the pillars strong enough to withstand the heavy load."

"They give you far superior grip."

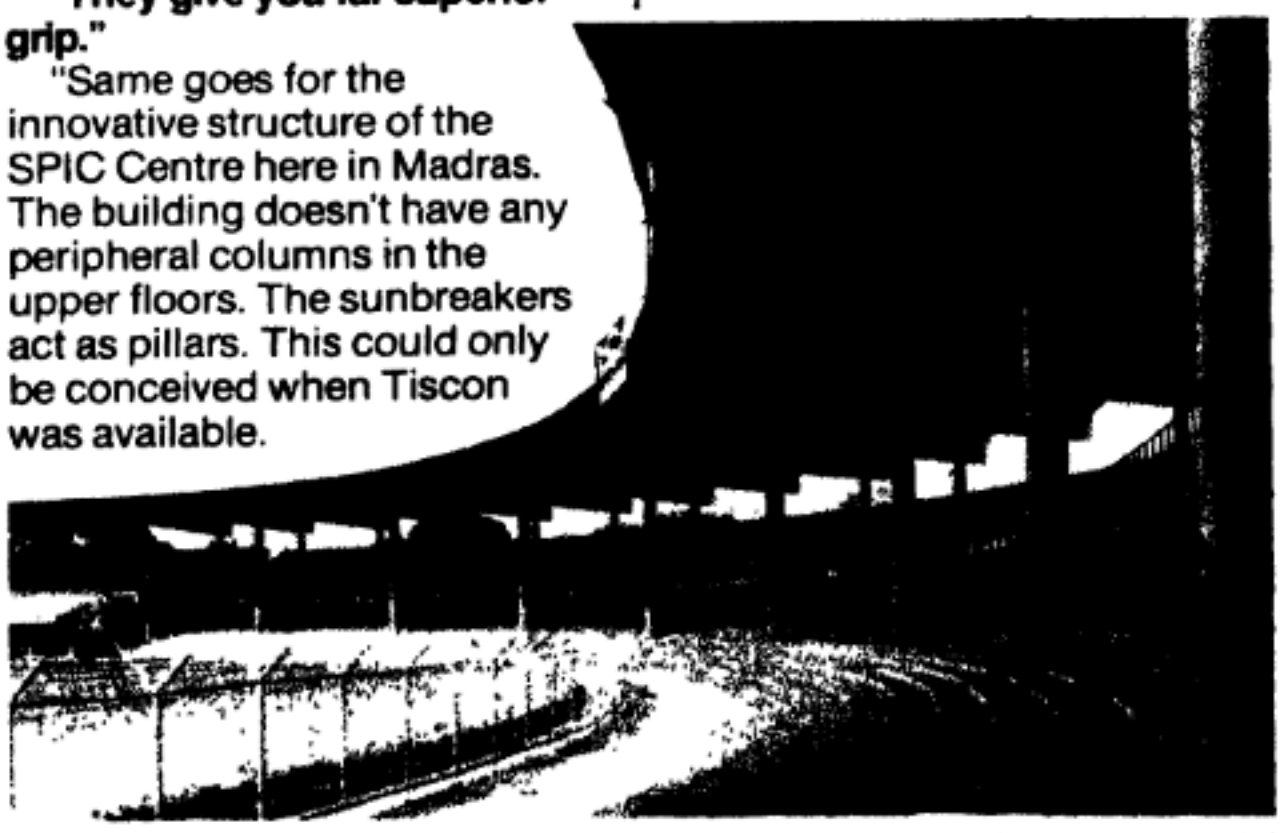
"Same goes for the innovative structure of the SPIC Centre here in Madras. The building doesn't have any peripheral columns in the upper floors. The sunbreakers act as pillars. This could only be conceived when Tiscon was available.

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TIS-5583

DATELINE / M.J.Akbar

Asansol: Once upon a time, not all that long ago, red was the colour of either side of the Grand Trunk Road as you left Calcutta by this most famous of highways. All over the country, in 1980, Mrs Indira Gandhi had smashed both pretension and claim, but the red fort of the CPI(M) in West Bengal held very firm indeed. Howrah was commanded by Politburo member Samar Mukherjee, while Bally, Serampore and Hooghly were proud to wave the red flag in harmony. Burdwan, of course, was unquestioned CPI(M) territory and if Ananda Gopal Mukherjee had taken Asansol away by a slim margin, this was attributed more due to the complacency of the local unit of the party than any significant rise in the strength of the "bourgeoisie and antipeople" Congress(I). More than 200 years ago, another red army had begun a march from Calcutta up the Grand Trunk Road, but that was the army of white businessmen with imperial ambitions, intent on painting the map of India red. Perhaps some within the revolutionary red ranks, buoyed by the commitment of their supporters and the sight of a prostrate national opposition had begun to entertain similar dreams? From Bengal to Bihar, then eastern Uttar Pradesh, then Awadh, while flanks subdued the Marathas in the west, and consolidated the south, before the richest prize of all, Delhi, fell to the red flag? It was not that impossible a dream, and it may not have taken as long as the redcoats did to achieve either. But the key lay in the preservation of Calcutta as a kind of political Fort William.

A trip from Calcutta to Asansol shows just how threadbare that fortress has become. What was once red has now become tricolour. Goliath Mukherjee in Howrah fell to David Munshi. In the second division league match in Serampore, it was again the Congress(I) which won, the veteran Professor Bimal Kanti Ghosh defeating the CPI(M)'s Ajit Bag. Hooghly has never surrendered since 1952, but this time the CPI(M)'s warhorse Rupchand Pal lost to the comparatively unknown Indumati Bhattacharya. Sudhir Roy in Burdwan managed to keep the red flag flying, but not as high as in the past; and Ananda Gopal Mukherjee in Asansol proved that 1980 was much more than an accident. The tricolour has not only managed to hold its own against the red flag, but has made significant inroads.

Nor is it difficult to appreciate why. The state of the Grand Trunk Road, to begin with. And why, on top of the awful track punctuated so often with railway crossings, does this national highway need so many bumps to irritate the long-distance traveller? There is a sense of arbitrariness, of lack of accountability, of working on a whim rather than a plan, that permeates traffic decisions as much as decisions of higher policy. The few schools visible from the road are all of 1950 vintage or older, the unhealthy dark smudges on the unpainted walls a reflection of the decay in education. The worst is that the countryside of Bengal never looks poor. It is a constant lush green interspersed with ponds and huts that form a continuous film before the eye. Why should there be such poverty in such rich fertile countryside, when once-barren Haryana can be converted into a granary? Not, as the uncharitable would put it, because the people are lazy. That is rubbish. The poor are never lazy; only the rich or the middle class, content that their meal will not be denied them whatever they do, can afford to be lazy. But they remain poor because they cannot get the agricultural science and technology that is needed to build green revolutions. There is not enough money with the West Bengal government for that. Apart from the difficulties with a hostile centre, the white collar trade unions (allegedly the backbone of the CPI-M in West Bengal but behaving more often like a leech stuck to the brain) drain away too much of the available resources. The bill has been handed in, and the political price must be paid now. The CPI(M)'s might turn out to be the only revolution which was destroyed by the loyalty of the clerk.

On the fringe of Durgapur, along the highway, is a new kind of snack bar: the Jai Ma Kali Video Coffee Shop. This unique synthesis of religion, culture, commerce, the most sacred ancient faith and the most insouciant modern toy, could only take place in our country. We are an open people and an open country: we take our influences and inspirations from where we want. Nor do we worry too much about the juxtaposition of the sacred with the profane: I cannot quite, for instance, see a Prophet Abraham Video Games Parlour springing up anywhere. But Hindu belief and faith is not rooted in the awe that defines the Judaic religions; it is more intimate, more personal and familiarity with the deity is not perceived as frivolity or licence or disrespect. If Jai Ma Kali provides the strength, and the good fortune, then she will have the medium through which the fortune is made named after her. Perhaps men cannot emulate the gods, but surely the gods can be brought down to the level of men.

The salesman at the counter was taken aback when, at 4.45 in the morning I asked him for a first class train ticket to Calcutta, just in time to catch the second Burdwan-Howrah local. His surprise was understandable. Who in his right mind would actually buy a first class ticket on one of these trains? Well, no one perhaps but a journalist. I had not been on a suburban train for some time, and I dearly wanted to see what a compartment, ambitiously labelled first class, looked like these days.

First image: a bombed out shelter. The front first class compartment of the Burdwan-Howrah local, via the chord line, leaving Burdwan at 0454, was almost certainly the worst compartment on that train. The seats were as wooden as in the second class, but that was no surprise; incorrigible theft had long since (to use a literal metaphor) knocked the stuffing out of the cushioned seats. But one did not expect the windows to look like they had just returned from the battlefront. Naturally, they would not shut. Neither would the door, and soon someone vented his anger against the belligerent door by smashing it up a little more. Even that early in the morning, the compartment was soon full within a few stations. No; no one else had made the mistake of buying a ticket. In fact, if a ticket collector had come in to demand first class tickets from the passengers, he would have been greeted by helpless laughter. The atmosphere was rather fun, the commuters being that special breed who belong largely to the service industries and must begin their work early. (A home guard, incidentally, chose this journey to strike up/renew a friendship with a vibrant lady; by the time she had left, he had bought a round of tea and told the tea man to return the change the next day, which is sufficient indication of the storms stirring in his heart.)

But why do the railways insist on calling a few of their compartments on the local trains first class? There's not even any hope of getting extra revenues, because only a sucker like me would buy a ticket. So where's the percentage? The next time tough Mr Bansi Lal comes to Calcutta, he should not restrict his sightseeing to the underground or the circular railway. He should really try and travel in a first class compartment of a suburban railway.

"Eat up, puppies, before mamma comes!"



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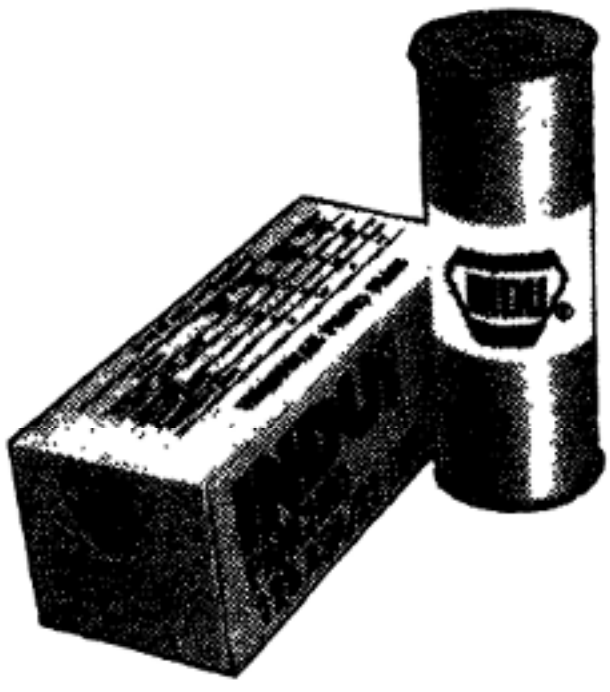
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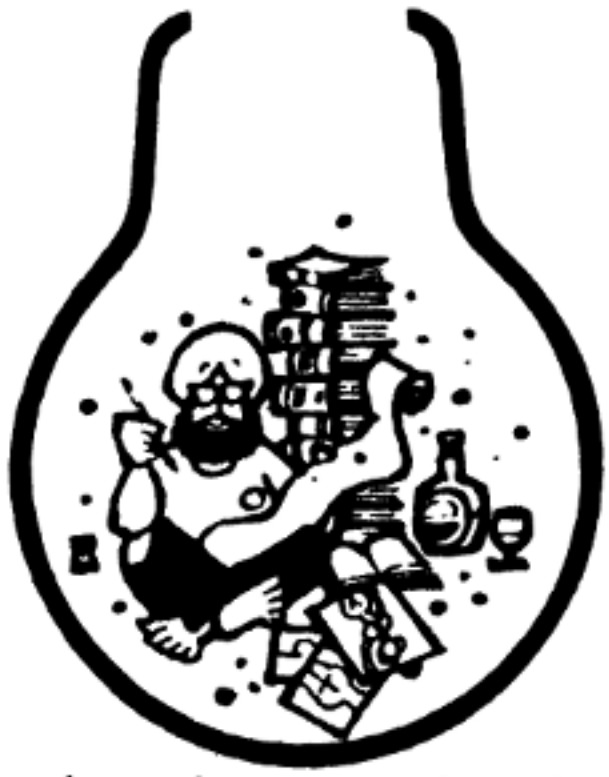
First Black Mark

Rajiv Gandhi's government has earned its first black mark which no one except he can erase. This is his government's refusal to hold a judicial enquiry into the widespread anti-Sikh violence following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. The President's address claimed that violence had been "fully and effectively controlled in the shortest possible time." Facts tell a totally different tale. And now we have two reports which present a damning indictment of the government and the ruling Congress party. Unless these reports are effectively countermanded, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that neither the government nor the party which forms it have the moral courage to face the ugly truth. So far all it has done is to authorise a senior police officer to investigate and make a report on the failure of the Delhi's police to discharge its duty. This is not good enough.

The first report entitled *Who are the Guilty?* was published a few days after the occurrences. The investigations were jointly conducted by the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights and the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties headed respectively by Gobinda Mukhoty and Dr Rajani Kothari. Amongst 16 politicians named as answerable are cabinet minister H.K.L Bhagat, sitting MPs Lalit Makan and Jagdish Tytler, two members of the Delhi Metropolitan Council, three members of the Delhi Corporation and several leaders of the Youth Congress. It also names 13 police officers and constables and almost 200 others. Since the violence involved murder, arson, loot, gang rape and abduction of women, one would have thought these gentlemen would themselves take steps to clear their names of calumny. None of them has so far bothered to do so.

The second report released on the eve of the Republic Day is on behalf of the Citizens' Commission presided over by retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, S.M. Sikri. Its members include men who held the highest positions in the civil service and are respected for their integrity: Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, Rajeshwar Dayal, Govind Narain and Srinivasvardan. This report does not name anyone but its pronouncements are equally damning of the government and the Congress party.

My attempt to raise the issue in the Rajya Sabha was greeted with derision by members of the Congress party. In his reply the Prime Minister



made no reference to my demand for a high powered judicial inquiry. Evidently the government has no intention of instituting one and by sweeping all the muck under the carpet hopes that it will soon be forgotten. Muck under the carpet is known to stink. This certainly will. Will future historians get nothing besides two reports as source material on the post-assassination violence?

All I can do is to plead with the Prime Minister to keep his image as clean as it was when he took office. He must have this tragic episode thoroughly investigated and punish those whose hands are soiled with innocent blood. He must wipe this ugly stain off his face.

Gas as Weapon

Ever since the ghastly tragedy in Bhopal, I have wondered whether our army has considered the use of poison gas as a weapon. I hope not. I hope it will never cross the minds of people in power to consider using anything as dirty as killer gas on the field of battle. Hence I was appalled to read in the *New Statesman* of England that a cricketing nation like the English is keeping its options open "in the light of the massive Soviet capability in chemical weapons." (Mrs Thatcher).

What leaked out from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal and killed 2500 people in a matter of hours was chimney smoke compared to what the super powers have in store for the world. The Germans were the first to develop chlorine-based gas in World War I. In later years of the same war they tried another gas called Phosgene. Neither caused much havoc as gas masks gave adequate protection against it. Mercifully none of the belligerents thought of using gases in World War II. The age of nuclear and hydrogen bombs, long-range missiles and laser beams had made gases somewhat passe. Nevertheless, both the Americans and the Russians have developed more lethal gases and have stock piled large quantities for possible use as alternatives to conventional weapons. These nerve gases are said to be 100 times more potent than the one that went on the murderous rampage in Bhopal. They go by sweet sounding names like Tabun, Sarin and Soman and are stored in liquid form. All that is needed is to fire their containers into the air where they explode and come down as drizzle or vapour. One breath of the gas-fouled air of a few drops on the body will kill humans and beasts within a matter of seconds as well as destroy plant life on which it descends.

On second thoughts what difference does it make to the person who has to die whether he is axed, shot, bayoneted, blasted or gassed? Many states in America have introduced intravenous injections or gassing as more human methods of execution than hanging or shooting. What consolation is it to a person knocked down on the road that he was not run over by a garbage van but a Rolls Royce?

Year of the Ass

The year of 1985 has been declared as the Youth Year. I do not know what this kind of declaration means any more than I understand the Chinese cycle of years named after beasts: Year of the Dog, Year of the Rat, etc. However, since the younger generation has in fact taken over the affairs of the country, permit me to relate an anecdote before suggesting an appropriate title for 1985.

At a function to celebrate the anniversary of the Ramayana, a young newly-elected member of Parliament was the guest of honour. In his inaugural speech, this youthful *neta* after paying tribute to the sage Valmiki, author of the classic, wanted to impress his audience of the changed times and the heavier responsibilities his generation of leaders have to bear. He said: "Brothers and sisters, at the time of Sri Valmikiji, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs lived in complete harmony with one another and there were no communal problems. Today, we have to deal with these tensions all the time." An appropriate title for 1985 would be "Year of the Ass."



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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Why R.K. Dhawan was Dismissed

R.K. Dhawan, who worked with Mrs Gandhi for 24 years, still does not know why he was asked to quit. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi once described him as a "walking computer" for the detailed information he had of men and matters, but it is Rajiv who told him that he had been "working too hard" and that he should "have some rest." And again it was Rajiv who took him along to the oath-taking ceremony and gave him the impression that his services were still indispensible.

Had another job been offered to him, Dhawan would probably have accepted it. But it was not, and he considered it humiliating to ask for one. Since he resigned from government service when Mrs Gandhi went out of office in 1977, he had no government job to go back to. And because he resigned he did not even get gratuity.

It is not known which forces operated to push him out, but there had been reports after Indira Gandhi's assassination that he would be dropped. Unlike Dr P.C. Alexander, former secretary to the Prime Minister, he was on a contract job and a note on whether he should be kept in his post was among the first papers sent by Dr Alexander to Rajiv Gandhi for orders. The file lay on the Prime Minister's table for a few days, and that gave grist to the rumour mills that Dhawan might not be retained. However, Rajiv Gandhi signed the note, as well as the note retaining H.Y. Sharada Prasad, information adviser.

Over the years Dhawan had become a controversial figure Though after Mrs Gandhi's return to power in 1980, he adopted a low profile and seldom helped Punjabi bureaucrats as he used to do before 1977, there was no doubt that he was an influential man. Mrs Gandhi used him to convey messages to chief ministers, cabinet ministers and top bureaucrats. He could have resigned before the election results were out. His successor, C. Venkataraman, was interviewed by Dr Alexander in mid-December, but there is no doubt that Rajiv Gandhi's polite suggestion to him to quit came as a surprise. Dhawan, despite rumours, did not expect that he would be asked to go without any other job being offered to him.

Dhawan had served the Gandhi family loyally. When the Janata government was desperate to bring Indira Gandhi to book, Dhawan was offered every temptation, even a diplomatic assignment, if he could give proof of her involvement in any deal. But his reply was that though he was prepared to reveal the extent of involvement of ministers and bureaucrats in Emergency excesses, as far as Mrs Gandhi and her family were concerned, he would not open his mouth, whatever be the punishment Nothing came of such pressures, though his role in the government during the Emergency is evident from the Shah Commission's proceedings. Still the Commission did not single out Dhawan, unlike Siddhartha Shankar Ray, former chief minister of West Bengal. The Commission, in its findings, has recorded: "What happened in the months following the declaration of the Emergency with regard to the High Court judges appears to have been merely an extension of the idea conceived on the night of the 25th on account of which Shri S.S. Ray had felt very uneasy and had also spoken to Smt Indira Gandhi before leaving her residence."

Dhawan's position was too important; M.O. Mathai, who held the same post in Nehru's time, had ticked off even powerful ministers like Gobind Ballabh Pant, the home minister, though ultimately such outrageous behaviour led to Mathai's downfall. Dhawan never flaunted his power like Mathai, but it appears that it was continuously dinned into Rajiv Gandhi's ears that Dhawan was not the right sort of person to continue in his post as special assistant. Dhawan is somewhat rattled by rumours that he might be "involved in one case or the other." But he also takes these things in his stride. What can he do if they do so? This appears to be his attitude.

During Mrs Gandhi's lifetime some of Rajiv Gandhi's backroom boys had tried to remove him. But the former PM had brushed them aside. She even looked into certain allegations of corruption against her personal assistant when Giani Zail Singh was the home minister. But after he was exonerated she stood by him. Rajiv Gandhi too seemed to have shed the doubts he had about Dhawan. Apparently, he could not resist the pressures from some of the people around him. Though Dhawan has reportedly said that he did his job diligently and faithfully and showed due respect to all, he may have irritated some, perhaps unwittingly. Some suspect that Dhawan's proximity to Swraj Paul, a foreign-based industrialist, was among the factors that led to his undoing.

But what worked most against Dhawan was the stature he had acquired over the years. The Prime Minister apparently decided that it would be better to have some uncontroversial person for the post, and Venkataraman, who once was Lal Bahadur Shastri's personal assistant, was considered the best choice. Dhawan has no fixed plans for the future. But he may some day write a book on his years with Indira Gandhi.

Dhawan's position was too important; M.O. Mathai, who held the same post in Nehru's time, had ticked off even powerful ministers like Gobind Ballabh Pant...Dhawan never flaunted his power like Mathai, but it appears that it was continuously dinned into Rajiv Gandhi's ears that Dhawan was not the right sort of person to continue in his post as special assistant.

A Burning Question

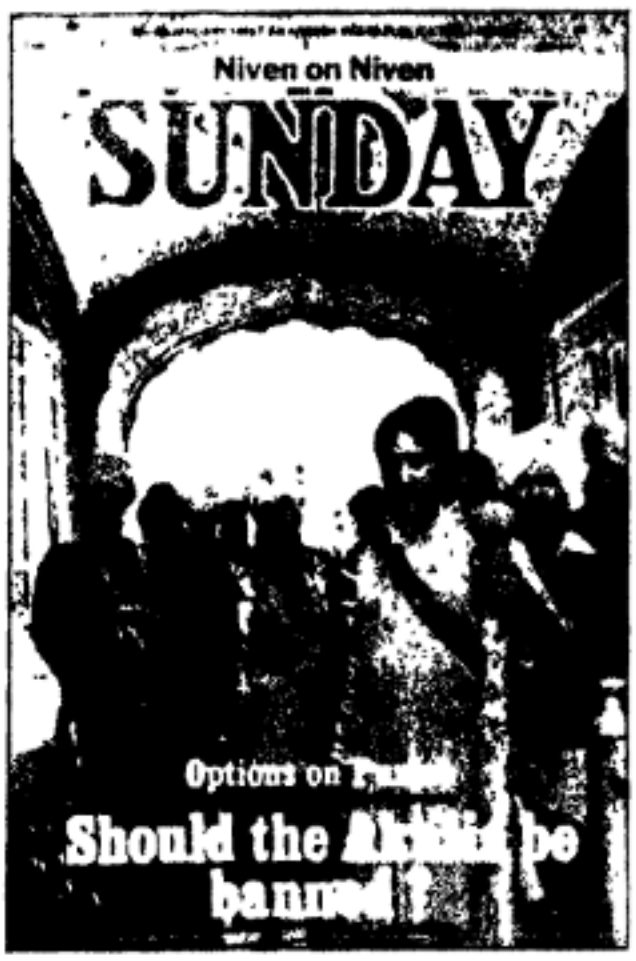
The cover story, *Should the Akalis be Banned?* (20—26 January 1985), by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya made interesting reading. It may sound revolutionary but there is no use banning the Akali Dal, the Muslim League, the RSS and other parties of a similar nature. If they are banned on the sole consideration that they are spreading communalism, the same prescription should also apply to other national parties. In this country, where so many religions co-exist, there is bound to be communal feelings. All that is needed from the leaders of such parties is that they must get rid of their separatist feelings and activities. The other parties should protest whenever such communal parties raise divisive slogans.
Moinak Gupta Choudhury, Ranchi

• SUNDAY keeps on publishing photographs of militant Sikhs. You should also print some pictures which show mobs killing Sikhs, burning their houses and looting their property. The entire Sikh community has been held responsible for the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. Many of them have been taken off key positions and sensitive jobs. Now that a spy ring has been busted, who is going to punish the community represented by the spies?
Dalip Singh, New Delhi

• The cover story was well-timed. The socio-religious organisations instead of bringing about harmony among different religions are, in fact, doing the opposite. The communal politics of the ruling party as well as that of the opposition is destabilising the nation. The need of the hour is freedom to practise one's own religion, and not give a special status to a particular religion. Such a gesture can help in averting a Punjab-type situation.
Abir Padhy, Behrampur (Orissa)

• Rajiv Gandhi deserves to be complemented for giving top priority to the Punjab issue. The appointment of a three member cabinet panel is a step in the right direction. The Sikhs are part and parcel of India and their contribution towards the building of independent India cannot be ignored. It is time that the Hindus and the Sikhs forgot the recent past and once again joined hands to build a stronger India.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• In *Wanted: Action Against Extremists*, Seema Mustafa has failed to come out with any concrete ideas to solve the Punjab imbroglio.
Subal Chandra Saha, Calcutta



• The cover story was illuminating. It is a burning question as to whether political parties of a communal nature should be allowed to operate. I expect SUNDAY to publish a few more articles of this nature.
Shibu O.G., Varkala (Kerala)

• The Sikhs have contributed in no small measure towards the prosperity of India but of late they have acquired a bad name primarily because of the Akali Dal. The Dal has been encouraging extremists over the last few years. The government should have taken strong steps before. We cannot allow the Akalis to hold the country to ransom.
M.G. Sundaram, Madras

• It would be wrong to equate the Sikhs with the Akali Dal. I appeal to all the Sikhs to cooperate with the government to solve the Punjab tangle. It is foolish to nourish the idea of Khalistan for we belong to India. But some enemies of India are trying to disturb the peace from outside. We must be wary of them.
Major Balbir Singh Bhasin, Patna

• This has reference to the question, *Should Communal Parties be Banned?* In my opinion religion and politics should not be mixed. There are a few parties in India which are openly communal. The most tragic part is that in our country elections are fought on communal lines.
Husain E. Beguwala, Bombay

• Communal parties like the RSS should be banned.
T.N. Venkateshamurthy, Bangalore

Brutal Force

Yubaraj Ghimire's illuminating article, *Police Massacre Harijans* (20-26 January '85) made interesting reading. I was shocked at the brutality of the police force. The Harijans had rightly raised their voice in order to protest the rape of a housewife by a landed bhumihar of the village. As usual in our country law is always on the side of the moneyed and the police instead of arresting the landlord went berserk killing and burning the huts of the Harijans. In order to justify the killings, the police cooked up a story saying that the Harijans killed were notorious Naxalites. Had not SUNDAY exposed the fraud, the police would have gone scot free.
Mabud Ali, Deulgram (Howrah).

Not Apt

I did not appreciate Kuldip Nayar's comparison of the Special Courts Act with the Rowlatt Act (*Exclusive*, 20—26 January '85). The latter was meant to curb the rightful freedom of the Indian people while the former is primarily meant to deal with the Sikh extremists in Punjab. It is the duty of the government to protect the lives and property of the people but a situation has arisen in Punjab and elsewhere, where the prevailing laws are not effective enough to deal with the situation. Hence the need for special powers. Thousands of extremists have been arrested in Punjab and it is necessary to dispose off the cases speedily.
M.S. Jagadish Babu, Bangalore

A New Formula

M.J. Akbar has at last admitted that he is a bad astrologer (*Dateline*, 20—26 January '85). But he has suggested a novel formula to envigorate the opposition: they should counter the growing influence of filmstars with filmstars. Putting up Rekha against Amitabh Bachchan in the next elections is a good suggestion. As regards the campaign theme of Amitabh, here is my suggestion:
De De Pyar De, Pyar De, Pyar De Re Hame Pyar De
Bijoy Kumar Rath, Kakiriguma (Orissa)

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Bitter and Sour

From henceforth Khushwant Singh's column should be called, *Bitter and Sour*. Mr Singh's outbursts in the wake of the riots following Indira Gandhi's assassination was understandable, but what baffled many of us was his attacks even after things cooled down.
V.C. Nair, Calcutta

• The *Gossip* column needs to be sobered down. Now that Khushwant Singh has emerged as the champion of the Sikhs, he should temper his writings to suit his new-found status.
C.A. Menon, New Delhi

• Of late the *Gossip* column has become more bitter than sweet and sour. But nevertheless I admire Khushwant Singh's sense of humour.
Mrinal Kanti Mahapatra, Singhbhum

• In *Far Eastern Economic Review* Mr Khushwant Singh has been quoted as saying, "The names of the two assassins (of Mrs Indira Gandhi) will be read into the scroll of martyrs for years to come. It is the greatest honour for the Sikh to give his life to preserve the sanctity of the Temple." But this is hardly the view of an honourable Indian. A renowned journalist should not issue such provocative statements.
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• It is natural for a man to become passionate while talking of one's religion. But Mr Singh should realise that his articles are read throughout the country by thousands of readers. As such he should be a bit more responsible.
H.P. Choubey, Jharia

• I was shocked to read the articles of Khushwant Singh appearing in SUNDAY. In one of his columns, Mr Singh writes: "If the Sikhs sink, India will sink with them." Such irresponsible statements are not expected from a journalist of Mr Singh's calibre.
Sudhansu Mohan Mishra, Jeypore

• Khushwant Singh's articles are clearly biased. If he thinks that 1.86 per cent of the Sikh population has the strength to sink India, then he is living in a fool's paradise.
Krishna Murari, Bokaro

• This is an appeal to Khushwant Singh to stop his outbursts against Hindus. In Delhi, Kanpur and Indore many Hindus sheltered Sikhs from the wrath of fanatics. It would be wrong to blame the entire Hindu community for the riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi.
A.B. Jahagirdar, Bangalore

• Nobody wants the Sikhs to sink. The Sikhs are part and parcel of Hindu society and as such they should try and live peacefully within it. By now they should have realised that hostility only breeds hostility.
B.K. Malhotra, Patiala

• Ever since the assassination of Indira Gandhi a lot has been said and written about Khushwant Singh. Riots, whatever be their nature, must be condemned in the strongest terms and Khushwant Singh has been doing just that. Operation Bluestar was certainly an unfortunate incident and had steps been taken timely, the operation could have ben avoided. But our political managers decided to drag their feet with the result that the sacred Golden Temple was converted into an arsenal.
Mustasad Ahmed, Azamgarh

• It was nice to read Khushwant Singh's comments on crime and punishment (*To Fit the Crime, Gossip*, 20—26 January '85). I agree with the author that it is time the country's lawmakers took a look at the Indian Penal Code to amend it in the light of our present circumstances. However, I disagree with Mr Singh as regards the punishment meted out to sexual offenders.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

• I wonder what punishment Mr Singh would recommend for those who glorify murders and make martyrs out of cold-blooded killers.
M.S. Nair, Durgapur

Old Faces, New Roles

The New Wave Government (6—19 January 1985) has begun well and we must wish Rajiv Gandhi and his team all success.
V.N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

• The Congress(I) has secured a massive mandate in the elections It was not a vote for the unity and integrity of the nation. In my opinion, the people have betrayed themselves by voting the Congress back to power. The late Prime Minister's persistent efforts during the last 17 years to discredit the opposition and other democratic institutions including the press have paid dividends. The prevailing corruption has destroyed the vitality of the people. Today, naturally the masses look for charisma, which can only be found in the ruling party. There is no democracy in India; we are living in a family *raj*.
Usha Sumit, New Delhi

• Shubhabrata Bhattacharya was right in observing that the new ministry is a judicious blend of youth and experience. The introduction of professionals is a novel feature of the ministry. But what was surprising was the axing of Pranab Mukherjee and A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury. However, the new team consists mainly of old faces in new roles How far they will be able to fulfil the promises they made, only time can tell.
Partha Pratim Banerji, Howrah

• Congratulations to Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I). But it is very sad that there is virtually no opposition in the Lok Sabha. But whose fault is it: the electorate's or the stubborn and egotistic leaders of the opposition parties?
Md. Anwar Alam Qumaispuri, Patna

• When in his election speeches Rajiv Gandhi said that he would take us into the 21st century, did it mean that he and his party would be ruling the country for the next two decades?
Lakshmi Kamalakar, New Delhi

• *Why the Opposition Lost* should serve as an eye-opener to the national opposition leaders. The opposition lost because the present generation could not trust the 'old stalwarts.' When the opposition leaders were busy quarrelling with each other at the cost of the "unity of the country," the youth decided to vote a leader who promised an *Akhand Bharat*.
Sujit Ghosh, Cuttack

• The opposition leaders have been taught a lesson. The people voted for Rajiv Gandhi because it was felt that he alone would be able to steer the country out of the dangers faced by it.
Duryodhan Mohanty, Palli Raghunathpur (Orissa)

• After the recent elections, haven't we shown the world that we as enlightened democrats can be successfully and successively governed by man (Jawaharlal Nehru), woman (Indira Gandhi) and child (Rajiv Gandhi).
Mohan Ramchandani, Indore.

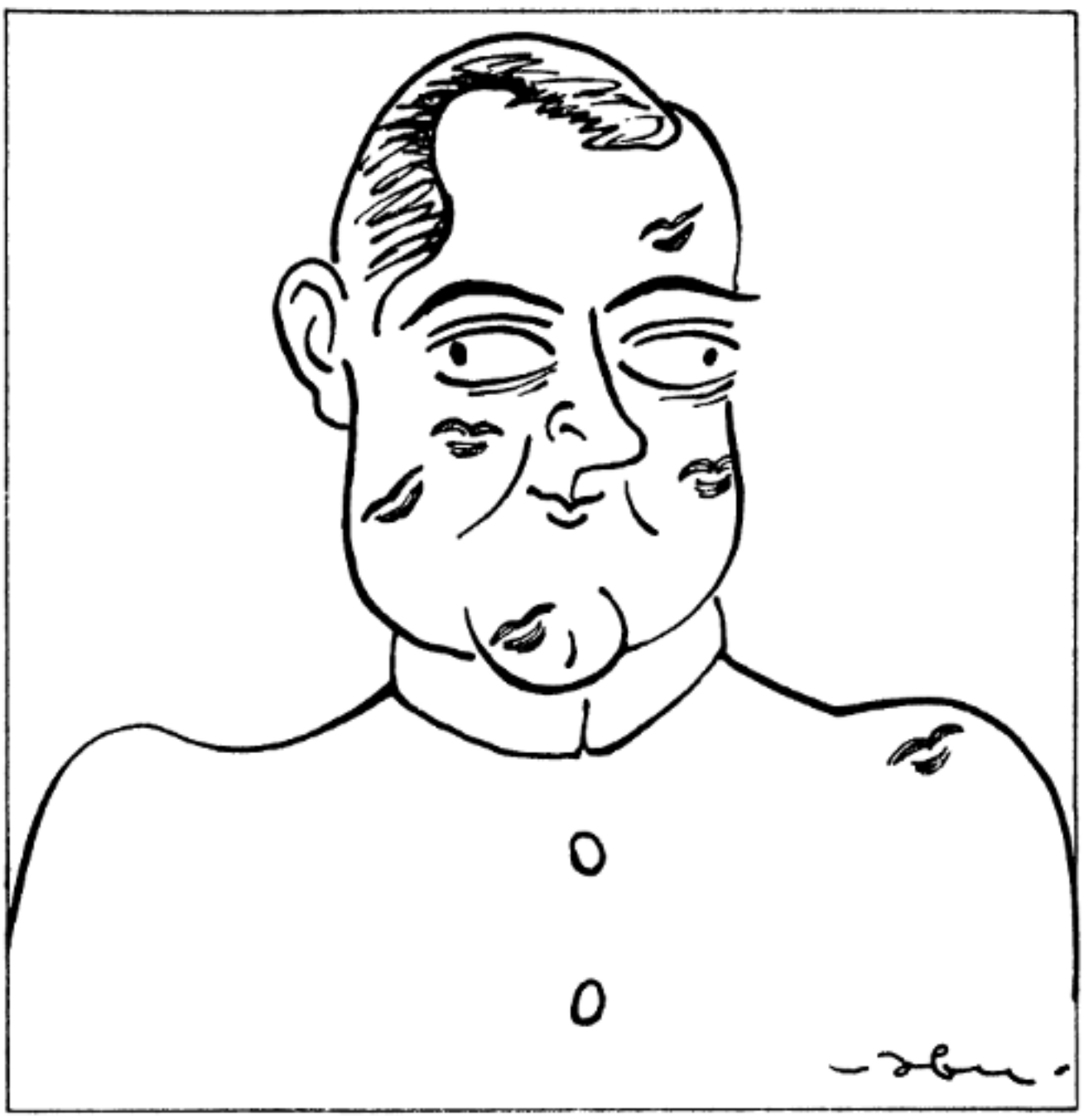
COVER STORY

Women in Rajiv's Politics

The Prime Minister has taken the first steps towards the emancipation of women



The Prime Minister being welcomed to Parliament by one of the women MPs: beginning of a new era



To fight ignorance is the first step towards emancipation. The new wave government of Rajiv Gandhi has taken a long, difficult leap forward by making education free for girls upto high school. From many of the signals being given by the new Prime Minister, it is becoming increasingly clear that he intends to bring the women who comprise 50 per cent of the population into the national mainstream. The United Nation's "Decade for Women" comes to an end during the middle of this year but for most of the women in India the 20th century has yet to become a reality, while the rest of the world has long been talking about the 21st century. Mr Gandhi, so keen and in such a hurry to enter the next century, has clearly realised that women cannot be left behind on the threshold of the next century.

The signals so far: A separate ministry for women and social welfare was the Prime Minister's new year gift to women. The ministry is headed by Maragatham Chandrashekhar, a senior Congresswoman who was a member of the Congress Parliamentary Board. Women were given a special mention in Rajiv Gandhi's maiden speech to the new party MPs. Women were spoken about again in President Giani Zail Singh's address to the joint session of Parliament when free education for girls until high school was announced. The election manifesto of the Congress(I) has a section on women which states that the party will "fight the reprehensible practice of dowry and attendant social evils, initiate a big programme to improve the educational status of women and improve the economic opportunities for them."

The intentions have been announced. Women have to be brought into the national mainstream. In this quest, Rajiv Gandhi has tried to give women important political positions. It is ironic that while there was no women cabinet minister other than herself in Mrs Gandhi's tenure, one of the first things Rajiv Gandhi did was to give cabinet rank to Mrs Mohsina Kidwai, presently union minister for health and social welfare. While the women in the new cabinet might not be too many, their presence is likely to be felt more keenly. Margaret Alva, formerly the convenor of the Mahila Congress which Rajiv Gandhi started in 1983 while he was a general secretary of the All India Congress(I) Committee, is the minister of state for parliamentary affairs. Ram Dulari Sinha is minister of state for home affairs, and M. Chandrashekhar heads the ministry for women's affairs. By selecting Najma Heptullah to be the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Bibi Amarjit Kaur as the joint secretary in the AICC and retaining Rajendra Kumari Bajpai as general secretary of the AICC, Rajiv Gandhi has shown a determination to involve women in party affairs as well as in the difficult task of nation-building.



Mohsina Kidwai

Why women? This is a question one could well ask. There are now 66 women in Parliament, 42 of them in the Lok Sabha and 24 in the Rajya Sabha. The Congress(I) had fielded 38 women in the last Lok Sabha elections and 36 of them won. Rajiv Gandhi has talked a great deal about his cleaning-up exercise, for which a giant broom is needed. And women wield the broom much better. Less dirt might be shoved under the carpet and the broom would reach into the hidden corners as well.

While there are more women in Parliament, there are likely to be more women in the Legislative Assemblies. Rajiv Gandhi is said to have told the Parliamentary Board that the percentage of women in the Assemblies should be far greater than what it is in Parliament. The Mahila Congress (which in a year enrolled ten lakh members), had recommended that women be given one Assembly seat in every Parliamentary constituency for the coming Assembly elections in March. The Prime Minister in his quest went a step further and said that at least 20 per cent of the seats should be given to women.

His call to women was obviously heard. Outside the AICC office on Akbar Road or in front of the houses

'Women Will Take Long Strides in the Years to Come'

Mamata Banerjee, MP, told SUNDAY

For Mamata Banerjee (27) it has been a journey from an ordinary Congress worker to an elected representative of the people in Parliament. Unassuming and confident, she is now the youngest woman MP in the Lok Sabha and one of the three women to have been elected from West Bengal. She won by a margin of 20,000 votes from the Jadavpur constituency defeating the veteran CPI(M) leader Somnath Chatterjee. Known as a crusader for the cause of women in her state, Mamata Banerjee was optimistic about the future of women in this country and pledged to make her contribution to the same. Excerpts:

Q: *What role do Indian women play in national politics today?*
A: I think they will emerge as a new personality especially because of the re-naming of a ministry for women. It is said that morning shows the day. I think in the same way Rajivji, by taking this step, has paved the way for the progress and development of women in India. He has given an important sanction for education of women and child welfare.

Q: What role do you foresee for women in the development and integration of the country?

A: After the death of Mrs Gandhi, the newly elected women MPs will be the spokesmen for women in India. Seeing us, the others will get motivated and play a more active role in politics and social welfare. Together we will try and do our utmost for women's welfare. We will try and organise a large section of women from all walks of life. For example, there is the anti-dowry law which is not being utilised. Rajivji has already stated in Parliament that there will be free education for women, which is very important. With this step taken, I have already spoken to the women's welfare minister, Mrs Maragatham Chandrashekar, to do something for equal employment opportunities for women. I hope the Prime Minister agrees to this. In 1975, during the International Women's Year, Mrs Gandhi had notified the ILO convention No 100 for the right to equal wages for women. Now we want that the right to equal employment should also be given to Indian women, according to their status and qualifications.

Q: What other steps should the government take to help women?

A: He (the Prime Minister) has already proven that the faith reposed in him by women will be paid back in kind by these things and he has fulfilled his promises. He has already, in a few days, done invaluable work for women and now he is trying to implement other projects and ideas given to him.


Dilip Banerjee

Mamata Banerjee

Q: What role will the women MPs play in this?

A: We will be the voice of millions of women. If there is any case of atrocity against women or their negligence we will definitely raise it in Parliament. In the next session we will try to utilise the anti-dowry bill and law. We will also not hesitate to oppose any steps taken by the government which goes against our demands and make sure our voices are heard as a group.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin

of members of selection committee (more women have also been appointed to these selection committees), large numbers of women could be seen. Signs that the dawn of a woman's era was on its way could be read on the faces of the women. There was confidence and candour and an awareness of women's rights. The new guidelines for the selection of candidates—honesty, education, hard working, etc—had been taken seriously. While this correspondent was talking to Srikant Verma, general secretary of the AICC, a young woman from Chhatisgarh came to see him. On the slip she had sent, in the "reason for visit" column, the lady had penned: "Regarding a ticket for the Assembly elections." Mr Verma displayed his enigmatic smile and said: "See the difference with women. Most men would have put down 'official' as the purpose of their visit. Men beat about the bush,


Jagdish Yadav

Shiela Dixit

women are generally more direct and honest in this approach."

This lady obviously knew her rights and could not understand why she had not been given a ticket thus far. "Rajivji," she told Mr Verma, "has said that he wants the seats to be given to the minority community, to women and to educated people. I am a woman, a Muslim, educated and hard-working. I deserve a seat..."

Whether it was the lady from Chhatisgarh or the countless others who had trekked to Delhi in search of a ticket, or the urban elite,

'PM Has a Positive Approach Towards Women'

Najma Heptullah told SUNDAY

The grand-niece of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Najma Heptullah,MP, was in the news when she was nominated the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Interestingly, Najma Heptullah is from Bhopal which was once ruled by women for four generations. She completed her doctorate in zoology at the age of 23 and was a member of the committee set up for the International Women's Year in 1975. Politics came naturally to her, and once in Parliament in 1980 she had a powerful platform from where to express her views. Now, as deputy chairman of the Upper House, she plans to voice her demands for development of Indian women.

***Q**: With your varied experience of women's welfare,how would you view the plight of Indian women?*

A: A very healthy trend exists in the country today. During Mrs Gandhi's time there was tremendous effort to uplift the cause of women. The same attention has been transmitted to Rajivji and he has been able to inplement his ideas in a better form by giving a larger representation to women in the elections and is going to do the same thing in the Assembly elections. Never before in the history of Indian Parliament have there been so may women in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, as this time.

Q: What impact have the recent statements made by the Prime Minister had on the status of women?

A: With his announcement about women being given free education, I think my own views have been put into actuality. I was lucky because I got higher education. My grandmother (Maulana Azad's sister) was the inspector of a women's school 50 years ago. But all women are not so lucky. Especially the rural women who I feel should also get education and employment.

Q: What steps should the government take now to implement its plans in this regard?

A: I congratulate the Prime Minister for the great step he has taken within a few days of his election. Another thing which I am really happy about is his formation of a separate ministry and more so, giving it in the charge of a woman, who I am sure will go deep into the problems of women. I am glad that she (the minister) has already organised a meeting of all women MPs regardless of their party affiliations, to make them into one party as far as their problems are concerned. This step was taken above party politics and individual problems of women in each state were discussed. Now what we have to decide is how best we can utilise our national resources like education, social welfare, exployment for the entire country and how to prepare our womenfolk to start thinking in a modern fashion. Being a science student I strongly feel a modern and scientific outlook in life should be formulated in the minds of women.

Q: Do you think other women MPs propose to use Parliament as a platform to voice your demands?

A: We have a lot of work to do. All the information we have collected will be computed and compiled. We want to form an overall policy with the approval of Mr Rajiv Gandhi. I think the steps he has already taken are not steps but a giant leap for women. Free education is the basic thing. Once Indian women are educated and play a more significant role in politics, then the country as a whole can progress.

Rajivji has kept his promise to the country and has a very positive approach towards women. But now it is up to each woman herself to act according to her role as a housewife, worker or politician to fulfil her responsibilities towards the country. Women from all castes and creeds should realise this and make use of the great opportunity Mr Rajiv Gandhi has placed before us.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin

women obviously believe that it is time for them to enter politics. Undoubtedly, a large number of women will presently sit in the Assemblies throughout the country. The crucial question which emerges is: Will they make a qualitative difference to public life in this country? Social problems have generally been neglected in Parliament and in the Legislative Assemblies and it seems that women have generally not been the keenest or persistent exponents of women's causes, but with the influx of women in politics, a large number of them social workers, Parliament might concern itself with the more basic and human problems. The bill on dowry, for instance, took a long time to be passed and even then the amendments to it were not good enough for most of the women's groups. Similarly, bills on social legislation have gathered more dust than interest in Parliament.

Women are more keenly aware of prices, of the drastic fall in human values, of the progressive deterioration of the quality of life. Simply put,

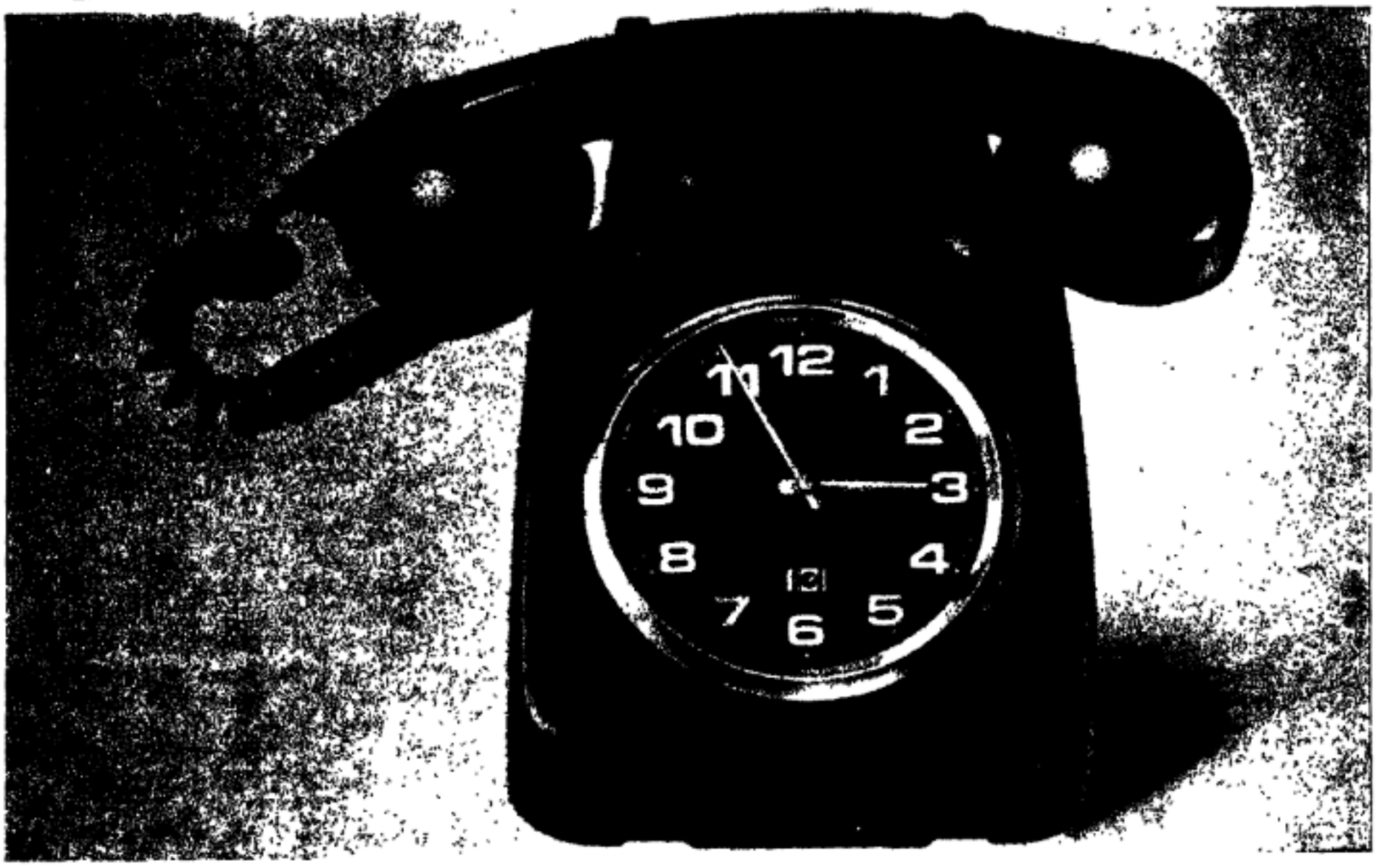


Jagdish Yadav

Vyjayanthimala

women might give a more human touch to Parliament. The women in the eighth Lok Sabha are educated and articulate, many of them with long years of social work behind them. Most of them, unlike the older generation of women, are not profes sional politicians. The earlier generation comprised those who entered politics through the freedom movement but the new generation is made up of politicians who have other professions. There are actresses, doctors, social workers, teachers and academics, although it must be said that many of them entered politics on the *bahu-beti-biwi* (daughter-in-law, daughter, wife) bandwagon. For instance, the *bahus* of Lokepati Tripathi and Uma Sankar Dixit: chandra Tripathi and Shiela Dixit, respectively; the wives of the chief ministers of Orissa and Bihar: Jayanti Patnaik and Manorama Singh; Kishori Sinha is the wife of Bihar

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'Rajiv Gandhi Owes His Success to Women'

Roda Mistry, MP, told SUNDAY

Essentially a welfare officer, Mrs Roda Mistry, MP, calls herself an "accidental politician." After working for the Congress actively for over 20 years, she joined the opposition in January 1984. She continues to be the All India President of the Indian Council of Social Welfare. For two decades she has fought for the cause of rural women. She left the Congress "because I was frustrated and could not get things done." Now she plans to continue her crusade against oppression of women from the floor of the House.

***Q**: The Prime Minister has recently announced that the government will take up the cause of women on a priority basis and there is also a special ministry set up for women welfare. How will this help the cause of women in future?*

A: That is all very well. But the fact remains that the number of women who have won acclaim and who are in the forefront, can be counted on your fingertips. This Parliament has now so many women MPs. This time of course God has been very kind to women and the figure has gone up one-and-a-half times (and it is expected to go higher in the byelections). But I am not happy with this. Why are we making such an issue of something which should have come naturally to us?

Q: In the elections, it was seen that the overwhelming support of the women electorate to the Congress(I) was largely instrumental in its victory. What do the women now expect of the government and the Prime Minister?

A: That is very true. Mr Gandhi owes his success totally to the women and the youngsters. During the campaign when I was touring the BJP strongholds all the women were in favour of the Congress(I) because they thought Rajiv Gandhi looked very handsome! Now, I am told by the Congress party MPs that he is trying his best to fulfil his promises made to women. Even in the allocation of tickets for the Assembly seats, he wants to give a generous quota to women. He has renamed the ministry as the ministry of social and women welfare. In fact, when I met Mrs Chandrashekhar, the minister, during the first meeting of the ministry, I told her I was very happy that the government of India has at last woken up. But I also pointed out that in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka we have had such a department since the last two decades. In 1978 I had toured the entire country demanding such a department but only Karnataka agreed to implement my suggestion.

Q: As the Prime Minister who has won with a historic mandate, what steps should Mr Rajiv Gandhi take so that women can play a more crucial role in national policies?

A: I will only repeat what I have said for years. The best thing that the Prime Minister can do for the women is give them the right to work. We have done so many things for women which have proved to be a failure. All the unattached women should be given a job by the government by right. Or, they should be given unemployment relief. Now the Prime Minister has said that he will give free education to all women. These are things that make us very happy, but will he be able to achieve this? There are so many things Mr Gandhi has said and we are watching his performance, but I doubt if he will be able to fulfil all his promises.

Q: Do you then foresee a dim future for India women?

A: No. I am sure the changes will be substantial but I am afraid only of one thing. The government should be able to give certain facilities to them. What upsets me is the stubborness of the government. For example, in the Legal Aid Cell, we had to force the Lt-Governer to appoint a lady officer. They have named the cell as anti-dowry cell. I have been screaming since two years that it should be renamed as atrocities against women! But this has not been done. This shows what facilities the government can provide women. What is the point of setting up a cell which cannot handle cases of all atrocities against women. How and whom can we convince about such things? I sincerely hope that Rajiv Gandhi can make the required changes and expedite such projects.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin

leader Satyendra Narayan Sinha, Dr Sumati Oraon, widow of the tribal leader, Kartik Oraon, Begum Abida Ahmed, Usha Verma, Premilatai Chavan and many others.

Many of these women appear to be efficient and practical. Shiela Dixit (45), who was elected from Kanauj and is an MA in history has been informally involved in politics since 1969, when her father-in-law, Uma Shankar Dixit (the present Governor of West Bengal), fell ill and she had to help him. Social work is her mainstay and she intends to continue it. She is interested in health programmes, especially the health of women, who are generally neglected or expected to suffer in silence. She feels that a Parliament with more younger people and more women has a "more 21st century look." Mrs Dixit, who is married to an IAS officer, also has a no-nonsense air about her. She appears to take the ticket-seekers touching her feet in this season of ticket hunters in her stride and tackles people in a firm and decisive manner.

Rajendra Kumari Bajpai



Ashok Kr. Verma

The youngest woman member of Parliament is Dr Mamata Banerjee (27), who has already become famous for having defeated the CPI(M) leader Somnath Chatterjee in the Jadavpur constituency near Calcutta, a Marxist stronghold.

Actress Vyjayanthimala is, of course, the most visible among the new women MPs and has been seen speaking in Parliament quite often.

Whether the women MPs form a lobby within Parliament to espouse the cause of women is not certain. Traditionally, the women have kept

'The Government Has Never Discouraged Women'

Kiran Bedi told SUNDAY

Mrs Kiran Bedi was the first Indian woman to join the IPS in 1972. She was the deputy commissioner of police (DCP) Delhi, and later the DCP (traffic). She faced a major challenge while handling traffic arrangements for the Ninth Asian Games held in the capital and the Commonwealth Conference in Goa. In 1978, she was awarded the police gallantry award and nominated the woman of the year in 1980 by the Jawaharlal Nehru Foundation. Presently she is the deputy director of the Industrial Contingency Board. She was frank and candid while talking to SUNDAY. *Excerpts:*

Q: *What role do you see for Indian women today?*

A: I foresee a very equal role though it is far from equal. If you



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Kiran Bedi

see the mandate which has brought this government to power, it (has been possible because of) the youth and women. So when women have played such a crucial and instrumental role in voting the Congress to power, there is no reason why the women should not take an active role in shaping the destiny of the country.

Q: What do you think of the recent steps taken by the Prime Minister and accordingly announced in Parliament for the upliftment of women?

A: The step has raised a very optimistic and positive hope in our minds. As women we are very hopeful by nature, and the declarations made by the Prime Minister show a very clear and determined mind and also that he means to do something positive for the welfare of women. The most important step taken by him is creating a welfare ministry exclusively for women. But it is only the results which will fulfil them or shatter hopes.

Q. In the police set-up what changes can be brought about by the government to ensure that women play a more active role in the profession?

A: I'm afraid women have yet to make a breakthrough in this field, since they constitute a very small percentage in the Indian police. Women have a very important role to play not only in the IPS, but also at the police station level where ordinary, uneducated, rural women come to report. The presence of a woman in a police station is important so that the female complainant can pour out her grievances to the reporting officer. I feel at least if we have women duty officers in metropolitan cities, it would go a long way in encouraging women to report their plight without hesitation. These proposals are with the government but awaiting sanction. It should, in fact, be made mandatory to have women duty officers. This can wipe away a common grouse of thousands with one stroke.

Q: Do you think the speed of development of women will be accelerated in years to come?

A: The speed will be much faster as can be seen by the initial steps taken by the Prime Minister, but the cause will have to be the women themselves. The government has never discouraged women from coming into the limelight but Mr Rajiv Gandhi has a very unique opportunity before him to help the cause of women. One important factor is that he is a man: Mrs Gandhi as a woman, doing something for women may have seemed chauvinistic. As a man, Rajiv Gandhi has a plus factor. If he does something for women he is only fulfilling his duties as Prime Minister, and will be seen as a large-hearted man who wants to do something for the oppressed sex.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin

themselves away from joining such pressure groups. But it does seem that they intend to get down to business. Ten days after Parliament opened, the minister for women's development and social welfare, called a meeting of women MPs to discuss issues relating to women. Some of the measures which will be taken up include a bill for interim maintenance for women seeking divorce. The bill has already been introduced. An anti-dowry bill which envisages educational opportunities for women and jobs is another. Other measures being considered are health cards for prostitutes and the abolition of the practice of *devadasis.*

The Mahila Congress which was made a frontal organisation of the Congress(I)—in a manner similar to which the Youth Congress was in the mid-Seventies—has emerged as a recruiting ground for future MPs and MLAs. The realisation of the fact that the women had voted in such large numbers for the ruling party in the last Lok Sabha elections, has led to women being given a greater role in the coming Assembly polls. While the Parliamentary Board had in its guidelines suggested that 20 per cent of the seats be given to women, the Mahila Congress, the women's cell of the All India Congress Committee has only been able to recommend 400 women candidates to the Board.

Gandhiji brought women out of their homes during the struggle for independence. Jawaharlal Nehru followed in the same vein to some extent. The new Prime Minister appears to want women to become a "real" political force. One of the major reasons for this step is that women could bring about change more quickly, especially in the sensitive and often politically costly task of family planning. Women could also bring more and more women out of the homes and translate their increasingly visible power to the benefit of the ruling party.

The cynics might say that Rajiv Gandhi brought in the women because of the growing importance of women as an independent and important votebank They could be partially right. But women, and this men in Parliament concede, are prone to be less corrupt, more hard working, meticulous, with an eye for detail and loyal. The women in Rajiv Gandhi's politics are certainly going to change the style and tempo of Parliament. Perhaps, the first step has already been taken: A women's election manifesto has already been prepared by 150 non-political women's organisations of Gujarat

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

It's a hard day's night
I've been walkin' the town
Makin' a living
And I'm feelin' down
I've been on the move
'Cos I got money to make
But after it's all over
A man needs a break
So here's to the good times
It's gotta be said
I'm ready for a Royal
I'm lookin' for the Red

Yeah, I'm lookin' for the Red

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YOU'RE LOOKIN'
FOR A LIFT

ROYAL

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moments for
Regent King

REGENT
KING

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taste & freshness

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The Woman in Rajiv Gandhi's Life

It was initially a tale of three women and a man. There was Rajiv Rattan Gandhi in the centre. On his side, in front, was his mother Indira Gandhi. Behind him, his wife Sonia Gandhi. On his other side, was his *choti bhabi*, Menaka Gandhi. It was a picture of a happy family. But the horrible afternoon of 31 October 1984 changed all that: Indira Gandhi had gone and Menaka Gandhi had moved out into the arena of opposition politics.

From then on there has only been one woman in the life of Rajiv Gandhi: his wife, Sonia. Sonia Gandhi, said to be an intensely private person (interviews are taboo) has preferred to remain behind the curtains of 1 Safdarjang Road. But she has had to step into the limelight, albeit reluctantly, and until now behind very dark glasses. January saw the Prime Minister's wife hazard into the territory of photographers. There was the Republic Day parade, the folk dances, the official visit of the King of Bhutan, the banquets given by the President and her husband, the Prime Minister, for the heads of state who had come to Delhi for the one-day summit on nuclear disarmament.

The public life of Sonia Gandhi had begun. It is being said that the Prime Minister's wife might set up a secretariat to help her in her public duties. After all, Nancy Reagan has one, as have the wives of many world leaders. Rajeshwari Tandon who has been appointed as social secretary in the PM's office (Usha Bhagat resigned shortly after Mrs Gandhi was assassinated), might lend a helping hand. The duties of a PM's wife would involve, in addition to playing hostess, considerable amount of correspondence and, of course, inaugurating various functions. However, at present, Sonia Gandhi is busy setting up house in the PM's new residence on Race Course Road.

What kind of person is the PM's Italian-born wife? A very private person, her whole world centres on her husband and their two children, Priyanka and Rahul, who have since 31 October not gone to school. Says a friend: "She loves her family but her husband is her life. You should see that when one of them walks into a room, the way the face of the other lights up..."



Rajiv Gandhi with Sonia Gandhi at the Asiad: supportive role

The house is the centre of the universe and the kitchen a very important part of this universe. Sonia Gandhi loves to cook. She has mastered the art of Kashmiri cuisine, but the *pastas* and the *lasagnas* are not neglected either. Good bread is one of the weaknesses of the Gandhi household. In more carefree times, when their circle of friends was larger and not under the supervision of the security men, she would often make special dishes and take them to friends' houses for dinner.

Sonia Gandhi has another duty now. With Indira Gandhi no longer there, she is the one to be concerned with the larger Nehru family. When last month, the Jawaharlal Nehru award for International Understanding had to be given, it was Sonia Gandhi who made frantic phone calls to trace the various members of the Nehru family and invite them for the function. She shares with her mother-in-law an eye for detail and the ability to remember the smallest of facts. Says another friend: "She is so considerate. She will remember to send a particular kind of *heeng* (a kind of spice) to a Kashmiri relative, or what there was for dinner when so and so came many years ago."

Languages interest the PM's wife. She speaks Russian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, English, Hindi and, of course, her mother tongue, Italian. In fact, it was while learning English at the School of Languages in Cambridge that she met Rajiv Gandhi. Art is another love. She learned restoration of paintings at the National Gallery of Modern Art. Music, especially opera, interests her a great deal.

Sonia Gandhi's shyness notwithstanding, she has played an important role behind the scenes in her husband's political life, though by and large over the telephone. She may, as her friends say, have been reluctant to let her husband enter politics, but once he decided, she played the ideal supportive role. For two years, upto the elections she went to Amethi for three days every month to visit the villages and distribute medicine. Her Italian-oriented Hindi went down well with the villagers. "*Bahu rani*, do not come here, we will vote for you anyway," they told her. And, they did.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

'A Country Cannot Forge Ahead Without Women'

Mohsina Kidwai told SUNDAY

While India has had a woman at the helm for 16 years, women ministers have rarely been given cabinet rank. Mohsina Kidwai in Rajiv Gandhi's new-look cabinet is the third woman in India to have been made a cabinet minister: Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur in the Fifties and Indira Gandhi in the Sixties were the other two. Ironically enough, a woman Prime Minister did not have any woman minister—other than herself—with cabinet rank. The soft-spoken, union minister for health and family welfare is greatly respected—even by her own colleagues—because she has made it the hard way up the slippery political ladder. She entered politics in 1960 through one of the small doors: she was elected to a local body and was later made a member of the Upper House in Uttar Pradesh. Elected to the Vidhan Sabha in 1974 from the Barabanki Assembly constituency, Mrs Kidwai became well-known nationally in 1978 when she won the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat on a Congress ticket. She became the first person from Mrs Gandhi's freshly-split party to make a comeback after the staggering 1977 defeat when the Congress lost all 85 seats in Uttar Pradesh. Mrs Kidwai was president of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee (UPCC) for a brief period. On Mrs Gandhi's return to power in 1980, she was given a berth in the labour ministry, from which she moved on to the ministry of health. Later, she was made minister of state with independent charge in the ministry of rural development.

In the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Mrs Kidwai won from the parliamentary constituency of Meerut. Fighting for the cause of women, Mrs Kidwai intends to improve the condition of women, both through legislation and through greater participation of voluntary organisations.



PM campaigning for Usha Rani Tomar, Congress(I) candidate from Aligarh

***Q**: I believe that you called a meeting of all women members of Parliament including opposition MPs. This must be the first time such a meeting has taken place.*

A: Yes, I called the women MPs and I must say that the response was good, even from the opposition. I wanted to seek their help in increasing the people's participation in matters of health and family planning. All of them showed a genuine concern about the population growth: they saw it as a national problem.

Q: Did you face any discrimination as a woman, either from your family or society as such in your political career?

A: I faced no discrimination at all. My mother's brother, Shafiqur Rehman Kidwai, the first education minister in UP, was part of the Khilafat movement. We belonged to the *zamindar* class, but we revolted during the freedom movement. My father-in-law, Jamiur Rehman Kidwai, encouraged me to enter politics In fact, when he fell ill in 1960, people said that only a member of our family could become a member of the Legislative Council from Barabanki. That is how I came into politics.

Q: Why is it generally only the bahus *(daughters-in-law) or the* betis *(daughters) who are the ones to enter politics?*

A: My joining politics as a *bahu* was just by way of an introduction. After all, I could not have continued for so long on the basis of being a *bahu*. My father-in-law could just as easily have asked one of his sons to enter politics instead of me.

Q: Wasn't the fact, that you as a Muslim were entering the political world, an enormously big step?

A: My family were good Muslims, but they were progressive. We were never compelled to stay indoors, there was no *bandish* (obstacle) to our going out. My father-in-law worked for the upliftment of women and I was a social worker. I think I am still primarily a social worker and (continue to be) absorbed in this. It is to the great credit of our leaders that they did not want 50 per cent of the population of the country, women that is, to get left behind. A country cannot go ahead without women. It was very difficult at that time: mothers-in-law at home did not always approve, neither did many husbands...Those were difficult times. There were some women who delivered their babies in jail.

Q: With 42 women members in the Lok Sabha, will there be a qualitative change in Parliament and in public life?

A: The present Prime Minister

wants a change. He wants respected, devoted and dedicated parliamentarians. There is a lot of work to be done and a lot of changes are to come. We have to get ready to step into the 21st century.

Q: Will the separate ministry, which the Prime Minister has created for women's affairs, really help the cause of women?

A: This step shows the Prime Minister's keenness for the upliftment of women. He has also emphasised the need for women to be educated, to be freed from the bonds of illiteracy. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that if you teach a woman, the entire family is taught. The move to de-link degrees from jobs also shows the PM's intentions. A new ministry is important because it also involves an increase in the budget. Mrs Gandhi talked about drastic changes. The changes are now taking place.

Q *What are the priorities?*

A: The first is education. This should be done not only through books. Education should inculcate a certain amount of broad-mindedness. Today mothers-in-law trouble their daughters-in-law for dowries. There are so many atrocities (committed) on women.

Women must speak up. In my own ministry the most important task is concerned with population growth. From two or three children, the thrust (now) is on two children. But coercion or *shakti* (being tough) will not help, only education will. We have to explain how important family planning is for the family.

Q: Would you say that women are the main motor of social change in India?

A: Yes, women are the motor of social change. Whenever there have been great changes, the youth and women have been responsible. During the time of the British, when Gandhiji said that nobody should wear clothes made outside the country—and you know how fond women are of clothes and jewellery—women were the first to make a bonfire of the *pardesi* (foreign) clothes. When Jawaharlal Nehru made an appeal for help during the 1962 war with China, women happily gave their jewellery.

Q: What measures would you advocate for women?

A: Working girls should be looked after. I feel that society as a whole should respect women and not look at them with a *buri nazar*. We work shoulder to shoulder with men. This attitude of theirs, the way they consider women should change...Our films with all the sex and violence feed this unhealthy attitude.

Q: Are women coming forward to contest in the Assembly elections?

A: There has been an awakening among women; they have recognised their rights. 38 per cent of women in the rural areas did not know anything earlier. During its Bangalore meeting, the Mahila Congress asked Mr Rajiv Gandhi to ensure that 20 per cent of the Assembly seats be given to women. This might be a little high for the time being but we should definitely get 15 per cent (of the seats).

Q: The Prime Minister's guidelines for choosing recipients of tickets for the Assembly elections are quite novel: scientists, doctors, educated people, youth, women, ex-servicemen are unusual. Is it the beginning of a new era?

Women should concentrate on human problems...They should go out and tell villagers about the need for education...Child marriages ought to be stopped. A girl gets married at the age of 12 and is a mother by 13, while she is still a child. Legislation cannot really solve social problems. Society has to change; *sati* was so cruel, but society did not accept it. This should also happen with dowry.

A: There is always a *nava zamana* (new era). But I would like to emphasise the fact that a woman has in her all the qualities of a good social worker: honesty, truthfulness, *mamta* (maternal feelings) and decisiveness. A woman can deliver the goods. Look at it this way: it is she who has to decide what is to be cooked, which school to send the children to, get the house cleaned and look after its maintenance...There are a hundred decisions to take in the house every day.

Q: To return to your personal life for a moment. Was it not difficult to incorporate political duties with your duties at home and as a mother?

A: I have three daughters, two of whom are married and a 15-year-old with me. And I am a proud grandmother. But you see I was lucky. My father-in-law protected me. I could not have managed without my husband's cooperation. My parents-in-law put me into politics and they looked after my children.

Q: Will there be a change in the approach to family planning? It has been a sensitive subject thus far because election speeches do not mention it.

A: I think that men should also be trained. Laproscopy appears to be quite simple and easy. I would not only like to emphasise the government programmes. Voluntary organisations should be brought in. I believe it should be done for the people and by the people—family planning is a way of life. Private practitioners should also be involved in family planning.

Q: Isn't politics a dirty game?

A: If you are clean yourself, there is no dirty game. You have to decide what you want to do and achieve it. This Anti-Defection Bill is a good thing. It will put an end to this daily *badnami* and restore democracy.

Q: What is expected of the new lot in Parliament?

A: Sincerity, hard work. Women should concentrate on human problems—on the problems of the women and the poor. They should go out and tell villagers about the need for education. I think child marriage ought to be stopped. A girl gets married at the age of 12 and is a mother by 13, while she is still a child. Legislation cannot really solve social problems. Society has to change; *sati* was so cruel, but finally society did not accept it and it (was) finished. This should also happen with dowry. Dowry is a complex phenomenon: it is an economic problem. People want a high standard of life, easy money. Girls are, therefore, given an inferiority complex.

As I said earlier, education is the crux of the matter and the most important age is the pre-primary when the stamp is put on the child's mind. We should have good trained teachers who know something about child psychology.

Q: So, you would say that the presence of so many women in Parliament will make it a softer, more human place.

A: Yes...it will.

Interviewed by Madhu Jain

'Women are Equal Partners in Nation Building'

Margaret Alva, minister of state for parliamentary affairs, told SUNDAY

In her early Forties, Margaret Alva, minister of state for parliamentary affairs, is a leading woman member of the Congress(I). Founder-convenor of the Mahila Congress, the party's womens' wing, Mrs Alva has been a prominent leader since the early Seventies, when she was made a joint secretary of the AICC. She left Mrs Indira Gandhi's party in 1979, became a leading opposition member in the Rajya Sabha, and rejoined the party in 1983. She is an active housewife besides being a leader: our correspondent found her helping her with her child's homework when he went to interview her.

Q: *You are a successful woman politician, having become a minister. Your mother-in-law, Mrs Violet Alva, too was a leading woman politician in her times. Have you ever faced any discrimination or obstruction from men in politics?*

A: You see I think it is a question of attitudes. For instance, there are many who believe that being a minority is a handicap. But as Christians, we have always come into Parliament with the support of the majority community. Whether it is the Rajya Sabha or in the local elections, I have never felt that I was different from the rest: I just fitted in. So also I have found as a woman. It is true that probably one has to fight a little more and may be some of us appear to be a little more aggressive than we should be, that is because you always feel that you have got to prove that you can do something, that you are as good as the men or generally better than them if you are to be accepted. So, in that sense, it is a tough battle every woman fights. But I must say that nobody has ever held it against me in any field that I am a woman—whether while I am speaking on a public platform or while being member of committees—I have always foundthatone has been appreciated if you are prepared to do the job or if you are capable of doing it. But I don't think any woman in politics can be pushed out or not be allowed to do something. But the point is that one should not expect to get something just because you are a woman. That would be reverse discrimination. There are some who believe that because women must be given representation, whether you are fit or not whether you can do the job or not, you must get it because you are a woman, I think that is also unfair.

Q: There is a new thrust on women in the government's policies. What is the reason for this?

A: I think the party has gratefully acknowledged the role that the woman voter played in the recent elections. The massive mandate which the Congress(I) received was in a large way due to the votes of the women. Besides that, I think even in the party, the Mahila Congress had played a very big role in the last one year and particularly in the recent elections in mobilising voters for the party. I think it was very gracious of the Prime Minister that in one of the first statements after the victory, speaking in Delhi, he thanked the women voters for the support which they extended to the party. I think it was but natural that he kept the women of India in mind while formulating the policies of the new government. The first thing he did was the setting up of the separate ministry for women and social welfare. We did have emphasis on women's programme before, but now there is a ministry with a woman minister, that too a senior person like Mrs Margatham Chandrashekhar, member of the Congress Parliamentary Board, with a long innings in politics. This shows that the Prime Minister wants something to emerge, something concrete to come from this new ministry Even in the President's address to the joint session of Parliament, a special mention was made about a new approach to women's problems and the President announced the scheme for free education for girls upto the high school level. This I think is a very welcome step in the right direction. Women have never lagged behind in their desire to do something, but I think education and training for the Indian woman is a prime necessity if they have to play their role as equal partners in nation building.



The Congress(I) has gratefully acknowledged the role that the woman voter played in the recent elections. The massive mandate which the party received was in a large way due to the votes of the women. Besides that, I think that even in the party, the Mahila Congress had played a very big role.

Q: You were the founder-convener of the Mahila Congress and still occupy this organisational post. Why was the Mahila Congress formed, earlier only a cell in the AICCdealt with women...

A: Well, there were some who sarcastically said that it was only an election gimmick and that once the elections are over we would be forgotten. But I must say that ever since Rajivji took over as the general secretary of the party, he was very particular about revitalising the front organisations While women did constitute a very large part of the membership as well as the support base of the party, women were just pushed into what used to be called the women's wing, or the women's front or the women's cell—it was variously known in the different states—which really did not enjoy an independent or autonomous status. When Rajivji came, he said if the youth had been given so much of freedom to act and so much scope for initiative, then why shouldn't the women get it also?

It is very significant that in the eve of the centenary year of the Congress the women got an independent headquarters in Delhi as the national headquarters of the Mahila Congress. We were given all the necessary facilities: we were consulted on the question of selection of women candidates for the Lok Sabha elections. Now, for the first time, state conveners of the Mahila Congress are members of the state election committees, which gives them the

right to select women candidates in the states. In the past, the selection of women was left entirely to the men. It is basically Rajivji's approach. He said that unless you get the women involved and allow them to feel that they have some sort of status, and some kind of stake in organising and mobiling, the women will not be able to really contribute their best. Now the Mahila Congress has an independent constitution. That in itself has given the women more self-confidence and the desire to do something. Of the 38 women put up by the party in the recent elections, apart from two in Andhra Pradesh, all have won. Now we have the largest number of women in the history of the Lok Sabha.

Q: What is the criterion for giving tickets to women candidates?

A: You cannot eliminate any one section and bring in someone else. But I would say one thing. For instance, when women candidates were discussed, there were many who said that Mahila Congress should be discussed, there were many who said that the Mahila Congress should take the seats where there were no sitting members of the party, which meant we should take all the seats where the party had lost in the last elections. So we said that the women cannot be expected to take only those seats which had gone to the opposition for one reason or the other. So far, women have been given tickets not only because they are members of the women's wing, but because they have been recommended by either the chief minister or the PCC president. Now we are insisting that if you want to build women's organisation in the party, then tickets have to be given to party functionaries, (and to) the women who have given time and energy to the party. And in that sense, the trend really is changing now As far as your question about the criterion is concerned, we would certainly want the young and the experienced. We cannot go on with the same faces for ever. But we would also think of bringing women from the reserved constituencies. Men normally corner the reserved seats for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes: we want women also to be nominated from these constituencies. Besides, we are getting many educated, professional women who want to contest the elections. So, I think the composition would be quite a mixed bag: age, rural, urban communities to be represented. In fact, this time we are trying to push the idea that we should have one seat per parliamentary constituency to be contested by



No woman can be successful in politics without the support of her husband. From the beginning if I have been able to do anything outside the house it has been because I have a very understanding, encouraging and patient husband. But with the children I had to give up a lot of things which I would have enjoyed doing...

women. If this is done, we would have, apart from the district convener of the Mahila Congress, perhaps, also the local MLA to build up the nucleus for the organisation at the district level.

Q: Talking of professional women, you yourself are a lawyer. Have you taken up any women's cases in the court?

A: Yes, I have always felt most involved in issues which concerned women. Or, where the question of constitutional rights were involved. My husband and I fought the air hostesses case which went to the Supreme Court—the female cabin crew of the Indian Airlines felt that they were being discriminated against purely on the basis of sex. They knocked on many doors, but even the unions were not prepared to help them, because they were also male-dominated. So, finally on my advice they agreed to go to the Supreme Court. I would not say that we got a 100 per cent victory, because we were asking for parity in all service conditions, including retirement age, with the male staff, who go on working till the age of 55 or even upto 58 years, whereas the female staff had to retire at 30 years or with great difficulty, extended upto 35 years. But now it has been accepted that the women can work till they are 45 years old. Earlier, the air hostesses were not allowed to marry, or even if with permission they married, they were barred from becoming mothers. And even if they did not marry and did not have children, they still had to get out at 35 years. So, all this has gone now, they can marry, have children and not stop working at the age of 35 years. I have told them what we can do now is go to court again when you reach the age of 45 years and say that there is discrimination (LAUGHS) and, perhaps, win the right to work as long as men do.

Q: A last question and a personal one. I find that you are an active housewife apart from being an active politician. How do you reconcile the two roles?

A: I must say it's very difficult. I have four children and the youngest is just five-and-a-half. It's a real challenge. For one thing, you just don't really want to let somebody else take your role as mother. In fact, nobody else can take this role. So comes the question what you (have to) give up to make your presence at home felt, particularly the growing children. There have been times, particularly in 1980, when my youngest child was just three months old and my (Rajya Sabha) term was expiring that year. I said that I had enough of politics and I wouldn't contest the elections and concentrate at home. I was literally forced by my political colleagues that time to contest. For one thing, you realise that the children miss you when you are not at home and for another, for a politician there are no fixed hours (of work)—I give credit to my husband, no woman can be successful in politics without the support and patience of a husband. From the beginning if I have been able to do anything outside the house it has been because I have a very understanding, encouraging and patient husband. But with the children I had to give up a lot of things which I would have enjoyed doing, for instance, whether it be seeing movies, or going regularly to a club, and socialising. Even a simple thing like shopping, marketing, becomes a family affair. I take the children along, so that they can spend that time with me. It is not difficult for a working woman to organise her time. If you are working, you have to be organised.

Interviewed by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

Did Women Vote Rajiv Gandhi to Power?

Yes, writes Ranjit Gupta, after analysing voting trends

On 24 December large number of women throughout the country turned out to vote in the elections. It was a big day for women. Even those from the less affluent classes put on their holiday best and queued up before the polling booths. Newspapers carried photographs of 90-year-old women being carried to polling stations to cast their votes. Adult franchise gave the lowest, the most down-trodden in the country the occasion to assert their rights.



A woman casts her vote in the Lok Sabha elections

But 1984 was a remarkable year in electoral history. The average turnout of voters in 1980 was 56 per cent. It had never been above 63 7 per cent for the last ten years But this year in West Bengal, for example, the turnout reached a record 69.01 per cent The countryside average was also higher than ever. In the three Calcutta constituencies—Calcutta North-East, Calcutta North-West and Calcutta South—and Jadavpur, the average of eligible voters was higher. The important point is that the women came out in record numbers. Take the case of Jadavpur, the Lok Sabha constituency in the south of the city. Jadavpur had been a dominant left political arena, till the recent polls. It was here that a comparatively unknown young woman, Dr Mamata Banerjee (a Ph.D. in history and a lecturer in the Jadavpur college) defeated the formidable CPI(M) candidate Somnath Chatterjee (an affluent barrister-at-law) by nearly 20,000 votes. The Jadavpur parliamentary constituency is not entirely urban: parts of it are rurban areas like Jadavpur, Mathurapur and Baruipur. These areas have for so long been dominated by the CPI(M) that they have come to be known as the Red Fort of the CPI(M). But the votes swung slowly but determinedly in these areas in favour of the Congress(I) Baruipur went to Mamata Banerjee as did Mathurapur. Only in Jadavpur proper, Somnath Chatterjee had a semi-marginal lead. In Behala, the tide started turning powerfully in Mamata Banerjee's favour. What was remarkable was that in Kabitirtha (the Kidderpur area), Muslim women came out in masses along with the men and voted for the Congress(I). Unprecedented things happened in the Red Fort areas too. Elderly women, who in the past had always voted left, led younger women voters to the polling stations. Judging by the results it can be presumed that the majority of them voted for the Congress(I) this time. This could be guessed from the earlier opinion polls, organised by the *Telegraph* (the English daily from Calcutta) in the middle of December 1984.

In the Telegraph-MODE opinion poll conducted in the Calcutta South constituency, 47 per cent of the people interviewed said they would vote for the Congress(I), 25 per cent said they would vote for the CPI(M) candidate, while the number of "can't say/won't say" was 22 per cent. Similarly in Calcutta North-East constituency, 49 per cent of those questioned for the survey said they would vote for the Congress(I); 26 per cent for the CPI(M) and 22 per cent remained non-committal. In the Jadavpur constituency, 44 per cent said they would vote for the CPI(M) candidate, 36 per cent for the Congress(I) and 17 per cent said they could not say/would not say who they would vote for. In the Calcutta North-West constituency, 62 per cent of those interviewed for the opinion poll said they would give their votes for the Congress(I), 15 per cent said they would vote for the Left Front (here a Forward Bloc) candidate, and 19 per cent remained non-committal.

Now from this non-committal percentage of the electorate, a shrewd man, even if he is not a psephologist can make a good guess: the majority of the "don't knows" would vote against the government. They do not speak out because of possible ruling party reaction. This correspondent spent most of his service life in the Congress regimes and just before the polls those days too "no commitment" meant a vote against the party in power. It was noted that slum women from the south-west and the south-east city constituencies also voted en masse for the Congress. Let us go back to the Muslim-dominated area of Kabitirtha. It is, in fact, a gigantic hovel of the urban proletariat The women of the Muslim poor are socially worse off than their sisters from other religions. That Mamata Banerjee was able to grab the votes of these female hewers of

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wood and drawers of water was remarkable. It would not be surprising if the longshoremen husbands (and part-time smugglers) also were persuaded, by these underfed and sometimes physically tortured wives to follow their political path, while ordinarily it is the other way around

In West Bengal, the Left Front won in 26 seats, a setback result but not necessarily dispiriting. What may have caused widespread Leftist dismay is the aggregate total of the votes polled partywise: the Congress(I) 50.5 per cent, the CPI(M) 37.7 per cent; the RSP 3.7 per cent; the Forward Bloc 4.3 per cent and the CPI 3.9 per cent.

This unhappiness on the part of the Leftist leaders may have been enhanced by the fact that the Left Front was in power when the polls were held. The fact that large bodies of voters were left out of the list, creating pocket boroughs in many parts of the state cannot be ignored when other measures of winning votes were available. In consequence, the poll results may have conveyed to the ruling party's leaders that the mass of the voters have turned against them. They have, together as the Left Front, and separately as members of the constituent parties, tried to examine the causes of the voters' volte face. The CPI(M) conclusion has been that they have drifted away from the electorate, a truism which need not have been blared forth. The other parties with partial justification have blamed the major party—the CPI(M)—for their political arrogance and consequent electoral setback. In other parts of the country, for example, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Party have blamed the Indira *hawa*; the only person who has expressed his complete bewilderment is Chaudhary Charan Singh. But then this gentleman has been in a state of bewilderment for years.

Rajiv Gandhi has himself tried to analyse the causes of the Congress avalanche. He has not been as simplistic as to attribute his victory to the "Indira *hawa*;" for a triumph like his could not have been caused by a *hawa* but only by a hurricane called "Indira." Rajiv Gandhi has regarded the verdict as a vote for a change and continuity. This is a good rationalising effort. He has also pointed out that a large percentage of the voters were below 40 years of age who wanted to vote for a young team of the hundred-year-old Congress. It has also been mentioned that the vote meant a support for stability and security, in ensuring which the Janata government of 1977 had not shown any particular skill. These are all true, but each in itself is inadequate to explain the high tide of support for the Congress. It may be argued that most analysts may have left out the major, but the overwhelming dominant factor that is the vote in cold fury by the women en masse for Indira Gandhi's Congress. It is something much more than "sympathy" for Rajiv Gandhi. We are aware that we do not have a system of proportional representation in the Parliament but direct representation, in which a plus or minus of five per cent votes can



Sujit Ghosh

Women waiting to vote

mean a victory or defeat. Therefore, if and when the women vote en masse for a certain party, a landslide victory for that party is assured.

There were powerful reasons for such support from the women. As Indira Gandhi herself said before her death that the women in India were second class citizens. They are not much better off in many other countries, including those in the West, but in India their lot is particularly dismal. The only ethnic groups where the women are and have to be treated with respect are mainly the *adivasis* and the matriarchical communities and these too do merge in several cases. But elsewhere in India until the mid-nineteenth century, the woman used to be burnt on the funeral pyre of her dead husband as *sati*, for merit for herself, or for financial gain for the relatives. The female children, as potential non-earners, used to be killed. If this is not a general practice in many communities now, the arrival of a girl-infant causes dismay. For when she grows up she has to be married off, usually with a dowry. This pernicious system is widespread, and has even penetrated into the Muslim community. A Muslim has not merely the right to divorce his wife by word of mouth and ritual right to marry more than once; nowadays, instead of agreeing to *den-meher* in the marriage contract (as the alimony for possible future divorce), many Muslim young men have been known to demand dowry in cash and kind. In north India, in particular, a disagreement on dowry between the two parties has been known to cause "bride burning." The women workers get lower wages in the fields and factories. She, after feeding her growing children, and demanding husband, has the least to eat (a matter which has been demographically suggested). She is subjected to worse fates. She has been known to be the victim of physical torture by her husband, rape by men, and then to the ultimate act in torture: slaughter.

To these Indian women, Indira Nehru-Gandhi governing hundreds of millions of people, a ruler at whose bidding thousands sped, was a person of admiration and respect. Yet they sometimes voted against the Congress for some valid reasons. But when Indira Gandhi was slaughtered by two men who were paid to protect her, the Indian woman realised that Kamrunissa Khatun, Nilima Devi and Indira Gandhi were all sisters under the skies. Since then, there has grown in the minds of women a sense of identification with Mrs Gandhi and it is a feeling which has come to stay. Rajiv Gandhi will win many more victories and the opposition may take note of the feminine thinking. There have been defeats for the Congress in isolated pockets in the last elections but there were other major factors to neutralise the women's votes. Every woman cannot be Abhaya of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee or Chitrangada of Tagore or Lysistrata of Aristophanes. But she can at last combine with other women and vote Rajiv Gandhi to power. There are enough facts to support this contention.

CONVERSATION

"This Generation Has to Pay for Its Future"

Finance Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh told M.J. Akbar

Finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh is perhaps the least self important chief of this vast and vital ministry that we have had in recent times. Without oozing any of that bogus Uriah Heep humility, he conveys an easy camraderie and approach characteristic of a man who does not need an office or a chair to define his worth and his ability. It was this self-confidence which prompted his resignation from the chief ministership of Uttar Pradesh—perhaps the second-most powerful political job in the country. Nor did he do so because he was forced to, which by itself is enough basis for entry into the Congress(I) hall of fame. The truth is that power has chased him rather than the other way round. Mrs Indira Gandhi was not too happy when he resigned, considering that he had the best image among the party chief ministers at that time. She later inducted him into the union ministry and gave him the sensitive commerce portfolio, safe in the knowledge that here was one minister who would survive a tenure in this ministry with his reputation safe. Mr Singh left government to take charge of his party's affairs and election campaign in Uttar Pradesh, his home state, when Mrs Gandhi was still Prime Minister.

And when Rajiv Gandhi formed his first true government, he showed he had even more faith in Mr Singh than his mother had. Pranab Mukherjee was dropped and Vishwanath Pratap Singh was made the new finance minister. Typically, within a short while of taking over, V.P. Singh had won praise from both ends of the political spectrum—Chaudhary Charan Singh on one side and Dr Ashok Mitra on the other. The first exclusive interview that the new finance minister gave was to **M. J. Akbar.** *While, in view of the coming budget specific details could clearly not be either discussed or even mentioned, the interview provides a glimpse of the new finance minister's view of the economy, and the priorities that have been established in his thinking.*

Q: *Mr Finance Minister, you have been given an enormous responsibility to control and give shape to the economy of the Rajiv Gandhi era. First, what are the most serious problems which you have inherited? Second, what are the most serious problems which you foresee in the immediate future—both long and short term? And what ideas do you have to tackle them?*

A: The first thing, of course, is that I don't think the finance minister controls the economy as such; he is a part of a general effort. Only his contribution is deeper. As far as the management of the economy is concerned, finance is just one part of it. But before discussing the economy, I



V.P. Singh: 'Growth has been possible through democracy'

would like to mention the parameters within which our economy is functioning: one, ours is a democratic set-up; two, it is a mixed economy; three, there are foreign exchange constraints; four, poverty is an economic reality. It is within these parameters that you have to make a response. You can find a brilliant economic solution, but it may not be conducive to political stability; a democratic set-up may not be able to absorb it.

It is a remarkable feat of the political leadership in India that growth has been possible, through democracy, with half the population below the poverty line. We could raise resources from these people to finance and fund the development of India from the stage it was at independence till today, and yet retain the ballot box; to coax and persuade these people to contribute as well as have confidence is a very major political achievement. A democracy also generates hopes from the government that a certain minimum of development will take place. Growth, progress is essential for the success of democracy.

Now, you are under constraints of foreign exchange today, concessional flows are drying up; more and more commercial borrowings will be the only window open to you. So how do you respond to this problem. These two issues are very linked. For instance, if you drastically cut your inputs (into the economy) the political fallout may become a problem. There is a cycle, it doesn't just stop here: political discontent can lead to ideal conditions for destabilising forces. If you try to solve the crisis only through borrowings you will walk into a debt trap. So you have to find your way in between We have however, managed very well so far as reserves are concered; the debt management, repayments are good.

Q: But soon you start IMF repayments, don't you?

A: Next year.

Q: How much pressure will that put?

A: This will initially increase a little pressure but it will still be well within manageable proportions. Coming back to what I was saying; poverty is one factor, and then there are the parameters of political development and commitment to democracy. Equity becomes very, very central in this structure. Equity, greater utilisation of existing resources is the key because you have constraints. There is also a rupee constraint. Poverty being what it is, there is a limit to what you can raise by saving.

Now you have to understand the parameters of the private sector and the public sector. You have to judiciously decide what extent of the resources you allow in the private sector for reinvestment and generation of growth, and how much you mark for investment in infrastructure where the private sector is not going to come—roads, railways, telecommunication, social services. I am talking simply of the basics I am not talking of medicine, though there are social investments in health and education, investments in human capital. So now here is another judgement to be made. Now the public sector has also played a very important role in the development of the Indian economy. At the same time, now it has to contribute to resource promotion

Q: So you are saying straight that profit accountability in the public sector has to be sharpened.

A: How does one convert savings, resources into investments? For this you will have to have imaginative policies. These are the parameters within which you have to think, and from here the smaller steps of specific decision making must begin.



In the recent period the economies of developing countries have moved through a crisis. Even in that period we have been able to keep our heads above water.

Q: I don't think there has been a single finance minister who at the beginning of his term has not spoken of imaginative policies. Somehow they don't seem to emanate later.

A: Well, finance is a very conservative ministry; and imagination. You have those doubts rightfully and I don't think I should start claiming right at the beginning that I will be very much different from any other finance minister. My claiming so might just prove how green I am! But I think we will talk about imaginative policies after the budget.

Q: One of the serious problems is the deficit that has been building up. The expenditure caused by the social problems that have bedevilled us particularly in the last year, seem to have widened the gap. Are we going to see some different approaches to solving this deficit?

A: The deficit crisis, as I see it, cannot be mechanically solved. It is again linked with a certain minimum of democracy, hope, ambition of the people. But we cannot go on having large deficits year after year because



Mediaphoto

This generation has to pay for its future. There is unfortunately nothing free, and least of all progress. It has to be paid for.

ultimately the people will pay for it. You get nothing out of printed money, you cannot generate wealth by printing money

Q: *The escalation has been enormous in the last three years*

A: Certain investments, even developmental investments, are inflationary in nature, you have to consider, for instance, the gestation period for a project But we cannot go on having fresh projects without completing the last lot. When you go on spending money, pumping in money and you are not getting the products or the services against it, it is bound to be inflationary. So I think it is a better policy, it is more judicious to complete the ongoing projects at an earlier period rather than go for new starts all the time. It looks nice to lay foundation stones (*laughs*)...

Q: There should be fewer foundation stones, yes.

A: But fewer not as a matter of policy; we want of course more. But we do not want only stones, we want buildings. We want more projects certainly. It is not my policy to have fewer projects; that will give a wrong picture. Certainly I want more projects—but more completed projects.

Q: There has been a certain feeling in the space of the last month that there is a definite shift in the stress, if not necessarily in the policy, towards more cooperation through the private sector with the West which has better technology, better product management or production processes to offer. Is there some truth in this contention?

A: There has been liberalisation generally in our import policy as well as in our industrial policy to open up industries and bring in technology, needed for areas where we don't have the technology, or where it is important for us for our growth or for our exports. It is a good policy, and it has brought results in the growth of the corporate sector.

Q: It has certainly led to a boom in share prices. The stock exchange seems to have more faith in the government than ever before.

A: Well, it is not only the corporate sector which is in the private sector—the largest private sector is agriculture.

Q: Absolutely.

A: The largest private sector we have is agriculture and if you can manage even a small per capita income increase in agriculture it doubles the income growth in the lower segments. So from the equity point of view it is this sector which is very, very important.

Q: Yet the signals (we are reading only signals at the moment) say that television sets are getting higher priority than any major effort to create new wealth in the rural areas.

A: You see, in such a large country, there are serious problems. Unity is a crucial one. You yourself have brought out a book on unity. Media is a very powerful instrument which can be used to forge national unity. And audio-visual media is one of the most powerful instruments.

Q: As indeed we have seen in the last elections.

A:(*Laughs*) Well, it was the issues, not the strength of the media then. But television in the rural and remote areas can be a medium for education, for imparting new ideas for bringing those areas into modern India, the modern world and in that sense the order of the investments is very, very small. And the development of the country lies not only in factory building—it is the attitude of the people, it is their preparedness for going ahead, understanding the challenges and responding to them. And that is where the media matters, your press matters. If the newspaper matters, certainly television matters.

Q: There is only the small difference that the newspaper is not government controlled as yet.

A: But the opposition did not get any more votes because they got time on the television (*laughs*). They were given time on television but that did not fetch them any more votes. Perhaps they would have got more votes if they had not appeared on TV

Q: It is in this context that I wonder if you welcome or consider an accusation in Charan Singh's statement that you seem to be taking a leaf out of his book in your assessment of our problems.

A: I saw his reaction only on the teleprinter print-out and that's it. It is for him to raise such things. I have no comment

Q: *What are the kinds of stress, that you will give to the rural sector? Not only in terms of direct economic inputs but also social inputs like education.*

A: As for education, the Prime Minister has taken a very important decision—that girls will have free education right upto high school. I think that is a very important decision. But with our resource constraints I think we will have to take resourcesaway somewhere else.

Q: Have you considered the idea that the cuts could come, as in the West where this is a big issue, through a smaller government? Quite a large chunk of developmental expenditure actually is soaked up by the nature of the bureaucracy itself.

A: Well, that has to really depend from project to project, because some projects are highly capital intensive. Where social services are concerned there is no question of calculating a profit and loss.

Q: But the wastage factor becomes...

A: Certainly, this is something we have to look into and whenever it is possible we shall have to try to cut it.

Q: Well, if you do look into it you will be the first person to have done so.

A: Well, I don't think it is something which one person can look into. But I suppose it is time we will have to examine this. Not because we necessarily want to look into it, but perhaps we now *have* to.

Q: Where will you look for additional resources?

A: Well, resource raising has not been that much of a problem. We have been able to raise resources. But two things: one is that in the states there has been a heavy erosion of their resources, in terms of the electricity board and state transport and all that has gone down those drains. This has been a severe problem of the states. And then there is the finance commission report, you see. I think (it is) Rs 1,500 crores straight off. So that is one rise of the non-plan expenditure. And then there are subsidies also. You produce more fertilisers, you spend more on subsidies. That becomes a priority area because if you don't spend on fertilisers you will be importing grain, which will involve foreign exchange which we don't have.

Q: The question remains: Where do we get more from? There has been talk of some kind of cess on agricultural production beyond a certain limit, and this talk has been going on for some years.

A: Take resource raising as two things: first, resource raising in the sense of what goes into the government kitty. The second is tapping savings for investments which may not necessarily be in the government's purview, but which certainly go to promote economic activity and thereby employment and thereby the gross domestic product goes up. That is one way also of mobilising total resources of the country. When you are thinking of the country it is not only the government you are thinking of. It is the total activity in the country.

But certainly you will have to mobilise more resources and as I have said right at the beginning, this generation has to pay for its future. There is unfortunately nothing free, and least of all progress. It has to be paid for.

Q: This progress we would gladly pay for, were it not that too much cynicism has crept into the ability of the government to utilise the money we have given them, productively and not indulgently.

A: Well, you may point out this defect here and that defect there, but overall if you see from where, as I said even earlier, the total leadership led the country to, you will find much to applaud.

There may be criticism here and there and even valid criticism I don't say everything is perfect. But overall there has been trust and people have believed and trusted and certainly there has been scope for... But there should be no grounds for complacency

Q: I agree. Four years before this country got independence, millions were dying in Bengal and we have solved that problem at least.

A: No, but even in the recent period the economies of developing countries have moved through a crisis. Even in that period we have been able to keep our heads above water.

Q: Now, to take unplanned expenditure. In the last five years, for inst-



We do not want only foundation stones, we want buildings. We want more projects certainly. It is not my policy to have fewer projects...

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ance ...

A: Non-plan is a technical sort of definition. Because if there is a plan, the next year it becomes non-plan. There are continuing shifts in definition.

Q: Agreed, but two obvious examples in the span of the last five years are both Asiad and Maruti. The money for both came from outside the plan. Are you going to allow, whatever the stress or priorities that may crop up, much of this sort of expenditure? Or will you try and fight this?

A: As far as the Maruti project is concerned the very demand of Maruti proves that it was the right investment.

Q: No, I am not challenging whether it was right or wrong. That is not the point. My point is that the Rs 250-300 crores which went to Maruti must have come from outside the plan allotments.

A: (*With a smile*) I think Arjun will answer (*Arjun Sengupta had just entered the room*). Akbar is asking that if you suddenly come up with projects which have not been included in the plan, how do we cope up with the resources for that? It must be a cut on other things. (*Returning to questioner*) The right of planning does not end with one document, it is a continuing process. So when it is decided to take up a new project in the middle of a plan it is because of a change in overall priority.

Q: The trouble with this sort of thing is to prevent it from degenerating into licence

A: Of course, you will see that there is no...

Q: *You had a very rare beginning in the sense that two of the most trenchant critics of the Congress government—Charan Singh and Dr Ashok Mitra—have both ended up praising you. What kind of policy are we going to see in the states?*

A: Realistic.

Q: A very short word which has very large implications.

A: It couldn't be otherwise.

Q: (Laughs) *No, I mean will the language of confrontation continue or will there be some effort to sit down and settle issues?*

A: Confrontation is not the essence of the situation, so why should we make an issue out of it?

Q: This is a question one has been asking for a long while actually.

A: If it is basic to a situation then of course one can raise the question. But if you make a question out of any situation, then it is different. It has to be cooperation (between the centre and the states); it cannot be confrontation. But if confrontation means that you draw as much as you want from the Reserve Bank and nothing should be pointed out to you, then I don't agree with the definition of confrontation. If someone points it out and you say that it is confrontation then it is a different definition of confrontation.

Q: Well, I know the West Bengal government pleads guilty to that but the justification that it tries to present is that it is not the most guilty in these matters. There are other Congress(I) ruled states

A: Economically, it is the same whether it is West Bengal or UP. They all have problems. States have to show a certain amount of growth. I think in this we have to start a dialogue, we have to understand the overall situation. We cannot be so insensitive to their demands; their need for developmental growth, etc. So, I think we have to sit down and collectively work things out. You see, nothing comes out of accusing one another. Of course, who has done what is obvious, but that is not the solution.

Q: One of the accusations that have been levelled against your government in the last few years is the one concerning the presentation of the sweet budget which means that you raise administered prices either before or after the budget and then present a budget which does not truly reflect the quantum of economic changes or the resource mobilisation that you have done. Are we going to see prices being raised before the budget or after? Are we going to see a political budget or a financial budget after a long time?

A: Presenting the budget is not the sole economic activity of the government. So, you cannot hope that everything will be in the budget and thereafter there will be no economic activity. It is a continuous process, including the budget.

Q: But it is a kind of theme song of the year, isn't it?

A: The budget basically reflects the tax structure and our financial managements during the course of the year. Prices depend on the exigencies of the period

Q: Well, if it is economic exigencies we are talking about, it is fine. But if it is political exigencies that you are referring, then it is different.

A: Many times prices go up because the costs of the raw materials or wages have gone up. There are so many factors, so these have to get absorbed. You can go easy for some time but sooner or later these factors have got to be absorbed.

Q: We can, perhaps, round up this discussion with the question: What personal challenges do you foresee in the near future? Challenges in terms of what is most likely to affect economic growth. What are the problems that you foresee that you will have to tackle very urgently

A: I think I will talk about this after the budget.

Q: *So, let us come to the other part of the conversation: UP politics. Or can't you talk about it till after the Assembly elections?*


Mediaphoto

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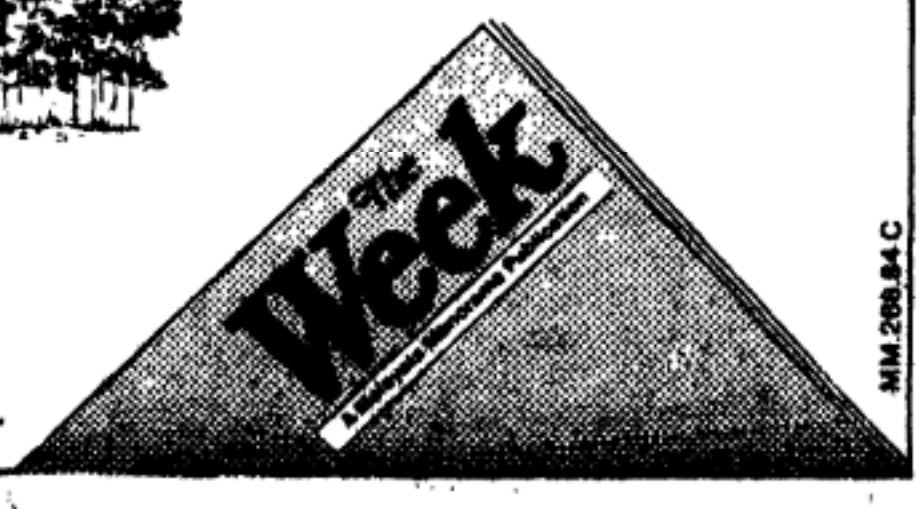
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Never a Week behind.

A: No, nobody can throw me out because of that.

Q: Though it is a bit late, I have always wanted to ask you: What happened in the aftermath of your resignation as the chief minister of UP? You resigned to make the point that law and order had crossed an acceptable level in UP, which we realised when we were covering atrocities in Sadhopur or wherever. Do you think your departure helped to improve the law and order situation in the state?

A: No, it was not that way. It was not that law and order had gone out of hand, and I had not resigned on that. I had resigned on grounds of credibility and even in my letter I had said that so far as the dacoity menace was concerned the police had done a very good job. Otherwise, that would have been a stigma on the sacrifice of the honest officers. All the top grade dacoits were liquidated during my chief ministership.

Success was complete on this front. But it was a question of credibility: What happens if in spite of liquidating the major gangs, an incident does happen? Now if I go on stating that I liquidated these gangs, you say that such an incident has happened, then it is a question of credibility.

In fact, during my chief ministership Chhabiram was liquidated. For ten years no one could touch him. He had a gang of about a 100 men. Anar Singh, Mahavira, all were eliminated during that time. I fulfilled my promise which I had taken in 1980, that these gangs would be eliminated—all the top gangs. When I say all, I mean all Phoolan was a creation of the newspapers, but all the others were eliminated by the time I left office. I think I am proud of it and the police are proud of it. But it was a question of credibility.

Do I go on arguing with the people by presenting data and facts and the names of the gangs or say yes or no. I stood by my word since there was an incident, I don't want to argue with it.

This is an area where there are no rules of constructive responsibility and dialogue with the people. There are no reference books and it is entirely within you and the language you want to talk is entirely yours.

Q: You lost a brother to some dacoits.

A: Yes, then this was a question of...that I made a promise. There has been tremendous success. Never in the history of UP has there been such success. And everybody recognises this: you go to Mainpuri and the people there say that development or no development they have got their night's sleep because of me. But do I go on arguing and give data to people if I say I have promised this and this is going to happen? After all, it was one washerman who raised the question of Sita and Sita was banished. He didn't argue I put her in fire, she's chaste and she's very...he didn't produce any arguments that I have gone through these tests (*laughs*). This is a dialogue between languages...

Q: I think we should introduce classes of Ramayana *among politicians.*

A: This a difficult language you see, you have to be...

Q: The problem still remains in East UP to a large extent. The gangs you were talking about were really from...

A: (They) Ran away to Nepal during my time.

Q: Did they? I thought they were under the protection of politicians, some including your Congress variety. You know this business of patronage between politicians and dacoits in Bihar and UP has reached serious proportions. You know the realities and it is not a disease which is restricted only to the Congress.

A: Gorakhpur in east UP was the area where (Virendra Pratap) Shahi and Hari Shankar (Tiwari) operated. Both are now in jail. Both fought the election, but we put up our own candidates and we won. So the political answer is also being given and of course the administrative answer has also been given. So that's how you fight it. So far the Congress has shown its determination in this regard.

Q In Bihar the record is not quite the same, I'm afraid. Some of the Congress MLAs' supporters have less than clean records. Will we see a better list this time in the interests of a clean government?

A: I think the opposition can answer this better.

Q. No, no, no, the opposition we can ask separately.

A. They have more to say on this subject. Some of these parties have been... if you draw up a list of opposition party members the *thanedar*'s list and their membership list will be the same. The Sanjay Vichar Manch was built that way in UP. As far as the character of our candidates is concerned you may have seen the statement of the PM and there will be no compromise on this.

Q: Is there any prospect of a change in UP's chief ministership?

A: Certainly not till the elections. There has not been any discussion on what will happen after the elections.



As far as the Maruti project is concerned,the very demand of Maruti proves that it was the right investment.

Reachi

The world of the spastic is one w
colours are muted. Some ho
cruel bodies. Yet, in spite of the
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enthusiasm in a school



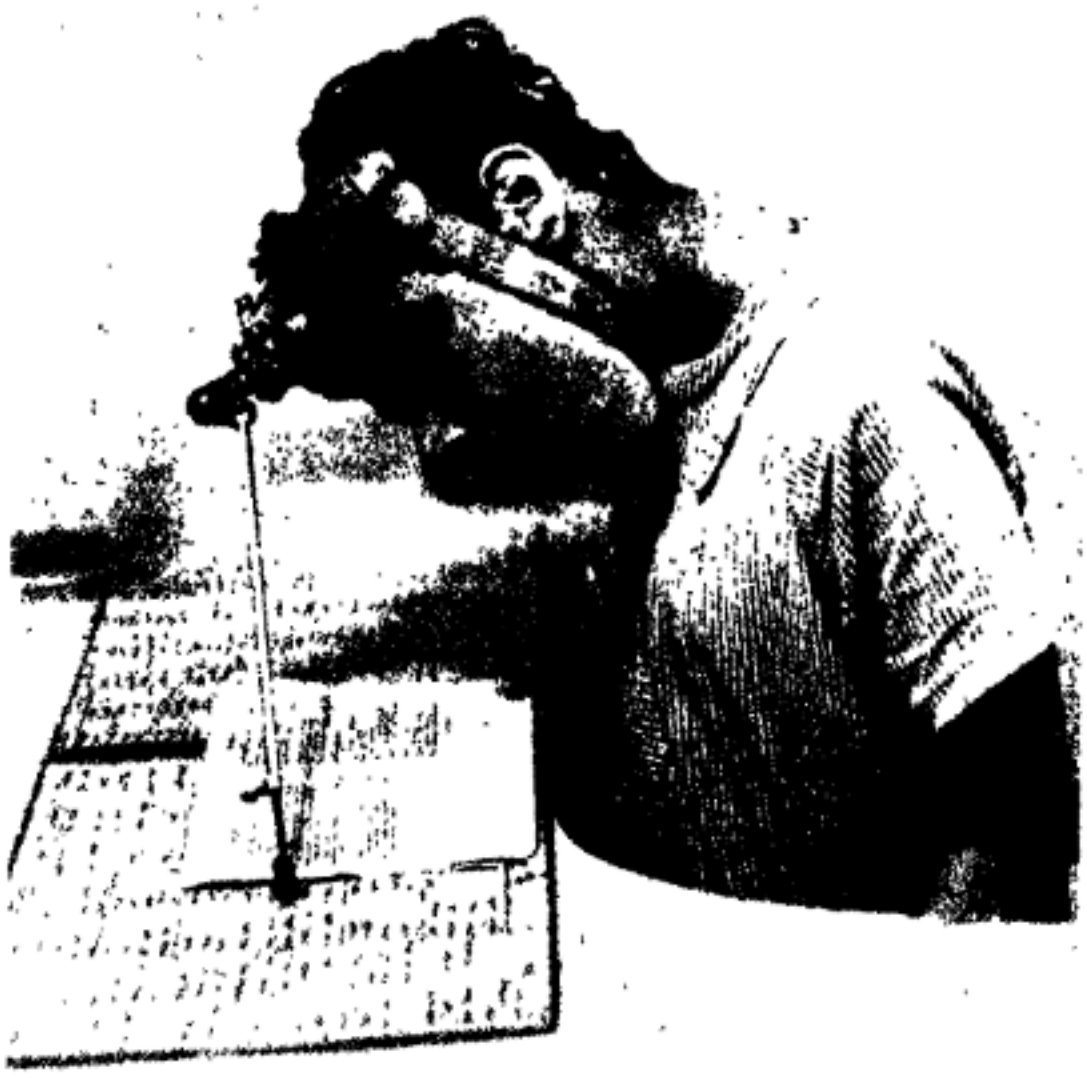


(Clockwise from left) The first steps; in a playful mood; striving to

)FEATURE

ıing Out

where hope is a rare dream and all
hose intelligent minds trapped in
heir deformity, their enthusiasm is
er Sunil Dutt was touched by this
ol for spastics in Calcutta.





ng to read and a game of football









(Clockwise from top) "You can't keep us down," the young boy seems to say; climbing stairs; and in a classroom: towards a better tomorrow

Sri Lanka's Voices of Reason

Sinhala liberals advocate a solution to the country's ethnic problem

The Indian media has had the opportunity to frequently report the travails and viewpoints of the oppressed Tamils of Sri Lanka. The attitude of a majority of the Sinhala politicians and the Buddhist Maha Sangha, which planted the seed of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism in the nineteenth century, has also to a certain extent been reported. But one of the most significant aspects of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka which has remained hitherto unreported is the existence of the "Sinhala liberals." There is a small but articulate section of the Sinhalese which, untainted by Buddhist revivalism, has been advocating a political and not a military solution to the Island's ethnic strife.

The Sinhala liberals, or the Sinhala Radical Intelligentsia as they are otherwise called, are essentially drawn from the academic institutions. They comprise university professors, members of research organisations, scholars, historians, political and social scientists. Having studied the ethnic relations in its entirety, these academicians have been able to adopt a dispassionate historical perspective of the troubled relations between the Tamils and Sinhalese of Sri Lanka. The liberals have been drawing more followers among the educated members of the Sinhalese public who are beginning to support and appreciate their viewpoint.

The Sinhala liberals have not only gone to the extent of repeatedly asserting that a political solution is the only way to settle the ethnic conflict. They have also specified that a political solution implies the provision of regional autonomy for the Tamils. In this context one can understand India's reportedly "lukewarm" attitude to Commonwealth secretary-general Shridath S. Ramphal's views regarding the Sinhala liberals and his efforts to bring about a consensus. India was naturally not very enthusiastic about the proposal because it means traversing a diplomatic ground which has already been covered. Besides, what is the point of starting talks with the Sinhala liberals when they have repeatedly expressed in black and white their viewpoint on the resolution of the ethnic crises—which incidentally coincides perfectly with India's suggestions? The all-party conference which was initiated following the July 1983 race riots was only due to India's efforts and has proved two things: first, that there can be no consensus regarding a political solution as far as the Buddhist organisations and opposition parties are concerned and second, the disastrous conclusion of the all-party conference (the drafted proposals were dropped) has raised serious doubts about the sincerity of the UNP government to resolve the issue amicably. The series of measures initiated by the national security minister, Mr Lalith Athulathmudali, indicate that the UNP government is more in favour of a military solution to the problem. Having been made to realise the futility of holding negotiations, India today is naturally reluctant to start all over again the charade of time-consuming negotiations, particularly when a lot of valuable time has already been lost.



The "goon squads" of the UNP cabinet ministers

As the opinions of the Sinhala liberals run contrary to that of the establishment, the former has come in for scathing criticism from the government-controlled press. The views of the radical intelligentsia are suppressed and all avenues of popular communication are blocked for them. This has effectively prevented the percolation of their views to the Sinhala masses. Consequently, the liberals have no option but to hold seminars and symposia where they can freely express their ideas. As and when the government gets wind of their activities, vilification campaigns are launched against them in the press. They are portrayed as betrayers of the national cause, which is of course the establishment of a Sinhala Buddhist nation. Apart from being branded as fifth columnists and traitors they are also accused of being Soviet stooges.

The Sri Lankan Movement for Inter Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) which has been active for the past five years has been con-

tinuously stressing the need for a "just political solution" as it is convinced that the "ethnic strife cannot be solved by increasing military action or by repressive laws." It points out that a "structure of decentralisation and devolution" should be offered to the Tamils. MIRJE's stand is that any interruption or cessation of the search for a political solution would only result in new levels of brutality and carnage and would entail "further loss of the democratic rights to which we have been accustomed, further brutalisation of our people and the strengthening of the authoritarian trends that are already evident in our society."

That the Sinhala liberal opinion is spreading is evident from the fact that Sri Lankan women got together to form their organ, called the Women for Peace and Ethnic Harmony. This group is vocal and active. They have taken out many peace marches, trying to mobilise opinion in favour of a political solution to the ethnic crises. The women have been urging an "immediate political solution over a military one," and have called upon "the women of Sri Lanka of all ethnic groups to work for a lasting peace in our country."

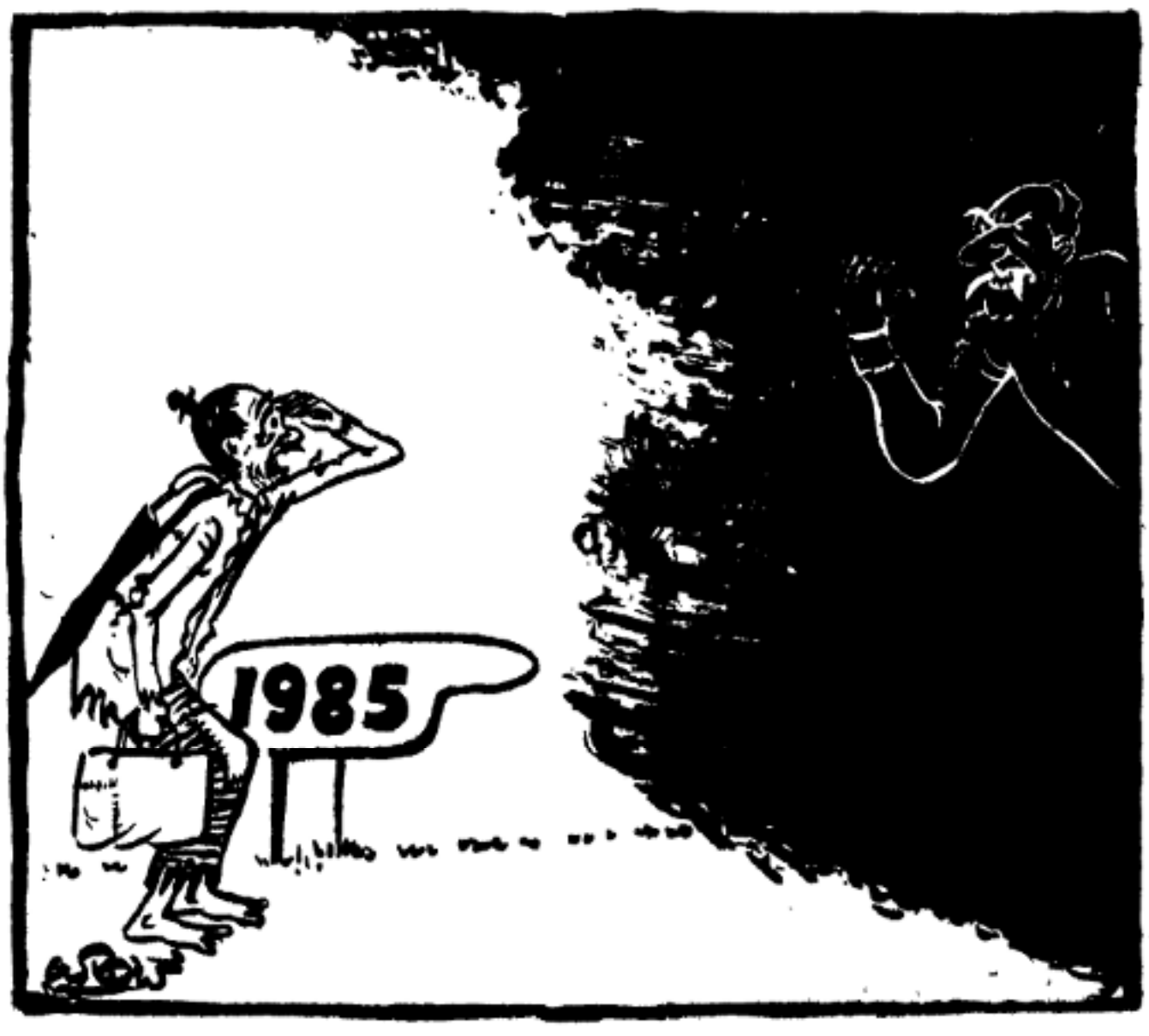
A spokesman of the Sinhalese liberals disclosed to this correspondent that due to the Buddhist Maha Sangha's constant emphasis on the "historic mission" to convert Sri Lanka into a Sinhala Buddhist nation, racism today has cut across all class and caste barriers of the Sinhalese community. Earlier, the working class had no interest in racism. However, since the Sixties even the Communist parties turned communal to retain their dwindling votebank. Time and again the Sinhala opposition parties sabotaged pacts that sought to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils. Every time the ruling party came towards settling the problem, the opposition parties spread the campaign that they had "sold out" to the Tamils, compelling the ruling party to renege. The spokesman revealed that all the Sinhalese politicians feared the Buddhist Maha Sangha and did not dare initiate any kind of action that would be frowned upon by the Sangha. The fear stemmed from the belief that the Sangha controlled the masses. As mass support is vital for the ruling party to stay in power, none of the politicians dared to risk the wrath of the Sangha. The spokesman added that the popular belief that the Maha Sangha controls the masses could well be an artificially created one.



President Jayewardene

According to the spokesman the resentment of the Sinhala masses against the Jayewardene government is rising to alarming proportions. The army is demoralised because it is unable to crush the Tamil militants. The Sinhala masses are unable to cope with the high cost of living. As the economy is in a shambles, the people oppressed by the yoke of inflation are turning against Jayewardene. The ripples of public unrest could escalate into a groundswell if effective steps are not taken. There are any number of Jayewardene jokes doing the rounds. Most of the jokes are mordant and often vicious and in a sense mirror the bitterness of the Sinhalese masses. The spokesman revealed another interesting piece of information. According to him more Sinhalese were emigrating (primarily to Australia and Canada) than Tamils. Insecurity has infected the entire nation: there is a general feeling that the system is collapsing. Worst of all there is political instability. According to the spokesman, President Jayewardene's position is shaky because of the intense factionalism in the ruling party. There is a palpable fear that the racist elements could group together to overthrow Jayewardene.

In 1979, at a seminar organised by the Social Scientists Association, several prominent Tamil and Sinhala liberals assembled for the first time to discuss and analyse some aspects of the social, economic and ideological roots of the continuing ethnic conflict. The papers presented by the eminent historians and social scientists have now been reproduced in the form of a book entitled *Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka*. The book is a must for all Sri Lanka watchers because the scholarly arti-



What will 1985 be like for Jayewardene?



Jayewardene shuts his ears to the din raised by national security minister Lalith Athulathmudali (left) claiming that Tamil terrorists have been put down and by Upil Mathews (right) saying that nothing has been done regarding the terrorists

cles are together an artful synthesis of historical research and practical realities. In addition to being an encyclopaedia of invaluable information, the book is a symbol of the soul-searching that the Sinhala liberals are capable of. The well-documented studies expose the mythic nature of the Sri Lankan history that traces the beginning of the island's civilisation to the arrival of King Vijaya and his band of followers from north India.

The papers point out that in actual fact the island had been for a long period inhabited by a people who were primarily agriculturists and that it was an amalgam of those inhabitants and subsequent migrants that laid the foundations of Sri Lankan society. A Sinhalese author traces the beginnings of the Sinhala Buddhist consciousness that was essentially based on the myth that the Sinhalese are of Aryan descent. This myth has been steadfastly developed over the years to the present time to legitimise the claims of the Sinhalese to Sri Lanka. The paper points out that the concept of a Sinhala Buddhist hegemony, which is to be protected from the inroads of a Tamil group from south India, has been pervasive from around the fourth century and even today forms the basis of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and of ethnic conflict. Tamil scholars trace the evolution of the Tamil consciousness which has "arisen as a response to the growth of Sinhala chauvinism." The economic aspects, the communalisation of the leftist parties and the colonial legacy, the education and employment policy that has exacerbated relations between the Tamil and the Sinhalese, the situation of the Tamils of Indian origin are all dealt with by the different authors.

One of the most brilliant papers has been presented by Prof. W. I. Siriweera, a senior lecturer in history at the university of Perandeniya. The dissertation exposes the prejudices that have crept into historical records. As most of the chroniclers were Buddhists, historical facts were often twisted or distorted to cater to their interests. Unfortunately, these versions have had a tremendous influence in shaping contemporary attitudes. As the prominent leftist leader Dr Colvin R. Desilva put it in a recent article, "The UNP government is shrieking from the housetops that our country is in the gravest crisis of its history since independence. The contention is true. But the crisis of which the government is shouting is not the true crisis. The crisis to meet which the government is summoning the nation to rally round it is a military crisis. The cause of that crisis is presented as Tamil terrorism. The task before the country is formulated as the task of defeating, destroying and rooting out that terrorism, that terrorism is a major element in the present crisis is true. But terrorism neither constitutes the crisis nor is its prime cause. The crisis we are facing is a crisis of the nation. The roots of that crisis lie in what history may characterise as our failure in the post independence period to build a Sri Lankan nation in which the majority and minority communities can co-exist peacefully."

The resentment of the Sinhala masses against the Jayewardene government is rising to alarming proportions. The army is demoralised because it is unable to crush the Tamil militants... President Jayewardene's position is shaky because of the intense factionalism in the ruling party.

Anita Pratap, Madras

Cartoons are from the Communist newspaper, *Atthha* (Truth)

ESSAY

Envy, Jealousy and Hate

BY KHUSHWANT SINGH

A handsome young athelete who had covered himself in glory having won a match for his side was standing on the pavement surrounded by his admirers. A man who had never seen him before nor had any interest in any game ran his car over him. When charged with murder, the man confessed that he had nothing personal against his victim but could not bear to see him being lionised.

In 1967 a succession of fires broke out in the hostels of Cornell University in which several students were roasted alive. The dormitories were specially chosen as they housed the best students of the campus. The coroner held that the arson had been committed by other students out of "human malice."

A middleaged spinster took the child of a close friend in her pram for an airing. She was suddenly overcome with envy of her friend's happiness in having a child and hurled the pram with the baby into the river... A 17-year-old boy shot dead his closest friend for no reason other than that the other was elected head of their class... A poor man walking along the road was overcome with envy and set a line of cars along the pavement on fire. When questioned by the police he said, "I could not afford to own an automobile, and I didn't want anyone else to have one."

All these incidents are true. Many more can be cited from India and elsewhere because envy, jealousy and hatred are a universal phenomenon. All of us suffer from envy, most of us also become jealous when our relationship with another is threatened. However the utmost most of us do is to indulge in malicious gossip against those we envy or endanger a relationship we have enjoyed. If allowed to go unchecked, envy and jealousy can turn to hate.

There is no language in the world which does not have words for envy and its manifestations like jealousy, hostility, malice, backbiting, gossip and scandalmongering. The closest Indian equivalents of envy are *hasad* in Urdu, *eersha*, *jalan*, *lalsa* and *dah* in Hindi.

Sophisticated societies have devised an etiquette whereby outbursts to envy are restrained. In less evolved societies like ours envy, jealousy and hate often play havoc with the smooth running of administration. No institution, office or department of government, not excluding the defence services bound by rigid rules of discipline, is without the envious and the envied. It is common knowledge that some Test matches are lost because some fielders deliberately drop easy catches to prevent good averages by their own bowlers.

Nirad Choudhuri is of the opinion that envy is born of fear. He goes on to state that "fear of enemies haunts Hindu life. This fear is, of course,



Illustrations: Subrata Ganguli

descended from the primitive fear of strangers, but was extended to an absurd degree. All relatives, neighbours, acquaintances, even wives and sons were regarded as potential enemies. Often quite unjustifiably, every Hindu regarded some of his acquaintances as his actual enemies and attributed his failures to their machinations. Beyond them were the unknown enemies, like the unknown gods of Greeks. In the social outlook of the Hindus the enemies of a person far outnumbered his friends. So one preoccupation in their life was to disappoint the enemies. So all well-wishers urged a man not to give joy and comfort to his enemies by quarrelling with friends and relatives. In Bengal, for instance, if two brothers quarrelled, a well-wisher would ask why they were providing joy for their enemies. Looking at a healthy child a grandmother, mother, or aunt would say: 'May he grow up like this and put ashes in the mouths of our enemies.' In the village the news of a woman in labour would not be given for fear that some enemy would utter spells to delay the birth of the child... Thus all religious observances and rites had a protective orientation. In addition, there were particular dieties and rites to ensure welfare and security. Some of the rites were meant to enlist support from a god or goddess against evil, others to bribe a mischief-making deity. For instance, in Bengal a goddess called Mangal Chandi or Chandi of Welfare was worshipped every Tuesday in order to secure insecurity from evil, and every Saturday *Sani* (Saturn), who in Hindu mythology is the personified evil eye, was worshipped to be bribed off from mischief-making."

Nirad Choudhuri is, as usual, harsher on Hindus than on other communities. As a matter of observation there is more evidence of uncontrolled envy among Arabs than amongst Indians and from Arabs more inherited by Indian Muslims than other Indians. Amongst agricultural communities like the Jats (Hindu, Sikh or Muslim), Rajputs and Aheers no sooner one of them becomes the village headman he has to watch out for the envious lest they bash in his skull.

Envy can be a creative impulse if it can be canalised into competitive-

ness—to do as well or better than others in the same field. Such one-upmanship should lead to progress. But when it is allowed to take the shape of wishing ill to others doing better, then it corrodes a person's inner being.

"Envy is a drive which lies on the core of man's life as a social being, and which occurs as soon as two individuals become capable of mutual comparison," writes Helmut Schoeck in his definite work on the subject *Envy* (Secker and Warburg). He further clarifies that envy requires at least two characters, the envier and the envied. "The more closely and intensively the envier concerns himself with the other person, the more he is thrown back on himself in self pity." It is a directed emotion which cannot occur without a target.

Psychologists have ascribed many reasons for this almost entirely human emotion (there is no evidence of it amongst animals). Melanie Klein in her work *Envy and Gratitude* is of the opinion that the root cause is sibling rivalry i.e. between children of the same mother for her attention. This is too simplistic an explanation. Before we go to its genesis, it is best to define the borderlines between envy, jealousy and malice.

Envy Versus Jealousy

Envy, as has been noted earlier, is largely a relationship between two people. Jealousy invariably requires three or more. It is the craving for the affection of another mingled with fear of losing it to a third party. Jealousy erupts when a rival appears on the scene Envy does not have to await a rival. As Schoeck points out, "Jealousy is only directed against a definite transfer of coveted assets or their removal elsewhere, never against the asset as such. Envy very often denies the asset itself." Envy is hateful emotion inasmuch as besides corroding the envier it seeks malevolent pleasure in seeing adversities befall the envied person. To wit Dryden:

> Envy, that does with misery reside,
> The joy and revenge of ruined pride.

Schopenhauer believes that the envier employs two methods—to praise what is bad, or alternatively, to remain silent about what is good. He goes on to add: "There is no vice, of which a man can be guilty, no meanness, no shabbiness, no unkindness. which excites so much indignation among his contemporaries, friends and neighbours, as his success. This is the one unpardonable crime, which reason cannot defend, nor humility mitigate, 'When heaven with such parts has blest him, have I not reason to detest him?' "

For some obscure reason the Germans have quite a sizable literature on this "vindictive, inwardly, tormenting, displeasure... in which one begrudges others their personal or material assets, being as a rule almost more intent on their destruction than on their acquisition." The professional thief is less tormented, less motivated by envy, than is the arsonist. Envy manifests itself when there is proximity as between relatives, friends and neighbours. It is roused as a Russian proverb says when a man sees with his ears as well as his eyes It afflicts all humans of all ages: if envy was a disease, the world would be a hospital. Not many people are willing to admit that they are sick with envy. The Swedes are an exception and have coined an expression "royal Swedish envy" for people who resent other people's prosperity. By Swedish law every citizen is allowed to examine another's tax return. A firm which publishes lists of families which have incomes above 36,000 dollars a year makes handsome profits out of people's desire to know which of their friends or neighbours are doing better than themselves and why.

A Deadly Sin

Many sayings are ascribed to Prophets. "Men should not envy one another what I give them out of my fulness," said Jesus, "The plagues of religion are envy, vanity and pride." The Prophet Mohammed denounced *hasad* as "something that devours faith as fire devours wood " An Imam



declared: "The true believer is he who wishes others well and who does not molest them, while the hypocrite is a man who is envious and who does not suffer any other to be happy."

Admonitions by prophets had little effect in excising envy out of their followers.

Gods and goddesses of Hindu and the Greek mythology were victims of envy. Episodes in the Ramayana and Mahabharata are replete with instances of envy amongst co-wives, stepmothers, cousins and neighbours. The classic story of Agamemnon's triumphal return home roused the envy of the gods.

Rare are those mortals who a friend arrayed
In fortune's smiles with eyes unenvying view:
The fateful poison rankling at the heart
A double smart inflicts, the sufferer mourns
His own peculiar woes—then at the sight
Of others more successful, sighs again.
I know mankind full well, nor need to learn
That empty as the shadow of a shade
Are many who with smiles may presence hail."

Clytemnestra greets her husband with the following words:

Oh! blest immunity from threatened woe!
Envy, begone—too well we grief have known.

Envious Practices

In all societies rites by which people hope to harm those they envy or hate are current as are rites by which those who wish them harm can be frustrated. Different forms of black magic were, and are, practised in different countries. Indian politicians hire tantrics to perform rites to harm their rivals. Mrs Gandhi's admirers were known to engage pandits to perform rites to preserve her from harm. The commonest evidence of envy among common people is belief in the "evil-eye." *Nazar lagaana* is to cast an envious eye on other's health, wealth and children. Of all slogans painted behind trucks and scooters the most popular is "*buree nazar say deykhney waley tera munh kaala!* (You who cast your evil eye upon me, may your face be blackened!") Although not as commonly used as the Urdu "*buree Nazar.*" Hindi has an equivalent in *ku-drishti*. Some people have effigies made of people they envy or hate and stick pins in them. In most agricultural communities peasants take precautions to preserve their cattle from the ill-effects of envious neighbours. In Bavaria and Austria peasants still mix "envy herb" with fodder to protect their cattle against *verneiden* or "envious sorcery."

An envious person will happily do harm to himself if by so doing he can also do harm to the person he envies. I recall litigation between two brothers who owned the largest cloth store in Lahore. I was appointed arbitrator by the court. When all attempts to divide bales of cloth failed, I suggested that each bale be cut in half. Even this suggestion was turned down. They agreed to cut the bales down the middle so that they could be of no use to either of them.

Another evidence of the prevalence of envy is the greater readiness



to believe and derive pleasure from hearing news of another's misfortune than joy in their success. "Any one can sympathise with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature to sympathise with a friend's success," wrote Oscar Wilde. Bad news makes better news than good news. The Germans have the most appropriate word for pleasure derived from another's misfortune—*schadenfreude*. It has a Persian equivalent in *Mathat*.

Envy in Poetry

In the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer lists "the foul sin of envy" amongst the seven deadliest and defines it in the words of St. Augustine as "sorrow at another's prosperity and joy in his harm." In *The Paradise Lost* Milton writes of the snake's envy of Adam & Eve in paradise

"Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th'infernal serpent! He it was, whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind...."

And later in the same poem Adam warns Eve:

"... for thou know'st
What hath been warned us, what malicious foe,
Envying our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work our woe and shame
By sly assault."

Price of Success

"He who attains renown rouses envy amongst his compeers," said Aristotle. "It is the practice of the multitude to bark at eminent man as little dogs do at strangers," wrote Seneca. Envy only exists amongst equals. The more nearly we are equal to the man with whom we compare ourselves, the greater is our envy. Bacon was of the opinion that the envy-ridden are often deformed or impotent—or persons "who cannot possibly mend their case and hence attempt to impair anothers." Kant regarded envy as belonging to the "abhorrent family of ingratitude and *schadenfreude*....the vice of human hate that is the complete opposite of human love. He defined it as the "tendency to perceive with displeasure the good of others, although it in no way detracts from one's own....it is only an indirect, malevolent frame of mind, namely a disinclination to see our own good overshadowed by the good of others, because we take its measure not from its intrinsic worth, but by comparison with the good of others and then go on to symbolize that evaluation."

Nietzsche made a perceptive analysis of *schadenfreude* which according to him came into existence only after man had learnt to see other men as belonging to his own kind and forming a society. He wrote: "Malicious joy arises when a man consciously finds himself in evil plight and feels anxiety or remorse or pain. The misfortune that overtakes B, makes him equal to A, and A is reconciled and no longer envious. If A is prosperous, he still hoards up in his memory B's misfortune as a capital, so as to throw it in the scale as a counter-weight when he himself suffers adversity. In this case too he feels 'malicious joy' *(schadenfreude)*. The sentiment of equality thus applies its standards to

the domain of luck and chance. Malicious joy is the commonest expression of victory and restoration of equality, even in a higher state of civilisation."

Neitzsche like many other philosophers believed that the idea of equality is in fact an expression of envy. He wrote: "When some men fail to accomplish what they desire to do they exclaim angrily, "May the whole world perish!" This repulsive emotion is the pinnacle of envy, whose implication is "If I cannot have something, no one is to have anything, no one is to be anything!"

Democracy as a Form of Envy

"Envy among other ingredients, has a mixture of love of justice in it. We are more angry at undeserved than deserved good fortune," wrote Hazlitt. "Envy is the basis of democracy," opined Bertrand Russell, "It is the passion that has given driving force to democratic theories." H L. Mencken in his essay *A Blind Spot* wrote: "No doubt my distaste for democracy as a political theory is due to an inner lack, to a defect that is a good deal less in the theory than in myself. In this case it is very probably my incapacity for envy...In the face of another man's good fortune I am as inert as a car broker before Johann Sebastian Bach. It gives me neither pleasure nor distress. The fact, for example, that John D. Rockefeller had more money than I have is as uninteresting to me as the fact that he believed in total immersion and wore detachable cuffs. And the fact that some half-anonymous ass has been appointed a professor at Harvard, or married to a rich wife, or even to a beautiful and amiable one: this fact is as meaningless to me as the latest piece of bogus news from eastern Europe."

"Democracy is depicted as brotherhood, even as altruism. All such notions are in error," he writes. "There is only one honest impulse at the bottom of Puritanism and that is the impulse to punish the man with a superior capacity for happiness—to bring him down to the miserable level of 'good' men i.e. of stupid, cowardly and chronically unhappy men. And there is only one sound argument for democracy, and that is the argument that it is a crime for any man to hold himself out as better than other men, and, above all, a most heinous offence for him to prove it."

There are people who enjoy making others envious. Grand wedding banquets, limousines and other forms of ostentatious display of luxuries usually designed to make others envious. An anthropologist who rewarded his native interpreter and asked him how would you spend the money got the reply: "I shall buy the biggest drum I can find and beat it in the village. Then everybody will envy me."

Not all manifestations of prosperity rouse envy. The style of living of Presidents in Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Kennedy's in White House or British monarchs in Buckingham palace do not rouse envy in the minds of the champions of equality because envy, as has been said before, operates only amongst equals It thrives in an egalitarian society and largely amongst people in the same profession "Have you ever been so imprudent as to praise an



artist to another artist, praised a politician to another politician of the same party? praised an Egyptologist to another Egyptologist? asks Bertrand Russel And answers: "If you have, it is hundred to one that you have produced an explosion of envy." Russel was also of the opinion that while women regard all other women as their competitors; men as a rule only have this feeling towards other men in the same profession. "Beggars do not envy millionaires, though of course they will envy other beggars who are more successful."

The cult of equality, the sense of justice and injustice are born out of man's capacity to envy. At the same time the rich and the privileged who are envied also suffer from a feeling of guilt towards the poor and the under-privileged and expiate it by gifts to charity, by indulging in radical talk and at times by joining revolutionary groups. This is particularly noticeable among the intellectual elite as "envy-avoidance behaviour."

Punitive Taxation

"Neither democracies nor dictatorships are averse to depending upon the supposed mutual envy in the population to produce maximum honesty in tax matters," writes Schoek. Not only tax payers willingly give information about other people in their business but in many countries including India tax authorities reward informers for snooping in other people's private incomes. In Switzerland tax returns are open to public scrutiny and in some cantons children sell from door to door copies of tax returns made by local residents. Punitive and confiscatory taxes are not levied from humanitarian motives, for the benefit of the poor but out of envy—the dissatisfaction produced in men not by what they lack but by what others have.

How to Overcome Envy

Envy as a positive force can fire innovators to invent new things in the spirit of "now I'll show them" attitude. As a destructive force it can band the envious together and insist on *status quo*.

The problems of most egalitarian societies are to foster positive envy and contain its destructive powers. Renouncing the world by taking *sanyas* rarely succeed in rooting out envy. More satisfying is acceptance of *kismet*—fate which gives more to some than to others. It is best to canalise it into a force of achievement: the will to outdo others on the same occupation as farmers, artisans, typists, business executives, scientists, painters, musicians or whatever.

Bertrand Russel found an antidote for envy in admiration: "Whoever wishes to increase human happiness must wish to increase admiration and to diminish envy." He discarded selflessness propagated by saints as a cure for envy because most saints envy other saints. "Merely to realise the cause of one's own envious feelings is to take a long step towards curing them," he advised. "Envy evil as it is and terrible are its effects, is not wholly of the devil It is in part the expression of a heroic pain, the pain of those who walk through the night; blindly, perhaps, to a better resting place, perhaps only to death and destruction To find the right road out of this despair, civilised man must enlarge his heart as he has enlarged his mind."

ANTI-DEFECTION BILL

A New Beginning

Efforts to clean up political life

In one step, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has covered a lot of ground. The passage of the Anti-Defection Bill, while strengthening his already strong position in the party, has shown him as a crusader for clean politics. It has also shown that as in the days of Jawaharlal Nehru, the ruling party is in for an era of inner-party democracy once again. Furthermore, the contradictions within the opposition have been laid threadbare all over again. Politics had become a dirty word since 1967, when the phase of the *aya ram* and *gaya ram* (the phrase was coined by the late Y. B. Chavan, when he was the union home minister) began. Defections by politicians had made the people at large begin to hate politicians.

In a democracy, while clean politics is imperative, the image of the politician, especially the elected representative, is important. Defections symbolised opportunism in totality. The people haplessly looked on while the elected MPs and MLAs switched sides with impunity and thereby mocked the popular mandate. People voted for a party, and rarely for an individual. The mandate of 1977, which brought about the fall of the Congress government, was negated when the disease of defections affected the Lok Sabha in 1979. The people reacted against this and voted Indira Gandhi back to power. In 1984 again, defection politics within the opposition parties was rejected by the electorate which chose to give the Congress(I) a mandate for stable politics. Appropriately, the new wave government chose the Anti-Defection Bill as its first step towards reassuring the people that politics had not become a dirty word after all.

This is not to say that the "Mr Clean" image of Rajiv Gandhi is unblemished. As AICC(I) general secretary, he did not murmur when defections were engineered in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh soon after the Assembly elections in these states by Bhajan Lal and Ram Lal, respectively, to form Congress(I) governments. When governments were toppled by defectors in Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh and the Congress(I) rushed to the defection leaders, G. M. Shah and N. Bhaskara Rao, to help them form governments, then too Rajiv Gandhi did not protest. The Moily Tapes scandal in Karnataka and the blatant use of money power to topple the Hegde government in Karnataka too did not attract Rajiv Gandhi's censure. In Sikkim and in Nagaland, defections were not scorned at. But that was the Rajiv Gandhi of 1984. The Rajiv Gandhi of 1985 has his eyes set on the next century. And for a leader to be able to sustain popular appeal, image-building exercises combined with preventive measures to ensure that the people's mandate is not reversed in any way other than elections, are necessary. By bringing forward the Anti-Defection Bill, while ensuring that he acquired a better grip over the party, Rajiv Gandhi also excused himself from the people for not having been able to do anything more concrete while he went back to them to seek votes in the Assembly elections. Nothing has happened on the Punjab front. Assam remains unresolved. The prices have not shown any downward trend. Apart from catching spies, the government has not been able to produce any other tangible result to



Mediaphoto

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Zail Singh entering Parliament House

show itself as the "government that works." The timing of the Anti-Defection Bill, therefore, was wise. It has given the ruling party an achievement worth shouting from the rooftops of having cleaned public life. And the people may gratefully acknowledge this.

The introduction of the Bill was an exercise aimed at showing that Rajiv Gandhi believed in the politics of cooperation and consensus. By getting the Bill unanimously passed, after "bowing to the opposition's wishes" regarding the controversial clause 2(1) (C), Rajiv Gandhi has shown his "magnanimity." This was in sharp contrast to the Indira Gandhi era. The Nehru years seemed to shine back once again. (In the controversial clause, which was dropped on the floor of the Lok Sabha, it was envisaged that an MP would be disqualified from Parliament "if he has been expelled from a political party with the procedure established by the Constitution, rules or regulations of such a party." Apart from the opposition, a vast majority of the Congress(I) members were also opposed to this. The controversial clause would have vitiated inner-party democracy. Some senior ruling party members, like Mool Chand Daga and Narain Chand Parashar, while speaking in the meeting of the Congress(I) Parliamentary Party, pointed out that the *dadas* of the district towns would be in a position to hold the legislators to ransom by threatening them with expulsion from the party and thereby the Legislature, if this clause were to be passed.

The opposition to the clause came from as many as 13 of the 15 speakers at the CPP(I) meeting. Apart from two lawyers who have been elected to the Rajya Sabha, Madan Bhatia and Murlidhar Bhandare, almost the entire party opposed this. Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, former union ministers Bhagwad Jha Azad, Kumudbehn Joshi, Vijay Naval Patil (now AICC(I) joint secretary) and Mohammad Usman Arif, former cabinet minister and Governor, A. P. Sharma, former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Sripati Mishra, Sharad Dighe and K. S. Rao joined CPP(I) secretary M. C. Daga and the Himachal Pradesh parliamentarian, N. C. Parashar in attacking the clause. Rajiv Gandhi patiently listened to this criticism. In the very first session of the eighth Lok Sabha, the ruling party provided inner-party criticism. This was a major departure from the Indira Gandhi days. He took his critics, both within the party and in the opposition by surprise by letting the clause remain in the Bill while it was tabled and then by suddenly withdrawing the clause at the end. He also took the opportunity of exposing the opposition's disunity. Initially, the largest opposition party, the Telugu Desam along with Farooq Abdullah's National Conference and the "friendly" Anna DMK had supported the clause. This led the Prime Minister to mock the other "national" opposition parties, by pointing out to them that he could listen only to the parties which had a strength of at least 20 MPs. The opposition could not provide effective opposition to the Bill even initially. On the first day when the Bill was mentioned in the House, the opposition leaders, Sharad Pawar and Madhu Dandavate did not provide even a feeble protest. K. P. Unnikrishnan, who is among the seniormost members on the opposition benches, was also not heard on the first day, though later when the discussions took place with the Prime Minister, he played his due role.

In the past two decades, over 2,200 legislators have crossed the floor. Altogether 212 ministers have acquired their positions due to defections, 15 chief ministers have come to power due to defections. Now that era is over. Interestingly, four of the present 14 cabinet ministers have been defectors—Rao Birendra Singh in the Sixties, Virendra Patil (who was the Janata candidate against Mrs Indira Gandhi at Chickmagalur), Abdul Ghafoor and K. C. Pant (who were in the Congress(U) after 1978)—constitute more than one-fourth of the cabinet which introduced the historic bill in Parliament.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

KARNATAKA

The End of an Alliance

Janata Party-BJP alliance breaks up before Assembly polls

Like most divorces, it ended in rancour and recrimination. In the last week of January, the Janata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Karnataka, which had maintained an uneasy relationship for two years against odds, finally fell out. The parting of ways came after a squabble over sharing of seats for the Assembly polls in March.

The ending of the two-year-old alliance was widely called a "divorce," even by the leaders of the two parties. For the past two years the BJP had been accused of "grumbling" because, in spite of its support to the Janata government led by Ramakrishna Hegde, it has consistently criticised the shortcomings of the government.

There was little inkling that the alliance would end so abruptly. Despite their uneasy marriage, it was widely believed that the two parties would somehow arrive at an agreement. They had done so for the Lok Sabha polls, after some initial misunderstandings. But the Lok Sabha elections itself turned out to be the turning point in the relationship. The Janata Party had fought 23 seats, giving four to the BJP and one to the CPI. The BJP lost all four seats, three of them by a margin of over one lakh votes. This caused some leaders in the Janata Party to speak disparagingly about the BJP's performance (the Janata Party did not lose any seat by a lakh votes).



Ramakrishna Hegde

Subsequently, when talks began about the sharing of seats for the 5 March Assembly polls, there was a large discrepancy in the "demand and offer" of seats. But the differences were not only over seat sharing. Even the atmosphere in which the talks were conducted was full of tension. There were also hawks in both camps. The Janata Party itself was split on continuing the alliance with the BJP. Most of the Janata Party leaders felt that the relationship would go against the Janata Party's chances in the election. Some leaders felt that the party would lose the minority votes if it had an alliance with the BJP. They backed this premise with the argument that the Muslims had supported the Janata Party in a big way in the 1983

Assembly elections. The BJP had then fought alone. Again in 1983, the Muslim League had campaigned against the Congress(I), indirectly helping the Janata Party. The Janata Party-BJP alliance would now erase all that, it was argued.

This hawkish group had a big say in the negotiations. Not even Ramakrishna Hegde's plea that the Janata Party had a "moral obligation" to fight along with the BJP due to the latter's unstinted support to his government for two years, helped. Said B.B. Shivappa, president of the state BJP, "Even as the talks began, we could feel that many Janata Party leaders simply did not want a seat adjustment. Talks were just a formality that preceded the sabotage." In the end, the BJP leaders walked out in a huff.

The BJP had demanded 40 seats out of the 224 comprising the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. The Janata would not agree to more than 24. The BJP had 18 sitting members in the dissolved Assembly and its first condition was that all the 18 seats should be left to them. That apart, the BJP wanted 14 other constituencies where it came second to the Congress(I) in the 1983 elections. But the BJP also demanded eight more seats where the party felt it had a "good chance of winning." Some of these seats have sitting Janata Party MLAs, and in some other places the BJP did not contest in 1983. The BJP's logic behind the demand of 40 seats is that it also needs to survive as a political party and not just an appendage of the Janata Party. Said Shivappa: "Suppose we agree to 24; we are not going to win all. So the next time the Janata Party will give us just the seats we have won. Our party will go on shrinking."

The break-up is a severe setback to the Janata Party's chances of coming back to power. But the Janata Party leaders seem undaunted by the reverse and are now pinning their hopes on the minority and backward class votes. Soon after the defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, Ramakrishna Hegde had told SUNDAY that the intelligentsia did not support the Janata Party. Now the Janata leaders are confident that the urban votes will go to the Janata Party.

Besides the BJP, the Janata Party is also not sure of support from the two Communist parties. Both the CPI and the CPI(M) claim that they have been given a raw deal by the Janata Party in matters relating to seat-sharing. More recently, the spectre of NTR's Bharat Desam hangs over Karnataka in the form of a "Kannada Desam."

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

CONGRESS(I)

Ticket Bazaar in Delhi

Heavy rush for Congress(I) tickets for Assembly elections

A gold rush for Congress(1) tickets for the Assembly elections in March has begun. Roughly 2,500 constituencies, spread over 11 states and the union territory of Pondicherry attracted two-and-a-half lakh bidders most of whom were in New Delhi to give their cases a final push. "Look at the rush. I am meeting more than 500 people everyday," said Srikant Verma, newly-appointed general secretary of the Congress(1), not so much with weariness at having to handle the "unprecedented dash" as with pride that so many were really lining up at his gates. "And the remarkable thing is," he continued, "the number of young people that have come this time. Our new Prime Minister has generated new hope and enthusiasm in the youth.., there is a new force coming up."

Whether it was due to a "new will for political work" that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has "generated' among the young or just a matter of political opportunism is debatable. but youth presented itself conspicuously in the Congress(I) ticket bazaar.Leaders just out of college, the street-corner rallyist from some district town, the Youth Congress(I) activist who has worked for the 20-point programme first with Sanjay Gandhi and now with Rajiv Gandhi and the one who went about talking of his "personal contribution" to the Family Planning Scheme: they were all hoping to hitch their wagons to the lucky star. "*Rajivji ke saath rajniti ne chhalang lagaya hai, hum bhi kyoon na kuden* (Politics has taken a leap with Rajiv Gandhi, why should we not jump into the fray too)?" asked Khardusan Singh, a young ticket-seeker from Madhya Pradesh, confident that age would tilt the balance in his favour.

Srikant Verma's room at 24 Akbar Road, the AICC(I) headquarters, was



Sandeep Shankar

Ticket-seekers for the UP Assembly elections patiently waiting at UP Nivas

spilling over with bio-data, thousands of them from every corner of the country going to the polls in March. Against one stack of papers sat Rampujan Prasad, an old man from Bhojpur in Bihar, bent on sheaves of foolscap, penning details about his life: the number of times he went to jail during the freedom movement, the numerous occasions when he came to Delhi to speak, his unflinching loyalty to the Congress. "I have written these things so many times without result but this is thelast,"he said, adding his own bit to the stack. Rampujan Prasad's history would perhaps remain unread. Not many in the Congress(I) today are interested in histories and as Srikant Verma himself admitted, "It is im-

possible for me to go through all the material." Besides, the AICC(I) was never the real stage of the ticket-drama.

Instead, undisclosed venues were in fashion. The stock answer for any question about where a particular state committee or sub-committee was discussing ticket-distribution was: "Nobody knows." On 30 January a huge crowd of ticket-seekers had gathered at the Maharashtra Sadan on hearing that Maharashtra chief minister Vasantdada Patil was holding a meeting there. Within minutes, however, it was learnt that the entire team had slipped away to Parliament House. There was a dash for Parliament House but the party had left again, this time for an "undisclosed venue."

Similar were the tactics adopted by leaders from other states too but soon the ticket-seeker came up with a counter strategy. They split up into groups, one at the state Bhawan, another at the concerned minister's house and yet another stationed in the lobby of a five star hotel. The state guest houses in the capital functioned as nothing but political brokerages. The busiest and the liveliest were the state Bhawans of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. A mini-township had come up in the area as it always does on such occasions.

At the Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, lists of Congress(I) VIPs in town with the phone numbers had been pasted, but "on instructions" the authorities were not saying who was staying with them. There was a big queue for booking calls to various places in the state. On the lawns a *shamiana* had been erected. The ticket-seekers were all crowded around the reception desk trying to find out who was meeting whom and where. Near one of the side entrances stood a blue Contessa car, drowned in a restless cluster waiting for the MP chief minister to emerge from his room. But before Arjun Singh, P.C. Sethi came out from another door. "Sethiji, Sethiji," the crowd rushed forward and Sethiji was immediately swallowed up by frantic, passionate petitioners. But Mr Sethi was already in his car and drove away without a word. "*Arre ab inki baat nahin chalti ab to Scindia ka jor hai* (Nobody listens to him now. It is Scindia who matters)," remarked one bystander as Sethi moved off.

There were so many centres of decision-making and so different were the levels of people involved that even sitting MLAs of the Congress(I) often did not know where matters were being clinched. Some who had gone campaigning to Kamalapati Tripathi's residence came back totally disillusioned. "Panditji said he was helpless and left for the Rajya Sabha," said Narmada Shankar. He was one of the many who had come from UP in search of a ticket.

The scene kept shifting from one venue to another, from one group to another and finally, from one committee to another. Srikant Verma had claimed that with the "democratic committee system we have eliminated lobbies in the party" but how flourishing lobby-politics is in the Congress(I) was only too clear. Maharashtra chief minister Vasantdada Patil is being besieged by supporters of union home minister S.B. Chavan and the rest of the "Maharashtra Congress Syndicate." Former Bihar chief minister Jagannath Mishra is ganging up with AICC(I) treasurer Sitaram Kesari and Bihar PCC(I) president Bindeshwari Dubey to embarrass chief minister Chandrashekhar Singh. In Madhya Pradesh it is chief minister Arjun Singh versus P.C. Sethi versus Madhavrao Scindia. In Karnataka, K.H. Patil is duelling with Gundu Rao. If the reaction of ticket-seekers was any indication, it was quite a see-saw battle. "*Sabki alag alag dukan hai, jiski dukan par jada bheed samjho usi ka bolbala*" (Everyone has his own shop and the one most crowded is the strongest in the market), was how Mirza Haleem, a bearded old man from Bahraich put it. Most leaders had their own lists, the more names you had on them, the more powerful you were, the more crowds you gathered.

"All these committees are quite a hoax. What ultimately matters is how much money you have, what your caste is and who you know in Delhi," scoffed one man at the Uttar Pradesh Niwas. He apparently knew he stood no chance. How big the rush was for hitting the Congress(I) jackpot was even more evident after a round of the opposition party offices. They remained unhurried, quiet and rather placid.

SankarshanThakur, New Delhi

RAILWAYS

Musical Chairs at Rail Bhavan

The reshuffle of senior bureaucrats continues

Rail Bhavan is the problem-pit of the central government's bureaucracy. It is perhaps, more prone to controversies than any other department. In the last three years many major squabbles have broken out in Rail Bhavan, all of which have had to be sorted out by the intervention of the top brass. In late 1981 the then railway minister, A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury had a difference of opinion with the then Railway Board chairman, M.S. Gujaral, and after a bitter battle finally succeeded in shunting him out. In June 1983 Mr Ghani Khan Chowdhury was again in the news. This time he was on a collision course with his minister of state, C.K. Jaffer Sharief. Mr Sharief had complained to the Prime Minister about the way the railway minister was "squandering railway funds" in his home constituency in Malda, in West Bengal. A peeved Ghani Khan Chowdhury was also reported to



Bansi Lal

have withdrawn most files from him. At one time, Sharief's powers were curtailed so much that he spent most of his time in Bangalore, his hometown. In 1984, immediately after the train accident in Byculla, Bombay on 22 November, K. T. V. Raghavan, chairman of the Railway Board and C.K. Swaminathan, member (traffic) were "forced" to proceed on leave. The railway minister's excuse was, of course, the accident at Byculla, but Rail Bhavan gossip had it that both were being "punished" for "opposing the pampering of Malda" by the railway minister. Both were "reinstated" within ten days, due to the intervention of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Ultimately it was Ghani Khan Chowdhury who left Rail Bhavan soon after the elections. Controversies, however, continued to dominate Rail Bhavan despite his departure.

On 30 January, the Rail Board chairman, K. T. V. Raghavan retired at the end of his term and almost immediately Rail Bhavan's circular

corridors started buzzing with speculation. Who would the next chief be? Would it be a new man, the choice of the new minister, Bansi Lal, or would Raghavan get another six-month extension? Would there be another shakeup in the railway hierarchy? There was suspense for one full day and then it was announced that J.P. Gupta, member (staff) of the Railway Board would be the next chairman.

Why was K. T. V. Raghavan not given another extension even though Bansi Lal was said to have recommended it? Why did J. P. Gupta supercede C. K. Swaminathan, the seniormost member of the Railway Board after Mr Raghavan? Why was Mr Gupta selected if he is due to retire on 30 June, barely a month after Swaminathan is scheduled to retire? If Mr Gupta does not get an extension, he will have the shortest-ever term a Railway Board chairman has had.

The official reason being given for the decision not to grant another extension to Mr Raghavan is that extensions are taboo with the pre sent regime. Another factor, however, which might have contributed to the denial of an extension to Mr Raghavan was his role during the regime of Ghani Khan. It was common knowledge that Raghavan, along with some other senior officials actively opposed the Malda operations of Mr Ghani Khan. Spending Rs. 56 crores on the construction of air-conditioned rest houses, new railway staff quarters, recreation rooms and a swimming pool for a district-level railway station like Malda was simply not palatable to these officials. The Prime Minister, it is said, has taken exception to officials having such "extra constitutional interests." This is what, perhaps, messed up Swaminathan's chances, too. He was one of Mr Raghavan's chief lieutenants in the anti-Ghani Khan, anti-Malda lobby.

What seems to have gone in J. P. Gupta's favour is more than just his non-involvement in "extra-constitutional" activities. He is known to be a good management man, a field that is in vogue with the new government. About five years before becoming member (staff) on 1 August 1984, Mr Gupta had had a fairly successful stint as director of management services in the Railway Board. An added advantage for him, perhaps, was that his career graph looked more professional, from 1963 to 1967 Mr Gupta was a railway adviser to the West German government. He is a Jamalpur apprentice, and therefore, the cream of India's railway engineering cadre. But the game of musical chairs has begun in the Railway Board all over again. A phase of uncertainty will grip the railways unless Mr Gupta's tenure is specified. If his innings is to end in June, then the line of succession should be clear. Otherwise, chaos will prevail.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

First an Indian, Always an Indian









On 29 January 1985, when folk dancers from different parts of India called on the Prime Minister at Teen Murti House, Mr Rajiv Gandhi sportingly donned their colourful costumes and headgear. He certainly drove home the point that in India there is unity in diversity.

Photographs by Central Newsphoto Service

PUNJAB

Still No Solution

No change in stands of the centre and the Akalis

With Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi categorically refusing to even discuss the controversial Anandpur Sahib resolution of the Akali Dal and with terrorists threatening their lives, Sikh leaders including the five high priests of the Akal Takht and the leadership of the Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) today find themselves in a difficult situation. The recent developments have also bewildered the people in Punjab who were hoping that a solution was finally round the corner.

Most people were hopeful because Rajiv Gandhi was expected to solve the Punjab problem after he assumed office with a massive mandate behind him. Things however, have started taking a turn for worse when the *Panthic* leadership called the Anandpur Sahib Resolution the basic instrument of policies and programmes of the Akali Dal and the Sikh community and the only basis for any negotiations with the centre. Junior leaders are also demanding the release of party chief and *morcha* dictator Sant Harchand Singh Longowal from jail on the grounds that he was the only leader to begin talks with the centre.

The Akali Dal ad hoc committee convenor Jathedar Surjan Singh Thekedar and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee acting President Prem Singh Lalpura have gone on record to say that there can be no settlement without the Anandpur Sahib Resolution as the basis. They have asserted this even after Rajiv Gandhi has made it clear that there could be no discussion on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, let alone treat it as the basis of any dialogue between the centre and the agitating Akalis. Describing the resolution as secessionist and separatist in nature, Rajiv Gandhi has, however, said that the Akalis were free to place it before the Sarkaria Commission already appointed to examine centre-state relations. This offer on the other hand has not found favour with the Akalis and other *Panth* leaders who in face of extremist pressures are finding it difficult to climb down from their stand.

The attack on Jathedar Kirpal Singh has made things still more difficult for the *Panth* leadership. They are aware that if they climb down from their stand on the resolution, the terrorists would not spare their lives. Central and state intelligence agencies and security experts in Punjab feel that the lives of the leaders are in danger anyway. This has already been brought home by the attack on Giani Kirpal Singh.

Intelligence sources believe that besides his good luck, Giani Kirpal Singh owes his life to the lack of training of his would-be-assassins. Following the attack, the state administration has offered the five head priests top security cover, but they have declined to accept the offer. Their refusal has placed more responsibility on the local police. But the lackadaisical constabulary may not be able to save them from the determined extremists.

The attack on Giani Kirpal Singh has scared every important leader of the Akali Dal and the SGPC as well as the five head priests. While some leaders of the Akali Dal and the SGPC have accepted the security provided by state agencies, others have made their own security arrangements. The Akali and SGPC leaders are keeping their movements a secret. Very often, they first decline invitations to attend social ceremonies but turn up at the last minute. Political observers are now wondering how this latest impasse created by the determined stand taken by the central government and an adamant Akali leadership on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was going to be overcome and the union government would release the top leaders or even Sant Longowal to pick up the threads of the talks once again. However, experts feel that attempts to sort out the issues might not be easy since the assault on Giani Kirpal Singh and a shootout at Dasuya in Hoshiarpur district in which two persons were killed and two others injured have once again proved that the law and order situation in the state continues to be far from normal.



The five head priests of the Akal Takht: terrorists' targets

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

BUREAUCRACY

The Old Order Changes

New faces in the Prime Minister's office

With the sudden departure of the Prime Minister's principal secretary, Dr P. C Alexander in the aftermath of the spy scandal, Arun Singh, parliamentary secretary to the PM has clearly become the most important figure in the Prime Minister's office, second only to the PM. Arun Singh is a chief of staff of sorts. Today the PM's office is in a rather amorphous state with the functions of the various officials overlapping each other. The advent of the three new parliamentary secretaries (Oscar Fernandes, and Ahmed Patel are really there to assist Arun Singh) has led to the departure of the ever-present special assistant to the PM, R K Dhawan and the transformation of that post to a non-political one. Significant changes are shortly expected in this office B Y. Venkatram, a joint secretary has replaced R K. Dhawan and his job is a completely political one.

These changes have involved the restructuring of the PM's office, the most important one being the abolition of the post of principal secretary Pandit Nehru's private secretaries held the rank of joint secretary: H V.R. Iyenger was Nehru's second private secretary, and was succeeded by A V Pai Trilok Singh, Nehru's first private secretary held on to this post for only a few days.

A decision may soon be taken to replace the principal secretary by the parliamentary secretary, a post resurrected after about 18 years. Lalit Sen who was Lal Bahadur Shastri's parliamentary secretary was the last incumbent to this job. While most of the political work previously done by Dr Alexander and R K. Dhawan is now being looked after by Arun Singh, Gopal Krishna Arora, one of the three additional secretaries in the PM's office has emerged as a key man in administrative matters and is at present handling some of Dr Alexander's duties. Mr Arora, who was once special assistant to D.P. Dhar, is handling the portfolios of defence, home administration, including the crucial appointments committee and some economic matters.

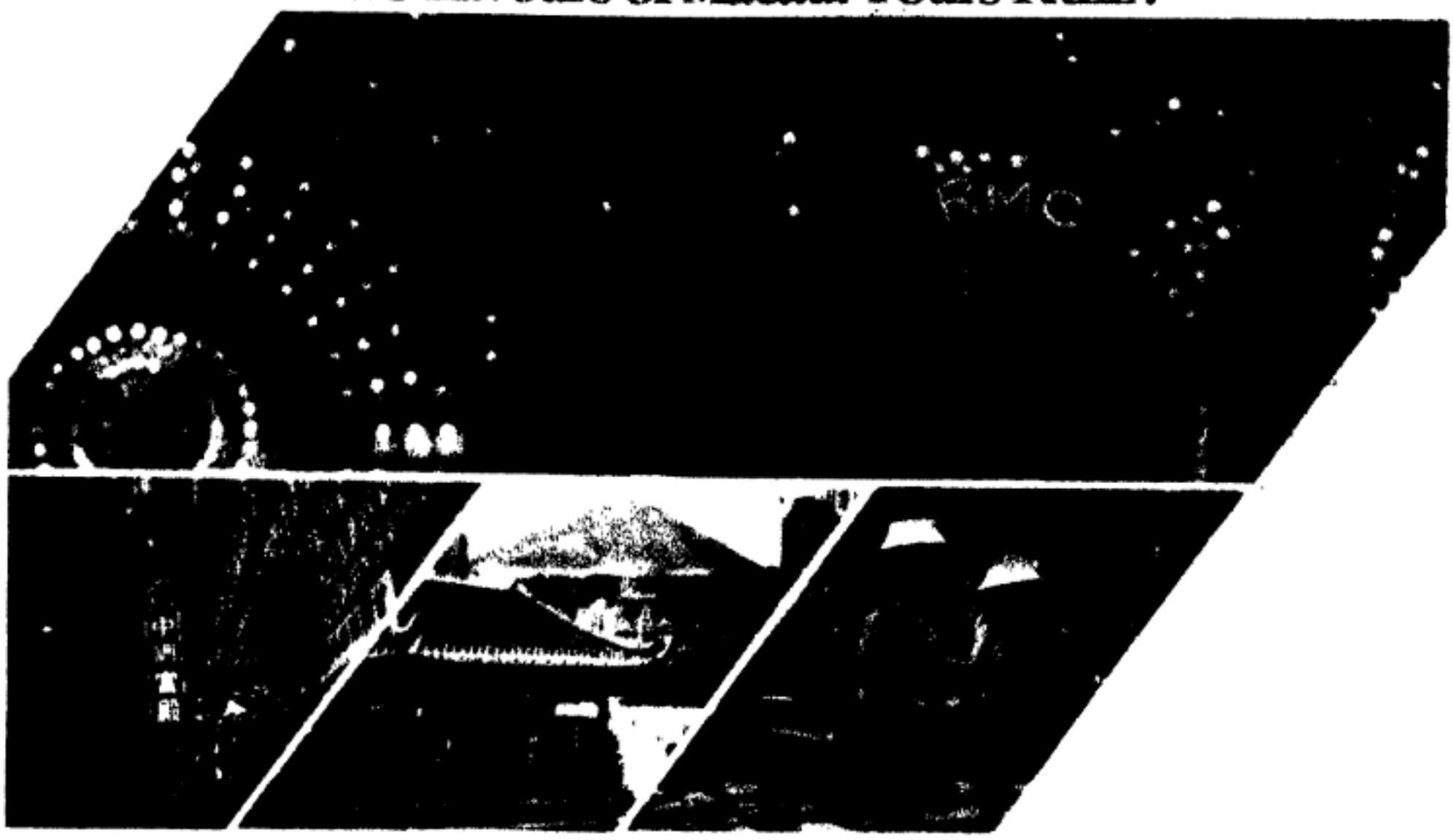
The new Prime Minister who was occupied with the Lok Sabha elections until now has got down to reorganising his office and perhaps, redefining the roles of some of his secretaries At present there is only one official with the rank of secretary to the government. H.Y. Sharda Prasad, with the designation of "information adviser," looks after information and publicity and is the official spokesman. Dr Arjun Sengupta, who was promoted to special secretary last year and was responsible for economic affairs, will soon be India's director on the IMF board in Washington D C. His replacement is Montek Singh Ahluwalia, a Rhodes scholar, who has been given the rank of additional secretary. C.R.N. Gharekhan, a career diplomat, is responsible for foreign affairs and is getting increasingly tied up with foreign trade.

V.S Tripathi, designated as "adviser" and who resigned from the IAS last year, now looks after rehabilitation, home and the implementation of the 20 point programme and information and broadcasting. The creation of the posts for three parliamentary secretaries has resulted in Tripathi ceasing to liaise with political administrators. His designation is now personal adviser to the Prime Minister. Tripathi had previously handled the home ministry, monitored intelligence and worked on the appointments committee. Arvind Pande, an IAS officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, a Cambridge graduate in economics who worked in the World Bank in Washington, looks after science and technology, wild life, environment and is also involved with economic affairs as joint secretary



Arun Singh, Oscar Fernandes and Ahmed Patel being sworn in by Rajiv Gandhi as Parliamentary secretaries

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The PM's office has three directors: Wajahat Habibullah (son of the former major general E. Habibullah) of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre, who is involved with the implementation of the 20-point programme and prepares messages for the Prime Minister to sign. He assists both Sharda Prasad and Tripathi. Rajeshwari Tandon, from the Indian Tourism Development Corporation is the new social secretary. Her predecessor Ms Usha Bhagat, who used to teach Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi many years ago, resigned from the PM's office shortly after Indira Gandhi's death.

The director who has, perhaps had the longest innings in the PM's office is N.S. Sriram who assists G.K. Arora on home affairs and defence matters. He was personal assistant during Pandit Nehru's time and has been in the PM's office since then. The PM's office has since 1970 been a pivotal centre, with a smaller, parallel centre of power at 1, Safdarjang Road. In Rajiv Gandhi's regime, 1 Safdarjang Road has ceased to be a mini-White House. Power is, today concentrated in the first floor of South Block. Says one of the officials in the PM's office: "Nobody is asked to come to the PM's house any more. Now the PM is here and he calls people to the office."

Moreover, Rajiv Gandhi has reduced the daily morning *darshan* to thrice a week and that too from 8.00 am to 8.30 am. There has been a quickening of the tempo in the PM's office as well. The PM, characterised by bureaucrats as "a man in a hurry," wants "everything done yesterday." His car reaches South Block at 10.00 am sharp, not 10.01 or 10.02 am." And "he is here until late in the evening often after ten." Rajiv Gandhi, incidentally keeps his Sundays free, spending time with his family.

There are other signs to show how the office is gradually changing to the image of its new master. The department of elections is in the process of installing a new computer, near Dr Alexander's former office. It is a change with continuity as the men in his office say. The most obvious change, other than the black-outfitted but polite commandos, is the palpable tension in the air after the spy scandal.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

ANDHRA PRADESH

Congress(I) in Confusion

Telugu Desam confident of victory in the Assembly elections

After its crushing defeat in the Lok Sabha elections in the state, the Congress(I) remains unable to make any headway. There is also no evidence of any moves to revitalise it in order to face the Assembly elections, with any confidence. Such is the level of despair into which the Andhra Pradesh Congress(I) leadership has fallen after its debacle in the Parliamentary elections, that the party made practically no effort to win the two byelections to the Lok Sabha and the results were almost a foregone conclusion with the Telugu Desam Party raising its tally in the Lok Sabha to 30 seats by winning the byelections in Srikakulam and Rajampet. Byelections were held on 28 January in these constituencies because the elections were countermanded due to the death of independent candidates. As the Telugu Desam Party chief Mr N.T. Rama Rao had confidently predicted both Telugu Desam candidates scored convincing victories winning by over one lakh votes.

However, none of the Congress(I)'s senior leaders in the state campaigned seriously for the party candidates, most of them saving their energies for the forthcoming Assembly elections. At Rajampet, the party had fielded a "fresh candidate" but at Srikakulam it was Mr B. Rajagopala Rao, one of the senior-most members of Parliament who lost to Mr H. Ayyappa Dora of the Telugu Desam. Mr Rajagopala Rao has represented



Vengal Rao

Srikakulam since 1952 except for a single term in 1964 when he lost by less than 10,000 votes. This time, Mr Rajagopala Rao could get only labour minister Mr T. Anjaiah to speak to his coastal Andhra electorate. At Rajampet, Mr S. Palakondarayudu of the Telugu Desam defeated Mr A. Sai Pratap of the Congress(I).

The Congress(I) high command has decided not to change the present APCC(I) set-up till the Assembly elections are over despite the fact that both Mr Vengal Rao and Mr K. BrahmanandaReddy are waiting to take over the leadership of the party in the state. Neither of them wanted to be associated with the candidates in the byelections and the youthful leadership of the APCC(I) president Dr Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy made no impact in the election campaign. On the other hand, the points that he suggested Mr Rajiv Gandhi raise in his election meetings in Andhra Pradesh—including a reference to Mr N.T. Rama Rao not being able to continue for a full term like the Janata government at the centre, only reminded the public of the Congress(I)'s help to Mr N. Bhaskar Rao.

For both former chief ministers Mr Vengal Rao and Mr Brahmananda Reddy, the Lok Sabha elections have not been easy affairs. Mr Brahmananda Reddy, who headed the State Coordination Committee was defeated in his home constituency of Narsaraopet. Though Mr Vengal Rao was elected from Khammam, it was the one constituency in the state where the Telugu Desam sponsored seat adjustment broke down. Both the Communist parties, the CPI and the CPI(M) fielded their candidates at Khammam and the combined votes of the CPI and the CPI(M) candidates were more than the total votes polled by Mr Vengal Rao. Both the leaders face strong opposition within the party and they have few supporters since they have not been actively involved in the state politics for some time.

None of the other Congress(I) leaders in the state have the stature to counter the Telugu Desam leader Mr Ramarao. Nor can they draw large crowds. The Congress(I) will have to fall back on the Telugu filmstars though even the crowds at the meetings of popular heroine Jamuna and hero Krishna who has an organised fan club were not very large. With the Assembly elections due on 5 March, Congress(I) members are hopeful of doing well because their candidates polled more votes than the opposition candidates in 70 Assembly segments in the Lok Sabha elections though they could win only six seats.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

RAJASTHAN

Catching Smugglers and Spies

New measures to tighten security network

After the recent discovery of the spy ring in the capital, a number of counter-intelligence agents have begun operations in the border state of Rajasthan. The government has tightened security measures after the recent disappearance of some important documents and is trying to check the large-scale smuggling and gun running operations across the Indo-Pak border. Right after Operation Bluestar, the central government had claimed that a large number of arms found in the Golden Temple were smuggled into India across the Indo-Pak border through Rajasthan which has a long border with Pakistan, stretching from Ganganagar to Barmer. Rajasthan chief minister Shiv Charan Mathur quickly denied the central government's version, claiming that smuggling of Pakistani arms into Rajasthan was unlikely because the state government had been keeping a strict vigil. The denial, however was as perfunctory as it was quick, as official figures show that large-scale smuggling is still continuing.



Bhairon Singh Shekhawat

At a press conference in the third week of January 1984, the director general of police said that goods worth over Rs. one crore had been seized by the police in a special anti-smuggling drive in two districts of Barmer and Jaisalmer alone in 1984. The figure does not take into account the district of Ganganagar from where most of the smuggling of arms and ammunition into Punjab took place.

Unfortunately, there is hardly any rapport between the Border Security Force (BSF), the other central agencies and the state police. According to reports in most cases, no action is taken against the smugglers by the police. In fact, the leader of the opposition of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, openly alleged in April last year, that sophisticated arms being used by the terrorists in Punjab were smuggled into the country from Pakistan through the Jaisalmer region. His allegation that the activities of Pakistani spies were increasing every day was dismissed by the government as a political stunt. But he was proved correct when four important top secret maps disappeared from the *tehsil* headquarters at Nachna in Jaisalmer in August 1984. The maps contained details of the Rajasthan Canal command area and the strategic bridges and roads in the area.

Just over a year ago, two Pakistani spies were arrested in the Rajasthan Canal area and important documents seized from them. More recently, two officers and a driver of the Central Bureau of Intelligence were caught smuggling a large number of tape recorders and calculators from Pakistan in their official jeep.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

Will the French Arms Deal Fall Through?

SUNDAY learns that unless the French government comes out as soon as possible to explain who exactly is Lieutenant-colonel Alain Bolley, France's chances of getting the contract for a very large weapons deal will fall through. It is understood that the government of India was on the threshold of deciding on "the source of supply" of defence equipment that involves anti-aircraft and anti-tank rockets among other things. This deal is said to be even bigger than the original Jaguar deal.

Others in the running for this anti-aircraft and anti-tank rockets supply contract were the British, Germans and Italians as one group and individually the French, the Swedes and the Austrians. The French seemed the most likely to clinch the deal due to India's friendship with France as well as the increasing arms purchases from France. Last year, France signed a 510-million dollar deal with India involving the purchase of 40 multirole Mirage-2000 combat planes. India has been moving away to other shopping centres when shopping for arms, in order to decrease her dependence on the Soviet Union. Hitherto, the bulk of the weaponry came from the Soviet Union. In recent years, Britain, Sweden, France and Germany have been approached and given lucrative contracts.

As France comes closer to India, the British, the Germans or the Swedes do not seem to be happy from the commercial angle. It is generally accepted that French technology in the weapons system is the best in the world. The French naturally would give weapons only to those countries with which they are politically close. This political closeness had been delicately nurtured in recent years by the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

With the exposure of the French diplomat and two other French businessmen, the whole episode has become an embarrassment to the French government. If it is proved that the French government is behind Alain Bolley's activities, it could embarrass the French government no end, particularly since it has been claiming friendship with India.

The spy drama that is currently unfolding is two-pronged. On one level is the sale of information to benefit a commercial deal running into crores of rupees. The other is political espionage relating to the country's defence preparedness in case of an attack from neighbouring countries. One does not know at this stage whether the two are inter-related. But what is interesting to know at this moment is whether the spy drama was unearthed following the tipsy utterance of an assistant of Coomar Narain, the liaison man of a Bombay-based manufacturing group. Or, was it a deliberate leak by a superpower like the British, wanting to embarrass the French?

Olga Tellis, Bombay

What Has Happened to the Larkins Case?

Just when people in India were waiting for the outcome of the Larkins espionage case which began 15 months ago, they received another jolt with the news of the involvement of officials from the President and the Prime Minister's Secretariat in another spy case.

The spy ring which was busted in November 1983 allegedly involved three former senior army and air-force officers and an arms dealer working allegedly for the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).



Larkins (extreme left) after being arrested by the police

Thanks to the vigilance of group captain (now air commodore) Jasjit Singh, in the air force headquarters major general F.D. Larkins (Retd.), his brother air vice marshal K.H. Larkins (Retd), Lt col Jasbir Singh Malik and the arms contractor Jaspal Singh Gill were arrested.

The Larkins brothers were the first to be arrested on 10 November 1983. Then on 13 November, Jasbir Malik was apprehended and on 19 November, Jaspal Singh Gill was arrested in Bombay. The case was handed over to the police about three weeks after the arrests of the Larkins brothers.

The counter espionage wing of the Delhi Police took up the case with the help of the Intelligence Bureau when Jasjit Singh informed the senior officials that the accused had approached him for certain classified documents in April 1983. The police charge-sheeted the accused within 90 days of their arrest. In between, Mr Gill was granted bail by the Sessions Court. His bail was however, later cancelled by the Supreme Court. The bail petitions by the other three were also rejected. All the accused are in judicial custody in Tihar Central Jail.

At present, the case is under trial in the court of the Additional Sessions Judge of Delhi, Mr J. D. Kapoor and the proceedings of the case is going on in camera. The police have [illegible] 200-page charge-sheet [illegible] of the [illegible] court, [illegible]

and meetings with different officials, foreigners and the nature of secret documents they had passed on to their contacts.

As in the present case, the Larkins brothers were in touch with a foreign diplomat. In fact, Harry L. Wealtherbee, an American, was asked to leave the country in November '83 after the case came to light. Of the 60 prosecution witnesses including senior officers of the army and air force listed by the police, 26 have been questioned so far. They include Lt general E.Q. Pattengell (Retd.), whose secret telephone diary was found in the house of Jaspal Singh Gill, air commodore Jasjit Singh, on whose behest the case came to light, and air vice marshal C.V. Gole. The other important prosecution witnesses to be examined are air marshal S. Raghavendran, air vice marshal M.L. Sethi, major general Kailash Chand (Retd.), Lt general [illegible] Sinha (Retd) and Mr V.I. Chacko, protocol officer in the external affairs ministry. The additional chief metropolitan magistrate of Shahdara who had recorded the confessional statement of F.D. Larkins also deposed before Mr Kapoor, on 25 January 1985.

In November 1981, the special branch of the Delhi Police had arrested Rajan Bakshi, a young lawyer at the Patiala Courts in New Delhi and a dark room assistant in the navy headquarters Subash Pachbhave for allegedly passing on classified documents of the Indian Navy to Pakistan. Pachbhave was arrested on 21 November 1981. He was caught red-handed near the Jama Masjid while passing on some documents to an employee of the Pakistan Embassy. The next day Rajan Bakshi was taken into custody from his Vasant Vihar residence and the police seized some incriminating documents.

At that time the Indian government had expelled three employees of the Pakistan Embassy for their unlawful activities. They were [illegible] Zaman, Munawwar Ali Shah and Mohammad Marshan. Subsequently against the Indian government action, they published [illegible] employees of the Indian Mission in Pakistan. The [illegible] this case is over and the [illegible]

GUJARAT

Searching for a Strategy

The opposition stands disunited before the Assembly polls

After the failure of the electoral adjustment of the opposition parties in Gujarat in the Lok Sabha polls, the parties are frantically looking for a more viable strategy to fight the coming state Assembly elections. Not only do they have an uphill task, but if the Lok Sabha poll performance is any indication, their chances of dislodging the Congress(I) from power are clearly remote. The opposition won only two of the 26 seats in the Lok Sabha elections, and finished ahead of the Congress(I) only in 43 of the 182 Assembly segments. The Congress(I) won 53.24 per cent of the total votes cast, marginally lower than in 1980. The Janata Party which contested 12 seats, got only 16.59 per cent of the votes cast while the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) polled 18.64 per cent. The DMKP (Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party), the third partner in the electoral adjustment of the opposition parties fought only two seats and got 2.31 per cent of the votes.

It was a difficult task to work out the electoral adjustment in the Lok Sabha seats and at the moment it would be more so because of the deep distrust between the Janata Party and the BJP now. The Janata Party workers are seething with indignation over what former Prime Minister Morarji Desai himself described as a "betrayal by the BJP" during the Lok Sabha polls. The BJP had broken the seat adjustment accord in Baroda by nominating a former police commissioner, Jaspal Singh, as a candidate although the seat was allocated for Manubhai Patel of the Janata Party. In the end, both Mr Singh and Mr Patel lost. The Janata Party men in Surat grew dispirited because of the failure in opposition unity in Baroda and the dampening of enthusiasm was noticeable in almost all constituencies.

The traumatic experience has led many Janata Party workers to worry about their party's political future in the state. They pointed out that although the Janata Party fought 12 seats, as against 11 by the BJP, it got fewer votes than the BJP because of BJP's electoral adjustments with communal elements. The Janata Party, they allege, was forced into an adjustment by the Patel lobby which rules the roast in the Gujarat Janata Party. Many party workers were unhappy about the electoral adjustment with the BJP and would want additional safeguards if the Janata Party seeks another adjustment with the BJP for the Assembly polls. What has upset the Janata Party leaders more was the claim by the BJP that it had polled more votes than the Janata Party, although both bagged one seat each only in the Lok Sabha from Gujarat. This was despite the electoral accord which specifically said that no one party would claim the votes as its own because it was a joint effort of the Janata Party, the BJP and the DMKP.

While the Janata Party leaders were groping for a viable strategy, former chief minister and president of the Lok Swaraj Manch, Mr Babubhai Patel, who had formulated the Lok Sabha electoral accord, was once more trying for another adjustment. He sent a letter in the first week of January to the three opposition parties proposing that they form a united front to provide a more formidable challenge to the Congress(I) in the Assembly elections. He recalled that in 1975, parties in the state had come together to form a loose Janata Front, a forerunner of the national Janata Party. Mr Babubhai Patel had become the chief minister of the Janata Front government formed after the 1975 elections and was in power up to 1980, barring a brief period when it was toppled by the Congress(I).

However, Mr Babubhai Patel's proposal did not evoke any immediate response, apart from the DMKP, which was enthusiastic. The Janata Party, while talking of the need to provide a united challenge, could not make up its mind till the third week of January. It got conflicting advice from its top leaders. Mr Morarji Desai was not in favour of loose adjustments, if there was no unity of hearts. Mr Ramakrishna Hegde, chief minister of Karnataka, who came to Ahmedabad to address a Janata Party convention, however, favoured electoral adjustments for the Assembly polls, but described unity efforts as a futile exercise.



Babubhai Patel

Political observers have noted that while Mr Babubhai Patel was dreaming of a resurrection of the 1975-type Janata Front, he tended to overlook that the opposition parties had the 'fallout benefit' of the 1974 Nav Nirman agitation which had made the Congress government very unpopular. Still, the Congress(I) got as many as 75 seats, only marginally less than the Janata Front which could come to power only with the support of some independents.

No such fallout in the coming Assembly polls is likely. Again, Mr Chimanbhai Patel, the chief minister who was toppled by the Nav Nirman Movement is now in the Janata Party. On the other hand, the Congress(I) is very confident of driving home the advantage of the massive victory in the Lok Sabha polls in the Assembly election too. In 1980, the Congress(I) had won 25 of the 26 Lok Sabha seats. Later that year, it bagged 140 out of the 182 state Assembly seats.

With the state Assembly elections in March, the demoralised opposition has to come up quickly with a cohesive strategy for the Assembly polls. Even for the adjustment of the 26 Lok Sabha seats, the opposition leaders faced problems and for the 182 seats for the Assembly polls, it would be even more difficult to reach an understanding. Having learnt a bitter lesson from the BJP's breach of accord in the Lok Sabha poll, the Janata Party would be taking a tougher stand. Then, as the Lok Sabha experience showed, mere electoral adjustment is not enough and the opposition would have to come up with a more convincing and broad-based programme than a one-point strategy of uprooting the Congress(I).

Opposition leaders are drawing comfort from the fact that the Congress(I) is not united either. They hope to draw advantage from the division among the Congress(I) men because while in the Lok Sabha poll, these differences did not matter, in the more localised Assembly election, they would make a very big difference.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

ORISSA

Biju Patnaik's Last Battle

But the Congress(I) holds the upper hand

Besides the chief minister J. B. Patnaik, the two other leaders who are hoping to return to power in Orissa after the Assembly elections on 5 March are the former chief ministers Biju Patnaik and Nandini Satpathy, although the ruling Congress(I) looks all set to win the polls with a comfortable majority. The Lok Sabha polls have, however, proved that the Janata Party under Biju Patnaik's leadership is a viable alternative to the Congress(I) despite the fact that the Congress(I) repeated its 1980 performance of bagging 20 out of the 21 Lok Sabha seats. That the Janata Party has emerged as the only strong statewide opposition political force was demonstrated from its share of 32 per cent of the popular votes in the 1984 polls against 14 per cent in 1980. While the Janata Party had fielded candidates in all the 21 constituencies in 1980, in 1984 the Party left two seats to its allies: the CPI and the CPI(M). The two Communist parties together had got another 3.3 per cent of the votes which gave the three-party alliance over 35 per cent of the votes.

The improved performance of the Janata Party was evident from the reduction in its margins of defeat in as many as ten Lok Sabha seats, besides a three-fold increase in Biju Patnaik's victory margin in Kendrapara. The second best performance by the Janata Party came in Jagatsinghpur where Rabi Ray was controversially defeated by a margin of 1,087 votes while his margin of defeat in 1980 was over 60,000 votes. The losing margins of Janata Party candidates in the two western Orissa constituencies of Kalahandi and Bolangir were substantially lower than in 1980. The Congress(I)'s share of 57.46 per cent of the votes was a marginal increase of 1.7 per cent over its 1980 figure against the Janata Party's increase of 18 per cent.

Mrs Satpathy's state-based party, Jagrat Orissa, which fielded only three candidates, polled less than one per cent of the votes in the Lok Sabha polls. This performance, however, is no reflection of Mrs Satpathy's actual political strength in the state. While neither she nor any of her party's leading figures contested the Lok Sabha polls, Mrs. Satpathy and two Jagrat Orissa legislators, Balgopal Mishra and Haladhar Mishra will seek election. The party is likely to contest around 90 seats and will go it alone. There is no possibility of an alliance between Biju Patnaik and Mrs Satpathy.

Mrs Satpathy has the least chance among the three contenders of becoming chief minister. The Lok Sabha elections showed a polarisation of political forces in the state between the Congress(I) and the Janata Party leaving by the wayside all other parties except the Janata Party's two Communist allies. While all the defeated candidates belonging to the Janata-CPI—CPI(M) combine retained their deposits, all the candidates of all other opposition parties lost their deposits.

For Biju Patnaik, this will, perhaps, be the last electoral battle of his life. The 70-year-old stalwart, who had an open heart surgery in the USA in 1982 has announced his intention of remaining in state politics and will naturally be the CM if his party is voted to power. His appeal to the people at a recent public meeting had a touch of emotion as he reminded them of his remarkable services to the state during his brief tenure as chief minister in the early Sixties. He called the electorate to give him his "life's last chance to serve you."



J. B. Patnaik



Biju Patnaik



Bhola Chatterjee

Nandini Satpathy

Biju Patnaik hopes that local issues such as corruption, nepotism, irregularities and the deteriorating law and order situation during the four-and-a half-year-old Congress(I) rule which was not a major issue before the electorate in the Parliamentary polls because of national considerations of unity and integrity will greatly influence the voters during the Assembly elections. With fewer resources at his command, Biju Patnaik's hopes of achieving a majority in the 147-seat state legislature will be shattered if the local issues which would go against the ruling party, do not sway the electorate. It would enable the Congress(I) to achieve a repeat of its performance of 1980 when it won 117 seats.

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

NEW DELHI

A House for Rajiv Gandhi

1, *Safdarjang Road to be a memorial for Indira Gandhi*

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is moving into a new house, leaving 1, Safdarjang Road, which has been the PM's house for 17 years. Renovated at a cost of Rs 15 lakhs, two bungalows, numbers 5 and 7 Race Course Road were selected for the Prime Minister after weeks of scrutiny. Number 1, Safdarjang Road will be converted into a memorial for Mrs Gandhi. The Prime Minister and his family wanted a new house, following the traumatic events of 31 October 1984, when Mrs Gandhi was gunned down on the lawns of 1, Safdarjang Road. After the assassination, top intelligence personnel advised Mr Rajiv Gandhi to shift to a new house. It was decided that a permanent residence for the Prime Minister would be constructed and till it was complete, he would be provided with a temporary accommodation. Before the bungalows on Race Course Road were selected by special teams of the works and housing ministry and the intelligence bureau (IB), houses at Rajendra Prasad Road, Akbar Road and even Teen Murti House which now is a museum, were inspected.

The bungalows renovated by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) have been the official residences for many prominent persons. The house at 5 Race Course Road, which will be the residential wing of the Prime Minister's house was till recently occupied by Dalbir Singh, the former minister of state for energy. Both Charan Singh and later Giani Zail Singh stayed there when they were home ministers. The house had also been allotted to P.V. Narasimha Rao when he took over the home portfolio. The second bungalow which will be the office wing, was last occupied by Shiv Shankar, former energy minister. Its former occupants include Raj Narain and Vidya Charan Shukla.

The bungalow to the right of the Prime Minister's new house is presently occupied by V.N. Gadgil. The bungalow to the left is to be allotted to Arun Singh. The twin bungalows have been connected by a passage from within the house. The office will be used by the Prime Minister to hold cabinet meetings and host official functions. The office wing will have a conference room, board room and a study for the Prime Minister.

On instructions from the Prime Minister himself, the special task force of the CPWD that took charge of the premises in the first week of January decided that no fresh construction would be undertaken. The Prime Minister wanted the cost to be kept to a minimum, since he would be staying in the house only for a short period. The only new structure being put up is a reception centre outside the office wing and the original design of the bungalows, built in the Thirties, has been retained. The impressive reception centre erected at a cost of Rs 4.5 lakhs is made of prefabricated material. A module of high-density opaque fibreglass with a golden corrugated sheet on the roof has been used. The roof rests upon galvanised structures with insulated glass panels. The entire reception area will be fire-resistant, sound-proof and weather-proof.

Vinod Jha, chief executive of Zenith Systems Building, the company constructing the reception,said that the entire module was erected in a record time of two weeks and will take the same time to dismantle and erect it at the PM's new residence. "The reception will be the first of its kind in the country and will meet all the security specifications given to us," he told SUNDAY. He added that the reception will have a large room for security personnel, headed by an assistant commissioner of police and senior members of the Prime Minister's security staff. There will be a communication wing, equipped with telephones, hotline connections, telex and teleprinter machines.

In the large, well-furnished reception, the PM's staff will screen all visitors and guide them to the waiting room. Visitors to the house and office will have to alight from their vehicles, pass the reception and if cleared by security, walk through a metal detector to the office. Even the Prime Minister's close friends and cabinet ministers will not be permitted to drive their vehicles inside. Regular traffic at the race course will be prohibited and the Gymkhana Club (which faces the PM's house) and the residence of V.N. Gadgil have been provided with alternate entrances and surrounded by barbed wire fencing.

The latest technology will be used for the PM's security, details of which are being kept secret. For both the bungalow entrances, hydraulic gates made in Pune have been installed. They open and close electronically. A boundary wall topped with wire fencing has also been erected and after a three-foot gap there are impregnable earthen embankments across the front and back of the bungalows. In between, commandos armed with sten-guns and carrying portable wireless sets slung to their belts, will maintain vigil. Though it has not been disclosed, it is understood that commandos of either the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) who were in charge of security at 1, Safdarjang Road after Mrs Gandhi's assassination, or members of the crack force of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will be on duty.

However, the PM has requested the intelligence agencies to keep security inside the house down to a minimum. He has even expressed a desire to reduce the number of domestic staff. The house itself has a built-up area of around 3,000 sq. ft. and will have a large pillared porch in front, a drawing room with a built-in fireplace, a dining room, a bedroom for the Prime Minister and his wife and one room each for the Prime Minister's children, Priyanka and Rahul.

Senior CPWD officials working at the site, described the house as "modest by any standards." They also pointed out that because of its old architecture, there were some inbuilt disadvantages. For one, the house has as many as ten entrances which will be a security hazard. When this correspondent visited the house and went around the rooms, masons, carpenters and plumbers were working 20 hours a day in an effort to finish the job. Said Ramchandran, a mason who had previously helped in the renovation of 1, Safdarjang Road: "The structure of the house is very old. But since we have been told not to change even the paint on the windows, we are leaving it as it is."

The renovation has been handled by CPWD workers, electricians, and 20 CPWD engineers. Heading the team is Harish Chandra, chief engineer, New Delhi zone who did not want to disclose the nature of his assignment because "it was a sensitive subject." He, however, said that the renovation has been monitored and supervised by the intellligence men. Other workers said that commandos of the ITBP were always present at the site, sometimes dressed as workers. Some professionals, including Sharat Das, the chief architect of the Indraprastha Stadium were asked to visit the site and

give their advice on the progress of the work.

Though it is Mrs Sonia Gandhi who is "in charge" of the operation, the Prime Minister has himself seen the work in progress on two occasions. On 1 January, he was accompanied by Arun Singh and was taken around the office and house and is said to have suggested some minor changes. In almost all matters like the colour of the walls or the design of furniture for the reception, the opinion of the first lady was sought. The entire house will be painted white, the favourite colour of the PM. The couple have asked the workers not to fix any ceiling lights or wall lights, as almost the entire house will be lit by pedestal lamps as in the Prime Minister's former residence. To economise on cost and to retain the old-fashioned style, the workers have not replaced the 50-year-old Persian tiles in the fire place, the outdated ceiling fans or the door-handles of the house.



Sonia Gandhi: in charge

Once the family shifts on around 10 February, the search for a permanent residence for the PM will begin. An announcement is likely to be made shortly, inviting architects to participate in a national competition. Though the site has not yet been decided, a location within the sprawling Presidential estate is being considered. The deadline given by the Prime Minister to complete construction of his new house is December 1985 though according to CPWD officials the house is likely to be completed only in 1986. Till such time the house is built, the Prime Minister will live in his temporary well-guarded residence, an accommodation which was described by a leading architect as "far from suitable for the Prime Minister."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

ENVIRONMENT

Under a Canopy of Acid

Unprecedented levels of pollution in Bombay

The people of Bombay, the commercial capital of India which has an industrial belt in Thane-Belapur unrivalled by any other industrial region in the country, have had to pay a high price in terms of pollution. While environmental science is a relatively new concept in India, Maharashtra has been a pioneer state in enacting water and air pollution laws. Last November, it set yet another record in this field with the amendment to the Motor Vehicles Rules to curb automobile pollution. "It is estimated that automobiles are responsible for about 50 per cent of the pollution in Bombay," said Mr C. D. Oomachen, chairman of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. In collaboration with the traffic commissioner and transport commissioner, over 500 car owners have received warnings and have been told to send their cars to garages for repairs as their cars emitted carbon monoxide beyond the permitted limit. Almost all the cars belonging to the ministers in the Mantralaya were "found guilty" when subjected to the test.

However, despite the plethora of laws which cover most of the aspects of environmental pollution, Bombay's citizens are increasingly becoming victims of pollution. Environmentalists believe that the heavy misting over Bombay particularly during the winter months of January and February is because of a photochemical smog caused by automobile exhausts. Heavy concentrations of carbon monoxide, one of the deadliest pollutants from petrol vehicles, and smoke from diesel cars and trucks causes smog.

One of the more dangerous effects of automobile pollution in Bombay is the little known fact that children living in slums on either side of the Express Highway develop a low IQ because of the constant inhalation of lead dust from motor exhausts. It is also believed that many criminals escape the clutches of the police because automobile exhausts make it difficult for police dogs to pick up the scent of the culprits. Despite the 42nd amendment to the Constitution of India which among other things says that the protection of the environment is the duty of every citizen, conscientious citizens and officials like Mr C. D. Oomachen are fighting a losing battle against state-owned corporations and foreign multinational companies.

In Chembur, a suburb of Bombay and the home of oil refineries, the prestigious Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and a host of fertiliser and chemical factories, as well as film studios, people are literally living under a canopy of pure acid. Human beings, as one environmentalist said, "are not made of stainless steel, so one can imagine the incalculable damage being done to the human system." Chembur has the highest rate of lung and respiratory diseases and according to another environmentalist, the largest number of miscarriages occur in pregnant women living in Chembur.

It is ironical that the central government which has a ministry for environment and forests is one of the biggest culprits. Citizens and the Special Committee on Environmental Safety are presently fighting a losing battle with the giant state-owned Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers (RCF) Ltd., to close down its old nitric acid plant. A report following the visit of the committee members to the plant in Chembur recommended that "it is not safe to operate the old nitric acid plant in its present condition." This is one of the ten recommendations dealing with every aspect of this giant plant which is responsible for creating acid rain in the area, particularly, during the monsoon and on days when there is heavy dew. The committee found that the control panel in the old nitric acid plant is faulty, the feed flow rate is not indicated at all and there are no standby storage tanks for methylamine and nitric acid.

The operators of the plant are not trained to handle abnormal operational problems like the rise of pressure in the system and are not properly conversant with safety devices like self-contained breathing apparatus. There is no continuous monitoring for ammonia and hydrogen in the ammonia plant, carbon monoxide in the methanol plant and oxides of nitrogen in the nitric acid plant. The safety valves and pressure indicators in the ammonia, methanol, methylamine, sulphuric acid, nitric

acid and phosphoric acid tanks are either corroded or are not functioning properly. The committee found a total of 14 major deficiencies in the plant.

Early this month, the RCF's Thal-Vaishet plant was responsible for the death of a three-year-old child, Dhore V. Swamy, son of one of the Kamathi workers. While there was a controversy as to whether the child died of ammonia poisoning or pneumonia, the fact even according to the police is that the child died of ammonia poisoning. During the trial run of the plant from November 1984, the waste stored in a one lakh-cubic metre open storage tank was left untreated as the equipment for the treatment plant had not arrived. The soil of the Konkan being porous, the ammonia from the untreated effluent gradually seeped into the soil and affected the surrounding area. With the Bhopal tragedy still fresh in the minds of the people there was a scare of an ammonia leak in the area which is across Bombay harbour. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board issued a prohibitory order against the unit "for wilfully violating the conditions of the no-objection certificate issued by them and asked them to meet all conditions by 17 January." The RCF asked for time till 31 January when its treatment plant is expected to be completed under the supervision of an American company.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

KERALA

Expensive Paper

Are shredded rupee notes being used by paper mills?

The next time you write make sure the paper you write on is not worth a few thousand rupees. It could be possible, if the 20 bundles of shredded rupee notes, found unclaimed in a suburban railway station in Kerala, finds its way to the Punalur Co-operative Paper Mills, Areeplacheri. A source, close to SUNDAY discovered the bundles in remote Punalur railway station, a short distance from Shenkotta in Kerala last week. Altogether 20 sacks containing neatly shredded rupee notes which should normally have been burnt in an incinerator by the Reserve Bank of India were found.

Investigations by SUNDAY revealed that the consignment seemed to have been booked from Bombay under the consignee, director (paper), Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Bombay. The railway receipt details point out that it could also have been loaded from Nasik Road. The railway receipt number 678095 P. 20 containing the inscription of Punalur Khanka Co-operative Areeplacheri was not immediately traceable in the Madras railway station through which the parcel could have been routed.

Normally, thousands of rupee notes are collected and bundled together and examined by the representatives of the RBI and the scheduled commercial and other banks before being sorted out and marked for destruction. Every day, in all the RBI offices all over the country, thousands of kilos of such shredded notes are incinerated. For instance, in Madras, there are seven or eight incinerators in operation every day burning up tonnes of rupee notes. Enquiries by SUNDAY show that there is no procedure to enable the paper mills or any other user to make use of the shredded rupee notes. It is surprising how such a huge consignment could have bypassed the tight security and found its way to the Punalur station.

Talk of using the high quality rupee notes after "defacing" (the term employed by the Reserve Bank for the notes after shredding operations are complete) for making paper or paper mache dolls have been going on since the early Fifties when the total value of the notes in circulation was around Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000 crores. But now, the value of notes in circulation exceed Rs 25,000 crores making it impossible to provide for adequate precautions before being used for pulping purposes. "The best way out is to burn all the shredded notes under tight security," said local bankers. In fact, the Reserve Bank of India had recently imported a number of high velocity shredders and fast burning incinerators to speed up the process.

The paper manufacturers in the country, at the height of the paper shortage in the Seventies had demanded through the Indian Paper Mills Association (IPMA) that they be allowed to use the high quality shredded rupee notes. After examining all the relevant procedures, the Reserve Bank turned down their request on grounds of security. It is not known how the Punalur Co-operative Mill was able to secure such a huge quantity of top-security shredded paper. But according to some people at the railway station, the paper was not meant for the Punalur paper mill but for use in a small private, paper-making plant near Kottayam, Kerala being run by a retired railway station master.

Some railway men told SUNDAY that the paper bundles may have been booked as waste paper from Nasik Road or Bombay and according to the usual procedure, the railways may have accepted the consignment and forwarded it to the Punalur station. "After all, we handle tonnes of waste paper including imported paper every day. Only last week we handled a whole container train load (40 wagons) of imported waste paper," they added.

After booking the parcel, a forwarding note is sent to the concerned railway at the receiving end. The party who books the consignment, sends the copy of the railway receipt to the consignee and both are tallied by the receiving station's officials before the parcel is handed over. "There is no way the railways can find out whether the parcel booked is what the consignment note says or not," said local railway sources. "If there was a standing instruction from the government not to accept such cargo from Nasik or Bombay, the railways would be obligated to check up each and every consignment. It is possible that the consignment escaped the railway's notice," he added.

Mr D.P. Sethi, director (paper), Khadi and Village Industries (KVIC), Bombay, said that they were experimenting for the first time with shredded notes from the Reserve Bank of India, for repulping purposes. The KVIC has about 400 units making recycled paper mostly in backward areas and is the only source of employment for the poor in these areas. Altogether 263 units are presently working while the others are in various stages of being set up. The KVIC provides financial assistance, technical knowhow and even raw material to these units as they are for the benefit of the poor in backward villages. Mr Sethi said that "earlier, the Reserve Bank used to sell shredded notes through tenders to paper mills. So we approached them and said that there is a demand for this from our production units and the government of India agreed to give it to us. It is the first time that we are going to experiment with repulping with shredded notes. At the cooperative paper mill at Punalur, they will be doing the repulping on a trial basis."

T. Raman, Madras and Olga Tellis, Bombay

Water and Sunlight for Energy



A team of scientists in England has found a way of splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using light. The experiment helps achieve commercial production of a pollution-free fuel that is hydrogen. Moreover, it is an attractive method of producing a conveniently stored source of energy from unlimited supplies of water and sunlight, especially as a replacement for natural gas, the first of the natural energy supplies likely to run out.

New Artificial Ligament



A new artificial ligament designed by surgical engineers and textile experts in England now comes as a blessing for those with damaged knees or joints. The new ligament, which is abrasion-resistant, helps reduce post-operative convalescent time. Patients do not need to have their limbs in a plaster for months anymore. Now, it is a matter of days. For nearly a decade, orthopaedic surgeons have been using implants made of carbon fibre. The combined research is aimed at improving still further the behaviour of the carbon fibre ligaments both during surgery and in use. The advancement has come through a careful combination of a carbon fibre core encased by a new polyester sleeve. Carbon fibre is ideal for ligament replacement because it is not rejected by the body, and acts as a "scaffolding" for the growth of new tissue.

Mirrors for Better Vision

Mirrors come to the rescue of artists, designers and draughtsmen suffering from tunnel vision. In this disease, a region of blindness forms around the central fovea of the eye, which then spreads onwards to the periphery of the retina, at the same time moving more slowly inwards. As only a small portion of the viewed surface is visible, the artist or designer has great difficulty in controlling the balance of a composition, painting or design.

The system involving mirrors works in this way. A large plain mirror about 90cm×60cm is mounted above and behind the user. A second, smaller mirror approximately 20cm×15cm is placed directly onto the working surface or desktop. By adjusting the tilt of the large mirror and its distance from the head, the user can see a large portion of the work surface and his hand reflected in the small mirror. Ths has the effect of increasing the distance to the work surface and reduces the size of the overall image so that the user can see much more in a small space. After two or three minutes' practice, the artist or designer can draw or paint while looking at the reduced image in the mirror, without referring to the original object, book illustration, photograph or small sketch. Even tunnel vision sufferers who wish to play large board games or have an interest in art will benefit from the mirror system.

Detector that Checks a Corpse

A West German electrician, Dieter Robers, has designed a device which can detect whether a corpse is really dead. It will prevent persons who have been officially proclaimed dead, but are, in fact, still alive, from undergoing a very nasty experience. The equipment picks up signals of brainwaves. As soon as such impulses occur, a booster triggers off an alarm system. The air-tube provided with the device to be fitted into the coffin is of greater psychological importance, for there can be no greater nightmare than the thought of being buried alive.

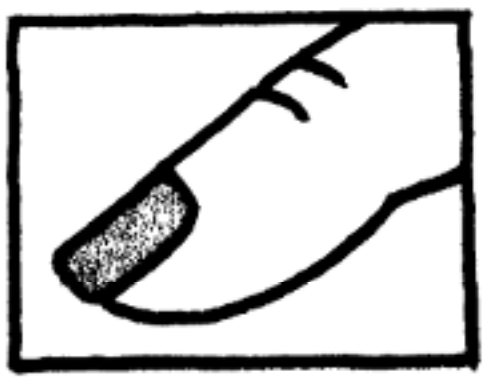
Robers began working on his invention following a harrowing experience he underwent seven years ago. "My uncle Josef had been officially proclaimed dead, and was laid on his back in the coffin," he explained. "When the coffin was opened in the family vault shortly before the funeral, Uncle Josef was lying on his side. He had moved."

Wanted: Iodine-Enriched Salt



Nearly ten million people in West Germany suffer from goitre due to iodine deficiency, although the complaint may not always be clearly visible. Lack of iodine means an alarmingly high incidence of goitre due to thyroid trouble. Iodine deficiency is mainly a nutrition problem: nearly all food other than fish and seafood contain too little iodine to ensure an adequate supply. People might need an intake of only 150-200 millionths of a gram per day. The disease particularly affects infants. Using iodine-enriched salt is an effective means of checking goitre.

Just Press your Finger



If you want to measure your blood pressure, you do not have to use the sphygmanometer. All you have to do is press your finger onto a small pad. This blood-pressure device is called the Finger-sphyg, and is being developed by Britain's Oric medical company. It doesn't involve the sleeve being rolled up, is less time consuming and the doctor doesn't have to stop work to take a reading. It will give an electronic readout of both blood pressure and heart beat in an easy-to-read digital form. Besides, it can be used by both the layman as well as by the trained professional.

Illustrations Prabu Sen

Headache?



The one solution ANACIN

Trust its extra pain relieving power.

Anacin contains more of the pain reliever doctors the world over recommend.

Effective for the aches and pains of colds and flu, headache, toothache, backache and muscular pain.

Trust only Anacin.

Now in a protective foil pack.



Strong and trusted

ANACIN*

India's No. 1. pain reliever

GM-2-R-84

* Licensed user of T.M : Geoffrey Manners & Co. Ltd.

SCIENCE

ARTHRITIS

Tracing the Cause

The treatment of rheumatoid arthritis has made unhappily slow progress. Scientists know a lot about the symptoms of the disease, but its causes have remained obscure. That is beginning to change. As with other mysterious diseases (such as AIDS), the culprit could be a virus.

Rheumatoid arthritis is the kind that affects joints throughout the body and not just in old age; it ruins many people's lives. The symptoms have been neatly described as the body's over-reaction to injury. Normally, when tissue becomes injured in a joint, chemicals called prostaglandins are released from the damaged cell walls. They in turn can help encourage the immune system to clear up the damage It deploys two kinds of cell to do its work: white blood cells to release antibodies which attach themselves to any foreign substances present, and monocytes to gobble up the debris.

In arthritis, however, the inflammatory process runs amok. The immune response fails to remove the initial cause of injury; the body starts making antibodies to fight its own naturally occurring antibodies.

The most common treatment for arthritis uses aspirin-like drugs. These interfere with prostaglandin synthesis (some also prevent the movement of immune cells to damaged tissue), but they cannot stop the progression of disease because they attack its symptoms

So what is the cause? One thing is for sure: studies with identical twins have revealed a definite genetic link. This has been pinned down to a gene called HLA DR4, which is common to about 60 per cent of rheumatoid-arthritis sufferers. It belongs to a class of genes which code for proteins that act as identity markers, helping the body to distinguish itself from what is foreign. They also help to control the immune system. But the HLA DR4 gene is present in 22 per cent of the population, whereas only one per cent get rheumatoid arthritis. So other factors must trigger the disease.

Some believe viruses are the prime candidates. Most viruses remain hard to detect, even with fancy new techniques. Some are very small, others seem to disappear once inside the cell, by incorporating themselves into the cell's own genetic material. There is convincing evidence that one virus can trigger chronic arthritis in old goats, but for man there is only circumstantial evidence:

- Some viral infections can cause temporary bursts of arthritis in the body's joints on top of other symptoms. Ross-river viruses, transmitted to man by mosquitoes can cause epidemics of arthritis. Rubella virus, or even rubella vaccination, induces arthritic symptoms
- Excessive quantities of antibodies designed to attack various viruses, including cytomegalovirus, have been detected in the blood of people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. However, the presence of antibodies to these viruses might simply mean that the arthritic patient is less capable of dealing with infection.
- Viruses have also been identified in tissues taken from synovial membranes (which encase joints), or cells cultured from them. The most recent example has been provided by Dr Robert Simpson and his colleagues from Rutgers university in New Jersey, who have detected the presence in arthritic patients of a virus similar to the parvovirus that is normally associated with illnesses in cats and dogs.

***By arrangement with* The Economist**

VARIETY

This India

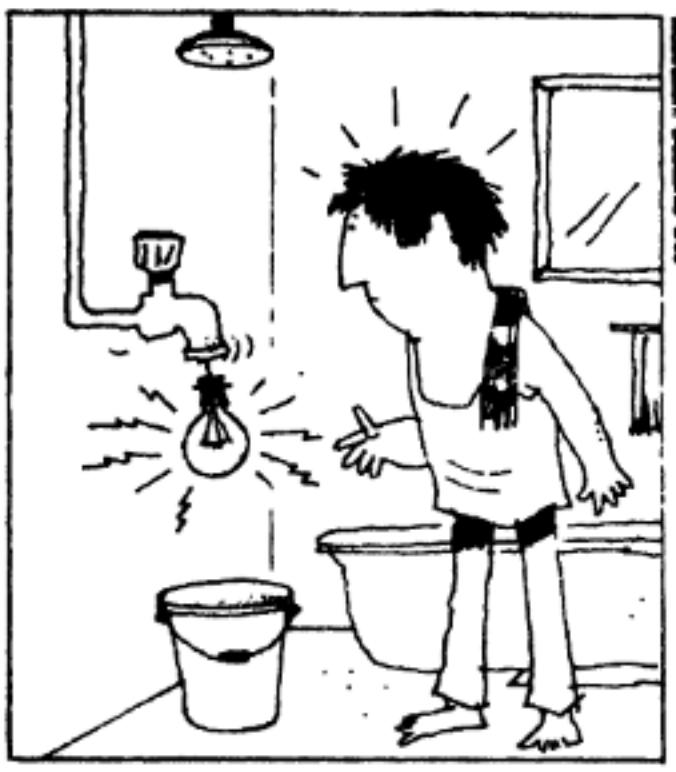


Illustration: Debarshi Das

NEW DELHI: If you have a problem with the water supply, you go to the Municipal Corporation; if you have a problem with the power supply, you go to the Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking. What happens, however, when you get electricity through water taps? This is what some residents of the MIG flats in Sheikh Sarai in south Delhi had to figure out on 14 January. When they opened their taps that morning, water came in great gusts seasoned with electric current—*The Hindustan Times* (K. Chakraborty, Calcutta)

AMBALA: At times a peon or a gardener is ordered to officiate as headmaster of a government school in a village in Patiala. This has been under the orders of the headmaster of Government High School, Khellan village, seven kms from here—*The Tribune* (Surinder Arora, Ludhiana)

NEW DELHI: Stengun-toting and walkie-talkie equipped police personnel stormed into the branch office of a multinational company at Connaught Place here on 7 December on being informed of a "clash". But the policemen were stunned when they were told that a woman staffer of the organisation had decided to call in the police when her boss refused to settle a quarrel she had with the canteen boy—*The Hindustan Times* (Veenu Bhatia, Dehradun)

MADRAS: Two English cricketers steered two college girls to safety and away from a watery grave. Bruce French and Jonathan Agnew had been given time off from the Chepauk test to visit Mahabalipuram on 15 January. As they were wading in the sea, they heard cries of 'help' from a panicky pack of college girls. As luck would have it, French and Agnew responded to their call. It was a tough swim for both as the current was strong. Indeed, at one point, both were as close to being sucked in as the two girls they were trying to rescue. The cricketers managed to bring in the two girls to safety and also render them emergency-aid measures—*The Hindu* (C. S. N. Murthy, Bangalore)

SHAMLI: "Amitabh Bachchan," was the prompt but sarcastic reply of a rustic, witty, old farmer to the poser—"Who can rule the country now?" The question was asked by Dr Z. Nazir, a close associate of Dr Farooq Abdullah, at the first election meeting in UP addressed by the DMKP leader, Mr Charan Singh, on 6 December. The answer evoked peels of laughter—*The Times of India* (Sanjay Chandwani, Allahabad)

DINDIGUL: Manickam, belonging to a village near Karur, has been sitting atop a 156-foot police control tower here since the morning of 21 January, refusing to come down. He says he has been sent to jail 20 times for various offences and now wants to live as a good citizen. But the community does not permit him to do so. Repeated requests to the authorities to help him financially for his rehabilitation have gone in vain—*Indian Express* (N. Balan, Madras)

SABARIMALA: A young tusker was among the hundreds of beggars who had spread their towels along the pilgrim path for alms from those climbing the hillside to the shrine of Sabarimala — *The Times of India* (Prasanna Kumar Das, Rourkela)

NEW DELHI: It was an amusing case of *kissa kursi ka* regarding the seat of the chairman of the standing committee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi on 22 January with three Congress members occupying it within a span of 30 minutes—an all-time record! The standing committee meeting to consider the budget of the water undertaking started with Mr Jagdish Anand occupying the chairman's seat as both the deputy chairman, Mr Fazlur Rehman, and the chairman, Mr Jai Prakash Agarwal, were not present. Fifteen minutes later Mr Anand had to vacate the seat as the deputy chairman arrived. Much to everyone's amusement, Mr Rehman had to leave the chair another 15 minutes later as Mr Agarwal turned up—*The Times of India* (Sumathy, New Delhi)

Without Comment

The unhappy marriage has ended in divorce—B.B. Shivappa, Karnataka BJP president, announcing the end of the BJP-Janata Party alliance, in *The Statesman*

Veerappan (Tamil Nadu information minister) has called me a 'Phoolan Devi.' He needed a Phoolan Devi to conduct the AIADMK election campaign, which left to themselves they knew they would not be able to manage—Jayalalitha in *The Week*

Rajiv (Gandhi) himself is enjoying a classic politician's honeymoon, during which he can essentially do no wrong—S. Nihal Singh, former editor of *The Statesman*, in *Newsweek*

I think the boys are in a much better mood for settlement—Rajiv Gandhi, on the Assam issue, in *India Today*



A cricketer has to be treated as a human being, he has to be honoured for his talents; his dignity has to be respected; you cannot, must not, exploit him—Ashok Mitra, West Bengal finance minister, in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

Our greatest battles lie ahead...We can change America forever. That's some great and beautiful music we've been playing the past four years—but the way I see it, from here on it's shake, rattle and roll—Ronald Reagan in *International Herald Tribune*

Bombay is far more professional...In Bengal they tend to spoil you. There is so much more love and forgiveness, that your faults are overlooked—Moon Moon Sen in *Frontline*

BEGINNING 10 FEBRUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



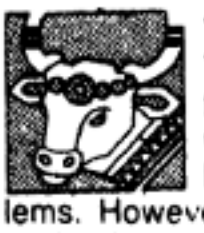
ARIES (15 April—14 May) Success in your ventures is a certainty for all of you this week Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. Lovers will find their parents extremely compromising. On the economic front most of you will gain money or property through an unexpected source However do not involve yourself in legal matters this week
Good dates: 10, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South-east



LEO (15 August—14 September) There is good news for those unemployed. a job is in the offing. Those employed will find their colleagues and superiors extremely cooperative. This is an ideal week for marriage negotiations. On the economic front, some of you will gain through inheritance The week-end will be a socially hectic one. Those above the age of 40 should be vigilant about their health.
Good dates: 12, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen and gamblers; do not hesitate to invest in risky ventures. The domestic front will remain inspiring Your financial position will improve. For those in service there is good news you will be promoted or transferred to a place of your liking The period is equally favourable for marriage.
Good dates: 10, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: East



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is a week of mixed fortunes Domestic problems will bother you. You will also be plagued by financial problems. However, this is a good period for professionals: some of you may even get a promotion Businessmen will bag lucrative deals. Your health will improve markedly during this phase. The week is also favourable for love and marriage negotiations
Good dates: 11, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) The stars are favourable to all of you this week Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress. The domestic front will remain peaceful. Your financial status will also improve, but avoid extravagance. Those above the age of 45 should be careful about their health.
Good dates: 10, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Financial gains from unexpected quarters are in store for you this week. The professional front will remain inspiring. At home your children and wife will be a source of joy. However, one of your close relatives may suddenly fall sick. Things are not so bright for lovers: a misunderstanding may lead to estrangement. Watch your health closely.
Good dates: 11, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Social engagements will keep you occupied but do not neglect your job. On the domestic front a minor upheaval will disturb you. Financial loses are also indicated. However, those in business will find this period very favourable. do not hesitate to take risks. Friends will prove very helpful, particularly in love affairs. Your health will improve.
Good dates: 12, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is not a good week for those in love petty quarrels and misunderstandings may lead to estranged relationship Your health will also bother you throughout this period. Businessmen should be wary of deception. check all documents meticulously. However, this is a good period for those employed in the private sector.
Good dates: 11, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Friends and colleagues will be trying to embarrass you: do not enter into unnecessary arguments and deal with them diplomatically. Financially this is a good week but you will face problems recovering debts. This is a favourable phase for artists and sportsmen. Lovers will also find this period favourable. But keep a close eye on your health.
Good dates: 12, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week enemies will be out to harm you do not rely on your friends and relatives on crucial matters. Your deteriorating health will add to your worries. Be prepared for setbacks on the professional front However, this is a good period for those in love The phase is equally favourable for gamblers and speculators. A letter will bring good tidings.
Good dates: 13, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This week your domestic front will pose fresh problems do not be upset and deal with those at home diplomatically. On the financial front you may lose heavily if you indulge in risky ventures. Businessmen in particular should be careful while taking up new assignments. However, this is a favourable period for love and marriage.
Good dates: 12, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: South



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This week you will be occupied with parties and social engagements but do not over-strain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health. Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress while sucess is in store for sportsmen. The domestic front will remain peaceful. However, this is not a favourable week for marriage negotiations.
Good dates: 10, 13 and 16
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South

For those born on the 11th, 12th or 13th of any month:

Most of your are born leaders and extremely good in oratory You will prosper in the legal profession. You may also join politics. Your tendency to dictate over others makes you unpopular at times. But you have no dearth of friends and admirers who look upon you for advice. However, some of you are arrogant. Women born during this period are very social by nature and their pleasing temperament makes them ideal housewives.

VARIETY

CHESS

Continuing last week's theme of useless extra pawns, I give a further and even more deceptive example of the value of an extra pawn, however lame it may at first sight appear to be.

In the endgame, which quickly arises, Black warms to the task of picking off White's sick isolated pawns, only to find he cannot do so without in return losing some of his own healthy connected ones. As a result he finds his own forces driven into increasing disarray, so that by the time material equilibrium is finally re-established he is quite lost.

White: L. Polugaevsky. Black: G. Sosonko. Queen's Gambit Ragosin System.

1 P–Q4 N–KB3 2 P–QB4 P–K3
3 N–KB3 P–Q4 4 N–B3 B–N5
5 PxP PxP 6 B–N5 P–KR3
7 B–R4 P–KN4 8 B–N3 N–K5
9 N–Q2!?

A nice idea. If 9 . . . NxQN 10 PxN BxP 11 R–B1 BxP? 12 Q–R4+ N–B3 13 RxN or 11 . . . BxN+ 12 QxB with clear compensation

9 . . . NxB 10 RPxN P–QB4!
11 PxP N–B3 12 P–K4 BxN!
13 PxB Q–K2 14 Q–K2 B–K3
15 PxP BxP

Sosonko (Black)



Polugaevsky (White) to move

Black appears to have equalised the game White's ragged extra pawn cannot be worth anything – unless of course Black tries to win it back

16 QxQ+ NxQ

Already haring off in the wrong direction. Correct is 16 . KxQ concentrating on development and forgetting about pawns.

17 B–N5+ K–B1 18 O–O R–B1
19 P–QB4 B–K3

Committed to his plan of winning back the pawn On 19 . B–B3 20 N–N3 everything is protected and White is better developed.

20 N–K4!

Announcing that he is not going to give up the front QBP for nothing. If 20 B–B4 21 N–Q6 RxP 22 NxNP.

20 . . . P–QR3 21 B–R4 BxP

Regaining his pawn, but the wrong one.

22 KR–Q1 P–B4 23 N–Q6 RxP
24 NxNP R–Q4 25 R(Q1)–QB1!

Now Black will be made to pay for the weakening effect of 22 . . . P–B4. The seventh rank is now open

25 . . . B–N4 26 B–N3 R–K4
27 R–B7 K–N2 28 N–Q6 R–K7
DIAGRAM
29 P–QR4! Resigns.

If 29 . B–Q6 30 R–Q1, else 29 . . B–K1 30 B–B4 and Black's rook is driven off the K file – 30 R–K4 31 P–B4 R–K6 32 K –B2

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

The Canadian player and writer Eric Kokisb remarked recently that modern bridge experts clearly ranked a cut above those of the past. Another Canadian, Frank Vine, questioned this, recalling some deals played in the 1950s, on one of which I played a walk-on part.

Dealer North Love all

	♠ 9 4 3 ♥ A K 4 ♦ A 4 ♣ A 10 9 8 6	
♠ 10 5 2 ♥ J 5 2 ♦ Q 10 9 8 2 ♣ 7 5	N W E S	♠ ♥ Q 10 9 7 6 ♦ K J 7 6 3 ♣ K Q 2
	♠ A K Q J 8 7 6 ♥ 8 3 ♦ 5 ♣ J 4 3	

North opened One Club I overcalled with One Heart, and South, Johnny Crawford, soon reached Six Spades My partner, Leslie Dodds, led the 2 of hearts.

It looks as though the declarer must fall back on the combination finesse in clubs However, these hands where you hold all the top controls offer many chances, and Crawford's line was to play off five rounds of trumps. He arrived at this position



	♠ – ♥ A 4 ♦ A 4 ♣ A 10 9	
♠ – ♥ J 5 ♦ Q 9 8 ♣ 7 5	N W E S	♠ – ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ K ♣ K Q 2
	♠ 7 6 ♥ 8 ♦ 5 ♣ J 4 3	

South now played ace and another diamond, on which I had to throw a heart, followed by ace and another heart. Then I was end-played in clubs.

Reverting to the general question, I don't think that in Britain there has been any improvement among the top players. Add to Gray, Meredith, Konstam, Dodds, Albert Rose, half a dozen or more who are still with us (just), and you won't find their equal among the moderns

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What is the hygrometer used for?
2. Where in India, is the National Institute of Sports?
3. The deficiency of which vitamin in the human body leads to scurvy?
4. Rabindranath Tagore wrote the Indian national anthem. Who wrote the national song?
5. For what is the Uber Cup awarded?
6. The *Majlis* is the parliament of which country?
7. The first man on the moon was Neil Armstrong. Who was the second?
8. Garlic, asparagus, caviar, ginseng and honey are reputed to have a common property. What?
9. Name the well-known Spanish author who lost an arm in the battle of Lepanto in 1571.
10. The first attempt in England to codify a constitutional document was the signing of the *Magna Carta* in 1215. Name the king who signed it.
11. What is the collective noun for jellyfish?
12. St Columba, is believed to have described what is considered to be a mythical creature as a "fearsome beast-...something like a huge frog," in a lake in Scotland in 565 A.D. What is this creature called today?
13. George Orwell wrote 1984. Which well-known British author has written a book on the same theme called 1985?
14. What do the following have in common: Tomcat, Eagle, Fighting falcon, Hornet and Tigershark?

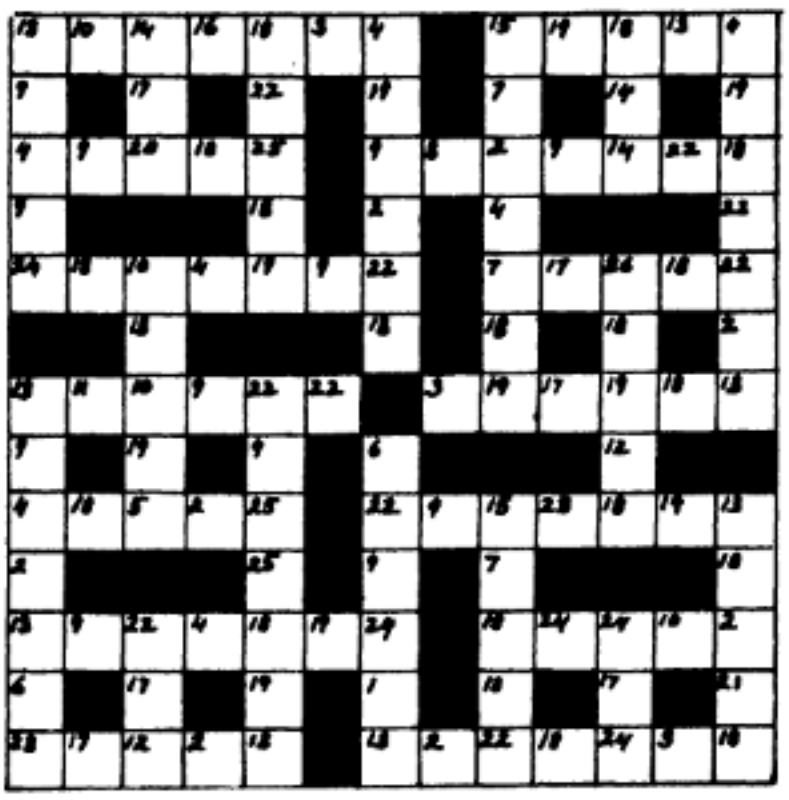
ANSWERS

1. The humidity in the atmosphere.
2. Patiala.
3. Vitamin C.
4. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee—*Bande Mataram*.
5. Badminton.
6. Iran.
7. Edwin Aldrin.
8. The are all believed to be aphrodisiacs.
9. Miguel de Cervantes.
10. King John.
11. A smack.
12. The Loch Ness Monster.
13. Anthony Burgess.
14. They are all names given to the American fighter aircraft of the "F" series. (F-14 is Tomcat, F-15 is Eagle, F-16 is Fighting falcon, F-18 is Hornet and F-20 is Tigershark.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		C										

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
					R				Y			

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start, three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Quick Think

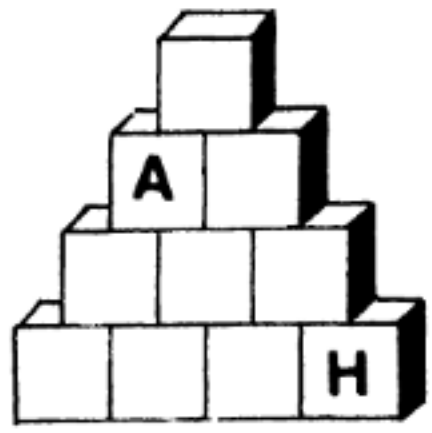
What should go into the blanks?
1) B, E, I, N, —
2) A, C, D, G, H, I, M, N, O, P,—, —, —, —, —

Witsharpener

The senior section of the school that Ram went to was short of teachers. There were only three teachers who between them taught five subjects. These were English, Hindi, Mathematics, History and Geography. The time table had to be worked out very carefully because no subject was taught by all the masters though each teacher taught three subjects. We know that:
a) Mr Sen did not know how to handle logarithm tables
b) Mr Rao was unfamiliar with the Devanagiri script
c) Mr Das had only a vague idea about what the trade winds were.

Can you work out which subjects each master took?

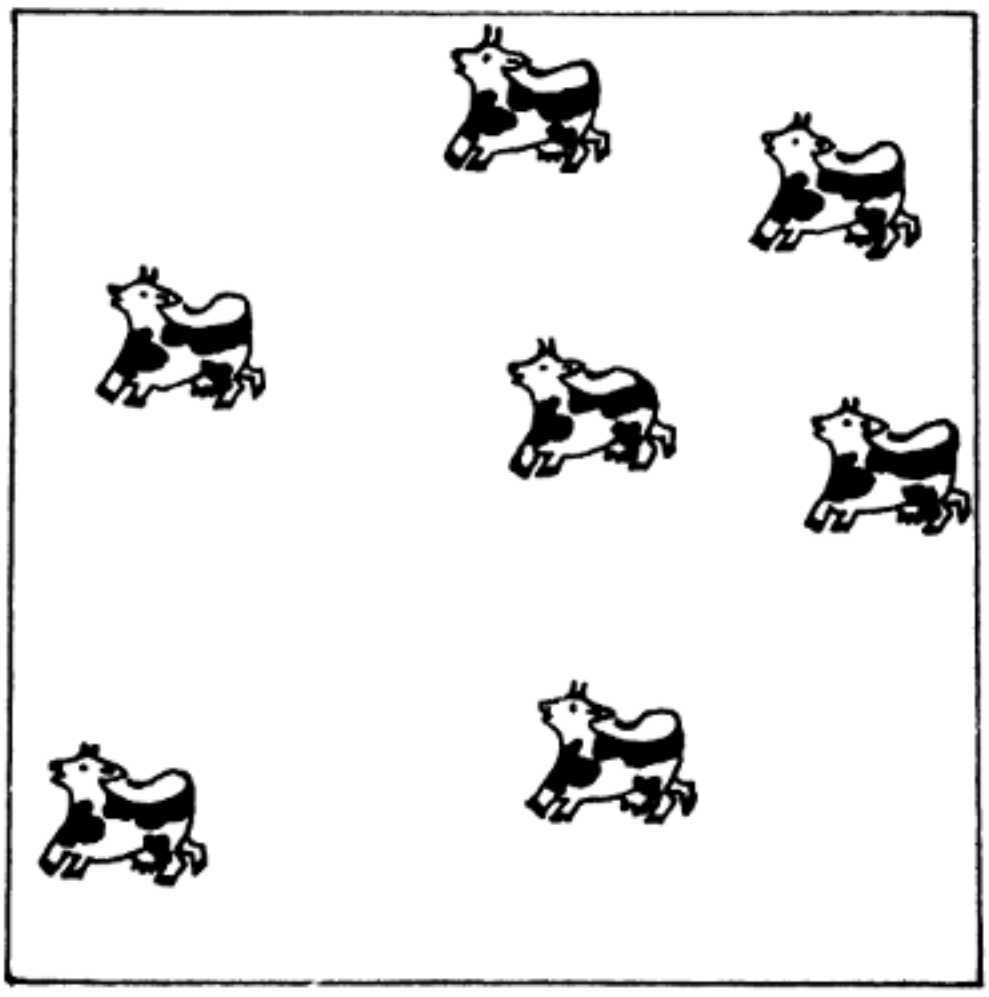
Blockbuster



H,M,S,L,T,N,D,A,B,U

Fill the ten letters given below into the pyramid so that they form eight four-letter words reading downwards. Two letters have already been placed to give you a start.

Figure it Out



With the help of three straight lines, can you enclose each cow in its own pen?

Quick Think

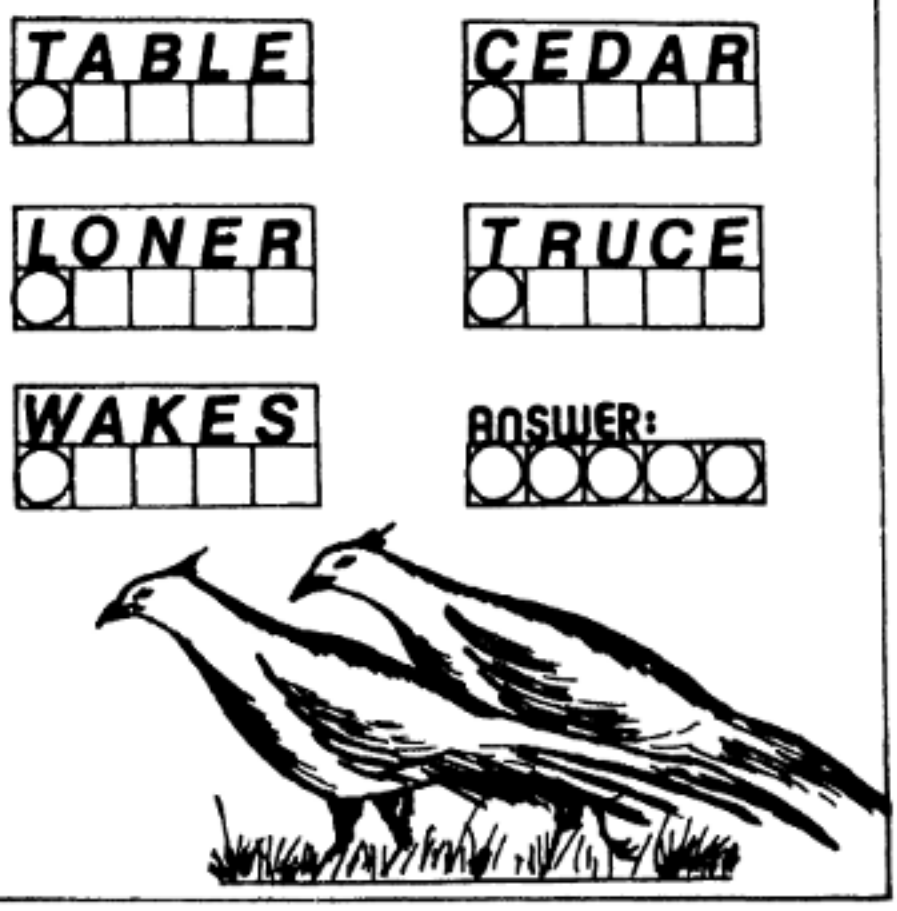
Five cats take five minutes to catch five mice. How many cats will it take to catch 100 mice in 100 minutes?

What's in a Word?

If you were to add the letters T O before and after M A, you would get the word T O M A T O. In the following words, we give you only the middle letters. The beginning and ending consist, as in TOMATO, of the same letters in the same order. Can you complete the words?

1) — — V E — —
2) — — G I B — —
3) — — A T — —
4) — — S U L — —
5) — — I T — —

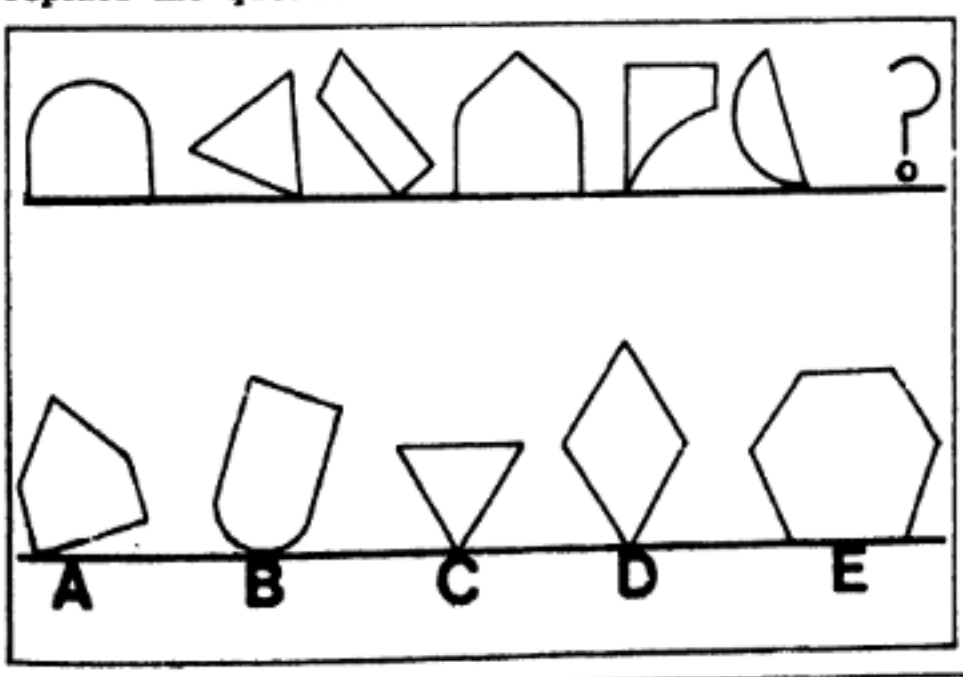
Scrambles



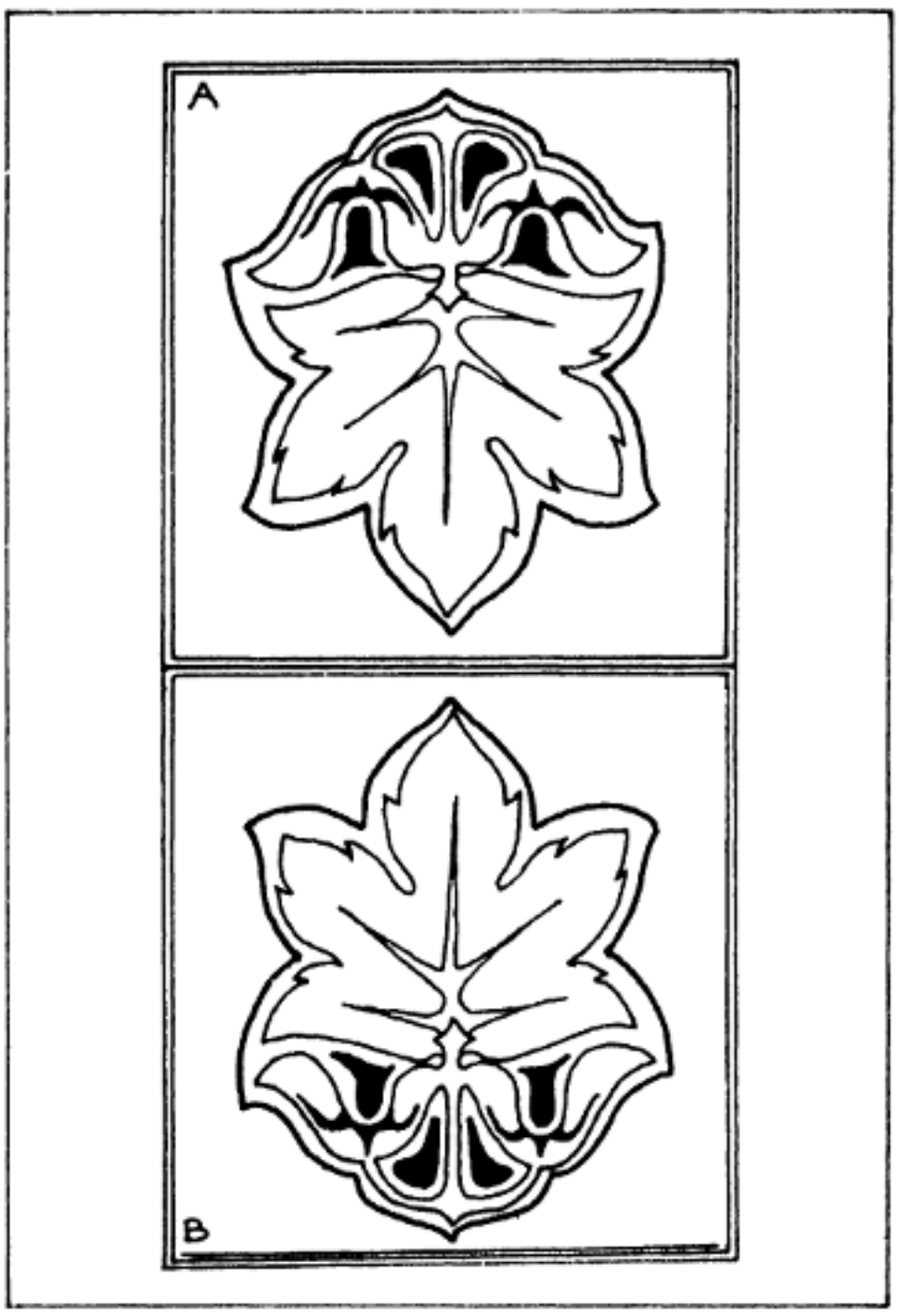
Unscramble each of the five words given to make a new word. Then rearrange the circled letters to give you a pair of birds.

Shape Sleuth

Which of the lettered shapes in the line below can replace the question mark?



Eyewash



What's the difference? There is just one difference in detail between Figure A and Figure B. How soon can you find it?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Witsharpener:
Each item on the list contains the number: Wonton, Christmas tree etc. So fishing net would cost Rs ten and Vanilla essence Rs 11.00.

Quick Think:
Dice 1

What's in a Word:
Philately, Capsicum, Chief, Rhombus Detain, Spinal and Axial.

Figure it Out: b

Missing Link:
1) HER 2) ACT 3) ONE

Word Power:
Hocus Pocus, Hotch Potch (or Hodge Podge), Hoi Polloi, Hanky Panky

Shape Sleuth:
Nottingham, Bombay, Isotope, Shakespeare and Business.

Mindbender:
Three moves:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 12 13 18 11 14 17 16 19 20

15 12 13 18 11 16 17 14 19

15 12 13 14 11 16 17 18 19

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20



It does not need an oracle to say that no man ever became a top-notch manager in his sleep Leadership calls forth the sedulous cultivation of the highest qualities in man like, for instance, a capacity for sound judgement In business there can be no readymade solution that would act as a magic wand and solve all problems in a miraculous manner Each problem may involve the exercise of the faculty of judgement to the utmost to decide how a particular situation should be met The manager must possess the unerring power of intuition to ensure that his judgement is at once suited to the specific situation and is entirely in consonance with the norms that already exist in the environment

The leader is one whose judgement has become matured and mellowed by exposure to many a knotty problem Far from avoiding a problem, he regards it as a challenge to be met with all the resources at his command

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EMINENCE THROUGH EXCELLENCE

EP.BT 117/84

After a gloomy period, *Poonam Dhillon* has started seeing light again. She has just signed some good films and hopes to concentrate on films once again as love, fun and marriage are far from her mind. Her experience with *Ramesh Talwar* was bitter enough. "It was embarrassing and humiliating to stay at home doing nothing and watching other girls walking ahead, but I did not lose hope. I knew better things would come... " she says with confidence.

The writers of Manmohan Desai's *Mard* were asked to make changes to suit the new status of the hero *Amitabh Bachchan*,MP. K.K. Shukla, one of the writers engaged to polish the script said: "We can't take chances with Amitabh now. He is a leader. We can't show anything cheap. People will watch Amitabh very closely and his critics will watch *Mard* with a lot of interest to find loopholes. We have the responsibility to take care of his image." Writers of two other starrers, *Khabardaar* and *Giraftaar*, are also working overtime to cast a heavenly glow on Amitabh Bachchan

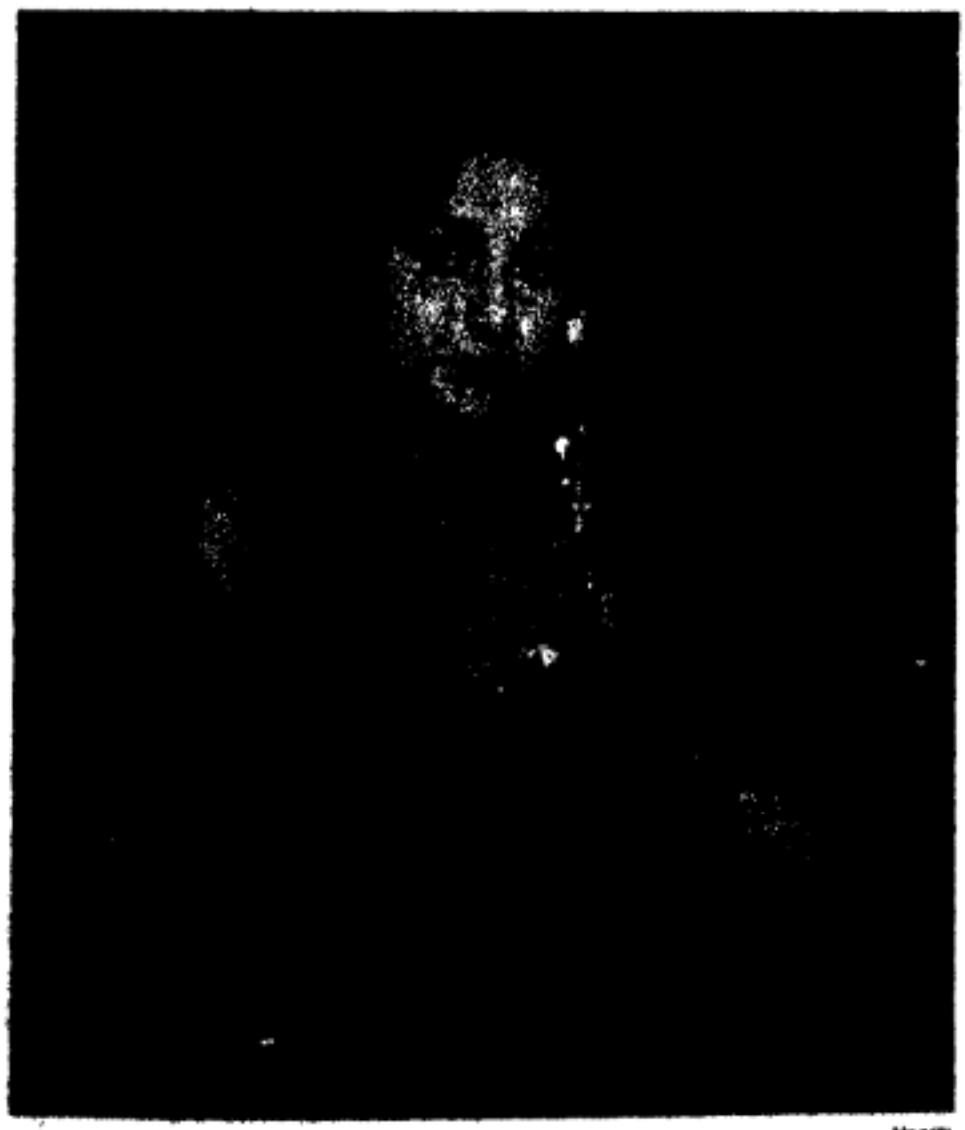
Everybody is talking about *Anil Kapoor* but success still evades him. He has had a hat-trick of flops. *Mashaal* won him all the applause but the film flopped inspite of *Dilip Kumar* and *Yash Chopra*. His second film *Laila* also failed and his latest *Love Marriage* is a disaster

The way *Raj Babbar* is going, he can only end up in Parliament He campaigned for *Sunil Dutt* and his speeches could only have been delivered by a veteran politician. The victory of Sunil Dutt and *Amitabh Bachchan* has given him enough encouragement. "I may enter politics at the right time," Raj Babbar says. And if Raj Babbar takes the plunge, will *Smita Patil*, whose father is a politician, stay far behind?



Sridevi: very close to Mithun

Durgaprasad



Poonam Dhillon: on the way up?

Nagrai

Mithun Chakraborty and *Sridevi:* who is not talkingabout them? And, of course, both of them are baffled by all the eyes that are probing their movements. "We first came to know each other only after *Raakesh Roshan*, the producer of *Jaag Utha Insaan* introduced us. We became very good friends during the making of the film. We had the same likes and dislikes. We got along well and I knew I was in for trouble. I wonder if these people who spread these wild stories realise how much harm they cause the family of the affected persons. But I have got used to it and so have Sridevi and *Pinky (wife Yogeeta Bali)*." Mithun says.

The one actress whose fortunes are on the upswing in South Indian films is *Sarita* who was discovered by *K. Balachander*. She has proved herself as one of the few actresses in the South who can do something other than take off clothes and put on vulgar acts, through films like *Thaneer Thaneer, Maro Charithra, Achamillai Achamillai*. "I don't believe in signing up films but in choosing my roles. I even wonder whether I have signed up more films than I should," she says. Sarita has acted in Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and has made her debut in Malayalam films through *Sandarbham*. More than anything else she might be a sobering influence on the hip-swaying crowd.

DELHI DIARY

New Image


Jagdish Yadav

Margaret Alva

What is the difference between the last government and the present one? The Rajya Sabha members have been feeling the change. In the last regime, the minister of state for parliamentary affairs was Kalpnath Rai. His manners were far from suave. He had become a minister within a month after SUNDAY published a report about the way his political opponents in Azamgarh district's Ghosi area were being harassed. He has now been replaced by Margaret Alva. Her gentle ways are in sharp contrast to those of Kalpnath Rai.

Made for Each Other

The spouse of a MP is issued a pass to enable him or her to enter the Parliament House and to go to the Central Hall and witness the proceedings from the distinguished visitors' gallery. The spouse pass had never before been taken as seriously as in the eighth Lok Sabha. Dr Bali, husband of Vyjayanthimala, the film-star-turned-parliamentarian from Madras, is seen in the gallery whenever she is in the House. And if you fail to locate him in the gallery, all that you have to do is notice the direction at which Vyjayanthimala is looking. If you follow her stare, it will invariably lead you to the seat in the gallery where the distinguished Dr Bali is seated.


Vyjayanthimala Bali

Creating History

In the Congress centenary year, history is being misquoted. In his maiden speech to the Congress Parliamentary Party on New Year's eve, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had referred to the inaugural Congress session in Bombay held in the end of December a hundred years ago. This was not the first time that Rajiv Gandhi was referring to the Congress centenary. He had set the ball rolling at the October 1983 session of the AICC held at Bombay. But his concern for the party's glorious past is not matched by his knowledge of history. Time and again, he has been referring to one "S.N. Banerjee" while talking of the first session of the Indian National Congress. Surendra Nath Banerjee was not in Bombay when the inaugural Congress session took place. It was Romesh Chandra Bonnerji who presided. But abbreviations apart, Rajiv Gandhi's bid at creating history has to be appreciated.

Political Stars


Sondeep Shankar

Shabana Azmi

Filmstars have not only entered politics, but politics too has entered into the lives of the filmstars. The closing ceremony of the Tenth Film Festival was not star-studded. Even a MP like Amitabh Bachchan was not there. Reason: Sivaji Ganesan, the Rajya Sabha member and Tamil film hero, had been asked to preside over the show. So, neither Amitabh Bachchan nor Sunil Dutt, two other star MPs, were around. Shabana Azmi, a jury member, too was missing. There was speculation about her absence. Shabana Azmi has no political ambitions (at least, so far) so, Sivaji Ganesan could not have upset her. Had she disagreed with the jury's verdict? There was no proof of this either. A rumour went round that she was unwell. Some added spice to it by saying that she was pregnant. At this point a film producer. with whom Ms Azmi is currently shooting, vehemently protested. He scotched the rumours by announcing that she was suffering from bronchitis, so she could not be present. Filmstars must be regretting the entry of their colleagues into politics now.

Practical Minister

Oldtimers in the steei department say that the efficient days, which had not been witnessed since the death of S. Mohan Kumaramangalam in 1973, are back again. The minister of state for steel, former diplomat Kanwar Natwar Singh, has begun the streamlining operations with a bang. To begin with, the minister has dropped all the frills: even at the airports, he has been seen checking in at the airlines counter, like an ordinary passenger. When the orientation classes were held for new MPs, Natwar Singh preferred to sit among the audience and refused to be on the dais, because he was attending the course as a student. The Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) was a brainchild of the late S.M. Kumaramangalam. With efficient ministerial guidance and the chairmanship of S. Samarapungavan, who was close to Mohan Kumaramangalam, SAIL may at last turn a new leaf in the coming months.


Jagdish Yadav

K. Natwar Singh

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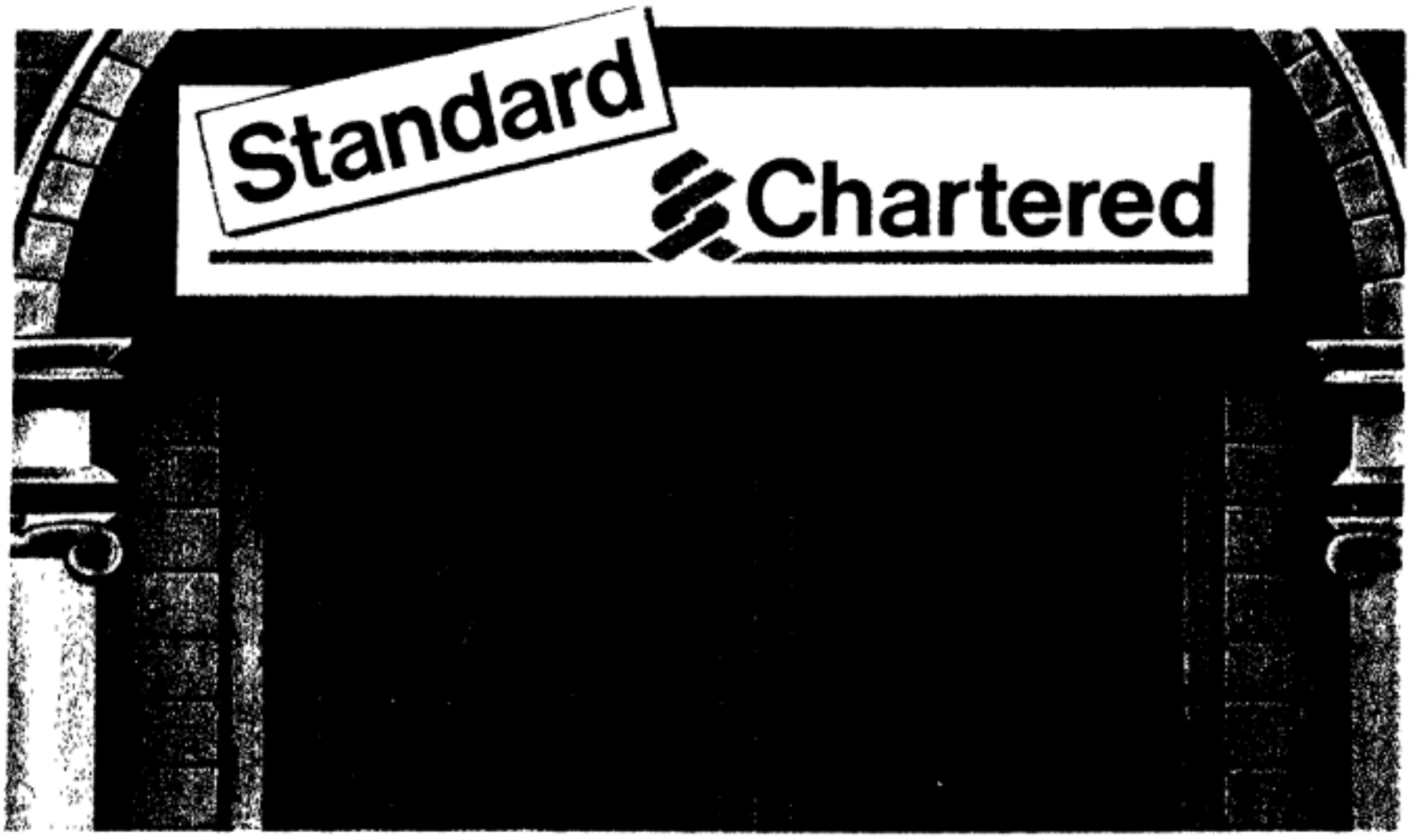


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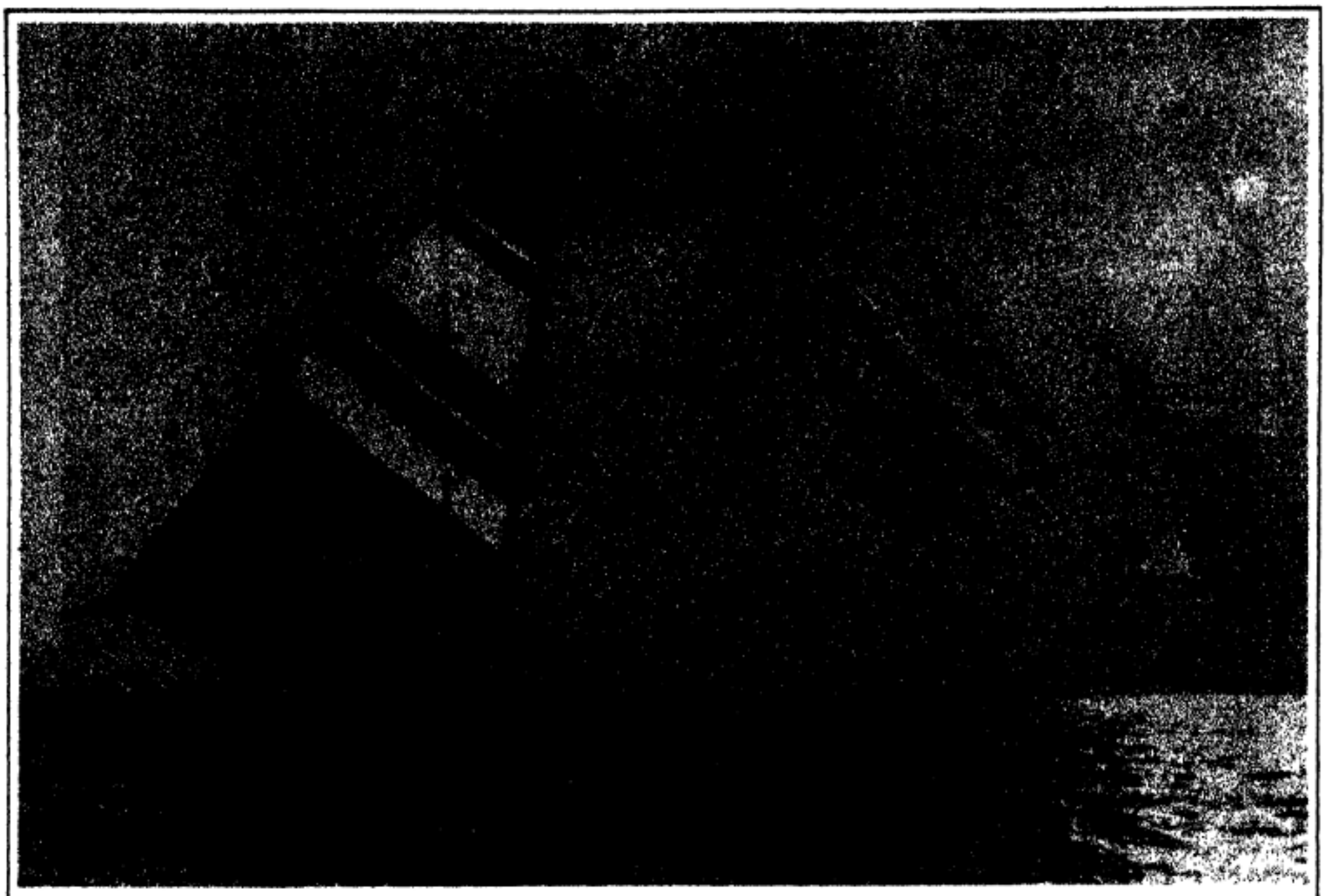
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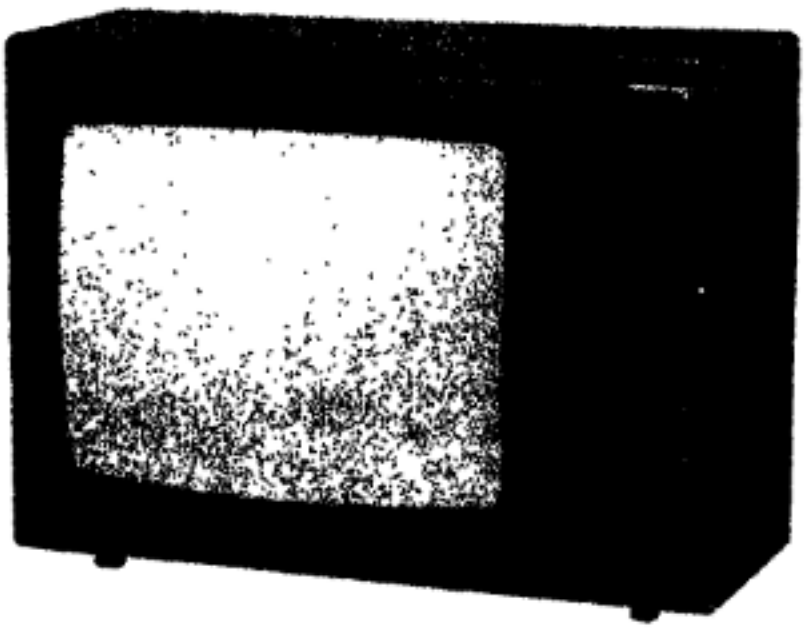
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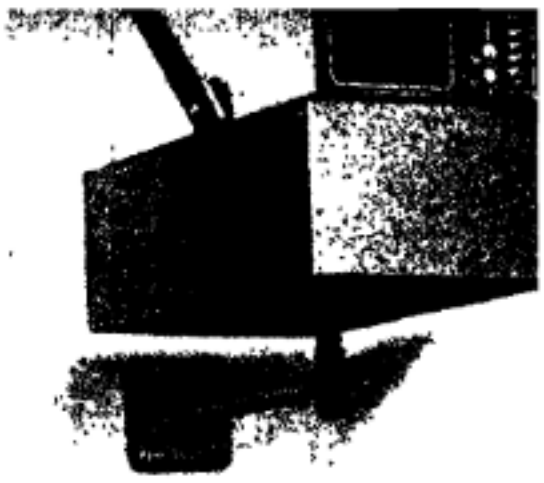
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DATELINE / M.J.Akbar

Calcutta: Every birth is dramatic, but most so the birth of a great career. Not all the seats were full at the Sisir Manch at five in the evening when the show was scheduled to start, but it will not be very long before all such theatres will be packed when *Damul* is shown. Perhaps the experience was more enthralling because one's expectations were subdued. Mrinal Sen had telephoned to suggest that I go to a special showing of this new film, and said that its maker Prakash Jha wanted to chat with me. I am not the world's greatest fan of films, particularly of the modern/serious variety. The medium is vitally important etcetera etcetera, but I prefer to receive my little knowledge through that old-fashioned thing called the written word. If celluloid (as its votaries insist) is the only passport to the twentyfirst century, then I would prefer to live a little longer in the twentieth. On the few occasions that I do indulge myself, I rather prefer the heroics of Dev Anand, the saucy dancing of Sheila Ramani, the embarrassed romanticism of Raj Kapoor or the exquisite delicacy of Waheeda Rehman. Revolution is best packaged between covers, at least in my scheme of things.

Mrinal Sen's generosity of the younger filmmakers is wellknown; one felt that he was perhaps being his moral helpful self, when he decided to literally introduce Prakash Jha and *Damul* to Calcutta. Mrinal Sen did us all a great favour. *Damul* is one of the finest bits of creativity to have appeared on the screen in recent times, and Prakash Jha has the ability to become one of the best directors in cinema. This is his first film, and its depth and power overwhelm the viewer. This is the village of Bihar which the filmmaker understands, because he has lived in it and has not forgotten it when the lights of Bombay's film industry could easily have erased the darkness of the nights of West Champaran. This is the village that urban filmmakers (the greatest of them) will never understand since rural poverty and inequity are only paper concepts to them. This is the village where there are no heroes and villains, just the reality of oppression, its perpetrators, its instruments, its agents, and its consequences of blood and bondage. This is the world of partial democracy, where power flows as much from consensus as the country-made gun. Morality is the handmaiden of survival here, and has been for countless centuries: the brahmin landlord Madhav Pande is a guardian not only of religious ritual but also of traditional hierarchy, he does not rant and rave; it is almost with a tinge of regret that he silently watches his *munim* cheat yet another low caste retainer into a lifetime of bondage through the old ruse of moneylending. If he sleeps with the young widow, he is also her protector, as he reminds her when she begins to show signs of dissent: who else could have protected both her five *bighas* of land and her body from the greed of the young? What he cannot quite come to terms with is this sudden birth of aspiration among people who have known their place for so many generations. The widow can be allowed her grief at her abortion; that is natural enough. But what right does she have to resent the decision to abort, and then to challenge the authority of Madhav Pande. This is crossing barriers; that is unacceptable; that is sin which the widow must pay for with death. The low caste bonded slaves must repay their loans by stealing cattle, but if one of them dies in the process they have no right to bring the bloodsoaked body to the door of his house. Madhav Pande's peace cannot be disturbed by the groans of thieves, his courtyard cannot be stained with their blood. This effrontery must be punished; dogs who receive crumbs have no right to bark. And if the labourer on his project suddenly begins to get ideas, if the word has reached even West Champaran that there is a land called Punjab where the daily wage is ten rupees plus two meals, where at the end of the season a man might even buy a small radio with the price of his sweat, then such ideas must be crushed before they take on the proportions of a challenge. The balance is delicate, and it needs all the dexterity at his command to keep it tipped in his favour.



Prakash Jha — Rajiv Basu

Once, not so long ago, it was much easier. Madhav Pande's father used the whip, the knife, the spear with fewer problems. But now these new ideas were seeping through. There was democracy, even if the vote could be manipulated. There was a judge, even if the policeman could be bribed. There was a popular government, even if the politician could be corrupted. Once the world lived at the mercy of the king and the priest; life was simpler then. Hotheads who thought that the gun could become a more efficient replacement of the whip and the spear did not understand that the environment was changing. Once, the king and the priest made the law, they were the law, no matter if their mood was whimsical or generous, cruel or magnanimous. Not so anymore. The old order did not yet have to bow to new pressures, but it must understand that its main weapons had changed. The modern institutions had to be used to keep the old equation steady. If corruption did not work, use deceit. If the judge did not take money, buy the witnesses. But the point was that the Pandes themselves must not kill anymore, not with their own hands at least. They must merely ensure that it was the judge who ordered the hanging. That was the true test of their ability. Modern society and its most venerable institutions must be converted into participants in the game, they must on no account be flouted. The policeman must be averted, the politician must be flattered, appeased; the judge must be left with no option but to announce death on the scaffold. The *damul* still had its part to play in the preservation of the status quo.

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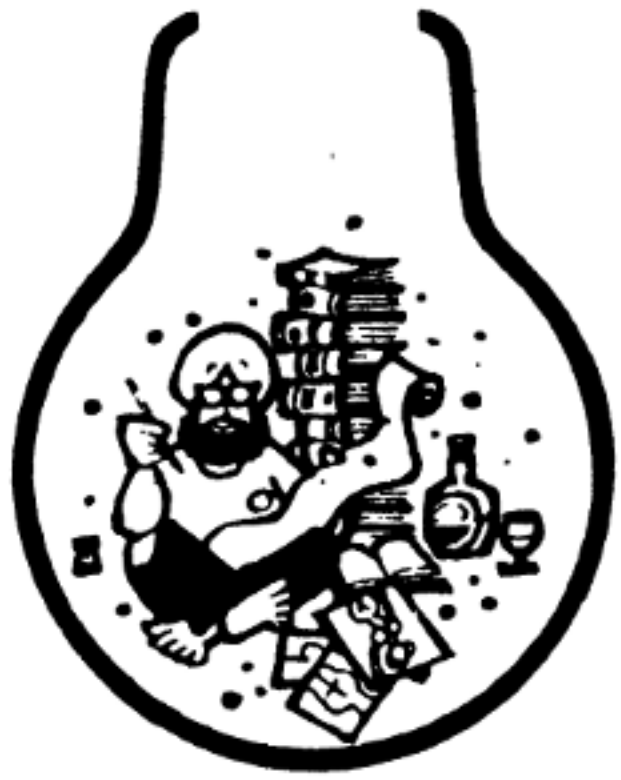
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Indians Abroad

The emigre Indians' attachment to their homeland can be both heartwarming as well as nauseating. The first generation suffers from home-sickness and guilt because they have quit their poor country and are enjoying the good things of life not available to their countrymen. They open up their purses and give generously whenever any calamity strikes India. At the same time they carry their little Indias about them and refuse to integrate with people. And although most have acquired foreign citizenships and passports they continue to be obsessed with Indian politics and Hindi films. Despite the superficial gloss acquired by being suited-booted and wearing neckties their behaviour remains Indian rustic. In London I saw a smartly dressed Sardarji out for a stroll with his Sardarni and their child. He walked a few feet ahead, hisSardarni with a baby in her arms walked respectfully a few feet behind. It was bizarre kind of conversation: He addressing the air in front, she replying from the rear.

Wherever there is an Indian community of some size it will have its own newspapers in English, Urdu, Hindi or Gujarati. They make interesting reading. The front page is invariably news from India. The next few will be devoted to community affairs in the country with lots of matrimonial ads spelling out religion and region with the usual addendum "caste and dowry no bar." Remaining are devoted to Hindi films. Another regular feature is the ceaseless war they wage against our missions which they have to approach for visas when they wish to visit ex-mother India.

I have just received several copies of a fortnightly *The Link* published from Vancouver edited by Promod Puri, brother of the scholar-journalist Balraj Puri of Jammu. He is Hindu, a majority of the Indian community in Canada are Sikhs. They have a grouse against our consel general Jagdish Sharma and are making life very difficult for the harassed diplomat. Mr Sharma thought it would not be a bad idea to get some Canada-based Indian editors to visit their homeland on a kind of refresher course. His first choice was a fellow Sharma, Bhanu Pratap, (Ben to his friends) who edits *Mid-Vancouver News* and the *Overseas Times*. Ben turns out to be quite a lad. He made the headlines of Vancouver dailies for making unwelcome passes at his employee, Renee Calligan. When interviewing her for the job he asked her whether she liked strippers or enjoyed sex. We don't know her response but she got the job. Thereafter. complained Renee, he ran his hands across her bottom and her chest. This was followed by a bear hug to celebrate a good advertising sale. The next day Renee Calligan quit her job and filed a complaint before the Human Rights Board. The Board ordered Ben Sharma to pay up a month's salary (640 dollars), one thousand dollars in damages and costs of suit. However Ben has had a *Bharat darshan* free of cost or obligation.



Only, *Na*

I am intrigued by the way many Indians, particularly, Bombayites, otherwise fluent in English add the word "only" at the end of their sentences and *na* before every question: "I was there only ... it is being screened at the Plaza only." And "I have to see the doctor *na*?" "Only" is not a translation of an Indian language expression. I find it as irritating as another Indo-Anglianism "You-all" used as synonym for "others" by Indians who fancy their English. *Na* is obviously an Indianism for "Isn't it?"

"Only" should be used to indicate that there is nothing besides. The exact placing of the word makes a world of a difference, should you say, "this could only happen once?" or "this could happen once only?" Both expressions are correct. "Only" relates solely to the word it precedes; hence "could only happen once" would mean that it could take place by accident only at one time and thereafter by design." However, "this could only happen once" sounds much better to the ear than "this could happen only once." But there is no excuse whatsoever to end a sentence with it. Indians do it only. I was compelled to draw your attention to this *na*?

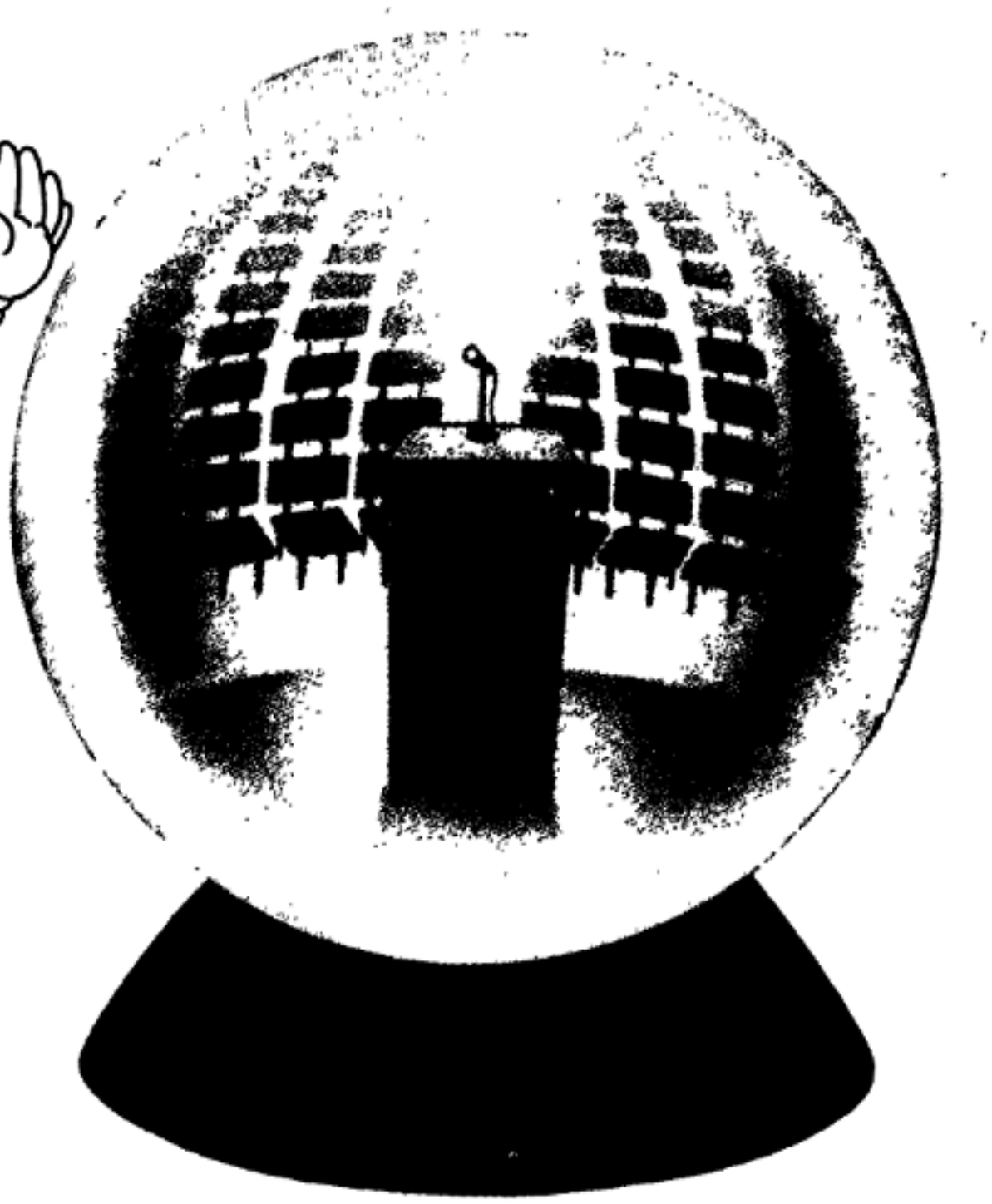
Geet Gobind

The widening rift between Hindus and Sikhs has caused anguish in the hearts of sensitive people of both communities. To them it is inconceivable that two people as close to each other as nails to the flesh of fingers could be so cruelly torn apart in so short a time. The anguish is much deeper in the hearts of millions of Hindus whose families have for generations worshipped in Sikh gurudwaras, revered and read the *Granth Sahib* as their holy scripture and looked upon the Sikh's ten gurus as their spiritual guides. One such sensitive soul is poet-writer P.K. Nijhawan who describes the warrior-Guru Gobind Singh as "My hero, my saviour and redeemer, the redeemer of my *dharma*." In his own words "I often talk with Guru Gobind in the small hours of the night, half awake, half asleep."

The result is a lengthy poem *Shri Guru Gobind Geeta*. This inspiration is Sri Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna on the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra wherein the *avatar* persuades Arjuna to perform his sacred task to engage in the battle for righteousness which is the theme of the Bhagwad Geeta. Nijhawan has chosen to construct a similar dialogue between Guru Gobind and Madho Das, better known as Banda Bairagi, to whom the Guru entrusted the secular leadership of the Khalsa Panth shortly before he was assassinated at Nanded. The meeting between the two took place in Bairagi's hermitage on the banks of the river Godavari. The Guru's sermon convinced the hermit to abandon *sanyas* and wage war against Mughal tyranny. The first success of Sikh arms came under the leadership of this Hindu hermit, who Sikh historians like to describe as Banda Singh Bahadur. He was later captured by Farrukh Siyar and along with hundreds of his followers including an infant son was executed after terrible torture in Mehrauli.

It is a moving epic poem full of learning and profusely illustrated. The only thing against *Shri Guru Gobind Geeta* is its price of Rs. 165.





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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Indian Antiques Go West

South Indian bronze idols, particularly of the Chola period, are on the top of the list of antique smugglers. Thieves pass them on to receivers in Bombay, Delhi, Madras or Calcutta, who in turn ship them out of India after acquiring by cheating or bribery, certificates saying that they are not antiques, and so can be exported.

Doubts have been raised about the way the certificates are being issued, and the Tamil Nadu director general of police has suggested to New Delhi that photographs of South Indian bronze idols, which are to be exported, should be sent for a second check to the Tamil Nadu director of Archaeology in Madras. He has also proposed that police officers of the rank of sub-inspector and above should be empowered to take action.

The Arts and Antiques Control Act 1972, authorises only officers of the archaeological department to take action, and New Delhi does not think that more specific powers are necessary for police officers as they can at any time seize property suspected to have been stolen and arrest whoever possesses it. "Whether a particular item is an antique or not," the Tamil Nadu DGP has been advised, "is a technical question which can best be decided by the experts."

There is merit, of course, in the suggestion for a second check, but what the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) proposed some time back seems to be more sensible. The CBI's proposal was to have a comprehensive, computerised data bank, with details of idols and the temples where they are, along with those of idol thieves and receivers for ready reference. But before collecting this information, the CBI should find out what happened to similar data collected a few years ago. Owners of antiques more than 100 years old and of manuscripts more than 73 years old had then filled in long forms and submitted them with photographs. Apparently, they have not been properly collected. The CBI has a division to coordinate offences involving "culture" property, including idols. But the information submitted by antique collectors never reached the CBI.

That may be the reason why the 50,000 art pieces smuggled from India in the last decade as stated in a UNESCO report, have remained more or less untraced. According to the reports of the Archaelogical Survey of India lodged with the police, 3,050 statues were stolen during a period of three years; that means an average of 1,000 a year, about three pieces a day.

In fact, many thefts are not reported; indeed, many are not even noticed as thieves often put replicas in place of stolen antiques. A few years ago Douglas Barret, an expert, alleged that the idol of Nataraj at the Shivapuram temple was a fake and the genuine one was abroad. This allegation turned out to be true. The real idol, three-and-a-half feet high and weighing 50 kg, is at the Norton Simon Foundation Museum in America. It is strange how it was smuggled abroad. A five-metal idol from the Ishwaran temple in Tamil Nadu and several idols of Nataraj have made their way to the Texas Museum. Sculptural panels from two temples known for their exotic art, one in Madhya Pradesh and the other in Karnataka, have been cut and presumably smuggled abroad. Recently some gifts received from Dr Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, kept at the Patna Museum, were stolen. These include a gold sword, a gold medal and gold-plated images.

Practically all museums abroad, particularly those in the US, seem to have acquired antiques stolen from India. The Mithun idol from Orissa is in Philadelphia



Tapan Das

An 8th century brass artefact

Museum; there are Jain idols and Sirpur Tara at the Los Angeles Country Museum, the 12 Gupta period memorials of Thaneshwar near Udampur are in the London Museum; the Buddha's hand removed from Mathura is in a museum in Switzerland and Baroda's Sun statue is at the Frankfurt museum.

As the DGP of Tamil Nadu has suggested, comprehensive legislation similar to COFEPOSA needs to be formulated to check the smuggling of antiques from India. The CBI has argued that the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, does regulate the export trade in art treasures and provide for the prevention of fradulent dealings in antiques. But it is obvious that something more effective is needed.

It is a pity that despite the fact that American and European countries are signatories to the UNESCO convention of 1970 aimed at curbing the smuggling of art objects, they are most guilty of encouraging idol smugglers.

It is a pity that despite the fact that American and European countries are signatories to the UNESCO convention of 1970 aimed at curbing the smuggling of art objects, they are most guilty of encouraging idol smugglers

OPINION

Modest Ambitions

The Ambitions of NTR (27 January—2 February '85) are modest and devoid of selfishness. Unlike most politicians, NTR joined politics so that he could serve the people of his state. I am sure that he will guide the nation in the right direction if he comes to power at the centre.
Debiprasad Panda, Patna

• The people of Andhra Pradesh have full confidence in NTR. NTR, on his part, has been successful to a large extent in removing the evils plaguing society and providing relief to the poor by initiating a number of welfare schemes.
B.N. Bose, Jamshedpur

• Ever since NTR came to power in Andhra Pradesh, regionalism has eaten into the minds of the people of the state. Result: they have been alienated from the national mainstream. Moreover, the numerous welfare schemes initiated by the government is only a cover to hide the administrative failures of the NTR administration. The poor have become poorer under the present government. The people of India should not be misguided by yet another NTR gimmick: the Bharat Desam.
T. Pavani, Visakhapatnam

• I was surprised to learn that NTR is trying to bring the opposition parties together through the Bharat Desam. But I wonder how parties with different outlooks and conflicting ideologies can stay together for long. NTR, it seems, has learnt nothing from the failure of the Janata experiment.
K. Kumara Sekhar, Eluau (AP)

• There is nothing wrong with NTR's decision to launch a national party, but its structure as conceived by the leader will certainly make it vulnerable. A federation of various regional parties cannot hold together for long. At least this is what the Janata experiment has taught us.
T.V.S. Murthy, Guntur

• The idea of launching the Bharat Desam reminds me of the Janata Party. Parties with different ideologies coming together for the sake of grabing power can never steer a country towards prosperity.
T. Pillai, Ahmedabad

• Kutty's cartoon *(Contents)* depicting NTR's bid to rescue the opposition was a masterpiece.
P. Masilamani, Salem



Why Ban the Akalis?

Banning the Akali Dal is not the answer to the Punjab problem *(Should the Akalis be Banned?* 20—26 January '85). It will alienate the Sikhs further. If a party serves the interests of a particular community without harming others, I see no reason why it should be banned. The present government should opt for reconciliation with the Sikhs rather than confrontation.
Akkiraju Nataraj, Hyderabad

• The Akali Dal should be banned only if it is established beyond doubt that it is communal by nature. The Punjab problem requires a more sympathetic approach and such arbitrary decisions will only serve to alienate the Sikhs.
P. Govind, New Delhi

Ambiguous

It is not very clear from Adoor Gopalakrishnan's interview *('I Have Mixed Fact With Fiction,'* 20—26 January '85) whether the director is trying to ridicule the Communists or the anti-Communists in *Mukhamukham*. Or, is he trying to criticise the entire political set-up?
Muyyam Rajan, Singrauli (MP)

• In my opinion Sreedharan, the hero of *Mukhamukham*, represents all men with revolutionary zeal who lack moral courage.
J.M. Hasan, Mastandam

Intelligence Failure

The *Enemies of the State* (27 January—2 February '85) should be immediately brought to book. The intelligence set-up in our country has always failed whenever the country has faced a crisis. I wonder how a spy ring operated for so many years. Moreover, nowadays the bureaucracy is full of officers who are willing to do anything for money. Rajiv Gandhi should first cleanse the government of such officers.
Mrinal Kanti Kundu, Belur (WB)

• Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's special report on the spy scandal was exhaustive. The article was successful in pinpointing responsibilities.
Subhas Dutta, Ranchi

• The spy scandal is undoubtedly one of the biggest of its kind in the history of independent India. It is also one of the biggest intelligence failures. The assassination of Indira Gandhi had exposed how ineffective our intelligence wing was. The entire set-up should be reorganised if we are to save this country from foreign forces.
Debasis Roy, Vijayawada

Not True

In the article, *Assam: Solution Ahead?* (20—26 January '85), Seema Guha is all praise for Assam chief minister Hiteshwar Saikia for successfully steering the state out of a major social and political crisis. But this not true. More than anyone else, the AASU and the AAGSP themselves are responsible for the death of the movement against foreign nationals. People shied away from the student activists since, with the passage of time, the movement took on a communal colour. Mr Saikia cannot demand credit for killing the movement.
Mifah Laskar, Silchar

• In her report on Assam, Seema Guha has written that the CM of Assam, Hiteswar Saikia, has won the goodwill of the people of Assam by drawing more funds from the centre to the state. But who have benefited from these funds? The chosen few of Hiteswar Saikia. Moreover, Mr Saikia is running the state without the support of the people. In connivance with the centre he is behaving like a dictator.
S.C. Malakar, Margherita (Assam)

Crime and Punishment

Khushwant Singh's suggestion for punishments *To Fit the Crime (Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 20-26 January '85) does not take account of the fact that the criminal is also part of our society and should be given a chance to reform. If he is subjected to public lashings and is ostracised, it will compel him to continue his criminal activities. Administering crippling drugs to criminals are still worse. Latest studies show that such drugs have dangerous side-effects that are transmitted to the next generation. That means the criminal's offspring will have to pay the price for no fault of theirs.
Partha Sarathi Baishya, Calcutta

• Punishment for murder should be death by hanging. The convict's earnings should go for the maintenance of the prison. Punishment for rape should neither be castration nor drugs. Seventy lashes in public is an apt punishment. Antabuse is a good drug for alcoholics and the sale of alcohol should be banned.
Rana Zafar, Calcutta

• We cannot root out a disease by treating the symptoms. So castration and death sentences will not help. What criminals need is a healing touch. The punishments like drugging as suggested by Mr Singh are like those of the medieval ages. A criminal whose sex drive is decreased by drugging can still harm women. Only attempts at reforming will help in the long run.
S. Ram Mohan, Vijayawada

• Parliament should discuss the novel penal measures suggested by Khushwant Singh.
D. Manuel Reddy, Visakhapatnam

• Khushwant Singh's suggestions are welcome. But why didn't Mr Singh suggest punishments for women who rape men. Foreign newspapers frequently carry such reports. Removal of one or both the breasts, depending on the cruelty of the crime, will be an appropriate punishment.
V.N. Narayanswamy, Madras

• Mr Singh should persuade his family members to experiment with Antabuse on him. It will save him and all his readers a lot of trouble and heartburn.
Kanailal Datta, Barrackpore

• The police say: once a criminal, always a criminal. Putting them behind bars and feeding them is a waste of national resources. So, life imprisonment should be changed to death sentence. Islamic law—an eye for an eye—can, perhaps, control those who cause bodily injuries. Sterilisation is an appropriate punishment for child abuse and attempted rape. Smoking should also be treated at par with drinking.
M.J. Edwards, Bangalore

• Most of the punishments suggested by Khushwant Singh are apt. But reducing the sexual urge of a rapist is not proper.
P. Rajesh, Durg

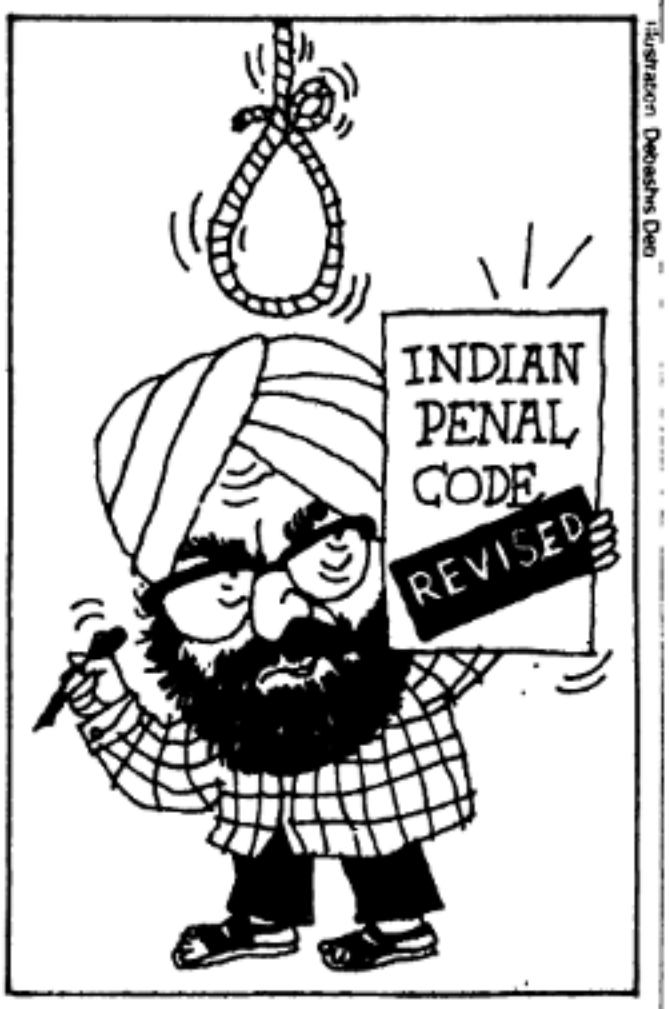


Illustration Debashis Deo

• While suggesting drugs as a mode of punishment for sexual offenders, Mr Singh has ignored the social life the criminal will lead after he has been punished. Drugs have bad side effects which can be transmitted to the family of the criminal.
Sanjay Rath, Khariaguda (Orissa)

• By emasculating a person with drugs, we not only punish him for life but also his wife and family. Khushwant Singh is wrong in saying that the enlargement of the male breast is "no great calamity." These drugs increase the chances of cancer in the male breast and can aggravate a benign tumour. They can cause fatal complications if the person happens to be suffering from heart, liver or renal disorders. Medical science, moreover, should not be used to harm anyone. It is against medical ethics. The *Medical Litany* says: "*From putting knowledge before wisdom/Science before art/Cleverness before common sense/Good Lord, deliver us.*"
Dr Shuba D. Priya, Tuticorin

• As a young college girl who travels by bus everyday, I know fully well the problems girls have to face. But even then, I shudder to think of the types of punishment that Khushwant Singh suggests. Pray for God's sake, don't revive those medieval punishments. It is much more painful for us to see those horrible sights of public flogging and castration and amputation of limbs, etc , than for criminals to bear them. Such punishments will only complicate matters. Most crimes are committed in a sudden fit of emotion and so the punishment should not cause any permanent damage.
Nita Ghosh, New Delhi

• The punishments suggested by Mr Singh for sexual crimes are not at all appropriate because sexual urge is not the only cause of rape. If sexual urge forces one to rape, why aren't women raping men? It is the male's dominant attitude that leads him to such acts. If he is castrated, his urge for domination will find some other outlet. Despite all the punishments, crime is on the rise. The root of such crimes should be discovered and remedied.
J. Venkateshwar Rao, Warangal (AP)

• Khushwant Singh's remedies to reduce incidence of crime is yet another of his incongruous antics. It is preposterous to suggest confiscation of the personal property of a criminal and pass on the same to the family of the victim. How could the family members of the criminal be responsible for his acts? Such unwise andunjust steps would jeopardise the very foundations of a developing community. His other suggestions are not even worth considering.
N.S. Sarnik, Bhilai

• Drugs cause permanent damage to the human body and as such I am against Mr Singh's suggestions.
Mrinal Biswas, Burdwan

• The punishments which Khushwant Singh talks of is prevalent in the Arab countries but it will not work in a democratic country like India. A rapist or a drunkard should not be punished by drugs. Punishment should be aimed at reformation and not maiming of the body.
M. Arivazhagan, New Delhi

GUEST COLUMN/M.A.K. PATAUDI

The Decline of Indian Cricket

The background to the recently-concluded contest is worth mentioning. The West Indies had mauled India and the Australians had beaten her conclusively in a series of one-day games. The same West Indies had battered England into humiliation with an unprecedented 5-0 victory. When David Gower arrived, the bruises still showed and both sides as indeed both captains, were intent on rehabilitating their reputation. To some extent Gower succeeded, but Sunil Gavaskar did not, and inevitably people began to propound their various theories regretting the decline of Indian cricket. After all Gavaskar had not lost a series at home, but it was forgotten that most of Gavaskar's wins had been against teams which had suffered wholesale defectionsto Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket. Also to suggest that there was a decline was to assume that there had been a gradual incline This was plain nonsense for this has never been the case in Indian cricket. There have been great individuals in the past, as there are at present, from C K Nayudu through Vinoo Mankad, Subash Gupte, Vijay Hazare, the three great spinners of the Sixties and early Seventies, to G. R. Viswanath, Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, and now hopefully Mohammad Azharuddin, but rarely if ever had they combined to make a composite team which could produce consistent performances over a period of years.

In the bad old days, if one is to believe senior cricketers, the infighting was vicious, catches were actually dropped on purpose and players spent more time Machiavellian schemes than playing cricket. The board also got into the act by appointing and dropping captains on vague whims and fancies. Sometime in the late Fifties, matters improved when the players realised that if personal differences were kept off the field there was a better chance to win, and winning brought longer lasting benefits. Yet, India rarely won because never and at the same time was she strong in all departments of the game. When a Vijay Merchant or Gavaskar was flourishing, the middle order was brittle; when India had world class spinners, there were no opening bowlers. And when Kapil Dev eventually turned up, the spinners had gone. Now Sivaramakrishnan has taken wickets but Kapil can now only average two wickets per match.

This in effect has meant that in Test cricket (till Sri Lanka was given full membership) India has been contesting for the bottom place with New Zealand, Inspite of producing a far larger number of quality players. Ofcourse, there have been moments of triumph, three successive wins, of which two were abroad, when Ajit Wadekar was captain. And while the country was basking in the glory of a self-styled world champion, Wadekar knew better and organised his benefit before India was bowled out for 42 and he had announced his retirement.



Gavaskar was the greatest, and while no one doubted this it is strange that only some Bombay players paid him sycophantic homage. Perhaps the others were jealous but no matter how hard he tried many cricketers from elsewhere were unable to give him their full trust.

India, against odds quoted at more than 500 to 1, won the World Cup, and once again the route from Santa Cruz to the Bombay Cricket Association office was crammed with people waiting for a glimpse of their heroes. This lasted till the West Indies descended like a wolf on the fold, and while their cohorts may not have gleamed, their pearly white teeth certainly did, as they systematically butchered the bowling and took their revenge. All India did was to change captains, and hope for further miracles.

Gavaskar has had more influence on India cricket than any other captain. There are not many who are prepared to argue with 30 centuries and 8,000 runs. During his first



Wadekar (left) and Venkataraghavan

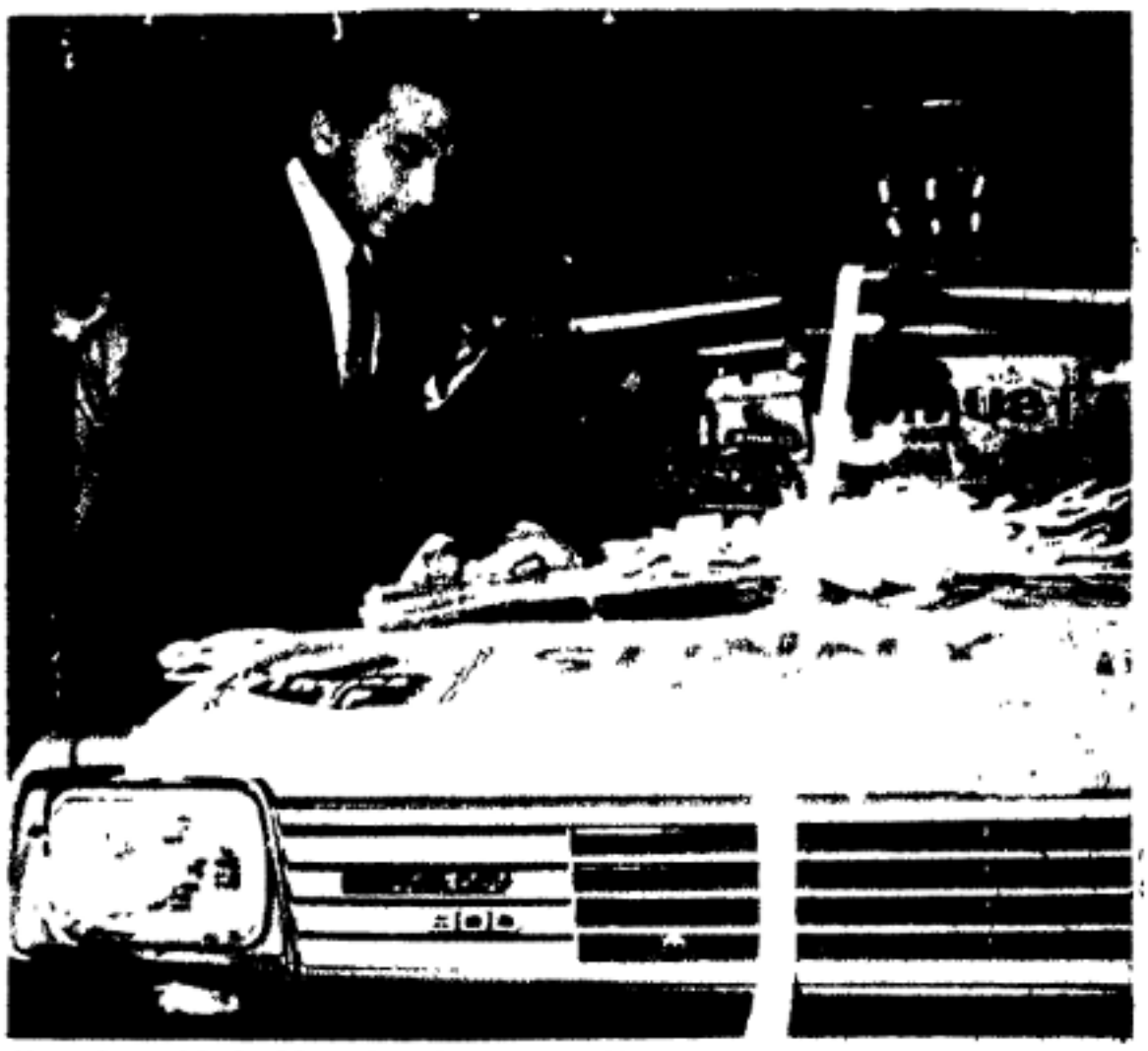
tenure and quite by accident the more important posts, including three members of the selection committee belonged to Maharashtra. At the same time the North was emerging from a long sleep and producing cricketers who could compete with the best in Bombay. (Previously this had been the privilege of the south) and when players like Suru Nayak were, prefered to one of their own, the north felt slighted enough to make a concerted move to have Gavaskar removed. The plan was ill-conceived for the north had only Kapil Dev to offer, and though enough pressure was brought to bear, for the plan to succeed, it became apparent very soon that Kapil Dev was not captaincy material no matter how fine a soul he may have been. Back came Gavaskar, and this time certain new aspects which had crept into Indian cricket became more apparent.

Money was one of them. Prize money came into the game about 16 years ago, and it was at a team gathering that Wadekar suggested that it be shared. Nobody objected, least of all the captain, who had to spend two years and twice the amount that he had won, in legal fees to convince the income tax department that this be treated as incidental income of an amateur or an outright gift and that income tax did not apply. Gradually and as TV caught on, those wishing to advertise themselves or their products began to offer substantial amounts. I suppose the players got a kick appearing on TV offering envelopes stuffed with cash. The players had become too wise to accept cheques. As each one received his due he handed it over to a player. Usually it was Venkataraghavan when he was in the team (not only because he was honest, but he had the knack of dividing thousands by any number and arriving at an even figure). After the prize distribution was over each player would collect his share and go home. So far so good.

But then Gavaskar opened up entire new vistas of making money. He had noticed how cricketers once out of the limelight were actually shunned by the same people who had fussed over them, fought for the pleasure of inviting them home and queued to have photographs taken with them. In Bombay only money seemed to matter, and there was more than one way to make it. Gavaskar found them all. Advertising, film producing (this may have been for a lark), writing articles (on the same match but for different publications), taking a fee for organising matches, writing instant books, which were spiced to sell better, appearance money (one paid for the pleasure of entertaining the team) and signing contracts with the manufacturers of sports equipment. He became the first Indian millionaire through cricket, rich enough to buy a flat in central Bombay. In a capitalist cricketing country he would have been considered a financial genius. In India they began to call him a mercenary, and within the team he became the envy of some who felt that their contribution to Indian cricket was not being fully appreciated. Why should Gavaskar hog all the publicity as well as the money? The answer was simple: he had reached those dizzy heights to which no Indian cricketer in his right mind would even dream of aspiring. As importantly he was articulate where others were dumb, he was controversial where others dared not to be, he could even be witty, and this made him ideal material for the media and the advertiser.

Gavaskar was the greatest, and while no one doubted this, it is strange that only some Bombay players paid him sycophantic homage. Perhaps the others were jealous but no matter how hard he tried, many cricketers from elsewhere were unable to give him their full trust (Dilip Doshi is an example). They felt that Gavaskar stood for Gavaskar though he had often clashed with authority for the benefit of his team. Had he not managed to organise the first benefit match in Sharjah for himself which had netted him US dollars 50,000? Further, was not the second beneficiary in the same year his own uncle, now richer by another few thousand dollars? Was it not due to him that the unsavoury aspect of writing books questioning the integrity of his own team members come into the game? And was it not entirely his doing that Kapil Dev was disciplined at New Delhi? The public believes this implicitly but the Indian public sees what it wants to see and an Indian captain must not only captain but be seen to captain. Gavaskar inspite of all advantages has not managed to project an all India image. And remarks like "I'll never play in Calcutta" or batting left-handed at Madras have not helped. Nor has the quest for money been without misunderstandings, which have at times reflected in the performance of the team.

As soon as India lost to an ordinary English side there was a cry for another captain, but who wants to head a losing proposition? The odds in Australia are far from favourable and Indian cricket is no more advanced than it was a generation ago. As such it does not matter if Gavaskar and his team lose. The fault does not lie in the player alone, but in the system which has never produced consistency. And what about Gavaskar himself? Soon after retirement, the same public which has been critical, will remember only his great deeds. Twenty years from now he will be a hero, far larger than C.K. Nayudu or Vinoo Mankad. In the meanwhile he has secured himself and his family, which has not been the case with many other Indian cricketers. He may not drive to work in a Mercedez but no one is ever going to shun him.



Gavaskar with the Maruti car he got as a gift

Gavaskar opened up entire new vistas of making money...In Bombay only money seemed to matter and there was more than one way to make it. Gavaskar found them all...He became the first Indian millionaire through cricket, rich enough to buy a flat in central Bombay. In a capitalist cricketing country he would have been considered a financial genius. In India they began to call him a mercenary.

COVER STORY

Don Azharuddin

A new star on the Indian cricket horizon

What Mohammed Azharuddin has achieved can be gauged not from his scores but the effect on Hyderabad in general. When this correspondent, alien to the city, stopped at Narayanguda and slowly recited, "3-5-569" to the garland vendor with a temporary stall there, the reply was tentative. "*Lekin koi address to hoga na* (But there must be some address)?"

With my telegraphic descriptions of the destination quite inadequate, I had another try. "*Wo cricketwalla Azharuddin kahan rahta hai* (Where does the cricketer Azharuddin stay)," I asked.

"*To aisa bolo na, saab. Auto ko bolo Virtalwadi le javega. Wahan koi bhi bachcha se pooch lena* (Why didn't you say so? Tell the auto-rickshaw to go to Vittalwadi. Ask any child there)."

Traces of Azharuddin's remarkable achievement were evident en route. Outside a State Bank of India branch was a banner: "Congratulations to Mohd. Azharuddin."

It was no problem finding his house. It had to be the one with a crowd outside. But Azharuddin was not at home that evening. He had gone to a function organised by an Exhibition Society in his honour, his brother said. I would be back again next morning at 10 am, I informed. I left a note. On an afterthought the time for the appointment was preponed to 9 am.

8 February. At 10 minutes past eight o'clock in the morning I was standing outside Azharuddin's house. With approximately fifty people waiting outside with requests ranging from "*Ek autograph bas*" "One photo with you please" to 'Happy birthday. We brought this garland for you.' Add to that two policemen who kept a benign vigil.

Inside his house in an ante-room' as one could call it, sat a few newsmen, four photographers, five of the local TV crew and well-wishers. Sitting space was out of the question.

At 8.35 am, Azharuddin, *churidar-pyjama* clad made his appearance. He was 22 that day. The crowd surged forward. While Azhar's father and cousin tried to keep the well-intentioned crowd at bay with intermittent cries of 'Line please, line please," garlands were offered,



Azharuddin in action during the recently concluded series against England: rare brilliance

sweets thrust forward, cameramen clicked and schoolgirls shyly presented their exercise books for an expansive scrawl. Finally, Azharuddin ducked, weaved, apologised and was lost into one of the inner rooms.

But even this was mild in comparison to the reception accorded to him when he arrived in Hyderabad. The crowd went berserk at the airport.

My memories of Azharuddin go back to Jamshedpur last year. West Zone were playing South Zone and Azharuddin's innings on the third day breathed some life back into a game which had by then gone beyond South's grasp. Azhar made 72 with the ease of a vacationing employee and was out not too long after he had gone in.

The last I saw of him afforded an insight into the stuff he was made of. We had got ourselves into an animated conversation on the game; we comprised Daljit Singh, a few South Zone players and journalists. Azhar sat in a corner quiet, head buried into a copy of the *Sun* magazine Pages flipped, the magazine was finished but apparently Azhar would turn back and start afresh. He sat secluded in that corner as if in a form of enforced detachment and spoke not a word. Finally, when time of his departure back to Hyderabad by a train that evening had drawn near, he got up, went to each one, whether he was acquainted with that person or not, shook him by the hand, nodded his head as a substitute for a greeting and then was gone. Typical introvert. The next one saw him was at Calcutta.

Azharuddin exhibited, as he had that evening in Jamshedpur, that he possessed most of the attributes of greatness. He played the ball late, almost posthumously, rolled his wrists over, he also played as straight and close to the body as was possible.

From a basic adherence to the textbook, Azharuddin improvised. There was this sweep shot at Madras. Edmonds pitched it outside the leg stump and slightly short of a length. Azhar took a step or two down the wicket, took his bat in a circular arc behind him, and once with the backlift completed, brought the bat down vertically, not horizontally, with the face of the blade "open" to the wicketkeeper. The impact was made the moment the ball pitched; the timing was perfect and the shot whistled past Downton,unaware ,for four. Noted *critic* Robin Marlar wrote in his column in *The Sunday Times*: "People ask you to define perfection in sport This was it " Lala Amarnath was tempted to place the boy beside Denis Compton. His strokes were shown among the highlights of the news over national hookup that evening. Two weeks later, his century at Kanpur and the consequent record of hundreds in the first three Tests of one's career was the lead item on the newscast. The recall by France of their envoy to India was second.. What a way to start a Test career!

Azharuddin has endeared himself to the millions. The other day he was invited to his old school and presented with Rs 10,000 for his achievements. Without a thought, Azhar gave half of it right back in memory of his grandfather. A fine, modest man Azharuddin. His ancestors from the maternal side came from Bukhara (Iran) to join Aurangzeb's army.

That reminds one of a joke. Azharuddin found an interested listener in a British journalist while he spoke of his grandmother from Scotland, Azharuddin kept a straight face for that one.

Mudar Patherya, Hyderabad



Photographs Tarapada Banerjee and Tapan Das

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'It Was Pray and Play'

Mohammed Azharuddin told SUNDAY

Q: Quite suddenly you are at the centre of all attention. A couple of months ago however, your presence had not been greatly noticed. How has life changed for you?

A: Well, take today (8 February) as an example. I woke up at 5.30 am to say my prayers. At about 7 am people started queueing up outside with garlands and for autographs. After that was done with there were a couple of interviews to newsmen around 8.30 am and an interview to the local television centre around 10 am. After that I went to my school as they had organised a function to felicitate me. Following that, I went to the mosque to offer my Friday prayers at one o'clock. Once that was over I had to attend an official function by the AP Legislative Council organised by Mukassir Shah. Once that had finished I was invited to attend another function quite close by. Then I was invited to another at ... I can't remember which place it was (*smiles sheepishly*). After that I came straight home as it is my birthday and we had some ceremonies to be observed. We also had a lot of people coming home. Yesterday all this continued up to midnight. It is 9.20 pm now and I expect that it should also continue to about midnight tonight. In fact, I have been extremely busy for the last few days. Moreover, I cannot now walk freely in my own locality. I'd be mobbed.

Q: You had been appointed as a clerk in a bank in recognition of your sporting achievements. What work did you exactly do there?

A: My work was only limited to the administrative side of things, no transactions were involved. I was in the recruitment board and had to merely check certain forms. That was all.

Q: You have been promoted to the level of a junior officer now. What work will be expected of you now?

A: I wouldn't know as I shall join only after coming back from Australia. At present I am on special leave.

Q: At the start of the season you were just one of the aspirants for a berth in the Test team. You were not selected for the tour of Pakistan.

A: Yes, but I did not feel anything about it. Perhaps, I was not considered good enough to make it. On an afterthought I would say I expected that I might have got through but when the team was announced I was not really disappointed that my name was not in the touring side.

Q: You must have, at the start of this season, made a mental plan for yourself. Did you feel that if you managed to play even one Test this season you would have made considerable progress?

A: Yes, I did want to grab whatever chance came my way. I would have been satisfied had I been told in advance that I would play in at least one Test in the series. I was however psychologically prepared to make the most of that solitary appearance and be selected again!

Q: Now that you have scored three hundreds in your first three Tests, don't you feel that your achievements have far outstripped your expectations?

A: I do feel that. The credit for that, of course, goes to God. Moreover, part of the credit goes also to the people of Hyderabad for their blessings and folks all over in India.

Q: You mentioned God. How often do you invoke his blessings?

A: I am a Sunni Muslim and pray five times a day even on tours. While touring I make it known to my roommate that I would be getting up at around 5.30 am in the mornings and praying. Nobody has had any objections till now.

Q: What about when you are playing in a game? Don't you miss your afternoon prayers?

A: I do as often there are few facilities in the dressing rooms. I make up for that when I come back to the hotel.

Q: Coming now to something on cricket, after that 52 at Jaipur against England you expected to be in the team playing the English at Ahmedabad.

A: I did as the game was scheduled to be played between the English and the under-25 Indian side. I had played as part of this side in Zimbabwe, so I thought I certainly had a good chance of being included again. But there were other problems apart from my inclusion. I had sustained a finger injury much before that game and had been out of touch. Also a cable from home just when I was ready to go in and bat made me extremely tense.

Q: What cable?

A: It had come from home and said that my grandfather was unwell. I remembered his advice to me when I took leave to attend the game. He had said that if I was destined to get a hundred I would. He had asked me to play my natural game.

Q: How did you get the telegram?

A: It was just before I went in to bat. I was handed a folded cable and looking at it I had a feeling that things were not okay, that something was certainly fishy. And there it was. I had left my grandfather in a perfectly fit condition and now he was seriously ill. My first reaction was of



Azharuddin being hugged by his mother on his arrival at Hyderabad

Photographs: Snaps India

Is Gavaskar Jealous of Azharuddin?

For over a decade Sunil Gavaskar was Indian cricket. He was the best opening batsman in the world, one of the greatest Indian batsmen ever, an astute and successful captain, and the holder of just about every batting record in test cricket. In the hit-and-miss world of Indian cricket, he was a phenomenon. With success came fame, fat paychecks and the adulation and affection of millions, something which Gavaskar may well have taken for granted.

More recently, however, there have been more ruins than runs for Gavaskar, a phase which has coincided with the rise of Mohammed Azharuddin. His first series has been as magnificent as Gavaskar's 1971 tour of the West Indies and he has quickly replaced his captain as the cult figure of the game. Cricket-lovers all over the country are already lining up behind Azhar. Is Gavaskar missing his status as a Messiah? And more importantly, has he deliberately tried to place obstacles in the young super-star's way?

With Sandeep Patil dropped after his suicidal dismissal in the lost Delhi test, one place in the middle order was vacant. It was Gavaskar's plan to drop down the order, not to give it a semblance of stability as was the original excuse, but to find his touch—his failures with the bat were continuing. But the selectors, the men Gavaskar had once called jokers, strongly, and this time rightly opposed his plan. This was the right time, they decided, to blood a promising young cricketer and Gavaskar would have to open the innings. And in what was one of the dreariest test matches in recent history, only Azharuddin sparkled.

Again, after Gavaskar's by-now-all-too-familiar early dismissal in the Indian first innings at Kanpur, it was surprisingly Azharuddin who replaced his skipper at the batting crease. Admittedly, Azhar was the man in form and Gavaskar's Bombay colleague Dilip Vengsarkar the regular one-drop batsmen in the side was not, but it was only Azhar's fourth test innings and there was another far more experienced batsman, Mohinder Amarnath who has regularly batted in this pivotal number three position. And why was a young batsman pushed up the batting order just to protect an out-of-form senior batsman?

When Azharuddin did get his third and by far his best century on the second morning, his teammates applauded from the players' enclosure as the crowds rose to a man to greet their new hero. Only the man who ought to have led the applause was very conspicuously absent. Since Sivaramakrishnan had sent the English side spinning to their doom during those brief moments of euphoria at Bombay few things had gone right for India, and this was one of the few. The Gavaskar of old, more a leader of a combative, fighting-fit team, than of a surly bunch of highly-talented individuals would have been the first on the balcony. This time he refused to make an appearence. What [illegible] and [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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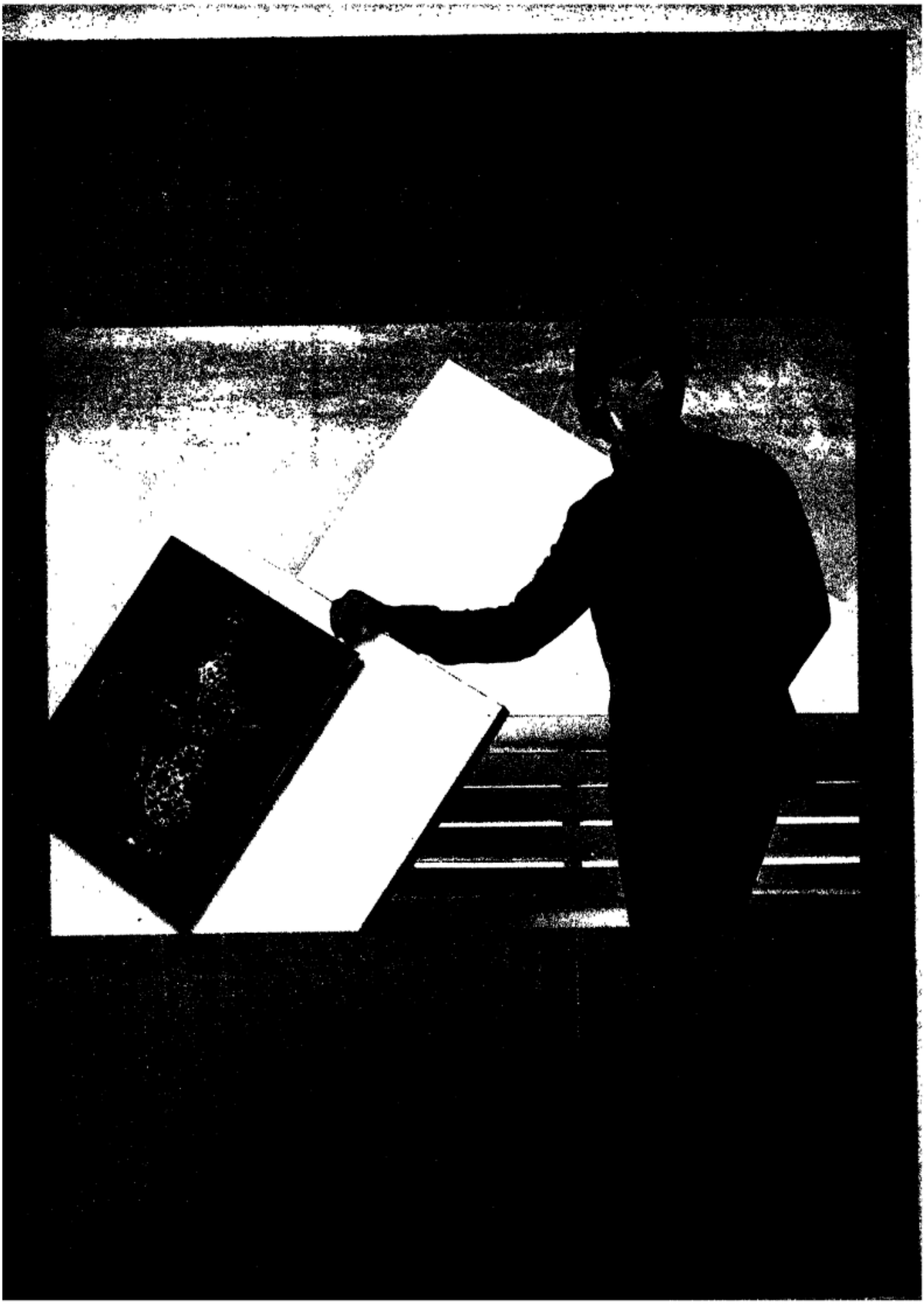


Kangra miniature, 1800 A.D

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HIMACHAL TOURISM

DYNAMICS





Policemen in ceremonial attire escorting Azharuddin home from the airport

must have been quite unnerving?
A: There's an explanation for that too. I had played the entire lot of players on two previous occasions: at Jaipur and Ahmedabad. I had also scored quite a few runs against them, so there was really no reason to be awed by the situation.
Q: What happened when you went in for your first Test innings?
A: Dilip Vengsarkar was at the other end. He had a word with me, bringing to my notice that Edmonds was extracting turn from the wicket and that I should be careful. A bit later, Shastri came in and asked me how the wicket was behaving. That pepped me up.
Q: The second day of the Test match was marred by rain.
A: We played only about four overs on that morning and went in again. Since I batted well into the third day mind must have been the longest innings in Test cricket by a debutant *(laughs).*
Q: Your century came on the third day. What was the first thought that crossed your mind?
A: My grandfather's saying that I merely had to wait for two months for everything to go right. That evening I offered special prayers in my room—'shukrana'—and thanked God for everything. We had a small party in the captain's room after that. Sunnybhai said. "Well done and I am sure that there will be many more to come." Similarly, each of the players came up and congratulated me
Q: The first innings at Madras was the only occasion when you did not get a fifty.
A: Unfortunately it was at a time when I was just beginning to get my shots. I tried to play for a single, got the inside edge, the ball hit my pads and hit the stumps. I cursed myself.
Q: What about the second innings?
A: Even though I went in at a fairly critical stage I was not tense. I began getting all my shots. When eventually I was out on the following morning I felt that my best was not adequate in saving India.
Q: The Kanpur century got you your third in succession. But you were on 98 at the end of the first day. That must have surely been a good reason for you to be a bit edgy.
A: There was no tension really but everyone seemed to say *'Bas, ab do run karne hain.'* (Only two more runs.) Next morning I did get the runs and my first thought was of course, of God. I thanked him. But I did not get my runs too smoothly. In fact, the 24 runs that I scored in the morning took me almost an hour-and-a-half.
Q. People began comparing you to Bradman and Viv Richards.
A: I don't think that it would be right. I have seen Viv Richards In fact, it would be wrong to compare anyone with him. Moreover, I would not be the right person to answer this question.
Q: Coming to your childhood, you must have had certain ambitions. What did you want to become in life?
A. It may all seem appropriate now, but I always wanted to be a Test cricketer. Look, I was never that good in studies to become a doctor or something like that. I always saw myself playing in a Test match; that used to be my childhood fantasy.
Q: What about your beginnings at the game?
A: I bagan playing *gulli* cricket at the Old MLA quarters–that is where we stayed years ago. We had our own *gulli* team and contributed money, formed a club and played. I used to play a lot; studies never really suffered if you know what I mean. I managed promotion each time though as a student I was just about average. Parental interference was out of the question; I used to stay with my grandfather.



Friends and relatives greet Azharuddin at his home

Q: You must have been beaten up by your grandfather quite often. Do you remember any such instance?
A: Well, one day I found a sparrow sitting on top of the fan. It was doing something so I took a stone and threw it at the sparrow. It fell down. When my grandfather saw what I had done he became really wild and beat me up. I cried quite a bit after that.
Q: Did you as a kid think you would eventually make it to Test level?
A: By the time I was in the eighth standard I was convinced that I was going to make it. I played cricket seriously, never for the heck of it. In fact, in those days I used to follow the progress of the Tests and used to hear a lot of Gavaskar and Vishwanath. Today I am playing alongside quite a few of them. It's a great feeling.
Q: What about your religious bent of mind? Was it inculcated since childhood?
A: Yes it was. It was pray and play side by side. In fact, the atmosphere at home was such. As far as fasts are concerned I observe all 30 in Ramzaan except on match days.
Q: Prayers must also be a psychological boost.
A: I too feel so. After the morning prayers, one feels confident in whatever one is doing. I get this feeling *ki ab to out nahi honge, subah ki namaaz jo padh li hai* (that I will not get out now that I have performed my morning prayers.) That confidence is instilled..
Q: You are a young man. Do you go out with girls?
A: I don't. I am an introvert. I try to keep within myself and find that this helps me to concentrate on the game better. I usually push off to bed by 9 pm each night. Even at home, I fall asleep while watching television. Therefore, partying as you might call it, is out for me. I'd prefer solitude.

Interviewed by Mudar Patherya



Hyderabad's Boy Wonder waves to crowds

'Azhar Has Always Been Dedicated'

Mohammed Azizuddin, father of Azharuddin, spoke to SUNDAY

Q: What was your attitude to Azhar's progress at cricket when he was young? Did you at any time try to impress upon him that all this was useless and that he should be more attentive towards his studies?

A: No, we encouraged him right from the start. He was an average student, nothing outstanding, and kept being promoted after each year. There were no problems on the academic front till the B. Com stage when he missed out on attendance because of some national tournaments.

Q: But when Azhar was young didn't you want him to become a doctor or an engineer? Surely you cannot have foreseen that he would one day become a Test cricketer.

A: As far as all my children are concerned I had left it entirely to their inclination. They were free to choose what they wanted to become. *Jo banna hai bano aur apna apna dekh lo* (Do what you want to). Initially, of course, I too thought that one of my sons should be a pilot, doctor or engineer but soon I was forced to give up my belief. By the way, cricket is also a profession in itself.

Q: When Azhar was, say in the tenth standard and pretty serious about the game, did you feel that he was going to make it to the top?

A: Yes, we were very confident. Azhar has great will-power and determination. Hats off to my son for that. In fact, every match, whether it be an important one for him or an ordinary one, he used to take very seriously. That dedication was always there. For example, he scored some 245 runs in a Vizzy Trophy game. Those 215 on his debut in the Duleep Trophy. Of course, I was convinced that one day he was going to become a great cricketer.

Q: Did you think that he was going to do so fast?

A: We had realised that he score a century on his debut. And we

three batsmen were out and then Azhar made 105.

Q: What were you doing when he got that century at Kanpur?

A: We were all watching television at home. Some friends who have a colour television had invited us to their place to watch but we preferred to stay home and watch. When Azhar got to 98 we felt that he would get the century that very evening but he didn't. Of course, we were sad but here again we admired his temperament: he had got stuck at 65, 91 and 93 but had not been tapped into making errors.



The hero at home

Q: There must have been tension that night as Azhar was unbeaten on 98.

A: Not really but when he came out to bat the next morning the tension was unbearable. On the previous night I was convinced that he would do it but now when he actually came in to bat my heart was in my mouth. There was pin-drop silence in the room while all of us watched [illegible]

moments of my life. Later in the day we also offered special thanksgiving prayers for the century. It was God's doing. Also behind all his centuries, Azhar's grandfather's blessings were there.

Q: How would you explain that?

A: When he was young, Azhar stayed most of the time with his grandfather (mother's father). He had a deep attachment to him.

Q: How are you coping with the amount of attention that you are now getting?

A: Till that second century there was tom-tomming in the locality that a boy from the Vittalwadi had become the only Indian and fourth in the world to score centuries in his first two Tests. When he returned from Madras there was no reaction as such from the people as he had dropped in to see us only for about 20 minutes around 5 am. He had come from Vijayawada and was pushing off to take the flight to Delhi and then onwards to Chandigarh. But when he came back from the Kanpur Test the reaction was unbelievable. There was a procession from the airport to our house led by horses. In fact, at the house itself people had queued up to see him. Quite a few people wait everyday even upto midnight outside the house to be able to catch a glimpse of Azhar. *Bilkul chain nahi mila saab* (We don't get any rest). We are spending sleepless nights. In fact, Azhar goes to sleep around 1.30 am and wakes up around 5 am to offer his prayers. He cannot go out because he might be mobbed. Earlier, he would have left after prayers for his physical training but in the present circumstances he cannot do so.

Q: What was Azhar like as a child?

A: He was very quiet, very submissive. He never gave us any trouble. He may have been mischievious but apart from that there were no complaints. In fact, I have never beaten him in my life. He has never given me a chance to do so.

Q: Did you observe any [illegible] Azhar's success?

A: [illegible] to pray [illegible] distributed it [illegible] [illegible] by Shyjal Patherya

SPECIAL REPORT

COOMAR NARAIN

The Multinational Spy

What was the nature of SLM Maneklal's involvement in the spy scandal?

The courtroom of metropolitan magistrate P. K. Dham on the first floor of New Delhi's Patiala House The multinational spy, Coomar Narain is making his two-hour, fifteen-page confession *in camera*. Outside the glass paned doors stand a posse of policemen and in one corner, a plump, middle-aged lady in a blue silk saree and rubber chappals, clutching a couple of plastic bags. It is Mrs Coomar Narain. Every now and then Mrs Narain tries to break through the security cordon and peep into the room When prevented, she complains and asks why the press has been allowed in the corridor. As soon as Coomar Narain emerges from the courtroom, the cameras begin to click Mrs Narain gives him a handkerchief to cover his face. Then, elbowing the policemen around him, she tries to tell him he should not speak "in such a state of mind " "I have made up my mind. Let me get rid of it," replies her husband as he is whisked away. She demands a court-order again banning the press in the court for all the "lies" they have been writing about her husband.

Mrs Geeta Narain is, perhaps, the only one who knows Coomar Narain best, even though she keeps insisting she has no interest in Narain's "business affairs" and thus knows little. She lives separately, rather like a recluse on a four-acre farm in Mehrauli. Initially, she refused to talk to us, protesting through a crack in one of the three giant gates to her farm, about the behaviour of the press. "I have nothing more to say," she said, wanting us to return. But she yielded finally on the condition that our questions would only concern Coomar Narain the man, not the scandal that he is involved in. Even before this correspondent could question her, Mrs Narain started speaking. Her first question:

Mrs Narain: What do you want to know about my husband? Narain is a rather simple person, there is nothing special about him. There isn't much to tell.

Q: Did you ever suspect he could be spying?

A: Never. He is not the kind of man to do it. He is so simple and quiet. He did not even mix with his neighbours in Defence Colony. Go and ask them about Narain and they will tell you (so). There was nothing suspicious about him.

Q: What was his usual day like?

A: He went to his office in the morning and came here for lunch at about two in the afternoon. Then back to his office. In the evening he used to go out for a walk around his office. But in the evenings he did drink at 16, Hailey Road with his friends. I don't know them, though. Then he came back to Defence Colony and always rang me up before going to bed. You see, he is a blood-pressure and diabetes patient, so we were always worried. That is why he always took a walk and drank *karela*-juice regularly. But he didn't have any special tastes...even if there was some extra salt in something he would quietly eat it.

Q: Why were you living separately?

A: No, no, Narain was coming here every day but this place is too far from the city and he was very afraid of the snakes on my farm. Besides, he didn't like my activities here.

Q: What activities?

A: All the farming and gardening



Coomar Narain (centre) being taken to court by securitymen

Jagdish Yadav

that I do...looking after the cows and the dogs and cats. I have dedicated my life to this farm...I want to do something creative. Even the men who had come here to conduct the raid were appreciating my garden. But Narain was never interested. He only did his business.

Q: Did you ever know what was happening at the Defence Colony residence?

A: Not really. I went there only occasionally. But I know nothing out of the way was happening there. We had a common servant who used to cook for Narain in the night and spend the days here, so I knew. In any case, I was not interested in what Narain did and he never told me.

Q: When did you shift to this farm and why?

A: In 1969, I was living with Narain in Defence Colony when someone told us this plot was available so we bought it. I was always interested in developing a farm.

Q: Where did you get the money from?

A: I had my savings. In 1956, only a year after our marriage, we bought a house in East Nizamuddin for Rs 10,000 only. I rented out some portions and collected the money. But that was a very small place, so we took this house in Defence Colony in 1964 for Rs 75,000 and I remember at that time I had only Rs 15,000 with me. So I had to mortgage the Nizamuddin house for Rs 60,000. I bought this farm again with the money I collected from rent. In all this, mind you, Narain had no role. He was not interested.

Q: What was your reaction on hearing of his arrest?

A: I was naturally shocked. My husband could never do such a thing.

Q: But he has himself confessed it in court...

A: Oh, I don't believe this confession. I have my own suspicions about it. Not one thing being said or printed is true. Everything is being presented in a twisted manner. I am sure Narain never said he had been spying for 25 years. He must have told them he was working for Maneklal for 25 years and they came out to tell the world he was spying. And this is very strange...the entire world knowing details of a confession that was supposed to be *in camera*. I think Narain is being framed. Even if he was spying for the last 25 years, my question is what were the intelligence agencies doing all the time? And do you realise the kind of people that would be involved in the so-called scandal if Narain had been operating for such a long time? I am sure Narain is being set up.

Q: Who could be doing that?



One of the suspects covers his face to avoid indentification

CNS

A: Who else but these intelligence agencies?

Q: But why?

A: They have to please Rajiv Gandhi, their new master. They have to show him how good they are at their work. They have to cover up their faults so they went about catching every Tom, Dick and Harry.

Q: What makes you suspect he has been framed?

A: I will tell you something interesting. The morning after Narain's arrest I had gone to 16, Hailey Road looking for him because I still didn't know what had happened and was worried. When I reached there, I found the place sealed and they wouldn't let me in. Then my driver, who has been with us for very long, came rushing out from inside and told me: "Madam, *aapka khel khatam ho gaya* (Madam, your game is up)." I don't know what he was talking about? What game and what did it have to do with me? And if there was a game, what did he know about it? I was surprised with his glee that morning. Later, some intelligence men cross-questioned me and I knew all their information came from my driver. He had been planted and was spilling the beans for a pittance.

Q: So there were some beans to be spilled...

A: No, no, no. I was just talking about what Narain was doing for the company. You know he was the liaison officer here and his company had many foreign collaborators. Naturally he had to keep contacts. Every liaison man does that, what was wrong if Narain did it. But I feel some of his friends have used him. I used to tell him not to drink in the office but he just couldn't say no to people. He should have kept an eye on the people he had below him but he treated them as members of his own family. They have taken undue advantage of such a simple man. Even this driver of mine, he grew rich so suddenly in the last few months. He has even bought a house. I had been telling Narain about his

suspicious behaviour but he would hear none of it. How mean this driver has turned out to be! He even punctured my tyre before he walked out on me.

Q: What convinces you your husband was not spying?

A: Because he was not. Whatever he was doing was only for the company. A lot of rubbish has been let out about him which I am not ready to believe. Look at this preposterous thing about Narain being involved with call-girls. This is fantastic. Narain is not the type to involve himself with girls, in fact he shies away from them. Maybe in his younger days he had affairs but not since he married me. Here again, I think he was a victim of his mild manners. I know who brought those call-girls and forcibly introduced Narain to them. There was this neighbour who lived in Defence Colony who used to go to Narain's office accompanied by these girls but Narain couldn't stop them from coming even though he didn't like it.

Q: Who is this man?

A: No, I am not taking any names.

Q: If your husband was not spying, what about the documents recovered from his office?

A: Look, whatever Narain was doing he was doing for the company. On the instructions of Yogeshbhai (Yogesh T. Maneklal). The documents must have concerned the company's work.

Q: In other words, your husband was spying for the company...

A: I don't know but sometime ago

Is Yogesh Maneklal Involved?

In an earlier interview, Mr Yogesh Maneklal, managing director of S Lal Maneklal had said that the country's intelligence organisation which had been caught napping was now desperate to prove something. He implied that they were now over-reacting and implicating any and everybody. He was confident that he was in the clear. He said they had raided his offices—located from the first to the sixth floor of Vaswani Mansions in south Bombay on 21 January and found no incriminating documents. After that Maneklal had spoken to the press on 22 January. Then on 5 February, the intelligence branch people from Delhi were back at his plush home on the 17th floor of Woodlands and his office. They were armed with a warrant of arrest for him, as Maneklal's liaison man in Delhi, Coomar Narain, had mentioned to the investigators that he had kept his boss in the know of everything that was going on.

From reports that have appeared so far, which has all been officially handed out, Coomar Narain was operating at two levels. At one level he was operating as a commercial spy, which in reality is supplying commercial or market intelligence as it is called officially, and at another level he was also supplying vital, sensitive political intelligence. The point is whether Coomar Narain sent Yogesh Maneklal in Bombay, both commercial and political intelligence that he picked up. And, if he did send Mr Maneklal politically sensitive intelligence reports, did the latter just file it away, throw it away or give it to forces outside the country who could use it to weaken the country's security? So far, the information leaked to the press only mentioned that Maneklal confessed to entertaining senior government officers in posh hotels. He further said that he had regular contacts with persons in the defence ministry. This is nothing unusual because his company manufactured specialised rubber sheets for defence. Five-star hotels in Bombay and elsewhere are full of Indian businessmen entertaining senior bureaucrats and ministers. In fact, it is said that the businessman-politician who is the chief of the Bombay Congress(I) used to personally pick up former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee's five-star hotel bills in Bombay. In another case, a minister of state for finance who stayed at the Oberoi Towers at the cost of a business house was thrown out of his job summarily and the business house did not bother to pay the bill despite several reminders.

Commercial espionage is not a crime and has been practised in India. The work of every liaison officer in New Delhi is collecting commercial intelligence. The liaison men supply comparative statements of prices of tenders and all such related information about competitors. Maneklal obviously used this information in his negotiations. The implications behind Maneklal's arrest makes it necessary to separate commercial espionage which is not a crime against the country. The fact that Maneklal's liaison man Coomar Narain was in direct touch with embassies shows his link with political espionage. He was giving the French military attache information not only about defence contracts but also about the country's defence plans.

Was Maneklal involved in political espionage? Maneklal had collaborators mostly from the West while his exports were primarily to East European countries. According to Coomar Narain he got business from the Poles and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) because he supplied them political information. The Poles and the East Germans do not have their own intelligence network and they were obviously being used by the Soviet network, the KGB. From the West he was importing technology and setting up manufacturing units. This was being done on tender basis from government departments and commercial intelligence is vitally important in such cases.

Maneklal took over from his father who died in the early Seventies. His family had always been [illegible] and this is evident from the fact that [illegible]



Yogesh Maneklal (right) on his way to the court



Suspects being taken to a court in New Delhi

Jagdish Yadav

Yogeshbhai had asked Narain to look after the interests of Poland and GDR because otherwise they would have lost their business. Another thing, look at the amounts of money the company is spending now. When Narain had joined they never had such big money. This company has landed Narain into all sorts of problems. Even the whisky bottles that were recovered from his office were not his but the company's, lying there for being taken to Bombay. And poor Narain got blamed.

Q: Have you ever met Yogesh Maneklal?

A: Yes, and also his father Trikamlal Maneklal. He was very fond of Narain and took him on in 1960.

Q: Why did Narain leave the government job?

A: He was tired of the problems there. You know these constant intrigues and suspicions. Some of his friends suggested Maneklal.

Q: Was he under suspicion then too?

A: No, no. But he was quite frustrated with the government job.

Q: How has Yogesh Maneklal behaved with Narain?

A: He used to be very good.

Q: How many times have you met him?

A: Just a couple of times. But after this problem he has changed. Narain has been with the company for 25 years but not a man came to enquire how his family is after his arrest.

Q: Where did you meet Maneklal? Did you go to parties hosted by Narain?

A: No, I never went. He hosted parties in clubs and hotels but his wife was never with him. I was never interested.

Q: What was your family life like?

A: Fairly ordinary.

Q: Any relatives?

A: No. He doesn't have any relatives, neither do I. He has a brother but we don't know where he is or what he is doing. We haven't been in touch.

Q: Mrs Narain, why were you trying to stop your husband from making his confession that day?

A: Because he is not in a stable condition. The poor man is bearing the brunt of the pressure and suffering. Even two days before he was arrested, he had complained of pain in the chest. In the few weeks of detention, he has become so weak.



The driver of Coomar Narain

He is not getting his *karela* juice, nor the medicines he needs. In such a situation, I fear he might break down some day.

Q: Haven't you been able to give him the medicines?

A: I did try in the court but couldn't. They haven't been allowing me.

Q: Is there any pressure on you too?

A: I am naturally concerned and very depressed with all this bad publicity. This shouldn't have happened to us at this age. So many wrong things have been said. People are almost beginning to believe we have made millions cheating the country. But I can tell you we are not very rich. Narain earns a good salary and my farm is doing well. I run my house on the interests I get from a fixed deposit account that I have.

Then, as if to prove herself, Mrs Narain took us on a tour of her house. Two large bedrooms, each with a television set. Another in her large, well-kept living room, fitted with a Japanese music-system—"Narain isn't interested in music, I am," she said—and decorated with pieces of china and rosewood. In her kitchen were two cooking-ranges.

Out on the farm was a tractor, 30 Jersies and Holsteins and a couple of seed-bulls in the cowshed and a dung heap on which worked two little girls: Renu and Radha, the adopted children of the Narains. They were farm hands. Mrs Narain had told someone earlier that they did not go to school because they were not interested in studies. The reason she gave us was: "They have stopped because of the current problem."

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

INDO-FRENCH RELATIONS

Is the Honeymoon Over?

The two countries will have to work hard to rebuild the relationship

The Indians and the French were just short of becoming *bhai-bhai* when l'affaire Bolley suddenly soured the relations. Nearly three billion dollars were in the pipeline from France for various contracts and projects in India. On the anvil were many more, especially in the fields of telecommunications, energy and arms.

While South Block has thus far refrained from naming France, the anger and hurt in the involvement of a French diplomat in an espionage ring which struck at the most important and nodal point in the country—the Prime Minister's office—is barely disguised. "We are now back to square one with the French... they will have to work hard to rebuild the relationship or win back that confidence and trust we had placed in them," said a senior bureaucrat.

The *lune de miel* (honeymoon) between the countries was seen to be over when the French envoy, Serge Bodevaix, a senior career diplomat, was "recalled" to France on 1 February. France announced the recall (which is not the same thing as withdrawal), two days after the Indian envoy in Paris Narendra Singh called on the French foreign minister, Roland Dumas, at the Quai d'Orsay. The move might have been no more than a courtesy call for the outgoing Indian ambassador but it is being said in New Delhi, unofficially, that the Indians made it known that the recall of the French ambassador would help restore Indo-French relations and smoothen the ruffled feathers.

Although the French did make this gesture, officials insisted that the ambassador was not being recalled but transferred after two years in India. The fact that M Bodevaix has been promoted to assistant secretary-general in the ministry (he is number three at the Quai d'Orsay) indicates that the transfer is a face-saving device. The French ambassador's transfer is in some way comparable to Dr P. C. Alexander's resignation (or rather the acceptance of his resignation): Both of them were held to be morally responsible for what was going on in their office, although neither of them were involved. This is the first time that an ambassador has been called back or transferred from New Delhi on the prompting of India, according to a senior official. This only indicates the extent of the anger of the government of India.

What is significant is the fact that although Coomar Narain, Colonel Bolley's supplier of intelligence of the most sensitive kind, had named the East Germans and the Poles as his customers, not too much noise has been made in Delhi about the involvement of these two Warsaw Pact countries. One of the reasons for the low key reaction on the part of India (the external affairs spokesman is ominously silent on the subject) could be that this country does not have any military transactions with either of the countries. "We have an easy relationship with these countries," says an official. In the ministry of external affairs, whether East Germany and Poland passed the information on to the USSR is another matter. But the reaction of the supposed involvement of the KGB has been muted. It is almost common knowledge that both the CIA and the KGB are actively involved in espionage in this country.

With the French, however, it was different. There were great expectations from the co-operation between the two countries. More, India just did not expect this of the French with whom a very special relationship had been built up since 1980, much to the chagrin of other European countries, with an eye on India's vast market, especially for arms and weaponry. The intensity of the Indian reaction to the presence of a French spy (and possibly one or two more Frenchmen) is commensurate with the trust India had in the French. There is far more anger at the betrayal of a good friend than the betrayal of an acquaintance.

While the visit to Delhi of Polish premier, General W. Jaruzelski takes place (the Polish spy notwithstanding) there is now apparently some doubt over Rajiv Gandhi's proposed trip to Paris at the beginning of June to inaugurate the year of India in France. "The visit is under a cloud," confided a bureaucrat. Obviously, the Indian government is waiting for some gesture of atonement from the French. One of the techniques the French might try is to have President Francois Mitterrand stop by in New Delhi on his way to Indonesia this fall. The French have to come up with something fast and special to thaw Indo-French relations. Meanwhile, it is reliably learned that Colonel Bolley is being interrogated in France and has been kept under surveillance.

Meanwhile, back in India, there is a feeling that many of the future joint projects and ventures with France will be affected. It is fairly clear that the on-going projects will not be touched. But the French are likely to loose out on some of the contracts for which they stood a good chance. The first to go is the 155-mm gun contract involving over a billion dollars for which the French were number one on the list because their AUF-I 155 mm self-propelled gun as well as their 5.56 mm Fames (the latter is considered the most advanced self-service rifle in use by NATO) are considered to be of the best quality.

Incidentally, the Swedes, Austrians, the British and the Italians (the last two in a collaboration) are also contenders for this major contract. While there is a great deal of speculation in New Delhi (which has almost overnight become a centre of international intrigue with diplomats disappearing into the night), the Russians were the most pleased ones about the French embarrassment, but the British are no less enthusiastic. Both these countries have faced fierce competition from the French. The Russians started becoming a bit envious of the blue-eyed status of the French after the sale of the Mirage-2000 by France to India. The British became uncomfortable in the Eighties because the French soon started to bag contracts in what the British had considered their preserve, even in the Middle East. The Mirage, important contracts in the fields of telecommunications (particularly the CIT-Alcatel contract) and energy were going the French way (overall commercial trade between India and France has shown an average increase over the past five years of more than 15 per cent a year).

One of the biggest French bonanzas in India is, of course, the CIT-Alcatel telecommunications project which orginally envisaged a million lines in the first two years, The contract for setting up electronic switching and microwave digital transmission factories involves over Rs 400 crores. An electronic switch factory has already been set up at Gonda. The one at Worli which will

cater to Bombay and parts of Maharashtra was recently inaugurated. But the contract for the factory at Bangalore has yet to be signed—and therein lies the rub.

This project might be put in deep freeze, as might the contracts with the French Compagnie Francaise de Petrole for the back-up technology for ONGC's operations in Bombay High. The two governments were also in the process of negotiating the purchase of French helicopters for the Bombay High operations. India has already bought 40 Mirage-2000 aircraft and the decision not to manufacture this plane in India was taken before the spy scandal. The contracts concerning the weaponry and avionics tied up to the plane are likely to continue.

Since the Five Year Plan has a massive outlay for energy, telecommunications and irrigation, there were already several big projects ready for discussion on the growing Indo-French platter. A major project for hydel power, yet another for high voltage switches in Bangalore, and the setting up of more ports in the country were already being discussed. These projects might be adversely affected if Indo-French relations remain at the present stage. One of the reasons why the Indians were inclined to opt for joint ventures and collaborations with the French is that they offered soft loans (this was the case in the CIT-Alcatel project) and they were willing to transfer their technology. Thus, while the Swedes and the Japanese might have had more advanced digital technology, the French offered softer loans. One of the most recent contracts signed was between the department of electronics and a French concern, Antiope, for equipment to transfer text by telephone.

Although the French were on a good wicket in India it is not fair to say that they were getting all the best deals. British Aerospace managed to sell its Sea Harriers, for which it had offered India special rates. The Russians came through finally with their MiG-27s and MiG-29s. The "French bias," if that is what it may be called, actually did India some good. When the negotiations for the Mirage-2000 had begun in all earnestness, the Russians woke up. It may be recalled that Indian officials were not previously allowed to enter the MiG factories in the Soviet Union and they met in offices outside the factories. It was an angry Jagjivan Ram who returned from Moscow in a huff, when he was defence minister in the Janata government, because he was not allowed to see a MiG-23 factory. Later the Russians promised the MiG-29 (when it was still on the board) simultaneously to both the Indian Air Force and to their own air force. The Russians obviously had a change of heart after the Mirage and the Jaguar deals came through.

This year—1985—is the year of India in France. The year was also going to be important for many important projects: French industry has made several proposals for the transfer of technology in some of India's high-priority areas. In the field of energy they have offered technology for the processing of poor



The French embassy in New Delhi

quality coal with high ash content, longwall mining equipment, hydel power generation, oil exploration and production. In electronics and data processing, main frame computers and supermini computers, in telecommunications, private telephone exchanges and microwave digital transmission.

The French connection is not really that old. It really began in 1980 when President Giscard d'Estaing visited India. It was the first visit of a French head of state to this country. The French interest in the east had stopped in Iran, skipped India and concentrated on China. The first real contact had taken place in the 1960s when the French helicopter, Alouette, was purchased. George Pompidou visited India in 1965, as General de Gaulle's PM.

The next important visit was of Jacques Chirac in 1976 when he was Giscard d'Estaing's Prime Minister. Cooperative ventures soon began to be signed. But the turning point came with President Giscard's 1980 January visit—an important visit—the fallout of which was the projects for bauxite in Orissa and a coal project. But what was for the French conservative government a desirable, potential relationship became a reality when the Socialists came to power in May 1981. The process of the wooing of India was accelerated To begin with the French laid out the red carpet for Mrs Gandhi when she went to Paris on 12 November 1981. Interestingly enough, President Giscard was scheduled to have come to India in 1979. But, it seems he had doubts about the Morarji Desai government. When Mrs Gandhi returned to power, it was not too long before the French President made his way to India. Even Mrs Gandhi initially had her doubts about going to Socialist France in the winter of 1981. She was irked about the members of the Socialist government hobnobbing with Indian socialists like George Fernandes in the days when she was out of power.

India in its attempt to turn away from both of the superpowers had begun in the late Seventies to look towards western Europe, particularly to the French and the West Germans. Politically, France was important, for the country was a symbol of Europe's quest to be independent. The French connection, therefore, blossomed, But the relationship did not escape the evil eye. There might not be anything major unearthed during the course of the investigations into the espionage ring, but India will for the time being at least be extremely weary of any hand offered in cooperation.

India might gradually turn away from both the French and the British (the Indian government is very angry with Britain's Pakistan connection, as well as its attitude towards the extremists based in its country). There is also apprehension about the French intelligence agencies sharing their information with Nato intelligence agencies. The Indian government has kept its options open: the French were the ones who happened to get caught but the Indians realise that closer political ties with France are in the interest of this country.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

Jumping the Queue

C.R. Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib, cabinet secretary, retires from service on 28 February. The post is on a tenure of three years, like the chief of army and air force, as decided by the Janata government under the prime ministership of Morarji Desai. This means that even a day before attaining the age of superannuation, that is 58 years, a serving IAS officer can be appointed cabinet secretary for a period of three years. Of course, it was the other way round for Rao Sahib. He would have retired from IAS on 28 February this year in the normal course. By becoming cabinet secretary on 30 April 1981, he completed the tenure of three years on 29 April 1984. When there was a strong rumour that he was about to go last year, it seems he invoked the normal rules of retirement and continued in his post. Tenure rule was, therefore, given a new interpretation by the government for the future.

Till the selection of Rao Sahib, succeeding N. K. Mukarji, the convention was that the seniormost civil servant became the cabinet secretary. When Mrs Gandhi became the Prime Minister in 1980, Rao Sahib continued as the secretary to the Prime Minister. In the combined list of IAS officers from 1948-1981, he was fifth from the top. Yet, he was made the cabinet secretary, creating a new convention. It was said at that time that the newly-appointed principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr P.C. Alexander and G. Parthasarathy had a big hand in such an out of turn selection for the highest civilian post in the country. Gone were the days when the seniormost civilian could look forward to the day when he could become the cabinet secretary, whether he was in Delhi or out in one of the states. For example, B. Shivaraman, then chief secretary, Orissa, came to Delhi as the secretary in the ministry of food and, after a short while, became the cabinet secretary. There was neither any political clout nor long stay close to the centre of power in Delhi to get such an appointment.

Since mid-January, many names came up for the post of cabinet secretary. The most talked-about names were those of K.V. Ramanathan, secretary, planning and P.K. Kaul, secretary, finance, both in service in Delhi. There were, however, 17 other officers who were eligible.

In order of the all-India seniority list of IAS officers, there are three officers in the 1949 batch of the IAS, same as Rao Sahib's,who should have been considered for the post of cabinet secretary: G.K. Bhanot, presently chairman, Board of Revenue, Rajasthan, posted in Ajmer and K.S. Ramachandran belonging to the Orissa cadre, now on long leave. It is learnt their service records are not so bright and they are out of sight from Delhi as well. Both of them would be retiring from service on 31 March and 30 June this year, respectively.

But, also belonging to the 1949 batch of the IAS, G. Ramachandran went to serve as the executive director, Asian Development Bank, Manila. Before going there, he was secretary, finance, in Delhi. Earlier, he had a stint as joint secretary for economic affairs in the Prime Minister's secretariat. His date of retirement is 31 July 1985. The other officer is B.P.R. Vithal who has just returned from a posting with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as fiscal adviser, Sudan, and is now principal chairman, Board of Revenue in Hyderabad. Though he came through the extension scheme in the states and got into the IAS in 1950, there is a similar precedent: S.S. Grewal came into the IAS in the same way and became the cabinet secretary earlier.

Both Ramachandran and Vithal are excellent officers with international exposure in finance planning and overall economic administration.

Combined list (as on 1 January 1984) of IAS officers from 1948—1981 who were eligible for the post of Cabinet Secretary on 31 January 1985.

Name	Year of Allotment and State	Date of Retirement
C.R. Krishnaswamy Rao Sahib, Cabinet Secretary	1949 AP	28.02.1985
G.K. Bhanot, Chairman, Board of Revenue, Ajmer, Rajasthan	1949 Rajasthan	31.03.1985
K.S. Ramachandran on leave	1949 Orissa	30.06.1985
G. Ramachandran, Executive Director, Asian Development Bank, Manila	1949 Tamil Nadu	31.07.1985
B.N. Raman on leave	1950 AP	28.02.1985
B.P.R. Vithal, Chairman, Board of Revenue, Hyderabad	1950 AP	31.07.1985
K.V. Ramanathan, Secretary, Planning, New Delhi	1950 Tamil Nadu	31.07.1985
A.S. Gill, Secretary, Petroleum, New Delhi	1950 Gujarat	31.07.1985
B.C. Gangopadhyay, Secretary, Food, New Delhi	1950 AP	28.02.1985
Mohinder Singh, Secretary, Mining, New Delhi	1950 Rajasthan	31.05.1985
S.P. Srinivasan, Vigilance Commissioner-cum-Administrative Reforms, Hyderabad.	1950 Tamil Nadu	31.07.1985
P.K.V. Bhiman, Member, Board of Revenue, Lucknow UP	1950 UP	30.06.1985
K.P.A. Menon, Chairman-cum-MD, National Seeds Corps.	1950 West Bengal	28.02.1985
K.S. Chandrasekharan, Principal Resident Commissioner, Orissa	1950 Orissa	31.05.1985
V.K. Sreenivas, Member, Secretary, Advisory Board of Energy, Cabinet Secretariat, New Delhi	1950 Gujarat	30.04.1985
K.N. Swarup, Secretary, Non-Conventional Energy, New Delhi	1950 UP	30.06.1985
K. Subramaniam, Director, Institute of Defence Studies	1950 Tamil Nadu	31.07.1985
R.C. Sreevastava, Chairman, [illegible]	1950 Kerala	31.07.1985
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
P.K. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Both these officers are senior to Ramanathan. They have been left out, perhaps, because they are also out of sight so far as Delhi is concerned. Among the regular recruits in the IAS in 1950, K.V. Ramanathan, secretary, planning, belongs to the Tamil Nadu cadre and A.S. Gill, secretary, petroleum, belongs to Gujarat. Ramanathan retires on 31 July 1986 while Gill is going to retire this July. Ramanathan has been given the rank of a minister of state, and elevated as member-secretary, Planning Commission, while P.K. Kaul was elevated to the rank of cabinet secretary. The case is similar to that of Thirumallai who was made a member of economic administration reforms commission with the same rank when Rao Sahib superseded him. The selection procedure follows the same pattern since them. The only difference between then and now is the whole list of officers in the 1950 batch IAS has been given a go-by, as Kaul belongs to the 1951 Uttar Pradesh cade. To top it all, he occupied the eighteenth position in order of seniority. Thus, Rao Sahib jumped the queue as did Kaul, over 17 officers. The irony is that these 17 officers, quite a few of them in the states, are not even chief secretaries.

This queue jumping in the states, on considerations other than seniority in service, has become more of a rule than an exception. This is especially true in the selection of chief secretaries. Perhaps they are also following the same ground rules as is followed in the centre for the selection of the cabinet secretary. Andhra Pradesh for example has set an all-time precedent by changing four chief secretaries in one year, as N.T. Ramarao was unable to work with them since he became the chief minister. Finally, he decided not to have any chief secretary at all. Though six officers in the IAS are still serving in the state, all senior in service to the principal secretary to the chief minister, Shravan Kumar is the one who is also looking after the work of the chief secretary. In Bihar, K.K. Srivastava has jumped the queue over four senior colleagues serving there. The story is the same in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and some other states.

Some of these IAS officers have been given very distinguished designations, perhaps, to compensate for missing the post of the chief secretary. For example, the first senior officer in the civil list of the IAS in Kerala is the chairman, Trivandrum Development and Calicut Development Authority. Next to him is the vice-chancellor, Kerala Agricultural University. Then comes the chief secretary. In Tamil Nadu two officers senior to the chief secretary are the chairman, Tamil Nadu Cooperative Oilseeds Growers' Federation Ltd and the other one is the principal government liaison officer, International Crops Institute for Semi-arid Tropics in Hyderabad.

P.K. Kaul is the second seniormost IAS officer in the city of New Delhi but the list of seniority of civil officers is kept at an all-India basis by the government of India. To be cabinet secretary at the centre or chief secretary in a state, seniority in service is immaterial. He should be acceptable to the political masters and as near to the ruling coterie as possible, with maximum visibility to them. In the case of the present-day chief secretaries in the states and also in the appointment of P.K. Kaul, superseding 17 colleagues in service, these conditions have been fulfilled once again. P.K. Kaul's appointment, however, has been generally welcomed by the bureaucracy.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

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Sukur Bakhia's Latest Escape

"Sukur Seth" remains as elusive as ever

Sukur Naran Bakhia has, ever so quietly disappeared again. If the June 1982 escape from the Fort Aguada jail in Goa was a sensation that hit the national headlines, this was a programmed low-key performance. Few know when Bakhia escaped or how. Nobody seems aware of his whereabouts. Nobody knows what this son of smugglers is up to now. On 18 December 1984, Sukur Naran Bakhia alias Sukur Naran Tandel was convicted for the first time in his life. (Tandel is his caste name; tandels are fishermen). Justice R.M. Christi, additional city sessions judge, Ahmedabad, awarded three-and-a-half years' rigorous imprisonment to Bakhia in a ten-year-old case of financial fraud filed by the income-tax department.

The very next day Bakhia got himself admitted to the Ahmedabad civil hospital complaining of cardiac and blood-pressure problems. A week later, on 27 December 1984, he filled in a personal bond of two lakh rupees and two sureties of one lakh rupees each to get himself released conditionally. He was not to leave Ahmedabad city without the prior permission of the commissioner of income-tax (Gujarat central) and was to report to the nearest police station every alternate day. But the lordly Bakhia promptly despatched a letter to the police headquarters requesting them to send a policeman for his rollcall "as I am admitted as an indoor patient in the civil hospital." Thereafter suddenly Bakhia became silent. And the police could not find him anywhere. "The official position is," explained Mr Bhargava, Ahmedabad's assistant commissioner of police, "that Bakhia is missing. We have no record of him after 4 January 1985 and we are writing to the court about it."

This was on 22 January, more than two weeks after Bakhia had slipped out. Surprisingly enough, neither the police nor the intelligence authorities seemed to have made any headway in the case by then. Indeed, their attitude suggested that they could not care less. That a man as notorious as Bakhia had disappeared without trace did not seem to bother them at all, as if not Bakhia but some petty thief had run away. Y.B. Jhala, Ahmedabad's police commissioner, seemed to know little about the entire affair. He did not have much to say other than stress: "There are no cases against Bakhia as such." When



Bakhia being taken by the police to a metropolitan court in Ahmedabad in August 1982 — Bhudev Bhachech

contacted, police intelligence personnel also shrugged. It was evident that Sukur Naran Bakhia was not even under cursory watch. Bakhia is never the man to miss such an opportunity. He can walk out of maximum security prisons and the escape from the civil hospital must have been like an evening stroll. But where is Bakhia? All kinds of stories were floating around: he was staying under a fictitious name at hotel Natra, allegedly his favourite haunt in Ahmedabad; he had fled across the Sabarmati, he was hiding in the labyrinthine old city and moving around quite openly, meeting friends and recultivating contacts. One rumour even had it that Bakhia had left Ahmedabad for his favourite haunts on the coast. In any case, within ten days of his first conviction in life Bakhia was a free bird again.

It is somewhat ironic that the first sentence against Bakhia had little to do with smuggling. This frontline smuggler who, in his heyday, was said to be netting annual profits worth Rs 20 crores, has successfully dodged several big traps set for him. But he was caught in what is certainly a petty affair by his standards. In 1968 a man called Navnitlal S. Patel floated a crossword puzzle and a "literary competition" called Shad Hariphal from Ahmedabad, which offered large, unheard of amounts of prize money. The basic idea behind it was to convert blackmoney into white and the brainwave was Bakhia's. What actually happened was that Bakhia and his 21 associates filled up several of the entries each and sent them in to Navnit Patel. With the entries went lakhs of rupees in cash to Patel who manipulated the results so that only Bakhia and his associates were the winners. Keeping a commission worth four to ten per cent of the amount for himself, Patel used to revert the amounts in cheques as "prize money." The laundering of money from black to white was complete. Between January 1968 and June 1969, Rs 41,89,533 had been converted from black into white. But soon Shad Hariphal, a racket that had spread to the neighbouring union territory of Daman and to Rajasthan, came to the notice of the income-tax department. They captured some records, persuaded Navnit Patel to turn approver and filed a suit against Bakhia and his 21 associates in 1974. The racket was squashed but the case could be brought to its conclusion only in December 1984 since the main accused were in detention under other provisions. Giving his judgment which convicted Bakhia and 12 other associates, Justice R.M. Christi observed that, "By this conspiracy they (the accused) had tried to save tax through a bogus crossword competition."

Shad Hariphal was only a small experiment that failed. Bakhia's main interests lay in his smuggling empire which he built up slowly. But once it had been established it ranked among the best in the business. Assisting him were his four men—Hari Naran, Markan Naran, Arvind Naran and Jiwan Naran—all of whom are said to have operated in and around Daman. Naranbhai Govanbhai Machhi, his brother-in-law, managed his Dubai operations. He headed a front organisation called Meena Trading Agencies which also had a branch in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Another brother-in-law, Hari Vallabhdas, was an ex-Congress(I) MLA from Goa who acted as Bakhia's political godfather. Bakhia himself is a man of extensive contacts. He knows the underworld like the back of his hand and has a formidable reach in the establishment. Police and customs officials, income-tax officers, other bureaucrats, MLAs: he has often used them at will in the past. Even intelligence reports on him admit that he "wields considerable influence in official and political circles." One senior customs officer at Ahmedabad plainly admitted that several of his men are "in Bakhia's pocket."

Daman, the former Portuguese colony off Bulsar and Vapi in south Gujarat, is Bakhia's base of operations on the Arabian Sea. Daman is a

The Hero of Daman

The man, rogue criminal to the world, guilty of legal and human outrage, is a hero in Daman. He is a legend, the local Robin Hood and he is referred to as Ganapati, "Badshah Bakhia," "Sukur Seth." And when they talk of him they always praise him. "Sukur Seth *hamara sarkar hai fishe* Daman *ko upar uthaya* (Sukur Seth is our master, he made Daman prosper)." Bakhia is extremely popular—and not without reasons. Bakhia brought the boom to Daman, placed it at the head of the contraband market in India and within no time the results began to show. Overnight, the large community of Damanese fishermen—the Machhis—who have cooperated with Bakhia's clandestine operations along the coastline, became wealthy. Many of them pulled down their huts to build *pucca* houses, others invested in business. And whenever they were in need of money Bakhia donated freely.

It was a good investment for him. Daman was at his feet. He has succeeded in creating a sort of [illegible] operation, a private [illegible] of his own, closed to questions from outsiders. How difficult it is to probe into smuggling which is rampant in Daman would be clear from a note a customs officer had made earlier this year. "Since the whole population of Daman is involved in the activity, there is no leakage of any information in regard to Bakhia's hideouts."

Even today, when Bakhia's activities are extremely low-key, Daman has the same regard for him. His repeated detentions, arrests and escapes make no difference. "*Hamara idhar ka siraf do cheez famous hai, hamara fish aur hamara Sukur Seth* (We have only two famous things in Daman, our fish and our Sukur Seth)," said Gaju Tandel, a typical Damanese fisherman, with pride.

But while the majority of the Machhis is devoted to Bakhia, the Catholics, mainly descendants of the Portuguese living in the fort area of Daman, are somewhat dispassionate about the local Don. The reasons might be purely economic. Says Mr Tomas, a local businessman, "At first we had only the concrete houses. Now in a matter of years they (the Machhis) have bigger houses...they have become the *saabs*." But even this section of society would not go to the extent of saying things against Bakhia, at the most they would take you in a corner and tell you a few well-known things about Bakhia "strictly off the record." A wizened old lady, Mrs D'Silva, who spoke only Portuguese, in fact maintained that Bakhia was very "liberal" and was helping the Machhis and the Catholics alike.

Smuggling, somehow, does not seem to be taboo in Daman. It is almost treated like a celebrated sport. It is something that brings in more money, something that brings more gin and *feni*, more happiness. Smuggling is something that "*hamara* Sukur Seth" does.

Sankarshan Thakur

Wine and Women

Bakhia is a Bacchus with added talents. He likes his wine and women. His added talents have brought him enough wealth to savour the first two 'W's—even while in jail or "recovering" in a hospital. This man of lavish habits has got what he has wanted: the finest Scotch whisky hidden in the meals or girls garbed as nurses. It did not matter if he was a slightly unattractive proposition—just five feet three, blowzy and bald—for money has got him his desires.

Sukur Naran realised the power of money early in his days of apprenticeship. Daman was then still under Portuguese control and Bakhia a mere carrier. One day he was apprehended with contraband goods but was soon out of custody after his employer made a payoff. Whether it is accomplishing a risky mission or avoiding detection, prolonging investigation or escaping from custody, money has been Bakhia's chief instrument. It had led him up the ladder of crime.

Not less helpful, however, has been his sharp mind. From the very beginning of his criminal career, this son of a fisherman called Naran showed promise: he was cool, calculating, ruthless. What was more, he was extremely ambitious. Lallu Joghi, another big-time smuggler from Daman, according to some locals Bakhia's mentor, started off smuggling potatoes and onions from India into Portuguese-controlled Daman. Bakhia went straight on to gold and silver.

He may be illiterate, he may mumble in a strange mixture of Gujarati and the Machhi dialect of Daman but Bakhia knows the law thoroughly, the manner of police operations, the way to manipulate both. So many times has he given the law a slip, on so many occasions has he left policemen pink and red that Bakhia inspires awe in many.

There seems to be some disputes as far as his genial nature and behaviour are concerned. Intelligence records describe him as a man who is "arrogant, rough and proud" but officials who have arrested and questioned him have found Bakhia rather congenial and mild-mannered, even given to humour. When customs superintendent L.G. Fitter had gone to Bakhia's palatial Daman residence to arrest him in 1982, he had found him sipping Indian whisky. On being asked why he was drinking an Indian brand, Bakhia remarked, "I don't trust smuggled Scotch. It's all adulterated stuff these days." Then he changed and walked with Fitter without any qualms. The only question which Bakhia had asked one of his men before going with the police was, "*Tian daru maise* (Do you get liquor there, in jail)?" Bakhia went to jail confidently thereafter. Perhaps, because he is always confident he would not have to spend much time in custody. In any case he always made a comfortable pad for himself wherever he went. All the Scotch and all the flesh for which Bakhia (54) still hungers for. Sukur Naran Bakhia should not have been born in a temple in Nani Daman.

Sankarshan Thakur

tiny place surrounded by muddy backwaters and vast marshes. A rather secluded place but at the same time just five hours by road from Bombay and only four days away from Dubai by a *dhow*. At first sight Daman looks like a one-street township wrapped in the smell of fish and buzzing with bars where even little boys sit and gulp gin and cashew *feni*. But off the street begins the real Daman—the Daman built by the smuggling boom, the Daman of Bakhia. You realise how fast prosperity has come when you see large concrete houses smelling of nothing but fish and inhabited by *lungi*-clad fishermen. The little boy working in a cycle repair shop wears a glittering imported watch, the man sitting on the street, knitting a net listens to a Japanese stereo cassette recorder and in what is almost the size of a big village there is a surprisingly large number of three-wheelers and taxis—all this the *meharbani* of Sukur Seth (as Bakhia is known).

The coast of Daman is ideally suited to Bakhia's purposes. Dotted with creeks and inlets, it is also shallow and marshy, making it almost impossible for customs vessels to chase the small canoes used by smugglers for depositing contraband on the coast. A broad inlet, locally called Daman Ganga, in fact, flows right through Daman, dividing the sea face town into two: Bada Daman and Chhota Daman. Bakhia has used the Daman Ganga as his private port for dumping contraband. And when the Daman Ganga was not safe for landing, his boats would simply take a detour and park themselves in one of the several landing stations Bakhia had fixed up: most of the time it would be behind his ice-factory in Daman. Its location is ideally suited for landing. The ice-factory itself is one of Bakhia's main godowns where he stores silver for shipment abroad and dumps the contraband that his boats bring in.

Bakhia uses three categories of boats in every operation of his. The first leg of the journey from Dubai is covered by 600 horse power Arab *dhows* which are fitted with more than one engine and can do upto 30 knots. They bring the contraband—mainly electronic goods, wristwatches and fabrics—to within 20 kilometres off Daman where the entire consignment is loaded on to small motorboats, also capable of high speeds. These carry the goods to a distance, five kilometres away, from the coast where Bakhia's canoes are waiting. Once these small boats set-off for the coast, there is little that can stop them. In water that is often only three to four feet deep, only expert hands can operate and most of them work for Bakhia.

After landing, the contraband is loaded onto trucks and driven down to Bombay. Every truck is piloted by armed escorts. At one time when Bakhia was doing exceptionally good business entire armies were deputed for the safe passage of his contraband from Daman to Bombay: almost 90 men accompanied his trucks in cars. If intercepted by customs officials, and that was rare, they would resort to violence.

No less than 5,000 people were said to be in Bakhia's employ at one time. His network operated not only along the upper western coast but also in Dubai, Hong Kong and Singapore. At one time it was said to be the best-organised smuggling network in the country but even today Bakhia knows more about the police than most policemen themselves. Daman is his eyes and ears. It is said that the moment a stranger enters Daman he is under watch. If anything suspicious is noticed it would immediately get to the Don. Active support from the local population—fishermen who help his operations, the man on the street who keeps a watch—has been one of the main factors for Bakhia's success. Daman is a place where information comes in regularly but seldom goes out. That is the reason why Bakhia has been able to avoid snares or slips out of them with such ease and frequency. But on occasions the information machine does trip.

One such failure occurred in 1982 and resulted in Bakhia's arrest. Led

by customs superintendent L.G. Fitter and armed with a detention order under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Act (COFEPOSA), a team of customs sleuths was able to pin him down to his plush farmhouse in Daman on 8 April 1982. For once they had outwitted Bakhia: they got a detention order not from Valsad (Bulsar), the nearest customs office, but Goa, slipped quietly into Daman and knocked at his farmhouse.

They lodged him in the Fort Aguada jail, Goa, but it took him less than two months to take sweet revenge. On 30 May 1982 the COFEPOSA review committee decided to let Bakhia go but officials of the Gujarat customs were ready at Fort Aguada to welcome Bakhia with fresh orders for detention. Bakhia had other ideas. Perhaps, he knew well what awaited him. He took his release order, walked quietly out of the main gate and boarded a bus to Bombay from where he returned to his favourite haunts around Daman. The customs officials were shown a clean pair of heels.

Bakhia has been playing hide-and-seek with the customs and the police for more than a decade-and-a-half now. He runs. they follow. Bakhia started giving them headaches in the late Sixties when he was doing a hefty illegal trade with his counterparts in Dubai. The first big catch was on 30 September 1969 when a customs vessel, MVS Mayavati, intercepted an Arab boat called Almashoor off Daman and seized Rs 14,79,190 worth in foreign currency. A penalty of Rs four lakh was imposed on Bakhia which has still not been realised. On 5 May 1970, silver worth Rs 4,34,018 was found in a pickup van (MRD 9101) near Daman and a penalty of Rs ten lakhs was clamped on Bakhia. He was again fined Rs ten lakhs when gold, wristwatches and fabrics worth Rs 9,61,189 were seized from Jalaram Vishwas, a motorised vessel used by Bakhia, on 16 February 1971. But such was his infrastructural strength and his hold on the market that he continued to flourish despite such losses.

In fact, it was during the early Seventies that Bakhia spread and strengthened his empire. He set up a team around him, prominent among whom were Jogibhai M. Tandel and Haribhai M. Tandel. He sent his brother-in-law, Naranbhai Govanbhai Machhi, to manage his operations in Dubai and opened a bogus firm called Meena Trading Agencies there, established links with politicians and officials, bought seacraft and a fleet of cars and trucks and became the biggest employer in Daman. And his generosity won him many friends. By 1973 he had become the Don, the feared and respected Sukur Seth.

After hoodwinking the authorities

Bakhia: A Pauper on Paper

On paper Sukur Karan Bakhia is a pauper—a humble fisherman from Daman who also owns a tiny farm and an ice-factory, with little else besides. Someone who finds it difficult to make two ends meet with "five families to support," someone who used to file Rs 275 as annual income-tax return.

Yet, entire economies have depended on Bakhia. Wattle he flourished, Nani Daman was transformed from a seaboard frontier into a prosperous township dotted with concrete houses, air-conditioned hotels, bars and cinema halls. His arrest in 1982 caused a shock in the political corridors of Delhi, Ahmedabad, Surat and Bombay.

filing Rs 275 as his income-tax return is itself an indication. Bakhia has followed an old maxim. He owns little of what he possesses. Most of his property is registered in the names of either his associates or relatives. Among the properties he is said to possess are:

- House No. 876(B) right opposite the official residence of the deputy superintendent of police in Nani Daman. This property is registered in the name of one Harmosji M. Vaid.
- A bungalow at Katchhigam, Daman, in the name of Jogibhai Tandel.
- A large plot of land and a building in Kathiria in the name of B. Khalpa, B. Baghla, Damu Bewala and Kesher Jalla.
- A house at Parkota, Sheri, in the name of Laxmiben Tandel.
- Land inside the Nani Daman fort area in the name of Ramiben Naran Tandel.
- Two buildings and an orchard near the Marwad Civil Hospital in the names of Mansinh-Dipsinh and Gangaben Tandel.

In addition, he is said to own several wadis (orchards) in and around Daman, a bar-cum-restaurant in Chhota Daman, a [illegible] near Pune and no-less [illegible] in Bombay. Bakhia also has [illegible]

cluded in it are 43 motor vehicles, one of which is a Mercedes and another a Cadillac, half a dozen trucks and a fleet of *dhows* all of which are registered in the names of other people.

Of late some people have begun to believe that Bakhia's fortunes have taken a dip and that because he has spent most of his time shuttling between jails and hospitals since 1982 he has lost his grip on the market and his credibility. "He is ruined financially, finished," remarked a customs official in Ahmedabad. But there are indications that point to the contrary. Bakhia is currently waiving personal and surety-bonds worth four lakh rupees. Besides, there are other penalties (in lakhs) imposed earlier that are yet to be released. Does Bakhia care? "Why should he?" asks a senior police officer. "A few lakhs don't bother Bakhia. It is peanuts for him."

It would be naive to believe that Bakhia is a spent force. Even if his stock in the market has touched a new low, he still is the master of an enormous *benami* empire. And how much time would it take him to re-establish his "fallen-prestige" among his brethren? After all, everyone in this business knows that this poor fisherman from Daman is any day capable of hauling in a good catch.

Sankarshan Thakur



Fort Aguada jail where Bakhia was lodged earlier

for years, during which time he became the biggest buyer of gold in Dubai and a prominent member in the smugglers' big league, Bakhia was finally detained under COFEPOSA in December 1974. His release in April 1975 by the Delhi High Court did not really give him freedom for he was rounded up in that swoop on smugglers a week after the proclamation of Emergency. But even the Emergency could not keep Bakhia within four walls. He got himself certified as a chronic heart patient and spent the months of detention in Bombay's King George's Hospital. It was a long lull. But no sooner was the Emergency lifted than Bakhia began his nefarious activities.

He moved frantically on the Daman-Vapi-Valsad-Bombay circuit, met hundreds of people including Hari Gallabhdas, the ex-Congress(I) MLA from Goa and reactivated his links in Dubai. Customs intelligence was only beginning to suspect that Bakhia might launch his operations soon when he went and bought S.V. Rama Sagar, a motorised craft for Rs two lakhs on 30 September 1977. Bakhia was in the market again. Curiously, customs intelligence does not seem to have suspected it. A spate of reports filed on his activities in the latter half of 1977 are intriguing. One such report, filed on 19 October 1977 said : "It appears that the biggest gang of Bakhia is absolutely inert and inactive." Another, sent in on 6 December 1977 read: "Bakhia is found busy on his farm and his ice-factory. No suspect person visits him." Customs authorities had almost concluded that Bakhia had retired, that he was ruined financially and not worth much in the market.

It was a grave mistake. For, Bakhia was then making hectic preparations for getting back into business. On 12 January 1978 two of his boats—Dharia Dolat and S.V. Rama Sagar—left for Bombay to collect "cargo." And Bakhia was afloat. This time he was not only into gold, silver and electronic goods but also drugs. And so important did he become on the drug circuit in a short time that he drew the attention of David S. Daub, then assistant narcotic attache (United States department of justice and drug enforcement administration) at the US embassy in New Delhi. In a letter to the customs authorities dated 28 March 1978, he wrote: "Indian opium is allegedly moving from *dhows* from Daman to Muscat. Opium is being taken by small boats to sea where it is loaded in *dhows*. The principal individuals involved at Daman are said to be Lallu Joghi and Sukur Bakhia... A review of our files indicates that the above names are certainly familiar and will be no surprise to you." If Bakhia was at all in a financial mess in 1977, he soon made it all up and by 1980 was once again hoarding huge quantities of silver. The customs, which by now had realised it had made an error of judgment, noted the increased activity in his camp and the fact that he was avoiding checkposts. For this in July 1980, he purchased a white station-wagon which resembled an ambulance. Only a month later silver worth Rs eight-and-a-quarter lakhs was seized from one of his cars. The landings continued, business flourished. Thereafter, in 1981, Bakhia took a *dhow* to Dubai to strike a business deal and landed back on the Dandi coast with a huge contraband. After his Dubai visit, there was a spate of landings on the Gujarat coast. Then disaster struck for Bakhia. On 10 January 1982, Bakhia's vessel Chandrasagar, loaded with contraband worth Rs 90 lakhs, was intercepted by the customs.

While it gave Bakhia a jolt it also sent the customs authorities running after him. Orders for his arrest under COFEPOSA were issued by the governments of both Gujarat and Goa. On 8 April 1982 he was taken into custody and sent to Fort Aguada. After his sensational escape from Fort Aguada Bakhia has spent most of his time between jails and hospitals. Rearrested on 31 July 1982 in the border town of Bhuj in Gujarat, he has consistently managed to either obtain bail orders or get out using his standard excuse: heart and blood pressure problems. Even when the Shad Hariphal case hearings were to begin in September 1984, Bakhia was in Daman feigning sickness. A special public prosecutor had to make a trip to Daman and bring him to Ahmedabad where he was put behind bars in the Sabarmati jail. Now he is again a free man, operating quietly from somewhere and perhaps reorganising his gang. In Ahmedabad, however, authorities maintain he is no more what he used to be. The talk that he is financially ruined has gained currency in customs circles. Besides, they say, he is physically too drained to be active now. But Bakhia remains a man of resources, and it would take him little time to beckon success again. As far as his physical condition is concerned, Justice R.M. Christi had remarked while delivering his judgment in the Shad Hariphal case on 18 December 1984 that Bakhia looked in good condition.

Sankarshan Thakur, Daman

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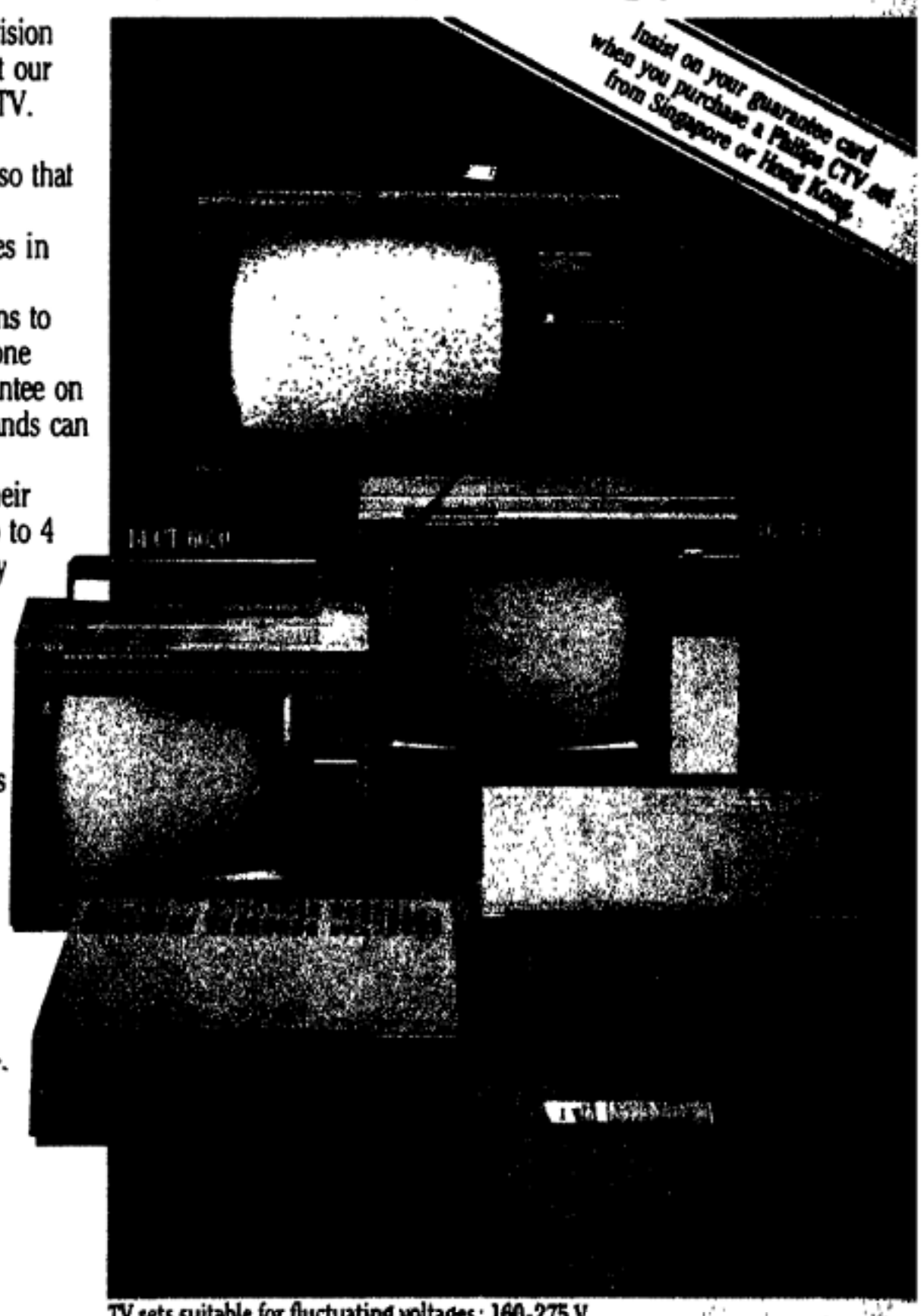
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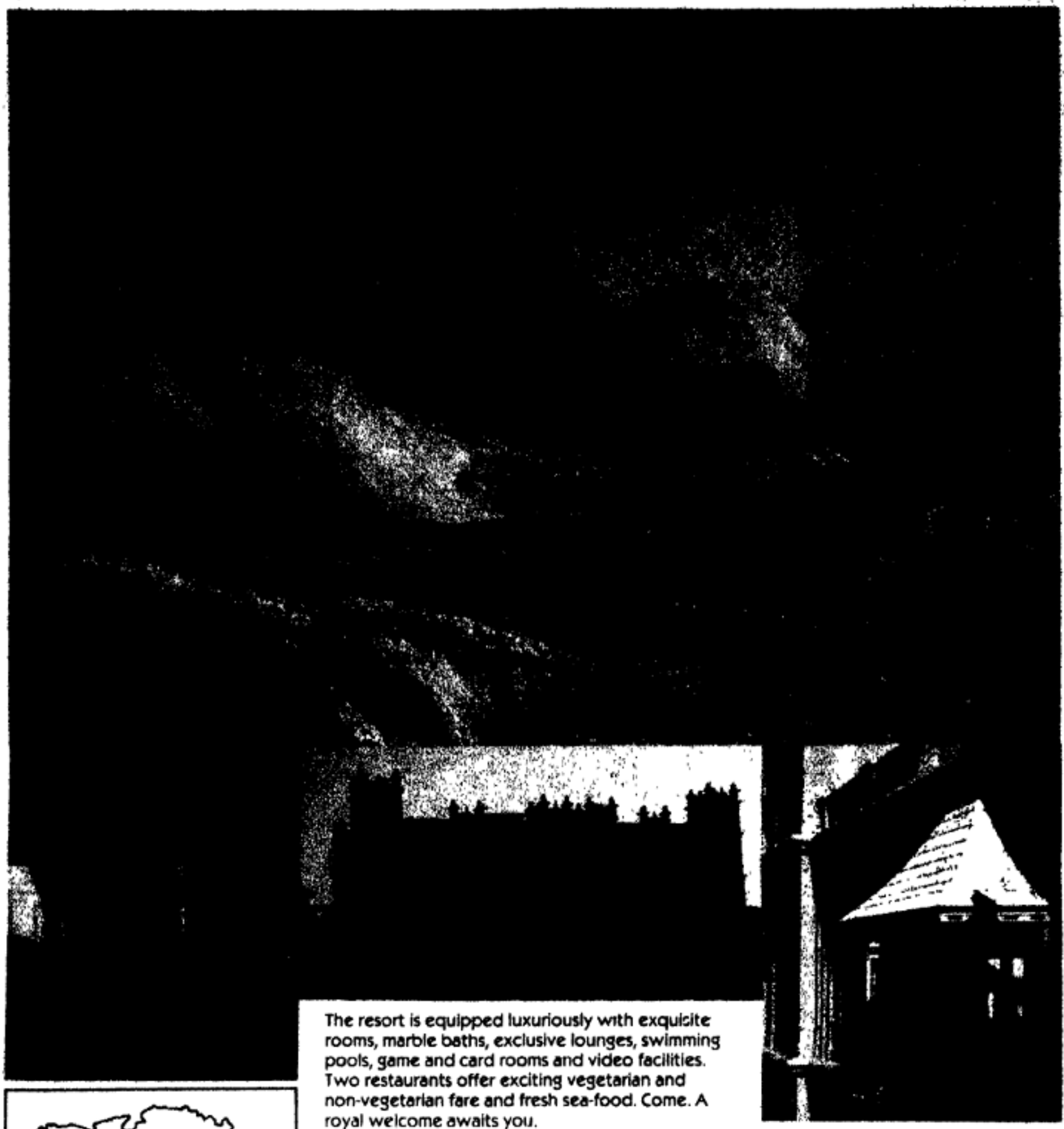


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MGR Takes Charge Again

After an incredible recovery from the brink of death, MGR is back to rule



MGR waves at his supporters

Photographs by Subha News Photo Service

Nearly a million awe-struck people of Tamil Nadu witnessed their beloved leader M.G. Ramachandran's triumphant return to their midst at the dawn of 4 February after waging an incredible battle against death that outshone even the most perilous of his celluloid adventures. The popular impression that MGR has divine strength became a belief as the multitude gazed with worshipful eyes at the leader who looked fresh and buoyant. For the millions the four-month life-and-death struggle had been only a nightmare that dissolved with the soft rays of the rising sun.

On 5 November 1984, MGR, on the brink of death, had been flown to New York strapped to a stretcher, breathing through a tube. His lungs had collapsed, he had diabetes, a paralytic stroke and a damaged kidney. Three months later he returned, walking jauntily on his own feet. Apart from the speech impairment, there were no tell-tale signs of serious ailments that would have permanently crippled, if not killed, most people.

At 6.55 am on 4 February, MGR was spotted sitting on the back seat of his official blue ambassador car TMQ 4777. The car was driven up the specially constructed ramp to the rear of the podium. Opening the door himself, MGR bounced out, and unaided walked into full public view with the characteristic spring in his gait. A full-throated cheer of joy and relief rent the morning sky. People watched with open-mouthed wonder at this vision of MGR—the same old fez cap, the same old glasses, the same old crisp white *kurta* and *dhoti*, the same old gestures and smiles. Yes, the same old MGR was back. No one had dared hope for such a miracle. The first thing MGR did was to bow his head deeply and fold his hands in a humble, *vannakkam*—the Tamil equivalent of *namaste*. With that touching gesture, MGR conveyed his humility and sincere gratitude much more effectively than a 100 words. Women wept unabashedly. MGR then lifted his right hand high up in the air, his characteristic gesture of greeting. The verve and ease with which he did it sent spirits soaring and the assemblage waved their hands in wild abandon. The vigorous way in which he kept waving his right hand (which was afflicted by the paralytic stroke) vanquished the fast evaporating doubts about MGR's recovery. But on stage, MGR demonstrated not only his remarkable physical recovery but also his mental alertness—the crucial

aspect that was the topic of fervid debate. Scanning the huge crowd, he soon spotted his partymen, beaming with happiness in the VIP enclosure. Like a fond father, he summoned them on stage and even elderly AIADMK partymen, who could barely restrain themselves, leapt up on stage like schoolboys. MGR warmly embraced speaker K. Rajaram and a few others. That he had missed them all intensely became apparent, when MGR overcome with emotion, wept like a baby. But as he has proved so many times, he is a man with a steel will and quickly composed himself.

Remarkable also was the fact that unlike his wife, Dr Sreepada Rao and others accompanying him from New York, MGR did not even look jetlagged. Contrary to the photographs taken in the Brooklyn hospital in which he looked old and haggard, his face now looked taut, bright and fresh. Of course the half hour make up session in the aircraft after he landed at the Madras airport helped but the fact that struck a chord in every heart was not just the unchanged face but the inner strength radiated by MGR. The brief simple public reception shorn of unnecessary melodrama and ostentation lasted for 20 minutes after which MGR strode back to his car and drove off to his house—not to rest but to meet partymen, officials, well-wishers and the Governor. The man whom most had not expected to come back alive, had begun the third phase of his life.

For the people the *darshan* was more satisfying than any of his films. On 3 February people had begun pouring into the city from all over the state, to witness the historic moment. Nearly two lakh people had thronged the Mohite stadium, 12 hours before the scheduled *darshan*. Lavish and meticulous arrangements (a tribute to R.M. Veerappan's organising skills) had been made to provide the basic needs like food, water, and toilet facilities. Little bonfires, excited chatter, vendors yelling their wares, the screening of five evergreen hits of MGR (significantly none of them were Jayalalitha starrers) all lent a carnival atmosphere to the stadium. Multicoloured welcome arches, banners, buntings and posters decorated the premises. Most posters showed a flower-bedecked Janaki Ramachandran standing next to MGR (till now one had never seen posters of her).

Investigations by SUNDAY reveal that there are only two things that MGR need to worry about regarding his health. He has to be guarded against infection. Due to the administration of cyclospirin the drug that controls the antibodies to check rejection of the donated kidney, MGR's natural resistance to infection has weakened. This was why a bubble top chair had been organised for MGR to travel in. In the sterile atmosphere of a New York hospital one need not have worried about infection, but not so in the steamy heat of Madras. There is cause for alarm as MGR insists on meeting various people, many of whom may be silent carriers of infection, unknown to themselves. Further, MGR will not hear of quarantine.

The other aspect that might create trouble is the possibility of a psychological problem which could arise due to his inability to speak. His words are still indistinct and the inability to converse freely may lead to frustration and depression, according to Dr Sreepada Rao.

The alacrity with which Governor Khurana declared that MGR was "physically fit and mentally alert" established the fact that sometime during the end of January the centre became fully aware of MGR's spectacular recovery. The Governor would not have issued the statement without consulting Delhi. This also explains why the Delhi trip had such a sobering effect on Mr Thirunavukkarasu, the minister who was divested of a few of his portfolios. Thirunavukkarasu who blamed a "group" in the party for the shoddy treatment meted out to him and who had asserted that the decision was not MGR's, clamped up completely on his return from Delhi.



The crowd at the Mohite Stadium waiting to see MGR

MGR's Decision-making Power Has Not Been Affected'

Dr T. K. Sreepada Rao told SUNDAY

Dr T. K. Sreepada Rao, the nephrologist from Downstate Medical Centre, New York, has been treating MGR and accompanied him to Madras. Anita Pratap spoke to him on the day MGR landed in Madras. Excerpts:

Q: Can Mr Ramachandran attend to the onerous task of chief ministership at this juncture?

A: Yes. You see his decision-making power has not been affected at all. But it will take a little while for him to be active the way he was before illness. For instance, it would be totally inadvisable for him to start touring the state immediately. We want him to come back to normal life gradually, over a period of time, say about two to three months. While he does not require bed rest it would not be advisable for him to put in ten to twelve hours of work daily. But his recovery is fantastic. He is a medical marvel. I mean at today's public function he wanted to keep going and I had to stop him. All of us were so tired and I was half asleep and he was fully awake. My God, the [illegible] looking forward to his [illegible] touching. For the last [illegible] been literally counting [illegible] would [illegible] off the day. And as the [illegible] closer he was [illegible] will it take for him to [illegible] Well, he [illegible] words now like [illegible] you, enough [illegible] the words are not [illegible] of course, by means [illegible] and gestures he is [illegible] very well. He [illegible] understood [illegible] speech [illegible] a [illegible]

drug MGR is being administered to ensure that his kidney is not rejected) works by neutralising the antibodies, which is what causes the rejection. But then antibodies are required to fight infection. Does not the supression of antibodies make MGR vulnerable to infection? Should he not be kept away from people?

A: Yes, you are right. He is vulnerable to infection due to Cyclosporin. That is why we have kept the dosage low. It is a risk and we do worry about it. All we can do is to keep a watch on a regular basis. But I don't think it's necessary to keep him away from other people. I am sure people with any kind of infection however mild, will keep away from him automatically. Gradually over a period of time he will develop natural immunity.

Q: MGR is a very charismatic person, a legend in his lifetime. Don't you think the inability to speak may create certain psychological problems?

A: That is a possibility. He realises that it is a weakness. But I am sure he will get over it.

Q: How would you rate his power of comprehension?

A: Good, extremely good.

Q: Can you narrate some instances to establish this?

A: Well, he always wanted to know what each medicine is for. He refuses to be satisfied with perfunctory explanations. He will demand an answer that satisfies his curiosity. Another instance that comes to my mind was his reaction to Mrs Gandhi's assassination. He actually cried. It was very hard for him to absorb the shock. He was depressed for several days and it took a visible effort for him not to dwell on it. It took many days for him to return to his normal state of cheerfulness.

Q: What do you have to say about [illegible]

[illegible]

The political fallout of MGR's triumphant return is the vindication, in a sense, of the coterie. It is now clear that Mr Ramachandran was fully aware of the developments vis-a-vis Jayalalitha and Thirunavukkarasu. This was proved in no uncertain terms in full public view by Mr Ramachandran himself. Among the many AIADMK partymen who had clambered onto the stage was Mr Thirunavukkarasu. MGR was seen communicating by means of gestures to Thirunavukkarasu indicating that now that he (MGR) was back, "there was nothing to worry." He also indicated to Thirunavukkarasu that he wanted to meet him the same day. Obviously MGR would not have communicated in this fasion to Thirunavukkarasu if he had been ignorant of the goings on. The minister met MGR thrice in three days. Mr Thirunavukkarasu told SUNDAY that he apprised Mr Ramachandran of all the developments during his absence. Significantly, he said he was convinced that Mr Ramachandran was aware of him being divested of his portfolios. No amount of persuasion succeeded in getting Mr Thirunavukkarasu to talk further about his meetings with MGR. As he told SUNDAY, "Now I know that MGR was aware of the situation. As I have said before, I am prepared to accept any decision of MGR's."

Coming from one of the prominent persons who had earlier raised doubts about decisions being taken on behalf of MGR by a "group" in the party, the statement is highly significant. It is clear, therefore, that MGR took the decisions himself. But this still does not answer the question why he took the decision, when it is well-known that he went into hospital, favourably disposed to both Jayalalitha and Thirunavukkarasu. Why then were these two singled out for axing?

A person close to MGR who was with him in New York told this correspondent that the coterie had been manipulating MGR, ever since the election results were out. The coterie, very cleverly, made no direct contact with MGR, but through politicians, industrialists and a leading Tamil writer, all of whom told MGR two things to turn him against Jayalalitha. First, that Jayalalitha had begun hobnobbing with the Congress(I) leaders in Delhi, a fact that had even earlier begun to worry MGR. The other information fed to him was that she and Thirunavukkarasu were having an affair, which accounted for Thirunavukkarasu openly supporting her. Later when Neduncheziyan went to meet him in

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MGR with his wife Janaki Ramachandran

New York he was informed of happenings more or less along the same lines. Nedunchezian pressed for the removal of Jayalalitha and MGR agreed, for a reason that proves his shrewdness.

According to the source, in the Brooklyn hospital MGR was docile and nodded agreement to a lot of things. This for the simple reason that he was fully aware of his helplessness. He caught on to the fact that the coterie was operating in full swing. Sitting in New York, still in the process of recovering, MGR decided it was best to play along with the coterie as he realised that the group was in control of both the party and the government. Any provocation or confrontation with the coterie would have precipitated a situation in which he would have lost total control of the party as well as the government. Astutely he realised that even if he played along with the coterie, he could always rectify the situation on his return, when he could be in direct physical control of the party and government. The minute he was in home territory, MGR began asserting himself, starting with the refusal to climb out from the aircraft into the bubbletop chair and special van. Contrary to doctors orders, he summomed all his partymen on stage where in full view of others he directed Thirunavukkarasu to meet him, obviously fully aware that the latter would otherwise be denied a chance to meet him. Ever since MGR returned and began asserting himself, Nedunchezian and Veerappan have clearly been looking uneasy.

MGR is now in full control of the situation and has ensured that like before all party and government-related decisions are taken by himself and no one else. He proved that the ministry-making exercise was his own effort. In meeting Thirunavukkarasu thrice it is clear that he is well on to the path of patching up all the differences in the party. At the same time, SUNDAY learns that MGR is very angry with Jayalalitha because of her intemperate comments in the press about the coterie, his wife and himself. Even so the situation has not reached the point of no-return which is evident from the fact that MGR refused to even suspend her from the party as requested by senior ministers. Apparently, MGR is waiting for passions to cool and will take a decision regarding Jayalalitha in about a month's time. Till such time *status quo* will be maintained: neither will Jayalalitha be reinstated nor will she be expelled. Even though MGR is angry with Jayalalitha for her harsh remarks, according to sources, he is unlikely to throw her out of the party. They point out that even a person like Edmund who defected from the AIADMK when the MGR government was dismissed in 1980, and rejoined when it won a is well known that MGR's attitude to errant party members is: "If I throw them out of the party, where will they go?"

Her anger spent, Jayalalitha has once again chosen to become a recluse. Earlier it was power that made her inaccessible. Now it appears to be obstracism. The flag of revolt that was raised by Thirunavukkarasu in the AIADMK was unfurled by Jayalalitha. In raising doubts about MGR's (her own mentor's) mental alertness, Jayalalitha appears to have alienated the sympathy of a large section of people. The popular feeling is that she acted immaturely, rashly and hastily. "She could have at least waited till MGR returned before she blew her top. She would not have cut such a sorry figure now," is the refrain now. However, there is a section, particularly women, who feel sorry for her. They point out that she was after all a loyal party worker, which she so effectively demonstrated at the time of the election campaign. While they also cannot condone her from her trenchant outburst, they feel that that the hard work put in by her for the AIADMK should stand her in good stead in this hour of crisis.

In the Fifties, after a string of flops, MGR's film career was thought to be finished. But he reached the pinnacle of success in the Sixties and reigned supreme till he quit. When he floated his own party in 1972, everybody scoffed at him. He had the last laugh when he trounced the DMK and won 132 seats in the Assembly elections in 1977. In 1980, when the MGR government was dismissed it was felt that the nonperformance of the AIADMK government would smash MGR's charisma. He became chief minister for the second time and his charisma was strengthened with the introduction of the noon meal scheme. The recent ailment was MGR's second brush with death. The first time was when he was shot in the neck from point blank range by screen villain M. R. Radha. Then too he made a spectacular recovery, with only a slight blurring of speech. There is a popular saying in Tamil: *Dharmam thalai kakkum* (acts of charity will protect you). MGR is popularly called *ponmanachammal* (man with the golden heart) as his munificence is legendary. The MGR legend rests on the belief that because MGR is such a good man, whatever the odds against him, whatever the combination of of evil forces ranged against him, MGR will fight and triumph in the end. The legend lives on.

Anita Pratap, Madras

Victor's March

Will A Passage to India prove to be the actor's passage to Hollywood?



Victor Banerjee playing Dr Aziz offers a helping hand to Judy Davis playing Adela in a still from David Lean's *A Passage to India*

Balanced. That's the first thing that strikes you about Victor Banerjee. That he is balanced.

He is not curt or arrogant, as widely rumoured, but he is decidedly outspoken. Yet he rarely loses his equilibrium and it is easy to see how he could be equally impressive as the strong and quiet Nikhilesh (of Satyajit Ray's *Ghare-Baire*) as well as the jumpy Dr Aziz (of David Lean's *A Passage to India*).

When this correspondent met him, however, Victor Banerjee looked harassed. He was waiting: for an urgent overseas call to come through, for his air ticket to LA, for his passport and Reserve Bank clearances, for the various documents he was required to be equipped with for business abroad and finally for a breath of relief. He wasn't even sure whether he was leaving for Los Angeles the same night or the next morning.

Victor's plans were part of a piece: his agents abroad were alreay doing the rounds of the Hollywood studios for him. Will *A Passage to India* then prove to be Victor's passage abroad?

"No" came the reply, "thanks to you, the press for overpublicising *A Passage to India*, I won't be out of work in India so soon." But surely his trip abroad would mean some more foreign assignments in the years to come? "Well, there is no such film in the offing yet, if that's what you mean. If I do get a good offer, I'll surely accept it, why not? Ideally, of course, I would like to work in one or two Indian and/or Bengali films every year."

What does the latest 'star' of Indian cinema have to say about his success? The answer is well framed and prepared, which is only expected from a candid and fluent speaker like Victor Banerjee and possibly more so because he's had to go over it so many times ("There's been a spate of interviews of late"): "Success is a fortunate juxtaposition of the part you play and the film you work in. Yes, of course, you have to possess the minimum requirements, but there's no way really you can manipulate the future."

"Let's put it this way. Had *A Passage to India* been a Merchant Ivory production, it would have been inconsequential. I feel that people attribute a lot less to luck than they



Director David Lean on location for *A Passage to India*



Nemai Ghosh

Victor Banerjee in *Ghare-Baire*

should. Success, after all, doesn't happen every day."

It was 15 March last year, as Victor recalled, that he walked into Sir David's room in a Delhi hotel—script in hand, a hypothetical dialogue well rehearsed, his nerves on edge and simply dying for an affirmative nod.

Success had found him out that day itself, catapulting him to international horizons. What has happened since is history. It is, however, not just the mention of his "electrifying" performance in *A Passage to India* in *Time* magazine that has turned the heads of a homegrown audience, as Victor believes rather disdainfully. The film has not even been shown in India.

The credit for his current high goes, no less, if not more, to his brilliant portrayal of the idealist aristocrat, Nikhilesh in Satyajit Ray's *Ghare-Baire*. And as a viewer remarked while coming out of the theatre where the film is currently showing in Calcutta: "*Ghare-Baire* is Victor Victor all the way."

In the very essential balance with which he has rendered the two "diametrically opposite characters," lies the evaluation of Victor Banerjee's versatility. As the actor related, Dr Aziz of *Passage* and Nikhilesh of *Ghare-Baire* stand on "two different sides of the graph." While Nikhilesh brings out an introspective tragic hero, Dr Aziz is an incredible character: "a comic role which rises to tragic heights to straight forward arrogance and ends on an absolute equilibrium."

Bringing that improbable character down to a level of credibility that would be comprehensible to an American audience was an acid test of the actor, which Victor Banerjee passed with flying colours.

But then, Victor Banerjee is no novice at acting. On stage from the age of five, Victor has been nurtured by theatre through his growing years. He was associated with leading English theatre groups both in Calcutta and Bombay. It was only in 1977 that he made his debut in cinema with a meaty role in Satyajit Ray's *Shatranj Ke Khilari*. Many others followed though not with the rapidity of a Jeetendra but covering a wide variety of roles in Hindi and Bengali. *Pikoo's Diary* made by Ray for the French television, Shyam Benegal's *Kalyug* and *Aarohan* were the most noteworthy.

Although *Aarohan* stills remains to be seen commercially, Victor Banerjee is as much remembered for his portrayal of the haughty *zamindar* in this film as for the stern and untenable industrialist in *Kalyug*. Victor himself, however, does not consider *Kalyug* a very satisfying film as far as his role is concerned—"in the sense that mine was not the only or singular contribution to the film. I was only a part of the team and Dhanraj (played by Victor in the film) was equal to as many as four others in the production."

Then, perhaps, it was because of a dearth of satisfying roles that Victor was not interested in more Hindi films? "Oh no," replied Victor, "I'd love to work in Hindi films (provided, of course, the role is good) but not many producers-directors have really got in touch with me. Perhaps, they can find many a younger and good actor in Bombay itself," Victor added with an innocent smile.

But, in any case, the commercial cinema world of Bombay is not Victor's cup of tea. What perturbs him "is the irresponsible attitude adopted by these filmmakers. They ought to realise the deep impact they make on a gullible and uneducated public."

What of Left Front cinema? Could that be included under better cinema: Victor's reply came quick: "Of that genre, I am afraid, I am extremely tired. Left Front cinema only depicts the oppression of the poor by the richer classes. There are far more gnawing problems in the country that do not, in any way, concern the disparity between the haves and the have-nots.

"None of these filmmakers realise this. There are exceptions alright, but almost all their films are about the poor in relation to the rich. Why don't they ever deal with the poor alone?" According to Victor Banerjee, the only motivation that works in them is the desire to join the bandwagon to international awards. "At the head of it all, is the tragic trend of promoting and strengthening the established views of those foreign film critics who refuse to look at any other aspect of India other than what is popular in the west. They simply love to see it (the seamier side of life in our country."

Victor is positively livid as he recalls meeting a few foreign film journalists in Calcutta at the last Filmotsav. For persons who had been associated with films for so long Victor Banerjee thought it appalling that "it was only when they saw the films here that those pompous fools realised that English films shown in



Victor Banerjee playing Dr Aziz joyfully stretches out from the train's footboard to impress Adela

India are screened without subtitles."

Just when we were wondering if there was any subject on which Victor Banerjee was less than forthright, we asked him to comment on the directors he had worked with. For the first time, he was non-committal. "Ajoy Kar is one fine gentleman I've worked with. In terms of stimulation and providing a rewarding experience, Ray stands head and shoulders above all the others. Shyam Benegal is a natural filmmaker and has a most amiable unit. And as for David Lean, he is perhaps one of the greatest people one can work with."

Despite the many versions one has heard about Victor's initial differences with Lean, the actor does not hesitate to admit that he has learnt a lot while working with Lean. "You can differ with any director, for that matter. They only difference in this case was that Lean is a man with a positive and too perfect an approach and the argument got prolonged." The argument was on the question of the accent Victor should employ to suit his characterisation of Dr Aziz. "But it was blown out of proportion by a reporter who spoke to me. Nevertheless, says Victor, "working in a Lean film makes you a very ruthless and unkind judge of works made by lesser filmmakers."

David Lean, as Victor would put it, is a perfect *auteur*—""an excellent editor, a wonderful photographer and absolutely the actor's director. Besides, in a Lean film, there is not a single mediocre performance, which is a challenge in itself. Then, you are given almost the same footage as others, which also makes standing out a little more difficult." Yet, Victor feels satisfied and rewarded enough when he thinks aloud: " *A Passage to India* was a great experience indeed."

A Passage to India, Victor Banerjee feels, has found so many people overreacting to it because "it's come as a tremendous relief in the midst of a spate of sci-fi films and special effect movies. No one is going to walk out of this film. The script is excellent and well drafted and the film itself is beautifully shot and edited. The nine pages devoted to it by *Time* which also bills it as the best picture of 1984 is a tribute to the return of the classic films."

How does Victor rate *Ghare-Baire?* Victor comes straight to the point. "As far as this film is concerned, it has to be seen more than once to understand the level it operates on." The actor does not agree with critics who believe that *Ghare-Baire* does not sum up Ray as *Fanny and Alexander* does Ingrid Bergman. "I don't think so at all. In fact, I feel it is very accurately representative of Ray as he thinks and observes things today." Besides, says Victor, every artiste has the right to vary his style from film to film. "This just shows



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Mrs Moore (Peggy Ashcroft) and Aziz (Victor Banerjee) establish an immediate rapport when they first meet in the mosque

that our critics have not developed at all."

Regarding the inevitable and unflattering comparison being drawn between *Ghare-Baire* and Ray's earlier masterpiece, *Charulata*, Victor fails to gauge the reason. "It's like accusing Tagore of rewriting a story under a different name. The only thing common between the two films is Tagore and the basic material perhaps."

Victor's empathy with filmmakers is understandable: he too is a filmmaker, having made *An August Requiem* in 1981. The film is yet to be seen commercially but Victor is hopeful. "Very soon, at last, my film will be cut and made to swim in the baths of chemistry. When it was first screened here, I hadn't even seen the film myself. I was busy earning money and sending bankdrafts to Bombay so that more prints could be made."

Victor doesn't seem too keen right now to launch another film, though he does talk about a script he has written himself. Another six to eight months' work on it and it'll be ready for filming. "It's a universal subject and the theme has no socio-geographical constraints. I would like to make it in a language that can reach out to maximum number of people," is all that Victor wants to reveal right away.

Isn't he keen to become a director: Victor's reply comes without any hesitation. "Of course. An actor in a film is, after all, only a minor cog in the entire system. Films are a director's medium. I definitely find directing more satisfying than acting. Given a choice between acting and directing, in terms of channelising my creativity in a certain direction, I would choose to direct films any day. But right now I have other things to see to. Once I can provide the right security for my family, it'll be easier for me to switch over."

No, Victor has far from forgotten his beginnings in theatre. He has all plans to go back to it with same vigour for "it's a very satisfying experience."

"A lot of the magic would disappear from the glamour world of films if the superstar concept did not exist. What is objectionable is their supercilious attitude and the way they run the industry." Then, explaining the difference between an actor and a superstar, Victor pulls in the name of Amitabh Bachchan. "Take him for instance, I'm sure he never went to Bombay with the intention of becoming a superstar. He wanted to be an actor; what he did become eventually was a star never really appreciated as an actor. I, for one, feel it's because of a sense of frustration that he has turned to politics."

But hasn't Victor ever aspired to reach that star-status: "No, I'll never be able to. I come from a totally different discipline in which I've trained far too long to allow my second nature—to respect others—to get wiped out."

And, in any case, Victor Banerjee has enough on his hands to keep him safe from the threat of an ivory tower existence—an art collector himself, he has an art gallery, Calcutta's first, to promote many a painter who searches an outlet for exposition and an association for the welfare of needy and neglected junior artistes, condescendingly called 'extras' in film jargon.

Victor Banerjee remains through all his successes and glories a down-to-earth man, as deeply involved with his family affairs, his wife Maya and his daughters, Dia and Keya, as with his career. Everything has its place and time.

Sunanda Gupta, Calcutta

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Revolt in the Congress(I)

Widespread unhappiness over distribution of tickets

Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar lies in a room in the deserted Maharashtra Sadan in New Delhi. He has a high fever and his mind is agitated. A senior minister in the Maharashtra government who has figured in successive ministries headed by A.R. Antulay, Babasaheb Bhosale and Vasantdada Patil, he was often regarded as a contender for the chief ministership of the state. But suddenly, to his chagrin, he has been denied a ticket for the Assembly polls. Obviously, one of the ten commandents of the AICC for selecting candidates has hit him between the eyes. Now, he finds his political career being eclipsed. So pitiable is his condition that visitors sympathise with him when he says that he has not been able to meet even a single member of the decision-making Congress Parliamentary Board, leave alone persuade them to review his case. The only consolation to Nilangekar, if he values it at all, is that his son, Dilip, has been given a ticket.

Nilangekar epitomises the plight of an average Congress(I) minister who has been denied a ticket. There are at least 62 others like him. And many more if one takes into account that most chairmen of state corporations are also bestowed with ministerial status. State party functionaries, like three general secretaries of the Uttar Pradesh PCC(I), who also enjoyed high privileges and powers, have been dropped. In the final tally, there are 800 new faces and nearly 1,000 sitting MLAs have been axed. However, in the selection of the candidates two guidelines have been flouted by the CPB. One relates to selecting 20 per cent of the party nominees from women candidates. The actual percentage of women selected comes to less than nine. It is a matter of regret that the Mahila Congress has not been able to exploit their guideline which would have, for the first time, brought women into politics in a big way. Women have missed the bus this time, if we are to believe chief ministers who say that they were unable to provide this quota because there were not enough women applicants.

The more controversial violation of an AICC(I) guideline relates to choosing people with a clean image. Eyebrows have been raised over the choice of Dr Jagannath Mishra in Bihar and the dropping of Mr R. Gundu Rao in Karnataka. While two former chief ministers of Rajasthan, Mr Jagannath Pahadia and Mr Harideo Joshi, have been asked to contest, Mr Babasaheb Bhosale, former chief minister of Maharashtra, has been sidelined. There was no question of giving a ticket to Antulay as he is no longer in the Congress(I). Again, while the less active and quieter ex-MPs like T.M. Sawant and Z.N. Kahandole of Maharashtra have been asked to contest for the Assembly polls, frontline politicians and sitting MPs like Shalinitai Patil and Yeshwantrao Mohite have been denied tickets even though they made vigorous efforts to be included



C.K. Jaffer Sharief

Rajiv Gandhi's desire to keep out meddlesome and troublesome legislators out of state politics stems from the bad image the party acquires because of persistent reports of dissidence from various states. The seniors in the party think that in such a large organisation as the Congress, some degree of dissidence is inevitable. But Rajiv Gandhi has seen this disease spreading in an almost epidemic form. There have been umpteen number of delegations of dissidents to New Delhi over the last five years urging the central leadership to throw out one or the other chief minister. The net result of this as seen in the current selection process is that while the chief ministers have survived and may even flourish, their ministerial opponents who stoked and nurtured dissent have had to eat humble pie.

Yet another interpretation can be given to this particular decision of keeping out ministers and their supporters. And that is: Rajiv Gandhi may decide to have an entirely new person as the chief minister. This would imply that such an incumbent would be dependent on New Delhi for assistance. The old policy of not allowing any chief minister in any state to become all powerful and a satrap can then be said to have been continued.

If, on the other hand, Rajiv Gandhi allows the present set of chief ministers, or most of them, to continue for another term, then it will indicate his desire to stamp out dissidence and allow the harmonious functioning of the state government and the organisation. The reason why Rajiv Gandhi attaches such great importance to quelling dissidence is that he wants development projects to make speedy headway in all the states. Since the main theme of the Congress(I) manifesto for the Assembly elections is going to be the progress and development of the states, Rajiv Gandhi has to make sure that the ground is prepared for implementation of all development programmes. He does not want time and energy to be wasted on internecine quarrels.

To return to the problem of sitting MLAs being dislodged, it must be said that not all those who have been dropped are dissidents or corrupt or incompetent or lazy. In many cases, where the chief minister or some other influential person has been wanting his own nominee to be chosen, trumped-up charges have been levelled against sitting MLAs. Take the example of Bhoodhar Narain Mishra, a sitting MLA from Kanpur Cantonment. It was made out that he is a drunkard but the fact remains that he is a teetotaller. Mishra was the man who helped minister Arif Mohammed Khan to win from Kanpur by looking after his electioneering there. He has not filed his nomination and has reportedly informed Rajiv Gandhi that he would not mind waiting his turn as he is only 42 years old and has a political career ahead of him. Another such example is Satish Chaturvedi, a young MLA from Maharashtra's Vidarbha region who was a junior minister in Antulay's government. His opponent, N.K. Tirpude, had levelled the charge that in one of his

foreign visits, Chaturvedi had tried to "smuggle" in various items. The fact is that the customs officer had issued a press statement that Chaturvedi had not tried to go through the green channel, had declared whatever items he had brought and had left them at the airport as he had no money to pay as duty. He had collected them three days later on payment of duty. Have Vidarbha MPs like Saroj Khaparde not gone abroad and returned loaded with goods? Since when has it become a crime to buy foreign goods?

One of the biggest "midnight massacres" took place in Maharashtra. Vasantdada Patil and PCC(I) chief N.K. Kamble read out to a handful of correspondents around midnight the list of 288 candidates as cleared by the CPB(I) around 11 pm. As many as 13 ministers were axed. They were the ones whom Dada had been wanting to throw out from his ministry in the wake of former deputy chief minister Ramrao Adik's peccadillo on his infamous Air India flight to Frankfurt. The 13 ministers had come out in Adik's support and Dada was in no mood to tolerate this act of indiscipline. While minister Awade is out, his son is in. Another compromise is that while Pratibha Patil is out, her husband Devi Singh Shekhawat has managed a ticket. Pratibha Patil is not a Maratha as her name might suggest. She is a Rajput. She too tried her level best for a ticket but was frustrated.

Whether it is revenue minister Shiv Kumar of Himachal Pradesh or finance minister Raghunath Patnaik of Orissa, the treatment given to them by the CPB is the same. Even senior ministers in UP and Bihar have been axed. Invitations are now being extended to them by the Congress(S) and the Janata Party. In the aftermath of the denial of tickets, MP and former minister of state for irrigation, C.K. Jaffer Sharief resigned his membership of the Lok Sabha on 10 February 1985. While about a dozen of the 63 ministers who have been denied tickets have submitted their resignations on "moral grounds," it is not yet clear if they will file their nominations as independents and leave the Congress(I) to contest the polls. A report from UP suggests that A.R. Khan Nashtar, a minister hailing from Kanpur, is among those who has filed his nomination. If he does not withdraw in time, he will be among those to be dubbed a "rebel" and expelled from the Congress.

One of the strategies adopted by the chief ministers to ensure their own nominees' inclusion is to have allowed their opponents to include their names in the list while panels were formed in the preliminary selection by the state panels. They did not offer resistance at this early stage. In the second stage where the sub-committee of the CPB(I) discussed the list, the chief ministers saw to it that the candidatures of their opponents were rejected. In the final stage when the CPB(I) took up the lists, it was easier for the chief ministers to have their say. Madhya Pradesh chief minister Arjun Singh has effectively used this strategy and has as many as 200 of his men in the list. Vasantdada Patil, Madhavsinh Solanki, J.B. Patnaik, Shiv Charan Mathur and Virbhadra Singh followed the footsteps of Arjun Singh. The *gherao* outside North Block of Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Narayan Dutt Tiwari, the arbiters of the destiny of partymen aspiring for tickets from UP, was symptomatic of the mood of the aspirants from all states.



Babasaheb Bhosale

Interestingly enough, one reason for the CPB(I) delaying the consideration and finalisation of the lists was to see that there was no violence or law-and-order problem in New Delhi because of the widespread discontent and resentment in the party generated by the selection of candidates. Hundreds of thousands of aspirants had converged on the capital during this period and as the last date for filing of nominations drew near, they made a beeline for their constituencies to be able to at least file their nominations in time. It is only when the crowds of ticket-seekers had thinned that the AICC announced the lists, gradually.

The lists sought to conceal more than what they revealed. There was no mention of "sitting MLA" against the names of those who had been given renomination. Nor were the ages of the nominees stated. This left AICC general secretary Srikant Verma, the party's bright boy on publicity, tongue-tied on issues like how many sitting MLAs had been dropped, how many youths were included or what professions were represented. Even in the matter of the women figuring in the list, Verma continued to maintain stoically that the AICC guidelines had been strictly adhered to when in fact they were grossly violated. As against 20 per cent representation stated in the guidelines women got only 8.64 per cent.

While ministers in Congress-ruled states who have been dropped in the final lists have been stung by the stigma, former ministers in Andhra Pradesh—as many as 17 of them—have emerged as clean and virtuous: they are all in the list of nominees. While in office, many of them had serious allegations levelled against them, a fact being conveniently forgotten now. But now the Telugu Desam has to be fought and better Congress candidates are apparently hard to find.

To be fair to the party, the Congress(I)'s chances in neighbouring Karnataka are far better. The exclusion of Gundu Rao may help the Congress considerably as far as projecting a clean public image is concerned. There was a lot of controversy during his chief ministership and Rajiv Gandhi obviously does not want to revive bad memories. The man who helped Gundu Rao become the chief minister by dislodging Devaraj Urs—H.C. Srikantiah—has also been excluded.

But even while the party leadership will cope with these internal problems and take measures to stem the tide of resentment, if not revolt, the more serious challenges will come when the elected representatives and the new state governments get down to the task of development of the state. Nationwide, there is a feeling that development should take place in each constituency along the lines of Amethi and Rae Bareili, the VVIP Lok Sabha constituencies in the country. Over Rs 700 crores have been invested in Amethi in setting up new industry and improving irrigation for boosting agricultural production. Crores of rupees have been invested in Rae Bareili too. While these may be "models" of progress, the main issue is whether similar investments will be made in other constituencies. Where will such massive funds come from? Great expectations have been aroused among the masses. If they are not fulfilled, at least partially, what will be the fate of the Congress(I)?

Gopal Mohite, New Delhi

CIVIL AVIATION

Is the Boeing Deal Off?

The Boeing-Airbus war hots up

Has the Indian Airlines decided to reconsider its decision to buy a dozen Boeing-757 aircraft? The deal, valued at around Rs 700 crores, had been finalised during the tenure of Khurshid Alam Khan as the minister for tourism and civil aviation last year. The new minister, youth leader Ashok Gehlot, in the light of the queries raised by the Public Investments Board (PIB) has asked Indian Airlines to reconsider the deal. The accident of the Kathmandu-Calcutta Boeing 737 flight of the airline, which occured at Dumdum airport near Calcutta on 8 February, has further complicated matters. In this accident, the undercarriage of the aircraft is understood to have given way, ripping open the engines. It was a miracle that the passengers survived. As the Boeing 757 is just an extended version of the existing 737s with a new engine and a longer fuselage, the Dumdum accident will also be viewed while reevaluating the Boeing-757 deal, according to the civil aviation sources. Apart from the 31-point query sent by the PIB, the Planning Commission too is understood to have expressed reservations about the deal. Till the transfer of the civil aviation secretary, M. M. Kohli (who has been shifted to power), the mood in the civil aviation department, as reflected by the thinking of minister Gehlot and secretary Kohli, was that the Boeing-757 deal should be scrapped. The new secretary, S. S. Sidhu, is a seasoned bureaucrat, who has served in the steel and defence ministries and was sent to Punjab as adviser last year. It has to be seen if the change of guard will affect the rethinking process in the ministry.

Two deals worth Rs 1,000 crore were finalised by the civil aviation ministry last year. The Indian Airlines were asked to buy a dozen Boeing-757s to replace their present Boeing 737 fleet and Air India opted for six Airbus A-310 (longrange version) for its Far East, Africa and Gulf routes. This deal was worth Rs 300 crores. The letters of intent in both deals were issued in 1984. In the Indian Airlines deal, till the last moment, Airbus Industries, the French-British-German-Spanish conglomerate of European manufacturers, tried to push its short and medium-haul version of the A-310. This, however, did not impress the selection committee.

The Boeing-757 is a narrow bodied, twin engine, 206-seater aircraft. It is based on the aircraft technology of the mid-Seventies. The A-310 too not being a latest technology aircraft, the Airbus Industries lost out to the American competitor. However, in November 1984, the European company offered the Indian Airlines a futuristic twin engine aircraft (164-seater), which is expected to enter service by 1988. According to civil aviation sources, the A-320 now offered by Airbus Industries may be able to last out the requirements of Indian Airlines till the end of the century. The A-320, based on technology of the mid-Eighties is more fuel efficient than the Boeing 757 and the A-310 which were considered by the Indian Airlines last year. The 31 point questionaire of the PIB is said to have been prepared in the light of the new offer from the Europeans.

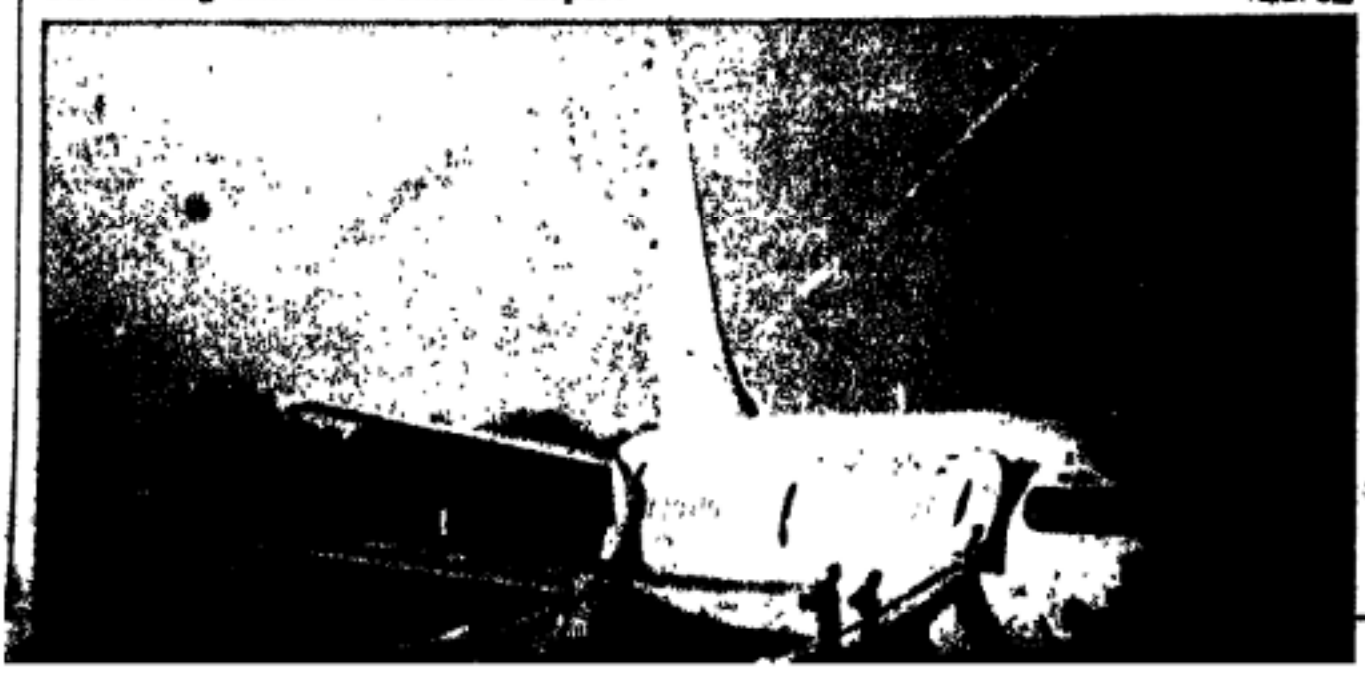
The review of the deal, however, is said to have caused a lot of heartburning in Airlines House, the Indian Indian Airlines' headquarters in New Delhi. Some of the junior officers assigned the task, are said to have dragged their feet initially. But constant reminders from the then secretary, M. M. Kohli, opened up the issue. The report of the Review Committee was sent to the ministry from the Airlines House in the first week of February. According to sources, the evaluation team has reported that if the A-320 replaces the Boeing 757, it would save the airlines Rs. 277 crores in capital investment. The new European aircraft is evaluated to be seven per cent more fuel efficient than the American aircraft chosen last year. The panic which the study has created in the American market can be judged from the fact that suddenly the Boeing company has offered a new aircraft, Boeing-7-7, which it hopes to produce by 1990.

India seems to have become the battleground for the American and European aircraft manufacturers now. As Rs 1,000 crores are at stake, it is understandable that major manufacturers should woo India. The Europeans have lagged behind in technology over the last two decades after European aircraft —Comet, Trident, Viscount, Fokker, Vanguard and later Caravelle had dominated the scene in the Sixties. Indian Airlines had chosen the Caravelle as its first jetliner. In the early Seventies, when Dr Karan Singh was the aviation minister, the Boeing-737s were chosen. Ironically, the then chairman of the Indian Airlines, Mohan Kumaramangalam, (who later became the steel minister) died in the first Boeing-737 crash of the Indian Airlines in May 1973.

Boeing has recently received some setbacks in their home market in North America. The Trans-World Airlines (TWA) and Air Canada recently cancelled some orders with the Boeing company. Pan American Airways (PANAM) has placed an order for 40 aircraft with the Airbus Industries in September 1984. These setbacks at home are bound to affect the American manufacturer. Of late, major sales of the Boeing company have been in the North American market and of the 401 Airbus A-310s sold the world over till the end of 1984, 295 (74 per cent of total sales) were exports. In the case of Boeing-767, 133 of the total of 188 sold (71 per cent of total sales) were in North America and only 29 per cent of the sales were exports. The European-American war in the civil aviation skies is hotting up. The decision of minister Ashok Gehlot to open up the files finalised by his predecessor Khurshid Alam Khan, have brought India into the centrestage of this war.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

The Boeing crash in Dumdum airport Tapan Das



INDIAN UNION MUSLIM LEAGUE

Nationalists or Secessionists?

Senior leaders issue controversial statements in Pakistan

Two visits undertaken by leaders of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) to Pakistan last year have caused anxiety in the foreign office. A few days before she fell to the assassins' bullets, Indira Gandhi had asked the IUML president, Sulaiman Sait, to explain a stand taken by him during these visits. With Mrs Gandhi's death, the matter was not pursued. The CPI(M)-led opposition front in Kerala tried to censure the IUML leaders in the Lok Sabha elections. Both Sulaiman Sait and G.M. Banatwala, however, managed to retain their seats, Manjeri and Poonani, respectively with the support of the Congress(I). (The IUML is a partner of the ruling front.) The leading Malayalam daily, *Mathrubhumi* which reported about the activities of Sait and Banatwala in Pakistan on the election eve, has been bearing the brunt of attacks from the IUML supporters after the elections. The offices of the daily have been attacked, copies of the newspaper burnt and efforts have been made to sabotage the sale of *Mathrubhumi* in the Gulf states, which have a sizable Malayali migrant population. The Muslim League leaders have joined issue with *Mathrubhumi* and have tried to deny the allegation that the IUML leaders took unsavoury stands during their visits to Pakistan. The controversy, however, has not blown over, though the first of the two controversial visits took place in February last year.

In September 1984, IUML president Sulaiman Sait and the DMKP leader from Uttar Pradesh, former union minister, Mohd Yunus Saleem, went to Pakistan to attend a seminar on "Islamic solidarity for world peace." This seminar adopted a resolution which advocated the "right to self-determination" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Sulaiman Sait was no ordinary participant in this seminar. By his own admission (in a rejoinder to *Mathrubhumi*) he was the moderator of one of the commissions set up during the seminar (commission number two). According to Sait, this committee never discussed the question of Kashmir when he or Mohammad Yunus Saleem were present. According to Sait, when the statement on Kashmir was being passed, he was in the Indian embassy and thus he was unaware of the deliberations of the plenary. This explanation can be accepted, though one wonders why the president of the IUML, who also happens to be a Member of the Indian Parliament, should not have been alert about the deliberations of the plenary. The scope for mischief against India, especially on the issue of Kashmir, in a seminar held in Pakistan should not be unknown to Sulaiman Sait.

What is interesting is that while Sait says that he was not a party to the deliberations in the plenary, no denial or protest by him on the Kashmir resolution adopted by the seminar was published in the Pakistan press. This is not to suggest that the Pakistan press blacked out the views of the two Indian delegates. Mohd Yunus Saleem issued a strong rejoinder against the reference to Kashmir and expressed his personal opposition to such a reference. This statement was made at Karachi and the Pakistani press carried it in full. Sulaiman Sait says that immediately after he learnt about the statement on Kashmir, he issued a note of dissent and contended that the IUML's position was that Kashmir was a part of India. This note, somehow, seems to have been ignored not only by the seminar but also by the Pakistan press. The Indian embassy, where Sait is said to have been at the time of the passage of the controversial statement by the plenary, too, seems to have ignored the dissent note. Otherwise, how does one explain the fact that after he returned to India from the foreign tour, Indira Gandhi sought clarifications from him in writing about the happenings in Pakistan?



Sulaiman Sait

During the visit to Pakistan in February 1984 by Sulaiman Sait and G.M. Banatwala, the Pakistani newspapers had given them a lot of publicity. Sait was reported to have praised President Zia for his efforts for Islamisation of Pakistan. The Pakistan press quoted Sait as having said that Muslims in India were suffering because of the acts of Hindu communalists, like the RSS and "other anti-social elements in the society." Sait had alleged that a section of the police and administration was hand-in-glove with Hindu communalist organisations. In the same meeting, Banatwala is reported to have said, "Pakistan was created for the sake of Islam. Muslims all over the world rejoice in its prosperity."

President Zia-ul Haq took note of these statements by the IUML leaders. Addressing a public meeting at Karachi, the Pakistani President quoted the two Members of Parliament from India. According to Gen Zia, Sait and Banatwala had told him, "Allah had given blessings to you and to Pakistan. General Saheb you must understand that this very special blessings should not be frittered away lest Allah's curse be on you. Pakistan has already been divided and the other half (meaning the existing Pakistan) should be carefully protected. Pakistan is the fortress of all Muslims. We in India are loyal to our country, but yet we are Muslims and have a spiritual relationship with Pakistan."

The statements of the two IUML leaders also received wide publicity in the Pakistan press. The widely circulated Urdu daily, *Jung* quoted them as having said that secularism had failed in India and that no secular party could protect the interests of the Indian Muslims. This task, according to them, could only be carried out by a Muslim party. The headline in the leading English daily *Dawn* was, "Muslims cannot be sabotaged, says Sulaiman Sait." The Urdu *Nawa-E-Waqt* headline read: "Indian Muslim leaders praise Islamisation." The *Jasrat* quoted Sulaiman Sait as having said that "twelve crore Muslims of India are fighting hard for their religious and cultural identity. The constitutional rights of the Muslims in India have not yet

been implemented."

Both Sait and Banatwala have reacted sharply to the expose by *Mathrubhumi* and the CPI(M)-led front's political campaign during the Lok Sabha elections. They have sought to deny the allegations. But the fact remains that they did not contradict the press reports in Pakistan. Fortunately for India, a vast majority of the Muslims had refused to be indoctrinated in the two nation theory before partition. Muslims are part and parcel of independent India, which is secular. Every Muslim who rejected the creation of Pakistan and stayed back in India has more right to be called an Indian. In 1947, they opted for India as against Islamic Pakistan. The Constituent Assembly, recognised the contribution of these Muslims by proudly proclaiming India to be a secular state. Secularism was the natural corollary of the Indian freedom movement. It was the creed of the Indian National Congress, which dominated the subcontinent since the early part of this century. The leaders of the Indian Union Muslim League do not seem to have appreciated the mood of the Indian people. Otherwise they would not undertake trips to Pakistan and make statements which they cannot either contradict in Pakistan, nor defend in India.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

KARNATAKA

Gundu Rao is Grounded

The former chief minister is refused a ticket

The fruits of loyalty can also go sour as the ebullient R. Gundu Rao, former chief minister of Karnataka, discovered recently. He was not given a party ticket to fight the forthcoming Assembly elections from Karnataka. Gundu Rao's political journey that began in the famous glass house of Lalbagh, Bangalore, during the Congress split of 1969 came to a shattering end.

The eclipse was even more bitter since many of his followers from the state also failed to secure tickets. To rub it in, his rivals within the Congress(I), Veerappa Moily and K. H. Patil, whom he had bossed over for years, secured tickets for themselves and their supporters. Known for his inane mirth, Gundu Rao had once said that not even his "dead body would serve under any other chief minister." But the party high command has made sure that Gundu Rao will not come anywhere near a ministership, let alone be the chief minister.

The immediate reason for the axing of Gundu Rao is that the Congress(I) would like to project a clean image in the coming elections. But there is an obvious fallacy in the explanation since both Gundu Rao's rivals, Veerappa Moily and K. H. Patil have a public image that is only marginally better than Gundu Rao. Moily was part of the infamous "tape scandal," while Patil was involved in a tax raid that was never fully explained. Both of them played a subversive role in the two years the Janata Party was in power in their anxious bid to grab the reigns of power. All through their attempts Gundu Rao remained circumspect.

But Gundu Rao's albatross was F. M. Khan. Since the Seventies, Gundu Rao and Khan have been close friends. When Khan was expelled from the Congress(I) last year, Gundu Rao never really came out with a denouncement of his old friend, which would have pleased the party higher ups. Instead, he unsuccessfully tried to fight Khan's case and get the expulsion revoked.

Another reason why Gundu Rao was refused a ticket is the lack of control the former chief minister exercised over his tongue. Though Gundu Rao has sobered over the past two years, he is still known to make reckless statements, especially in front of a large audience. On public platforms, he is often the subject of mirth and he projects a negative image.

Gundu Rao's political career is now at the cross roads. He has not gone the Antulay or Khan way, but he is not favourably placed like Jagannath Mishra. The state Congress(I) now awaits his next step. But he still has considerable clout within the party in the state, but whether he will chance his arm against Rajiv Gandhi is yet to be seen. Even on the last day for filing nominations, there was no sign of a revolt either by Gundu Rao or his supporters who were denied tickets. Gundu Rao himself did not return to Bangalore, preferring to sulk in Delhi. But he may be biding his time.

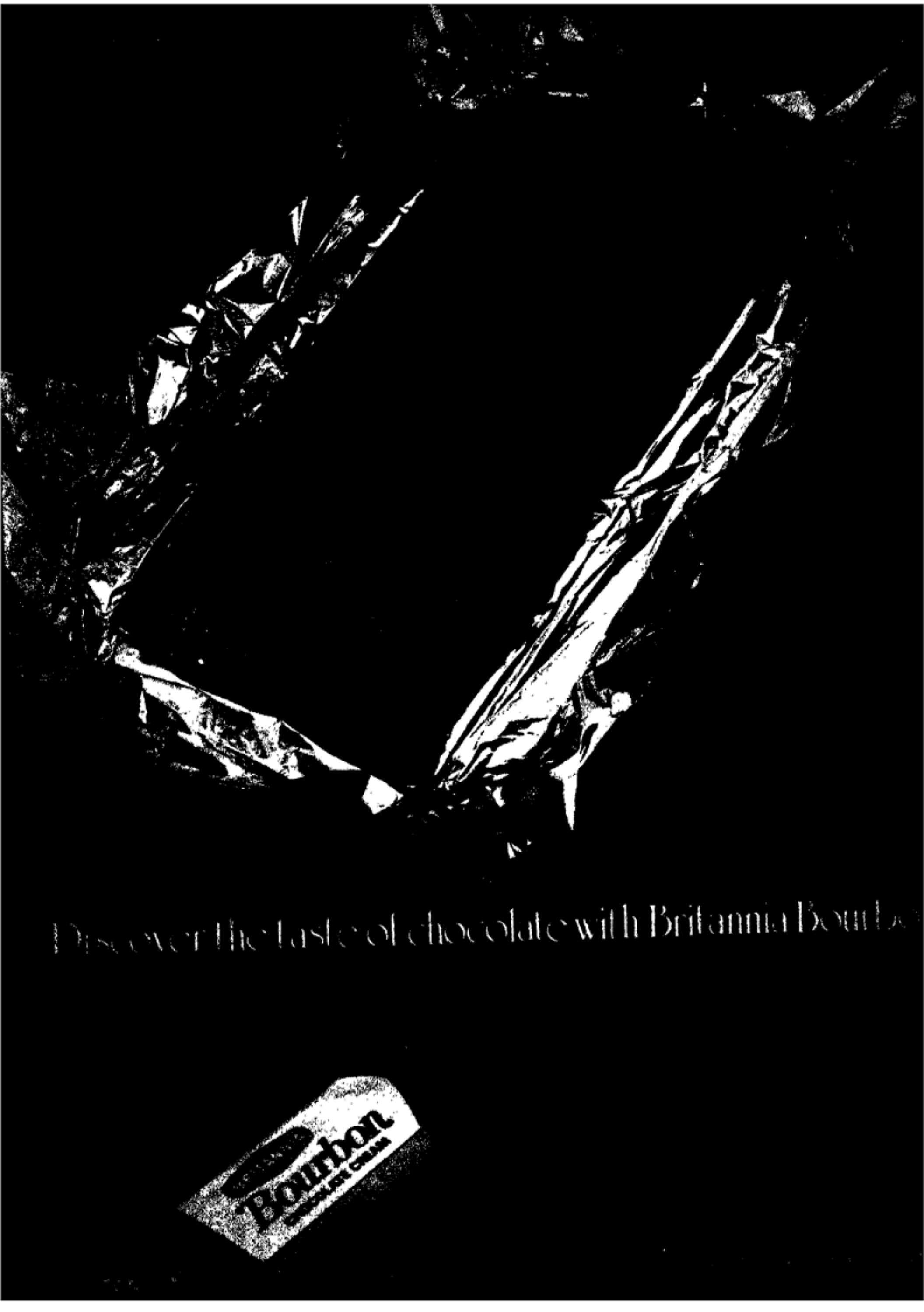
The Congress(I) high command also denied a ticket to another powerful dissident leader, H. C. Srikantiah. This was an obvious punishment for Srikantiah's stringent campaign against the state Congress(I) leadership and his alleged links with the Janata Party. But at least some of his followers have been given tickets. Even though the Congress(I) made some sweeping changes while nominating large number of new faces in Karnataka, they have not hesitated to bypass the guidelines set for the selection of candidates. Political expediency and pragmatism is alive and well in the Congress(I), even under the new Prime Minister.

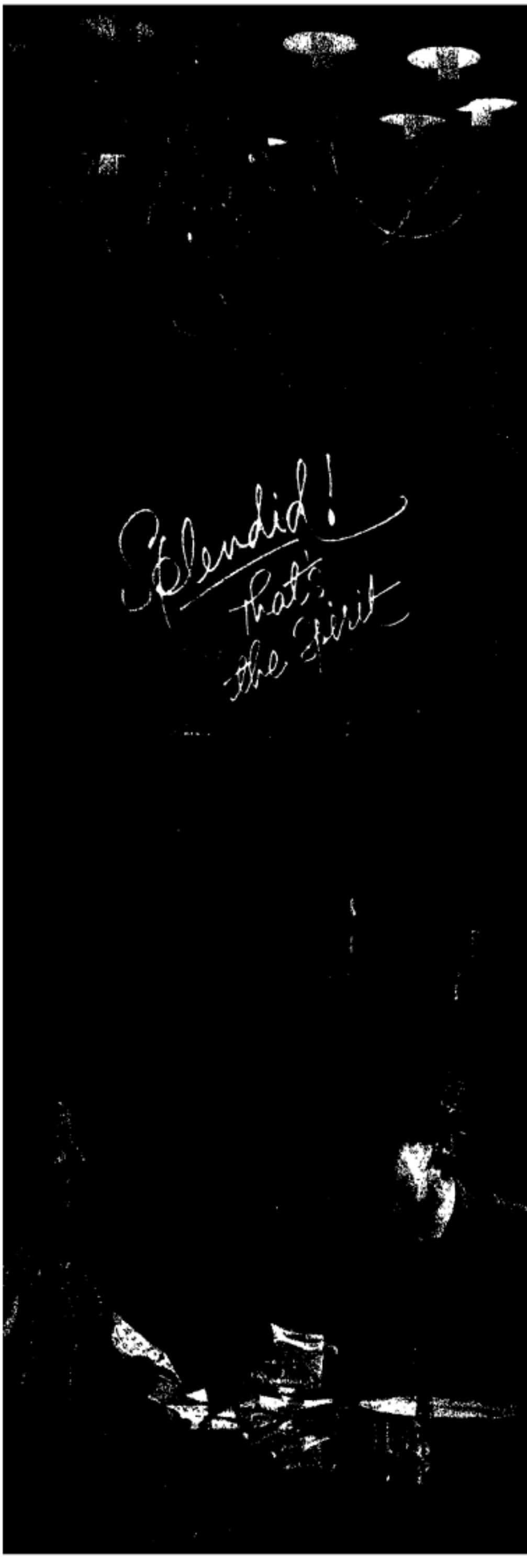
Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore.



Durgaprasad

Gundu Rao


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BIHAR

Congress(I) Divided Before Polls

Many sitting MLAs to contest against party nominees

On the eve of the Assembly elections, the Congress(I) in Bihar hardly looks the picture of a house united. Following the denial of party tickets to over 70 sitting MLAs, including seven ministers and the Speaker of the Assembly, Radhanandan Jha, more than 20 MLAs have already quit the party and many more are expected to join them. Some of those who have left the party will either be fighting the elections as independent candidates or on the symbols of other parties. The resignations would not have posed as big a threat to the ruling party had it not been for the fact that they have the blessings of some senior leaders who are still in the party and fighting elections as the ruling party's candidates.

The rebels were led by Raghunath Jha, the powerful minister in the former chief minister Jagannath Mishra's cabinet. He submitted his resignation with the signatures of 12 MLAs to the state party chief Bindeswari Dubey, protesting against the "arbitrary" selection of candidates. After the efforts of Dr Jagannath Mishra failed to get his men renominated to contest the elections, he, it is believed, gave them the green signal to quit the party. Shortly after Dr Mishra's return from Delhi on 7 February Mr Jha announced that he had resigned from the party along with 12 other MLAs and immediately got in touch with the Janata Party. Though the Janata Party was divided on the issue, Raghunath Jha and others including Rajo Singh, another Mishra supporter, managed to get an assurance from the Janata Party leaders that they would be granted the party's symbol to contest the elections.

This was followed by a defiance of the party whip by over 35 MLAs during the byelection to the Rajya Sabha on 11 February. (Of the 194 MLAs, only 156 were present during voting in the Assembly though the party had issued a whip for all MLAs to be present.) And among those who did not vote that day was Dr Mishra who was busy conferring with his supporters who were sulking at having been denied party nominations.

The criteria adopted by the party for allotting tickets were not clear. It was initially believed that young members with clean images, who were not related to sitting MLAs would be considered for nominations. About sitting legislators it was said that the Lok Sabha results in the legislators' Assembly segment would decide his fate. This meant that MLAs of the constituencies where the Congress(I) had a lead over the opposition would be given tickets. But these guidelines were not strictly followed. Ramashray Prasad Singh, an efficient minister, was denied a ticket on the ground that the Congress(I) Lok Sabha candidate at Jehanabad had lost to the CPI. However, what was not mentioned was the fact that the party had established a lead of over 10,000 votes in Mr Singh's Assembly segment. Moreover, Mr Mahendra Prasad, a defeated party candidate was elected to the Rajya Sabha, which according to many party leaders was



Jagannath Mishra DV Jayner

due to the special efforts of Mr M.L. Fotedar. Similarly, Mr Braj Kishore Singh, the minister of state for health, was replaced by his 80-year-old father at Madhuban.

But perhaps the most humiliated Congressman was the Speaker, Mr Radhanandan Jha who was denied a ticket for his Madhepur constituency, and was instead replaced by his son, Raghubar Jha. But within hours his son too was replaced by Harkhu Jha. This was probably because of Mr Jha and his son's names had been dragged into the infamous "Bobby" case in 1982. Others like minister of state Karuneshwar Singh and Dudhnath Paswan, a sitting MLA whose names had also figured in the same case have been denied party tickets. (The CBI has, however, dismissed the investigation of the Patna police involving them.)

The education minister, Nagendra Jha, was denied a ticket because the party's Lok Sabha candidate, Harinath Mishra had lost in Darbhanga as well as in Nagendra Jha's Manigachi Assembly segment. Another minister to be denied a ticket is Jagnarain Trivedi even though he had helped in the victory of the party's candidate, K. K. Tiwari, in Buxar during the Lok Sabha elections.

Buddhadeo Singh, another minister was dropped though the chief minister earlier refused to drop him when his name was being mentioned in a murder case last year. The deputy minister Ranjit Sinha was also dropped on the allegation of Dr C.P. Thakur, a party MP from Patna, that he had worked for Lt Gen S.K. Sinha (Retd) during the Lok Sabha elections. Similarly, the chief minister himself was cleared in the last moment.

There were also rumours that the list was being reviewed and that there were to be more changes which increased the confusion in the party. Sadaquat Ashram, the state party headquarters remained under siege as the supporters of those denied tickets squatted there for hours. The PCC(I) chief and the chief minister were *gheraoed* and in some cases, the pressure tactics succeeded. Ashwini Kumar Sharma, the sitting MLA from Lakhisarai who was not in the first list got through in the second one after about 1,000 of his supporters came from Lakhisarai and *gheraoed* the chief minister. A beaming Mr Sharma came out of the chief minister's room and was seen being patted on his back by the CM.

Nagendra Jha, the education minister, however, said he would abide by the party's decision. "The party knows that we are the Congress people and we cannot go anywhere," he said. The party also gave tickets to people who have not worked in their constituencies. For instance, the PCC(I) vice-chairman L.N. Jha got a ticket from Jalle though he wanted to stand from Madhubani. But all candidates lack clean records. Mrs Mala Devi, a party candidate from Fatuha constituency has a warrant issued against her under Section 86 of the Criminal Penal Code. Sagir Ahmed who was dropped from the Jagannath Mishra ministry after his name was involved in smuggling cases, was given a nomination. Similarly, relatives of sitting members were also nominated. The husband of Mrs Prabhawati Gupta MP was given a ticket. Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav whose son is an MP was also given a ticket.

Yadunraj Gidwani, Patna

JANATA PARTY

A Crippling Blow

Senior leader resigns in protest in Gujarat

The Janata Party in Gujarat was further weakened in the last week of January with the resignation from the party of Mr Ghanshyam Oza, a former chief minister and thrice Member of Parliament. Although Mr Oza was never openly identified as a dissident belonging to the Parivartan group of the former finance minister, Mr Dinesh Shah, his resignation came within a week after Mr Shah left the party. A number of party workers left along with him.

Their departure has demoralised the Janata Party workers, especially those who once belonged to the old Congress. Although these leaders have not publicly stated the reasons behind their resignations, their actions seemed to be a protest against the dominance of the Patel lobby in the state Janata Party. The party leadership has been trying to reduce the impact of the resignations by remaining silent on the issue, but it was clear that the party leadership had been taken by surprise. Talking to SUNDAY, Mr Oza repeated Mr Shah's statements saying he had not acted because of political ambitions nor was he contemplating joining the Congress(I). But it has become increasingly clear that the dissidents in the Janata Party, annoyed with what they called "plummeting credibility of the local leadership" were gradually coming to the conclusion that there was no way but to leave the Janata Party altogether. According to insiders, some more Janata Party men may quit very soon.

The feud between what is known as the Patel lobby, headed by the former chief minister, Mr Chimanbhai Patel, and old Congressmen like Mr Oza and Mr Shah is not a new one. The diehard old Congressmen have never accepted the entry of Mr Chimanbhai Patel, who was ousted as chief minister in 1974 by the Nav Nirman agitation against corruption in public life. They had never thought that Mr Chimanbhai Patel would rise in stature in the Janata Party and threaten to capture its leadership, which is what he has done in the last four years.

However, it was only Mr Babubhai Patel, Janata chief minister between 1975 and 1980 who dissociated himself from the Janata Party about three years ago, seemingly in protest against the entry of "doubtful elements." Those who stayed on realised later that the Patel lobby was growing in strength

Matters came to a head before the election for state party president a year ago when Mr Indubhai Patel's candidature was supported by the Patel lobby against the wishes of old Congressmen including former Prime Minister Morarji Desai. Mr Chimanbhai Patel and his group threatened that if Mr Indubhai Patel who had already completed two terms in office was replaced, Mr Chimanbhai Patel himself would stand for elections. The dissidents felt it would be better to have Mr Indubhai Patel as "a lesser evil" and agreed to a compromise. The accord between the two groups, according to the dissidents, was that Mr Indubhai Patel would resign after two months in office in favour of a candidate amenable to all sides.

Mr Indubhai Patel later claimed that there was no such understanding and refused to quit. In September last year, one more attempt at a compromise was made after the dissidents grouped themselves into a forum named Parivartan. They published a charter of demands calling for "a reassertion of standards of cleanliness in public life." The Patel lobby accepted the charter, passed a resolution at the Patel lobby-dominated Janata State Council lauding the call for a return of the spirit of 1977. But, according to the dissidents, it remained only on paper.

The Lok Sabha electoral accord among the Janata Party, the BJP and the DMKP left the dissidents further disillusioned. A noted dissident leader, Mr Motibhai Choudhary, the lone sitting MP of the opposition from Gujarat, who was elected from Mehsana was denied a ticket because this "safe" seat was allotted to the BJP. "The Patel lobby conspired to deny tickets to both Mr Choudhary and Mr Oza who wanted to contest from Surendranagar, to ensure that whatever happened they did not go to Parliament," said a dissident leader.



Ghanshyam Oza

Mr Oza who was a minister in the former state of Saurashtra right from 1950 has been a public worker with a clean image. The 73-year-old Mr Oza was made the chief minister of Gujarat in 1972 by Mrs Indira Gandhi when the state Congress party won a landslide victory at the polls but could not decide who should be the chief minister. He was at that time the minister of state for industrial development and his rivals in Gandhinagar averted the leadership war for a while. But in 1973, Mr Chimanbhai Patel engineered a coup of Congress legislators against Mr Oza to become chief minister himself. Many observers feel that the toppling of Mr Oza began the feuds in the Congress party. In less than a year, Mr Patel himself was ousted as a result of the Nav Nirman agitation.

Recently, Mr Oza was critical of the way in which the Congress(I) installed Mr Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister after the death of Indira Gandhi but has become an admirer of the young Prime Minister after Mr Gandhi began his crusade against corruption, inefficiency and indiscipline in public life. He said it was vital for democracy to have a healthy opposition but unfortunately, no major party nor an individual leader has emerged. In Gujarat, the credibility of the present leadership of the Janata Party is on the decline. The Congress(I) in Gujarat, according to him, is full of corruption and other evils. But, Mr Oza hoped, the Congressmen would strive to get rid of these under the leadership of Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

Mr Oza felt that the opposition had to adopt a three-pronged strategy put forth by the Sarvodaya worker and associate of late Vinoba Bhave, Vimalatai. This involved abjuring the path of perpetual confrontation, cooperation wherever possible and an alertness to protect the democratic rights of the people. As such, these ideas are not new, but now such a bold outburst by Mr Oza, just before the Janata Party fights the Congress(I) in the state Assembly polls due on 5 March, cannot but harm the party.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

EDUCATION

St. Stephen's Male Chauvinists

Female students of the college are up in arms

Two T-shirts and an undergarment are hardly things that can spark off a controversy. But when they belong to ladies and are hung for public viewing on the high cross of a chapel in a place like Delhi's prestigious St. Stephen's College, they can make a bit of history. Which is exactly what happened on the morning of 31 January, the day Arun Shourie lectured in the college about "Gandhi's ways and ours." To add to that were obscene slogans on the walls of the ladies common room which had been broken open to obtain the two sky-blue T-shirts and the white undergarment swaying on top of the cross. Within hours the entire campus of Delhi University was in uproar.

A group of irate girls, on learning what the boys had done, took a shrill procession to the office of the principal, Mr John Hala and while the campus was still descending on St. Stephen's, Nandita Narain, a lecturer of mathematics in the college and an active campus feminist, informed the press. At this point the situation went out of control. Boys of the college, including a Rhodes scholar, gave the press a hostile reception. Some were abused, others roughed up, film exposed by photographers there was snatched away. Mr Hala did not intervene. He said the press had no right to interfere in a "family matter." Mr P.K. Dwivedy, the dean of students welfare of the college, expressed pride at what his boys had done.

The next morning St. Stephen's College was on the front pages of the capital's dailies. For an institution that shies away from anything that can be controversial (St. Stephen's is not officially a member of the Delhi University Teachers Association nor does it participate in the Delhi University Students Union elections) it was an uncomfortable time. In fact, so concerned and nervous was newly-appointed principal Mr Hala about the "reputation" of the college that in one letter which he wrote during the days of the row, he marked all the dates as 1984 instead of 1985.

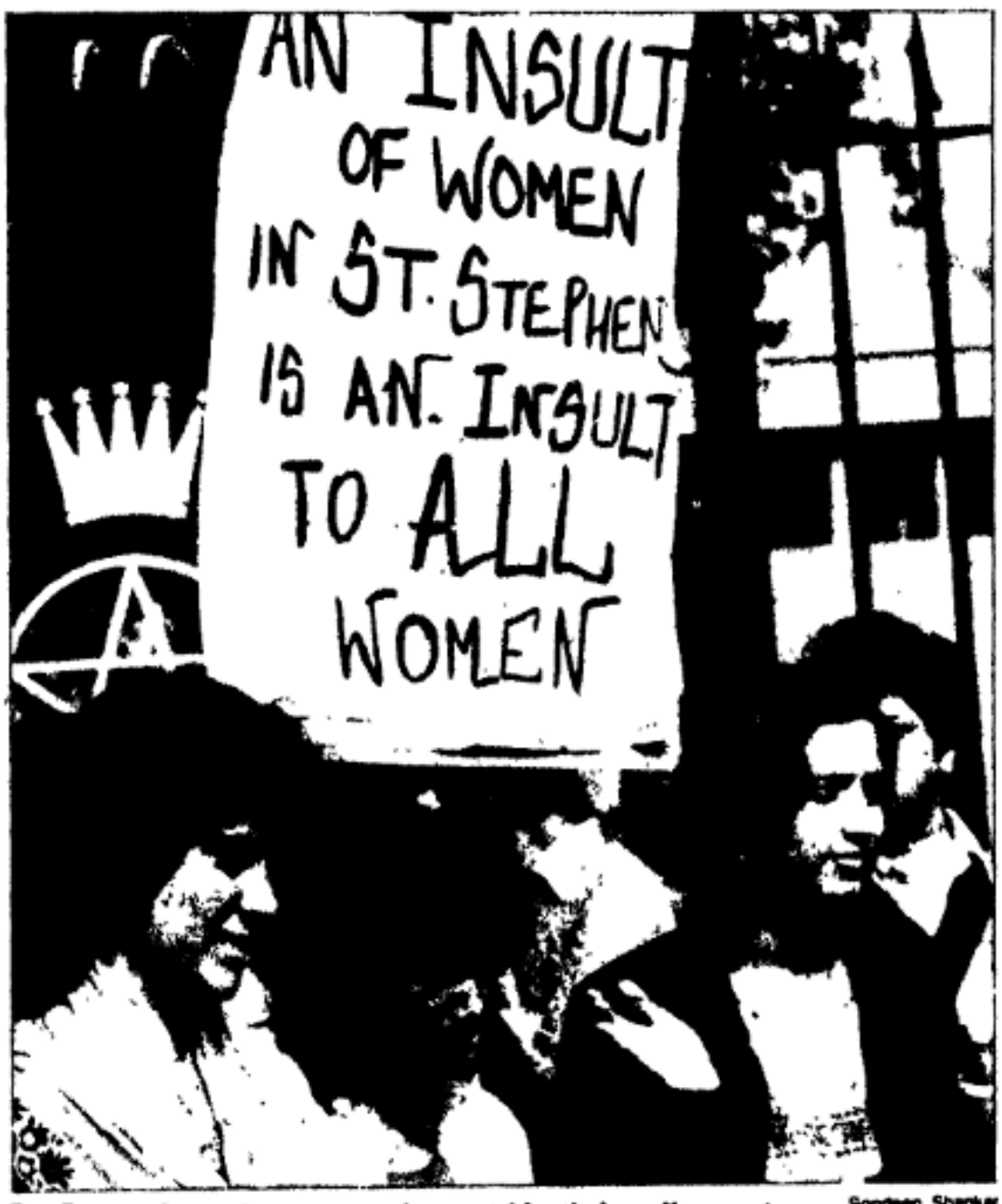
His college was a sight to see. Entry of outsiders into the premises was banned by Mr Hala on 1 February and it was surrounded by *jawans* of the CRPF and the helmeted riot-police. Inside, the authorities imposed what some Stephenians called "martial-law." Talking or moving in groups was banned, loitering around on the lawns prohibited and the girls were asked to keep "either to their classes or the library." There was also a kind of semi-official censorship. Students were "advised" not to talk about the incident, specially to "outside agencies." For some days St. Stephen's College was known as the "campus-cantonment."

St. Stephen's had been a male bastion of the Delhi University till 1975 when the late W.S. Rajpal, then principal of the college, decided to open the gates for ladies: a step that is said to have been unpopular specially with the staff whom principal Rajpal did not take into confidence. It was a society of males and with the arrival of the women, it became male-dominated. How else could something as noxious as "chick-charts" have become an "accepted custom?" Boys regularly pinned up on the college notice-boards the names of "ten Stephenian beauties" along with their vital statistics. It was a corridor-norm but never received any official opposition.

The opposition came finally from the girls themselves, from a militant group that had emerged after the infamous "holi-incident" of 1980 when a group of "revellers" molested a girl-student. They protested regularly but the staff took no action. When, after a spate of such "chick-charts" in November last year, the girls made an organised protest, the boys said they lacked a sense of humour. Even after the 31 January incident, the boys stuck to their guns. A meeting of resident students and senior staff members was organised on 1 February but those who tried to speak for the ladies were "shouted down" and there were a lot of indirect hints that things were not going to change too much. Even though under pressure from the campus and the press, the authorities ordered an enquiry into the incident and three boys were expelled from the hostel, the male Stephenians refused to bow down. On the day the clothes were hung on the chapel cross, P.K. Dwiwedy confronted the press insisting that "no woman has been victimised." Instead, girls who had spoken to reporters were singled out and threatened with expulsion.

But the girls were in no mood to compromise. With the support from other women's and students' organisations, they have organised several demonstrations protesting against harassment and the "history of victimisation of women in St. Stephen's"

Sudarshan Thakur, New Delhi



St. Stephen's students protesting outside their college gate — Sandeep Shankar

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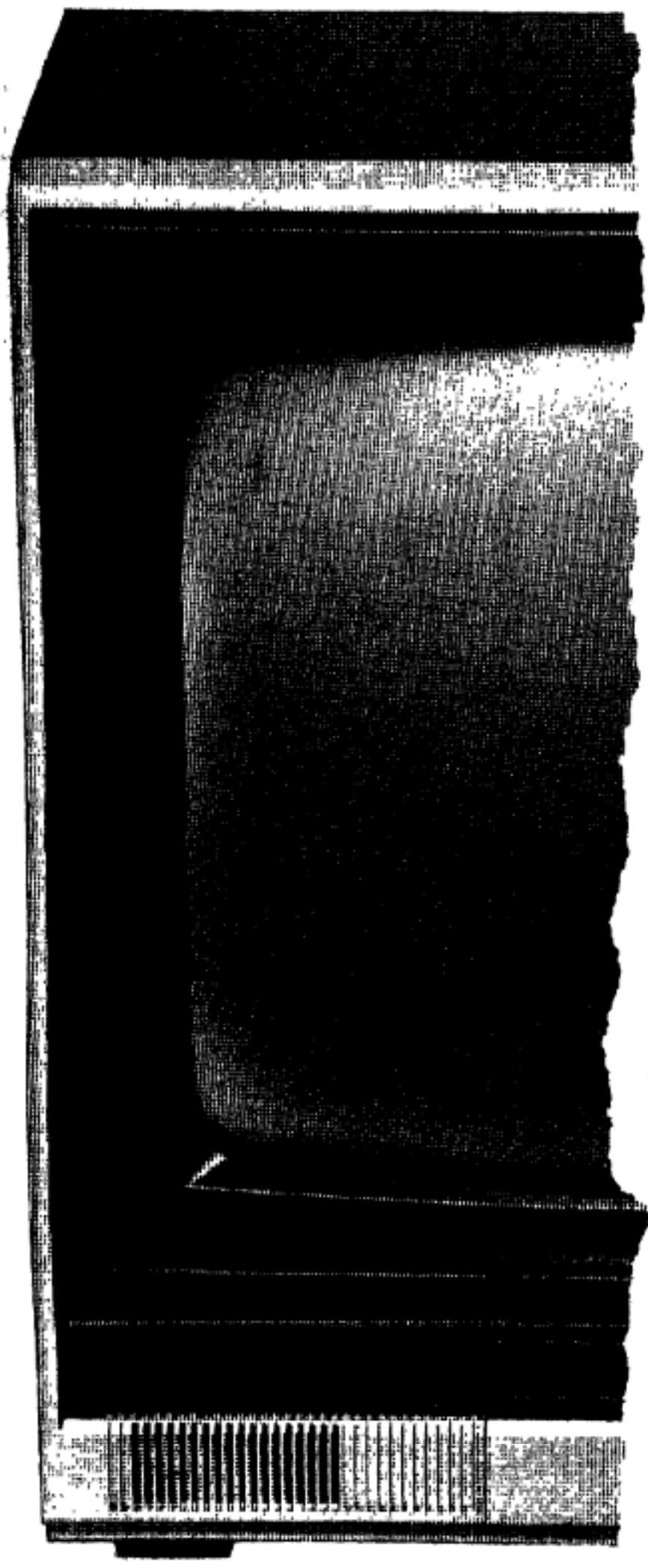
Because while all other colour TV sets continue to look the same with panels at the side, ONIDA has an obviously classy and futuristic design.

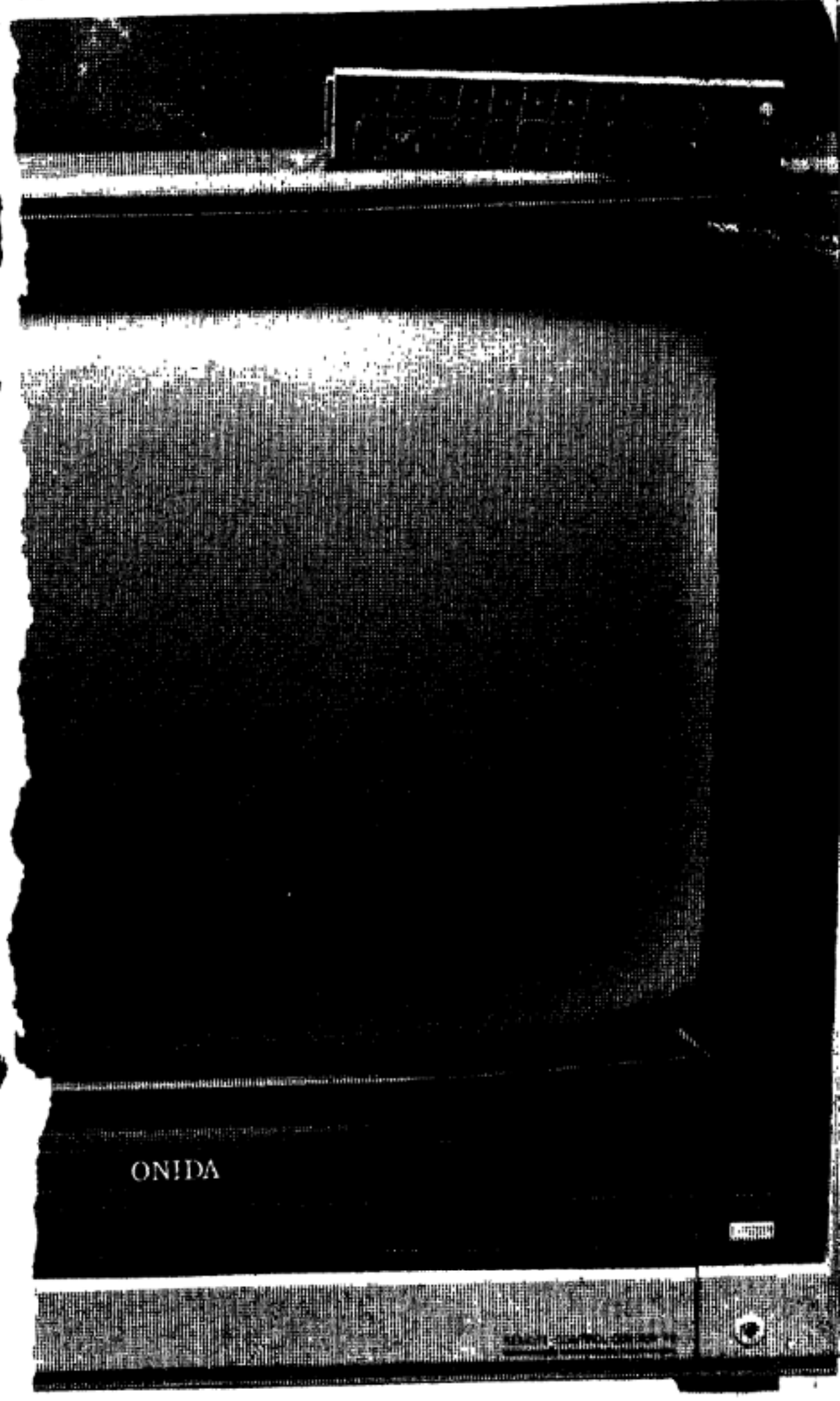
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Avenues Ad

THE SIKHS

The Nightmare Continues

Widespread indifference to measures to rehabilitate victims

The six-member Uttar Pradesh Sikh Relief and Rehabilitation Committee which visited riot-affected areas of the state to assess the progress of official rehabilitation measures has returned to Lucknow, bitterly disappointed. Despite the Prime Minister's well meaning assurances, Sikhs in the state continue to be ill-treated expecially by policemen and politicians. The committee is unhappy with the amounts fixed for compensation to riot victims which besides being grossly inadequate vary widely, specially in Kanpur which saw the worst of the rioting and the rest of the state.

Many people said that they were surprised to find that they were not even entitled to any compensation because they could not produce FIRs. "Does the administration realise that at the time of the violence, Sikhs were as terrified of the police as they were of the rampaging mobs and, even if they picked up the courage to go to the police stations, the police refused to register their complaints," said Jagjit Singh Chandok, the committee's general-secretary. "It is true that the DIG has gone to Punjab to persuade those who have migrated, to come back but that is not enough because low-ranking policemen are still humiliating Sikhs," he added, but cautioned this correspondent from writing about such humiliation for fear of the consequences.

Mr Chandok gave the example of a Sikh *dhaba* owner in Lucknow who was abused by a police sub-inspector for asking him to pay for his food. In most places, landlords do not want Sikh tenants and Sikh tenants who fled from their rented flats are being refused entry by the landlords. At Lalitpur in Nawabganj, Gonda district, the landlords have even forcibly taken possession of shops from Sikh shopkeepers. Mr Chandok also cited the case of a Sikh family who live in a small three-roomed house in Bhola Khera in the Krishnanagar police station area and who are at the mercy of thieves who come daily to their house, break open doors and windows and walk away with whatever they can lay their hands on. "The police are of no help and the Sikhs are vastly outnumbered in their localities and are still very insecure," Mr Chandok said. According to him, the government was paying up to Rs 2,000 for each house that had been burnt, looted or damaged in Kanpur, although actual damages far exceed that amount since a large number of VCRs, TV sets, cars and scooters were looted from the houses.



A shop belonging to a Sikh looted after Mrs Gandhi's assassination

For shops, it is more or less a flat rate of Rs 17,000. However, in Lucknow, the district magistrate is allocating only Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 for houses and the Rs 17,000 compensation for shops which is insufficient in any case is not being given to everyone. For the dead, Rs 20,000 is being given, according to the old government norm relating to communal riots but this is only being given to persons who have recorded complaints in police stations. Disbursal of payments is also progressing slowly. A Sikh gentleman who wanted to remain unnamed complained. "They (the officials) are sending us from one department to another and now they are saying there is no money." Red-tapism has become a major difficulty for insurance claimants and for getting soft loans from banks. However, only five per cent of the Sikhs, mostly the affluent sections, are covered by insurance.

When asked what the damage for the whole of Uttar Pradesh was, a spokesman of the committee said that the losses suffered in Kanpur alone amounted to nearly Rs 30 crores. Of this, the damages to schools and *gurdwaras* was Rs one crore, damages to shops and houses Rs seven and a half crores each, damages to cinema halls and factories Rs one crore and Rs seven crores, respectively. Commercial vehicles including 250 insured trucks and buses (yet to be totally computed) and private vehicles including 250 cars and 400 scooters were over Rs 4.25 and Rs 1.22 crores respectively.

These figures mentioned in a letter from the Sikh Relief and Rehabilitation Committee, Kanpur, addressed to the union agriculture minister, Mr Buta Singh were apparently based on written records and documents and hence deflated. According to a spokesman of the Sikh Relief and Rehabilitation Committee, Lucknow, their estimate of the total loss suffered by the community in Uttar Pradesh would be twice the figure of Kanpur and roughly Rs 60 crores.

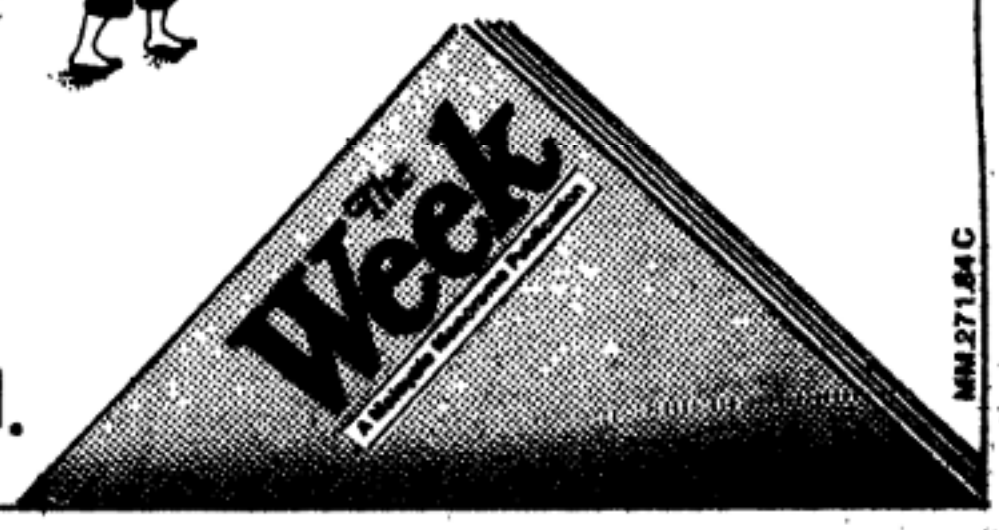
The committee which was finalising its report after it had held discussions with *sangats* (groups) all over the state revealed a number of incidents which had occurred during the riots in Chillawan under the Sarojini Nagar police station. Eight members of a family were burnt alive at about 10 am on 2 November 1984. Sadly, the head of the family "Bhapaji" Surjit Singh had gone to the police

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station and recorded a statement after he had been attacked on 1 November when his moped was looted and valuables worth Rs two lakhs were stolen from his house. He had requested the officer-in-charge to save his six children but the police did nothing and a mob broke into his house and burnt the whole family alive. The police who have closed the file and disposed of the bodies now claim that Bhapaji and his family have fled to Punjab.

In Dehradun, a businessman, Mr Rajan, who had used his gun in self-defence against the marauders was taken into custody under Section 302 of the IPC and the National Security Act. He was released after two months and that too after the High Court's statement that the police should reward such persons for defending themselves against criminals. In Haldwani, in the district of Nainital, about 150 shops of the Sikhs were looted and 70 trucks burnt in Allahabad and Rae Bareli. Almost all shops of Sikhs were looted and burnt in Moghalsarai and Varanasi. About 90 shops were looted and trucks burnt in Mirzapur. In Gitapalli, Captain Vohra, a retired army officer was disarmed by the police and handed over to a furious mob. His two sons were also arrested under Sections 302 and 307 of the IPC.

Defending the official relief and rehabilitation measures, Mr Subodh Nath Jha, the Uttar Pradesh relief commissioner said, "We have no problem of money. The government had fixed a budget of Rs two crores. Up to now a total of Rs one lakh 70 thousand has been disbursed, all of which is non-refundable. In addition, Rs 1.5 crores has been given out by the nationalised banks on soft-loan terms (12.5 per cent interest) to the riot-hit area on an earlier borrower preference basis. General insurance companies too have given out between Rs 1.5 to two crores to cover the damages. But what of the allegations of continuing discrimination against Sikhs? Mr Jha said, "Well, peace committees have been set up and I went to Kanpur and visited Sikh *gurdwaras*. Over Rs seven lakhs have been spent in Kanpur alone. Where Sikhs are isolated and insecure, the army and CRP are on guard, the Union government and the chief minister have assured them of protection. We sent the IG, Mr A.P. Mishra, to Punjab. He spent a week there and convinced 150 of the 350 families who migrated to return." Mr Jha said that the state government had assured Sikhs of 100 per cent safety. "But if in somebody's mind there is still fear and insecurity, it can only be due to their sense of guilt.

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

GYMKHANA CLUB

Heavy Lobbying Before Elections

Arms dealers and soldiers rub shoulders at Delhi club

Normally arms dealers cannot get close to senior defence officials and the top military brass. But this necessary distance in this city of dangerous liaisons, as was revealed in the wake of the spy scandal and Coomar Narain's varied connections, could have been easily bridged during the hectic lobbying for the annual general elections to Delhi's exclusive Gymkhana Club which took place on 9 February.

The first week of February saw a series of parties to introduce air marshal L.M. Katre who was contesting for president and the 16 aspirants to the committee memberships. One of these parties was hosted by Mr Vipin Khanna, an ex-army man now in the arms trade and lives in Greater Kailash. Yet another was held at the house of Bhai Mohan Singh of Ranbaxy, at Aurangzeb Road whose son Dr Parvinder Singh—on that list of 16 is also in the arms trade.

Air marshal Katre is a highly respected man and he was the unanimous choice of the members of the club. But many of them think that the air marshal was misled by some of the members of the previous committee into attending these parties. Hence resentment is increasing in the club. The club members have objected to the growing politicisation of the club: last year saw the beginning of this process when there was heavy canvassing for the outgoing president, Kanwar Natwar Singh, former secretary in the ministry of external affairs and presently minister of steel, who set the precedent of a 16-member slate of candidates (syndicate as the critics call it).

Officials of Air India and the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) gave several parties to introduce the aspirants. This year canvassing is outwardly less visible, but some of the members who usually receive little mail suddenly found themselves flooded by letters from the aspirants. Much of the canvassing took place over the telephones and a significant amount during the lunches and dinner sessions.

Last year, pressure was put on three of the candidates who tried to stand for president to withdraw (a cabinet minister and a powerful person in the Prime Minister's office tried some gentle pressure tactics which worked). There was no second presidential aspirant this time. But Mr Vinod Nair, an expert in textile engineering stood for president to protest against the system of a 16-member slate. A member of the club said: "We were quite surprised last year when Mr Natwar Singh announced his cabinet before the elections...."

Although there has been no "arm twisting" for the current elections, many of the club members are perturbed by the polarisation taking place in the club. Some of them have been circulating letters criticising the administration of the club, particularly the induction of members. There are over 9,000 members on the waiting list of the club, many of whom are trying to edge their way in, through the main and side doors. Usually about two members are taken in each month, which means that a non-government applicant would have to wait a hundred years.

Some of the club members have complained that over 100 people were made members out of turn in the "eminent category" during the course of the last year. One of the circulars asks, "How would one explain the induction of a private secretary to a minister, a deputy secretary in the government of India, and a manager of a bank in this category? The eminent category is supposed to include judges of the Supreme and High Court, ministers, secretaries to the government and chairmen of public sector undertakings. Strangely enough in 1984, a deputy general manager of a bank was made a member whereas the waiting list includes several chairmen of banks. Each member of the committee is allowed to induct two members. The circulator states that last year's committee inducted over 900 members whereas the committee of 1983 brought in only less than 200. The politicisation of this club includes the practice of these circulars and whips to vote, according to one of the counter-circulars in what has become a circular war of pamphlets.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Princess with the Whip

Arab princess sentenced for assaulting maids

Since the oil-rich Arab princes, princesses, Sheikhs and potentates began to frequent Britain 15 years ago, they have brought a new element on the social scene of this country: not only their habit of throwing away money by way of expensive shopping expeditions and buying expensive properties but more pertinently their feudal ways. One peculiar aspect of this is their cruel treatment of their servants. As a result, from time to time, cases come to light of servants being maltreated, or beaten up by their Arab masters or mistresses, which often end up in British courts.

The latest of such cases was a particularly gruesome one, in which a Kuwaiti princess beat up her two maids—one an Indian and the other, a Sri Lankan—for which she was fined on 4 February 1985, Rs 500 and given a suspended jail sentence in a London court. The judge also ordered the princess, Sheika Faria Sabah (30), to pay Rs 1,250 as compensation to the girls.

Judge Hayman of Knightsbridge Crown Court told the princess: "Your conduct was disgraceful, verging on barbaric. You have escaped a prison sentence by the skin of your teeth." The princess pleaded guilty of whipping the Sri Lankan maid, Mrs Samsul Ariffa (20), with an electric flex and burning her hand by pressing it on a hot plate. She also admitted beating her Indian maid, Mrs Laxmi Swami (40) of Madras and giving her a black eye.

During the trial, the prosecution counsel told the court that the ill-treatment of the two maids came to light way back in July 1983 when a local shopkeeper noticed numerous injuries on Mrs Ariffa: he helped her to escape from her Kuwaiti mistress's house and she took refuge in the Sri Lankan high commission. On the basis of the information given by her, British police raided the house of the Kuwaiti princess in Bayswater and found an electric flex and a riding whip which had been used to beat up the maids. They also found a blood-stained dress belonging to Mrs Ariffa.

The prosecution counsel said that the two maids had been struck frequently for what they considered to be no misdemeanours, such as "looking out of the window or sweeping too slowly." The counsel for the defence ruled that the princess was a "person of some standing in her own country," and had voluntarily returned to Britain twice to attend the proceedings. She had been under stress in bringing up her four children without her husband as well as caring for her sister who was ill. She had also been running her business and a construction company in Kuwait and was thus under considerable strain. The counsel said that things were "very much on top of her."

The two maids are now being looked after by their friends. Mrs Laxmi Swami was not available for comment.

Peter Pendsay, London

MHATRE MURDER CASE

Guilty

Two JKLF men sentenced

A little more than a year after the Birmingham-based Indian diplomat, Ravindra Mhatre, was kidnapped and killed, the Crown Court of the city concerned has reached a conclusion on the crime. In a judgment delivered by Mr Justice Bristow on 7 February, the court sentenced two Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) activists, Abdul Raja (28) of Paris and Mohammad Riaz (24) of Leicester, earlier found guilty of murder by a jury by a majority verdict of eleven—one, to imprisonment.

However, allegedly the main culprit, Mohammad Musserat Iqbal, who is said to have fired the three shots near a farmhouse in Leicestershire which brutally ended Mr Mhatre's life, has apparently escaped, and is thought to be in Pakistan, which has no extradition treaty with Britain. Two other accomplices, Aslam Mirzan, Riaz's brother, and Azhar Mahmood, are at large and Zubair Ansari, "world" secretary of the JKLF, is also absconding.

It is understood that the British government has requested the authorities in Islamabad to deport Iqbal, Mirzan and Azhar Mahmood. But thus far it has drawn a blank, and it is generally felt that Pakistan is unlikely to cooperate. Indeed, it is gathered that the Pakistan government has already pleaded no knowledge of the whereabouts of the three accused.

Mr Mhatre, a relatively minor functionary in the external affairs ministry, and posted as number two in the assistant high commission in Birmingham, was abducted near his home on the outskirts of the city in February 1984 and silenced two days later. Justice Bristow described the kidnapping and murder as "an act of international terrorism" but "a pretty pathetic operation." It seems that the assailants picked on Mr Mhatre at random and were amateur enough not to tackle a more senior and well-guarded official.



Ravindra Mhatre

There was, however, a motive: to pressurise the Indian government into releasing Maqbool Butt, founder of the Liberation Front in 1968, who was under sentence of death. In fact, Mr Amanullah Khan, chairman of the JKLF, which was formed in Britain in 1977 after its mother party was liquidated and its leaders were arrested, wishfully thinks the plan could have succeeded. "It was due to the very unreasonable attitude of the Indian high commission in the days after Mr Mhatre's abduction that he died," he maintains.

The outcome of the Mhatre case is a matter of some relief to the British government, which has been facing a certain amount of coldness from New Delhi for the former's inactivity pertaining to anti-Indian agitations by British Sikhs, particularly the utterances of the self-styled leader of Khalistan, Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan. On the other hand, the decree is embarrassing for Pakistan, whose embassy in the United Kingdom has, reportedly, indulged in covert contacts with the JKLF.

Ashis Ray, London

No Threat to Babies

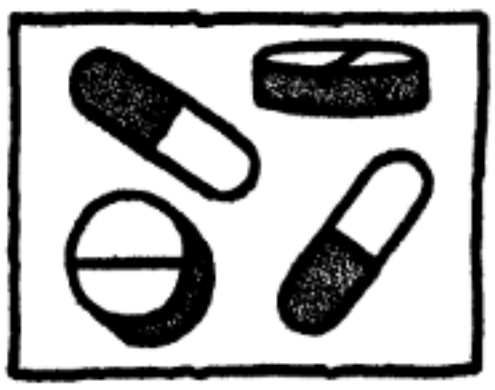


Ultrasonic scans used on pregnant women pose no threat to their babies, according to *Lancet* magazine. An ultrasound machine uses sound waves to produce a picture of the unborn baby on a screen. It can show multiple pregnancies, possible handicaps and the sex of the child. There have been fears that such scanning could increase the risk of childhood cancers. But two experiments carried out in England prove otherwise. In one study, researchers compared 1,731 children who died of cancer with an equal number who did not. They found that an exposure to ultrasound did not differ between the two groups, and concluded that "ultrasound is safe as regards the risk of childhood cancer." In another experiment, 555 children with cancer were compared with 1,110 healthy children. The observations revealed "no significant association between exposure to ultrasound examination in pregnancy and the risk of childhood cancer."

Mobile Unit for Heart Patients

Every year more than 6,000 people in Northern Ireland die from coronary diseases, alarming statistics indeed. This was the main reason why Dr Mahen Varma, a consultant cardiologist at the Erne hospital in Enniskillen, decided to pioneer Britain's first mobile screening unit to check heart patients. The unit is manned by hospital staff who can screen up to four people an hour. Dr Varma explains, "Using the mobile screening unit we felt we could encourage people to come in off the street on a random basis to have a general checkup, especially those people between the ages of 35 and 60 who are most at risk." The unit has screened more than 400 people and, at least, one potential diabetic and a leukaemia patient have been identified. About 25 per cent of those screened had a very high level of blood fats.

Deafening Drugs



Keep away from streptomycin and aspirin: they might make you deaf. Researchers at Keele university in the English Midlands, Britain, are of the view that very strong doses of antibiotics, particularly of the streptomycin family, and large doses of salicylates such as aspirin damage microscopic hairs on the sensory cells in the inner ear, which pick up sounds and transmit them via the nerves to the brain. Dr Carole Hackney, a cell biologist, is attempting to find out how drugs change the inner ear structure and give an insight into how inner ear cells receive and convert sounds. Using special dyes to stain individual nerve cells, the connections of the auditory nerve will be investigated to see how the more central parts of the brain change during deafness.

Karate for Insects



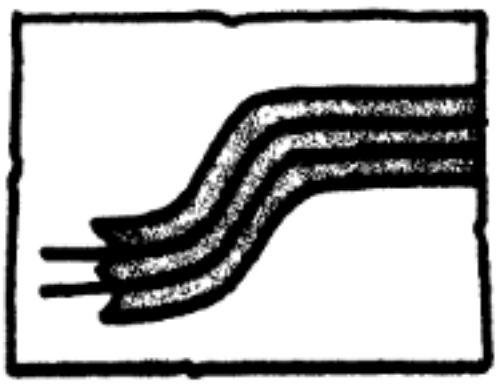
Scientists of the plant protection division of Britain's Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) group have discovered a new insecticide, which has a high degree of environmental acceptability. Interestingly, the substance has been named Karate, though in UK and certain other countries it will be known by some other name. It controls a wide range of pests, including caterpillars, beetles, weevils aphids (plant lice or greenflies) and other sucking pests. Its major uses are in the control of foliar pests in agriculture and for the control of public health insect pests. Birds, earthworms and bees will not be affected by the insecticide.

The Multipurpose Magnetic Card

In France, the magnetic card (a payment card with a magnetic strip) has been doing wonders. It is possible to pay shopkeepers and stores, hotels, travel agencies, means of transport (trains, car rentals, flights). The business concerned simply has to be affiliated to one of the networks issuing its clients cards. The principle is simple. You give your card to the shopkeeper, for instance, and he prints a bill. The bill is signed and the card returned to the holder. For purchases by correspondence, the (confidential) number on the card is simply written on the back of the order form. Cash can be taken any time, either from automatic cash-dispensers, or from banks. With just one material support, the owner can carry out as many transactions as he likes, according to the balance of his bank account, of course.

Mention must be made of the memory card too, a French invention about a decade old. A microchip is simply inserted inside the plastic card which remains just as slim. It is a complete microprocessor incorporating a calculator and a storage memory. This enables it to be lined up to a central payment unit. The card makes it possible for the bearer to be identified, confidentially and inviolably.

Plastics that Conduct Electricity



Britain's Science and Engineering Research Council is providing over £15,000 for research into certain plastics that have an ability to conduct electricity. Plastics are more usually used as insulators of electricity, for example, a plastic-coated electrical cable. Recent discoveries that plastics conduct electricity are arousing a lot of interest since plastics are tough, light, cheap and can be processed easily. By suitable chemical or electrochemical treatment called "doping," the electrical properties of a number of plastics can be changed from those of a typical insulator to those of a semiconductor like silicon and, ultimately, to that of a true metal.

Illustrations: Prabir Sen

While this gentleman is very much at sea level behind his smile is an aircraft flying 25,000 feet high!



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VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Devadatta Deb

CALCUTTA: The process of governing West Bengal ground to a temporary halt due to a cat and an owl. The owl and the pussycat had taken up residence in Writers' Buildings, the seat of the state government, and their escapades resulted in the suspension of all work. On the night of 29 January the cat scaled the inner wall of the building and slept on a ledge under an airconditioner projecting from the room of the cooperation minister, Mr Nihar Bose. But in the morning it could not get down. By the afternoon of 30 January its plight had moved an official to summon the fire brigade. A fire tender, manned by eight helmeted and gloved firemen, arrived promptly and an impressive ladder was propped against the wall. A fireman rushed up only to find the cat avoiding his reach. Finally, a stick was called for; on seeing it, the cat jumped to the ground and sped off, leaving the fireman stranded sheepishly on top of the ladder. On 29 January itself, the owl did what owls are supposed to do—it slept. However, it chose as its bed the beam across the main entrance to the area. All through the day, curious clerks and newsmen stood staring up at it and held serious discussions on the astrological implications for the Left Front government. The owl, however, remained least bothered—*The Telegraph* (Jude Mitra, Calcutta)

BANGALORE: Elephants are shrewd creatures no doubt, but have they developed a fascination for studies? A herd of 11 elephants, including two calves, had strayed from a nearby forest. The animals had lodged themselves in a mango grove right behind the R.V. College of Engineering on the outskirts of Bangalore. Though the pachyderms have not threatened the residents of the area as such the people seem to have been unnerved by the sudden landing of so many elephants nearby —*The Hindu* (C. S. N. Murthy, Bangalore)

THANJAVUR: Anyone driving through the lush green Thanjavur delta, where the Samba harvest is gathering momentum and the Thaladi harvest work is due to begin shortly, will be surprised by the hundreds of red flags fluttering in the fields. The flags have not been planted by any political party. The flags have been put up to indicate that the paddy field is under distraint and that only with the permission of the authorities can the crops be harvested. The large number of red flags indicate that a huge amount of kist is in arrears which total Rs 16 crores—*The Hindu* (R. Venkatesan, Tiruchirapalli)

NEW DELHI: Does this country, like Holland, have two Prime Ministers, instead of one? That would seem to be the case, according to the New Delhi telephone directory. For in this volume, while Mr Rajiv Gandhi is listed as the Prime Minister in the entries under the PM's secretariat, department of atomic energy and the ministry of electronics, Indira Gandhi continues to be Prime Minister and minister-in-charge in the lists of ministries under the heads 'ocean development, science and technology.' What makes the confusion even more intriguing is the legend: "Corrected up to 30.6.84"—*The Times of India* (Saroja Simhan, New Delhi)

JAMNAGAR: Blue films appeared on television screens in many drawing rooms here on 24 January, leading to utter surprise and amusement. Inquiries showed that this happened when the local television got tuned in to a short-range transmitter of the naval training institute, INS Valsura, here. While some believed it was a deliberate mischief played by someone in the navy, and demanded a high-level probe, one navy officer reacted sharply, saying that the civilians should have switched off their sets if they did not like the programme—*Indian Express* (Vibhas Srivastava, Dehradun Cantt)

HYDERABAD: A dental surgeon and a young man were rounded up by the police when they roamed nude in different areas here in the city on 24 January. The doctor was arrested while moving without clothes in Narayanaguda, while the other, a native of Sircilla, was held in Ramkote area—*Indian Express* (Dhanpatrai Agarwal, Tadepalligudem)

WITHOUT COMMENT

You can abuse me, slander me, call me a defector, but you have no right to take Jammu and Kashmir out of the map of India. That will happen only over my dead body—G. M. Shah, J & K chief minister, in *Indian Express*

A cabinet of thieves, contractors, rapists and swindlers—Biju Patnaik, on the J. B. Patnaik ministry, in *The Telegraph*

How can a man who is afraid of even a lizard, work against the country?—Mrs Geeta Narain, on her husband Coomar Narain



Why don't you say that Rajiv Gandhi might end up in my party? Is it strange that leaders of two parties should agree on certain issues or on certain values? Is it necessary that they should differ on every issue?—Ramakrishna Hegde, on the speculation that he would join the Congress(I), in *The Week*

We deal with India, not with Sikhs—Gen Zia-ul Haq in an interview to Prem Bhatia

Fantasies are realisable—William Kennedy, author of Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *Ironweed*, in *Life*

I have very little respect for actors like Amitabh Bachchan. Even a dog wipes the ground with its tail where it sits, but most stars are just parasites of the medium—Om Puri in *Cine Blitz*

Smita Patil says she is the best. Rekha announces she is the best. You have to make your choice between these two ladies. I am nowhere in the running—Shabana Azmi in *Stardust*

VARIETY/SUNDAYWEEK

BEGINNING 17 FEBRUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) If you take care of your health, the week ahead promises to be lucky one for all of you On the economic front most of you will gain money or property through an unexpected source Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress The period is also favourable for lovers you can materialise marriage plans. Friends and relatives will contribute to your happiness

Good dates: 18 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 8
Favourable direction: East



LEO (15 August—14 September) Financially, this is not a very good week and unless you keep your expenditure to a minimum, you will run into debts Businessmen should avoid risky ventures However, professionals will make headway during this phase Lovers will also find this period favourable Friends and relatives will keep you busy during the week end Keep a sharp eye on your health and diet

Good dates: 19, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Minor problems may crop up this week but with a bit of diplomacy you can easily overcome them All will be well on the professional and domestic front This is also a good period for artists and sportsmen Students should make the most out of this lucky phase. If you are in love and intending to get married this is the opportune time to do so Watch your health

Good dates: 19 22 and 29
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is an exceptionally favourable week for those in business investments made during this period will fetch rich dividends in future The phase is equally favourable for professionals a promotion cannot be ruled out For bachelors, this is the ideal time to get married. However, the financial front is not all that encouraging

Good dates: 17, 19 and 21
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 9
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is not a good week to solve legal problems Postpone all important plans. Businessmen are advised not to take hasty decisions Politicians should be cautious while dealing with the masses However, this is a good period for those in love and intending to get married but do not get carried away by your emotions. A letter will bring good tidings

Good dates: 20, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 1, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is not a good period for politicians and lawyers Businessmen should guard against deception You may lose heavily if you gamble or indulge in speculative ventures However, this is a favourable week for those employed in the public sector Creative artists and sportsmen will also benefit from this lucky phase

Good dates: 17, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Businessmen and professionals should be wary of enemies. do not take even your close friends and relatives for granted. The period is also bad for lovers avoid adventurous plans and do not take hasty decisions However, the domestic front will provide you with all the inspiration to overcome this bleak period. A journey towards the week end will relieve you of all tensions

Good dates: 19, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South-west



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) The stars fortell a bright week for all of you The economic front will look up but avoid extravagance. Businessmen and professionals should not hesitate to undertake responsibilities. At home your children will be a source of joy Friends and relatives will keep you busy throughout the week but do not neglect your work. Your health will deteriorate further.

Good dates: 17, 19 and 20
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is not a good week for courtship and marriage negotiations an affair may come to an end Avoid legal disputes during this phase However, this a lucky period for those in government service a promotion is in the offing. At home, the health of your wife is likely to bother you Those above the age of 45 should be extra-vigilant about their health and diet

Good dates: 18, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North



CANCER (15 July—14 August) There is good news for those of you who are unemployed a job is in the offing The phase is also favourable for professionals some of you may be posted to a place of your choice Students should not fritter away the chances that come their way. Lovers will also find this week a lucky one. The domestic front will remain inspiring. However, do not neglect your health

Good dates: 18, 19 and 21
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North-east



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) The stars do not shine very brightly on your financial front. On the domestic front one of your close relatives residing with you may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden. Love and marriage are ill signified try and avoid arguments with your beloved Your health will add to your worries Avoid undertaking pleasure trips

Good dates: 18, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) You will come in contact with an influential person. Matters relating to property will be resolved in your favour. On the professional front you will make steady headway Businessmen will also prosper. The domestic front will remain inspiring. However, this is not the opportune time to get married A journey towards the middle of the week will prove financially profitable.

Good dates: 19, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: South-west

For those born on the 18th, 19th or 20th of any month:

You are emotional by nature. At times you get carried away by your emotions to such an extent that you find yourself in trouble. Some of you are also endowed with an artistic temperament: you will do well if you choose the creative arts as your profession. Most of you are social by nature and you love to be surrounded by friends and relatives. Women born during this period make ideal housewives.

VARIETY

CHESS

n Iceland, people take their chess seriously. A nation of docile warriors, they are temperamentally well suited to the concept of bloodless struggle, their tenacity at the board being matched only by their humility away from it.

The spirit of Icelandic chess is embodied in Fridrik Olafsson, grandmaster, ex-President of FIDE and national hero. The wealth of talented young players in Iceland is naturally going to be the source of his successor, and none is a more obvious candidate than 21-year-old Johann Hjartarsson. He has recently turned in some beautifully polished performances which mark back to the young Olafsson, whose early games displayed the same classical fluency.

White: Ree. Black: Hjartarsson. Queen's Gambit Declined.

1 P–Q4	N–KB3	2 P–QB4	P–K3
3 N–KB3	P–Q4	4 N–B3	B–K2
5 B–N5	P–KR3	6 B–R4	0–0
7 Q–B2	P–QN3	8 BxN	BxB
9 P–K4			

A dangerous-looking attempt to exploit the temporary instability of two white diagonals viz. 9 . . . PxKP 10 QxP P–B3 11

Hjartarsson (Black) to move



Ree (White)

B–Q3 P–N3 12 P–KR4 or 9 . . . PxBP 10 P–K5 B–K2 11 Q–K4 P–QB3 12 BxP followed by B–Q3 and P–KR4 etc.

9 . . .	N–B3!	10 0–0–0	PxKP
11 QxP	B–N2	12 P–KR4	R–QN1
13 B–Q3	P–N3	14 Q–N4	B–N2

The first wave has been successfully thwarted so White tries from a new angle.

15 B–K2	N–K2	16 P–R5	P–KN4
17 N–K5	N–B4	18 B–B3	

DIAGRAM

Planning to plant pieces on the QB6 square. Hjartarsson rudely disrupts his horticultural aspirations.

18 . . .	P–B4!	19 PxP	Q–B2
20 N–Q7	BxN	21 PxB	PxP
22 NxKR	Q–R4	23 K–Q2	N–Q5!
24 K–K1			

A choice of hopeless alternatives. If 24 BxB RxB 25 K–K1 QxP+ 26 K–B1 QxP+ 27 K–N1 N–K7+ winning the queen.

24 . . .	NxB+	25 K–B1

Or 25 PxN QxP+ 26 K–B1 BxP 27 Q–N3 Q–Q6+!

25 . . .	Q–R5!	26 R–Q6	P–B4

27 Resigns.

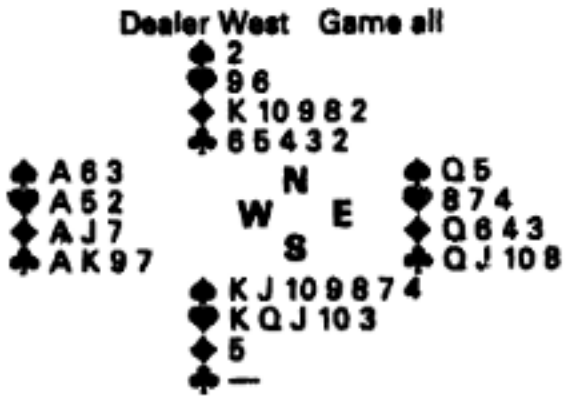
On 27 Q–N3 QxBP+ is mating.

MICHAEL SIEAN

BRIDGE

This is a deal from the Woolwich Spring Foursomes, with the same hands played in both the Northern and Southern sections.

Dealer West Game all



In the Northern heat between Shek and the holders, Teltscher, the auction at one table was on Blue Club lines:

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
—	1 ♣	No	1 ♥
4 ♠	No	No	dble
No	No	No	

The opening one club showed about 16 points upwards and one heart was semi-positive. West's pass of four spades was a scientific move inviting partner to name a long suit, but East could only double. At the other table East-West bid a simple 2NT – 3NT, and the final contract was again four spades doubled.

West led a club, ruffed by South. At one table South laid down the king of spades, losing four tricks, at the other the king of hearts. The defence did not make the mistake of winning, so again the contract was defeated.

At another table South made the better play of a low heart at trick two. West played low and dummy's ♥ 9 provided an entry for the critical trump finesse.

The same sequence of events was followed at two tables in the Southern quarter-final, South at one table leading the king of spades from hand, at the other trying the low heart successfully.

The final, between teams captained by Mayo and Shek, will be played during the Brighton Congress in August.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. Name the famous scientist who first developed a vaccine to prevent the occurrence of polio?
2. Which city in North America is known as the city of magnificent distances?
3. Who was the first woman to climb Mount Everest?
4. In astronomy, what are the bodies formed from the collapsed remnants of supernova explosions called?
5. What is the collective noun for kangaroos?
6. USSR is the largest country in the world. Which is the second largest country?
7. How is Nitrous Oxide better known as?
8. *Return to Earth* is the autobiography of a well-known astronaut. Name him.
9. Name the "lost continent" described in detail by Plato which is believed to have subsided after it was struck by a meteorite, over 11,000 years ago.
10. *Red Rackham's Treasure, Black Gold, The Black Island* and *The Blue Lotus* are comic books with a young reporter as the hero. Name him.
11. Who was the first Indian to be a member of the British Parliament?
12. Which country receives the highest number of tourists every year?
13. When is Teachers' Day in India?
14. Where in the human body is the Von Ebner's gland?
15. Mao ze Dong wrote the Red Book. Who wrote the Green Book?

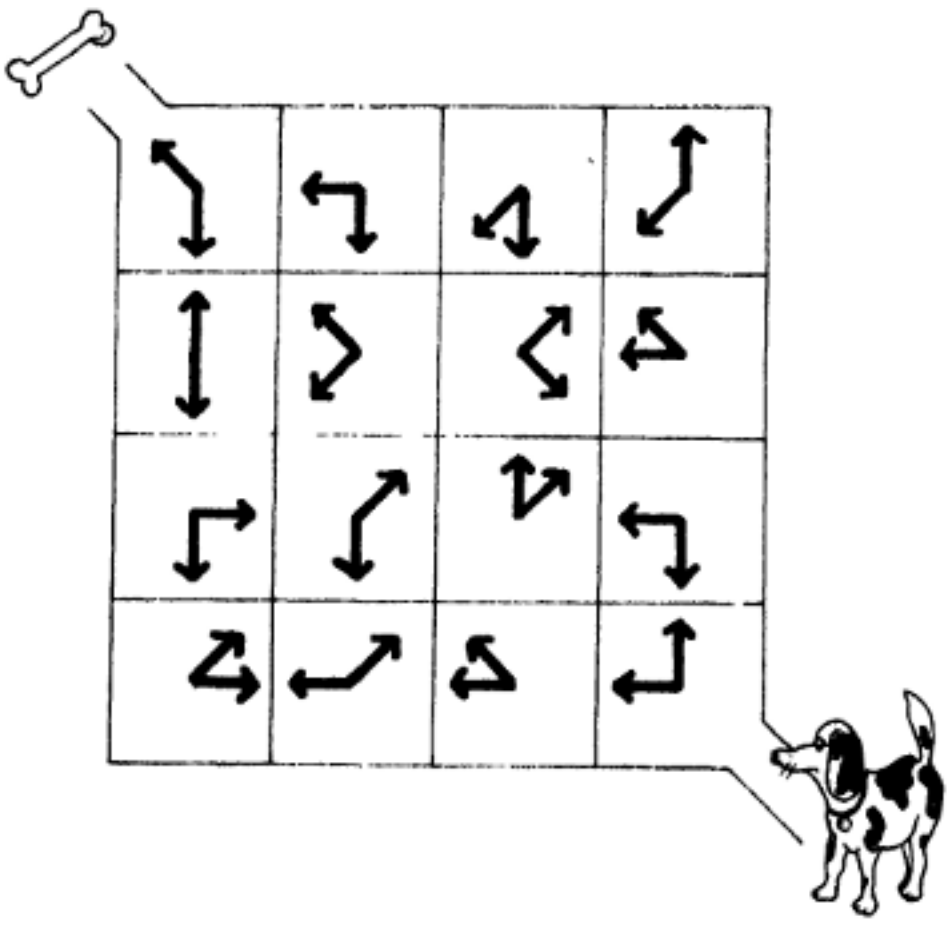
ANSWERS

1. Dr Jonas Salk.
2. Washington D.C., the capital of the United States.
3. Mrs Junko Tabei of Japan in 1975.
4. Pulsars.
5. A troop.
6. Canada
7. Laughing gas.
8. Edwin Aldrin, the second man on the moon.
9. Atlantis.
10. Tintin
11. Dadabhai Nacroji.
12. Spain.
13. 5 September.
14. In the tongue.
15. Col. Gaddafi of Libya

TEASERS

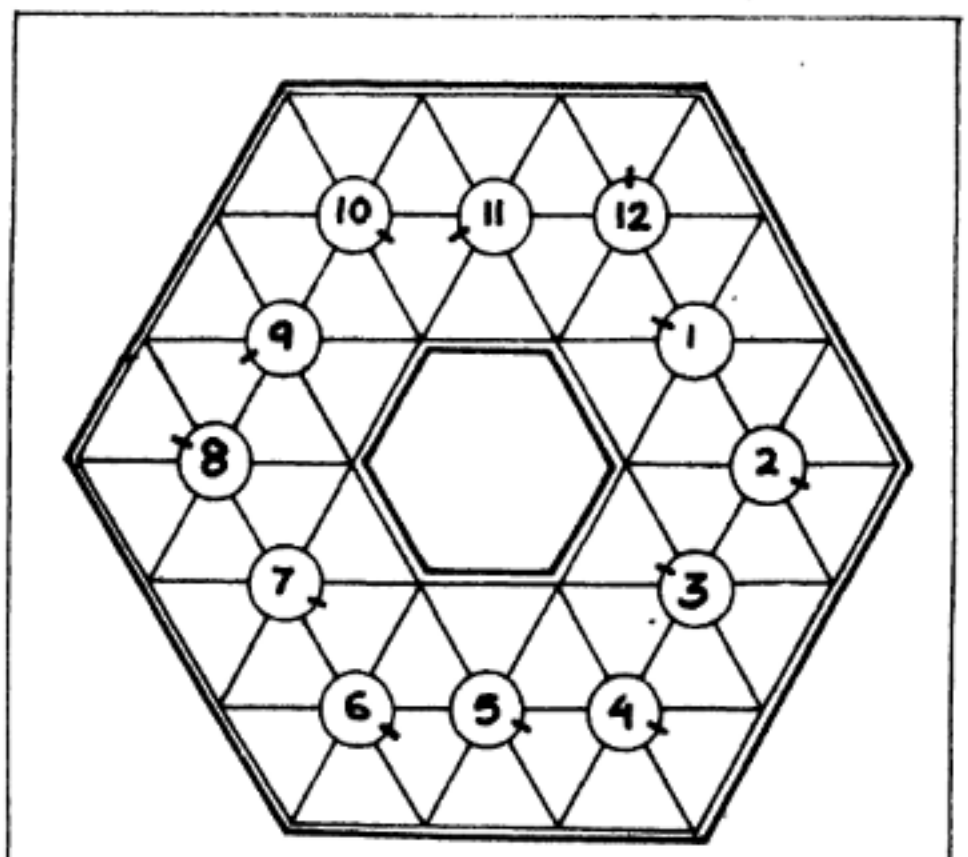
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Mind Bender



Can you get the puppy to the bone? You can enter from one square into another only along the direction of the arrows. Obviously, you must find the shortest route.

Wordplay



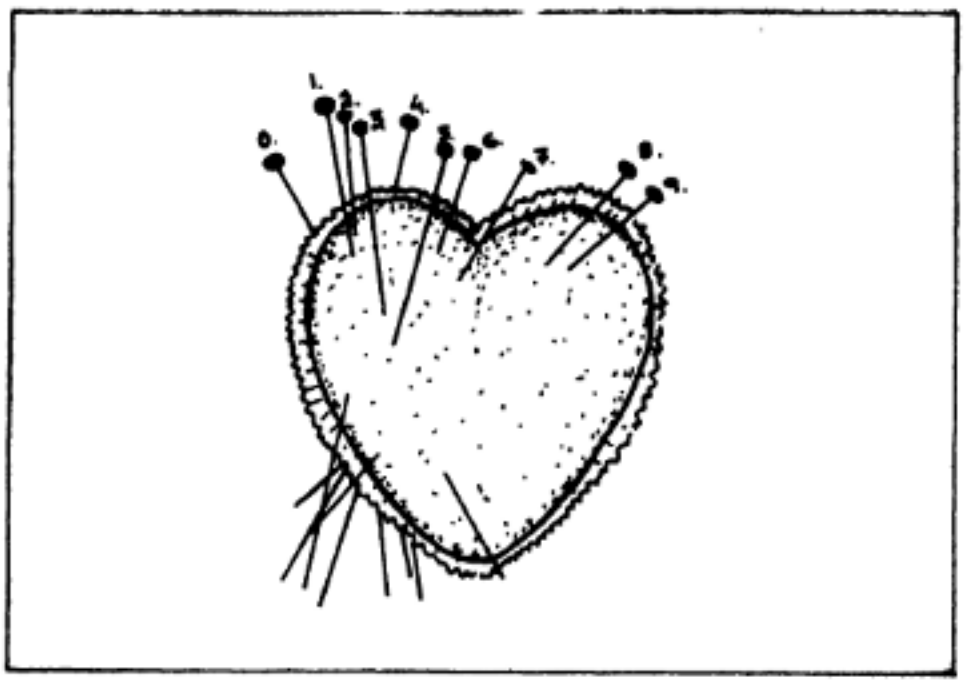
This word maze will contain 12 words, when completed, one letter per space, reading in EITHER clockwise OR anti-clockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below:

1. A quiver 2. Hearsay 3. Heavy load 4. The highest point 5. Striped wild cats? 6. Decline 7. Mildew 8. A container, for feeding animals 9. In good health 10. Scuffle 11. Delicate 12. Traced, around.

Quick Think

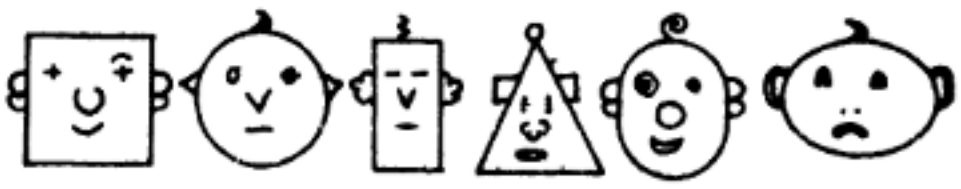
The year 1984 may have been a year of catastrophes, but it wasn't an upside down year. The last two upside-down years were 1691 and 1961. How quickly can you find the next upside-down year?

Eye Wash



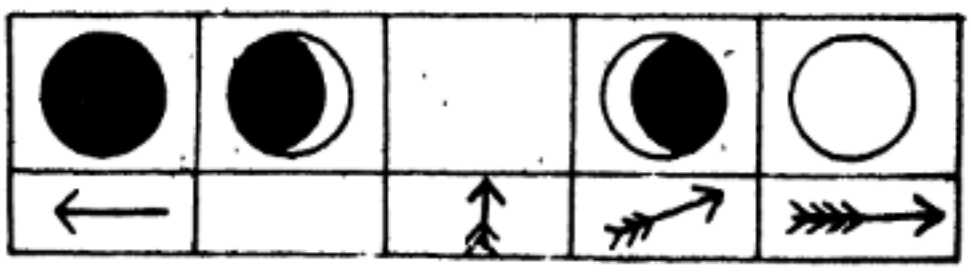
There are ten pins which have gone into this pin cushion and only nine come out. Which pin got stuck?

Face Facts



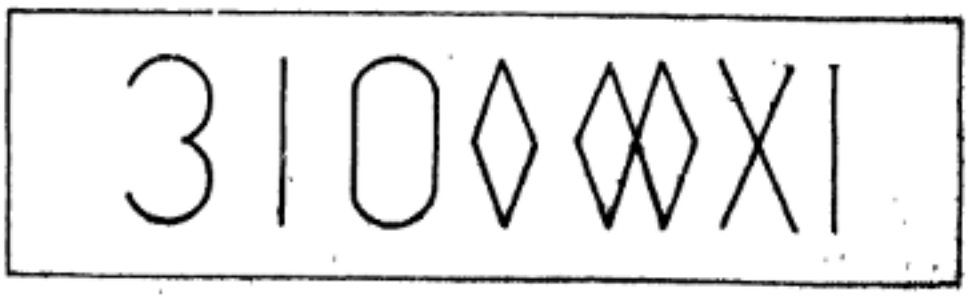
Which face is entirely different from all others in every single detail?

Mindbender



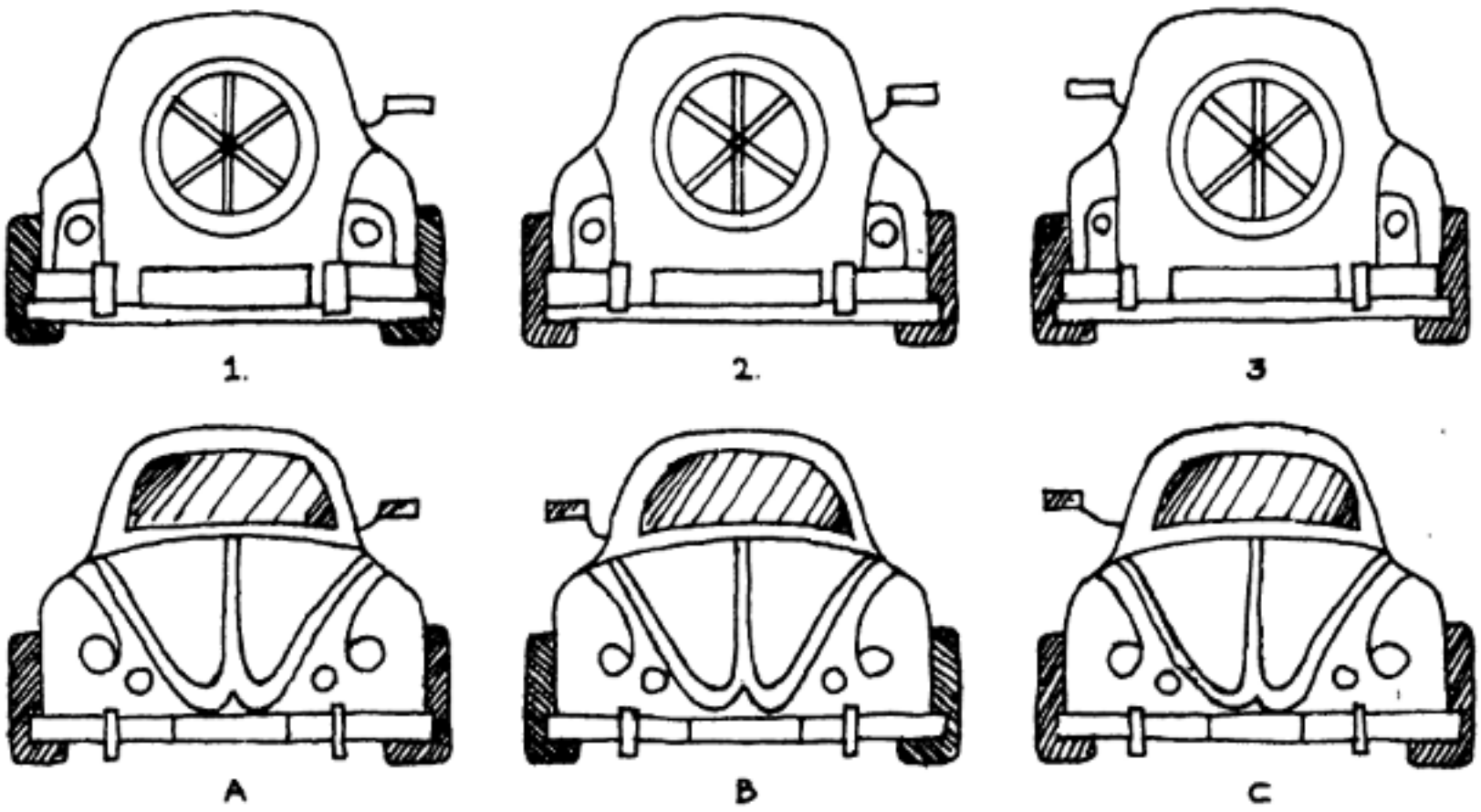
Draw the appropriate figures in the empty spaces.

Quizzbizz



What is the next symbol in this series?

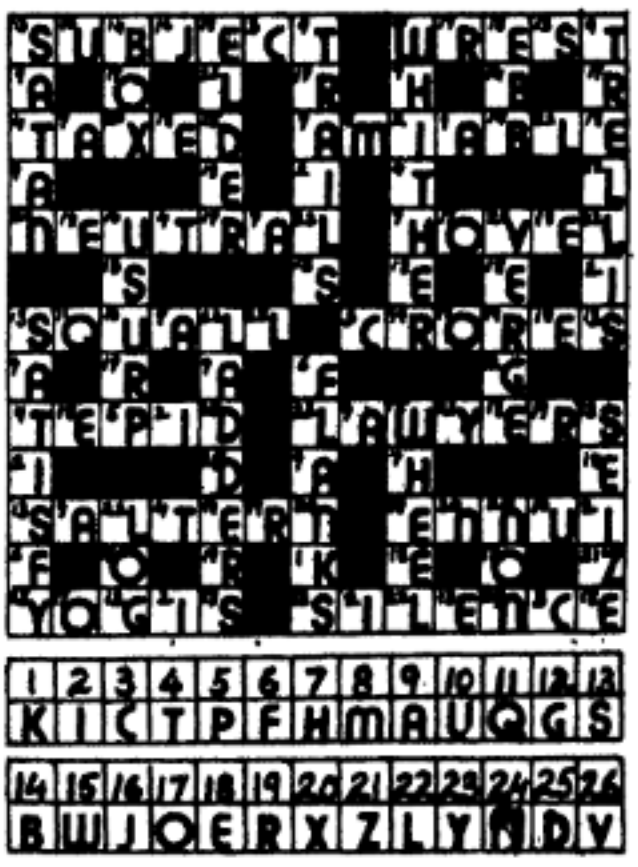
Figure it Out



Tricky treads, these. Match the backs of these cars to the fronts.

Solution to last week's Teasers:

Cryptocross:



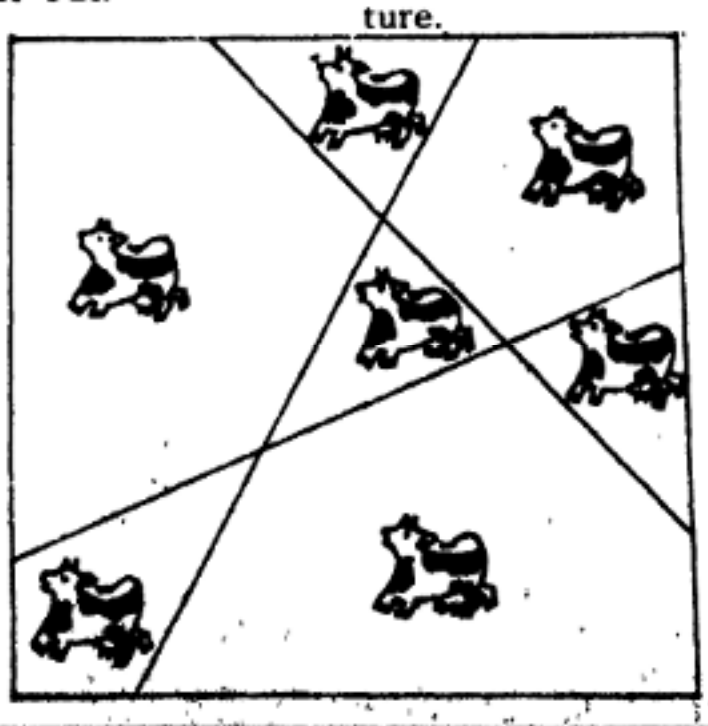
Quick Think:
The five cats catch five mice in five minutes, that is one mouse per minute. Therefore, in 100 minutes, the five catch 100 mice, and there is no need for any more cats.

Witsharpener:
Mr Sen obviously had no knowledge of mathematics (clue a) and so could not have taught it. Mr Das did not know enough geography to teach it and since Mr Rao did not know the Devnagiri script, he could not have taught it. Therefore, Mr Sen taught English, History and Hindi; Mr Rao taught Mathematics, Geography and History and; Mr Das taught English, Mathematics and Hindi.

Blockbuster:



Figure it Out:



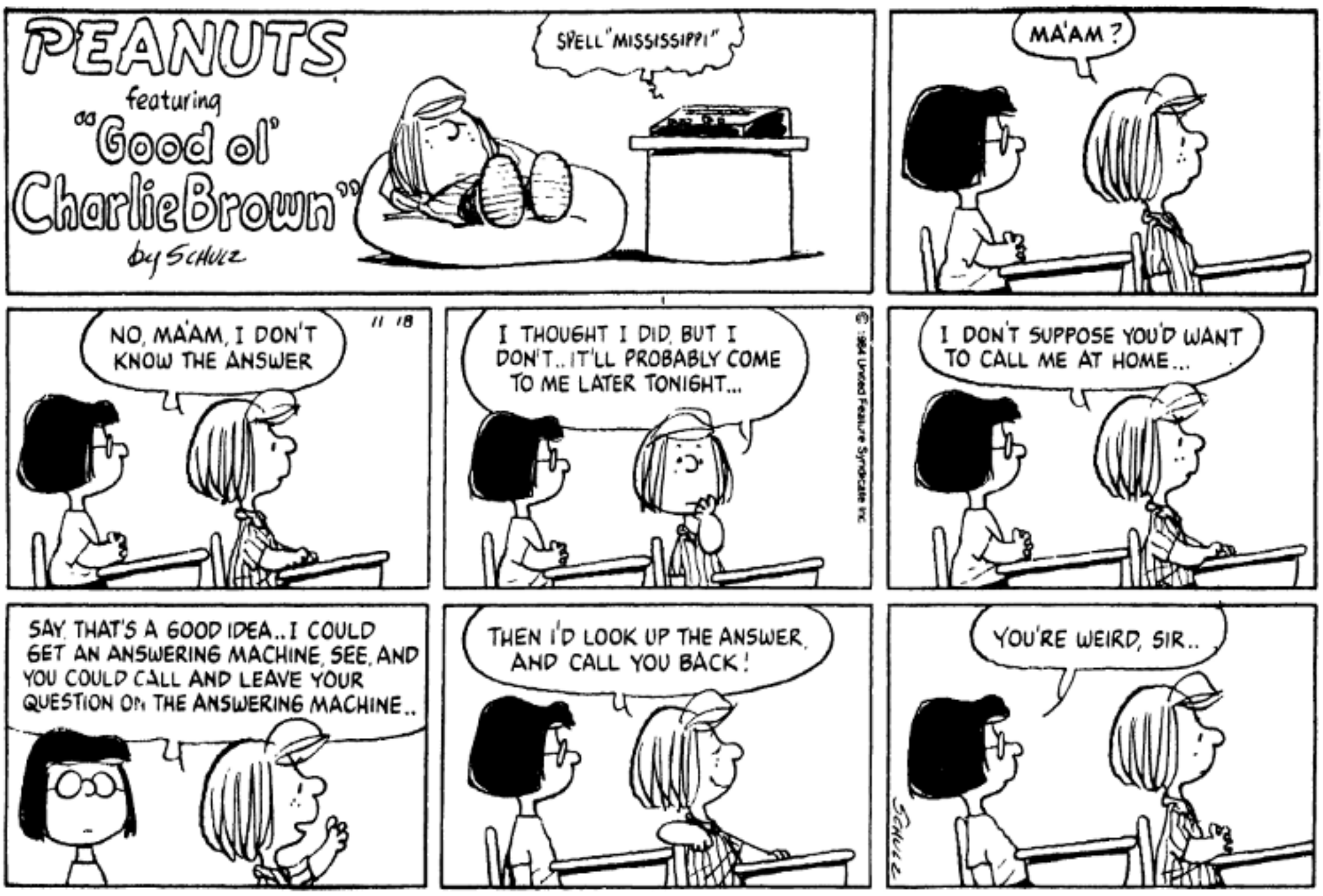
Quick Think:
1. T (miss 1, miss 2, miss 3...)
2. U. V, W, X, Y, Z (1, miss 1, 2, miss 2, 3, miss 3...)

What's in a Word:
Revere, Legible, Orator, Insulin and Edited.

Scrambles:
Bleat, Raced, Enrol, Cruet, Askew, Brace.

Shape Sleuth:
E (One stable shape is followed by two unstable shapes)

Eye Wash
There is an extra line in the frame of the lower picture.



Nathaniel Brassey Halhed
A Grammar of the Bengal Language
100 00

Atulya Ghose
The Split
10 00

P.K.S. Kutty
Laugh with Kutty
35.00

Dr. Sisir Kumar Basu & Birendra Nath Sinha
Netaji: A Pictorial Biography
65 00

Barun Sengupta
Last days of the Morarji Raj
35.00

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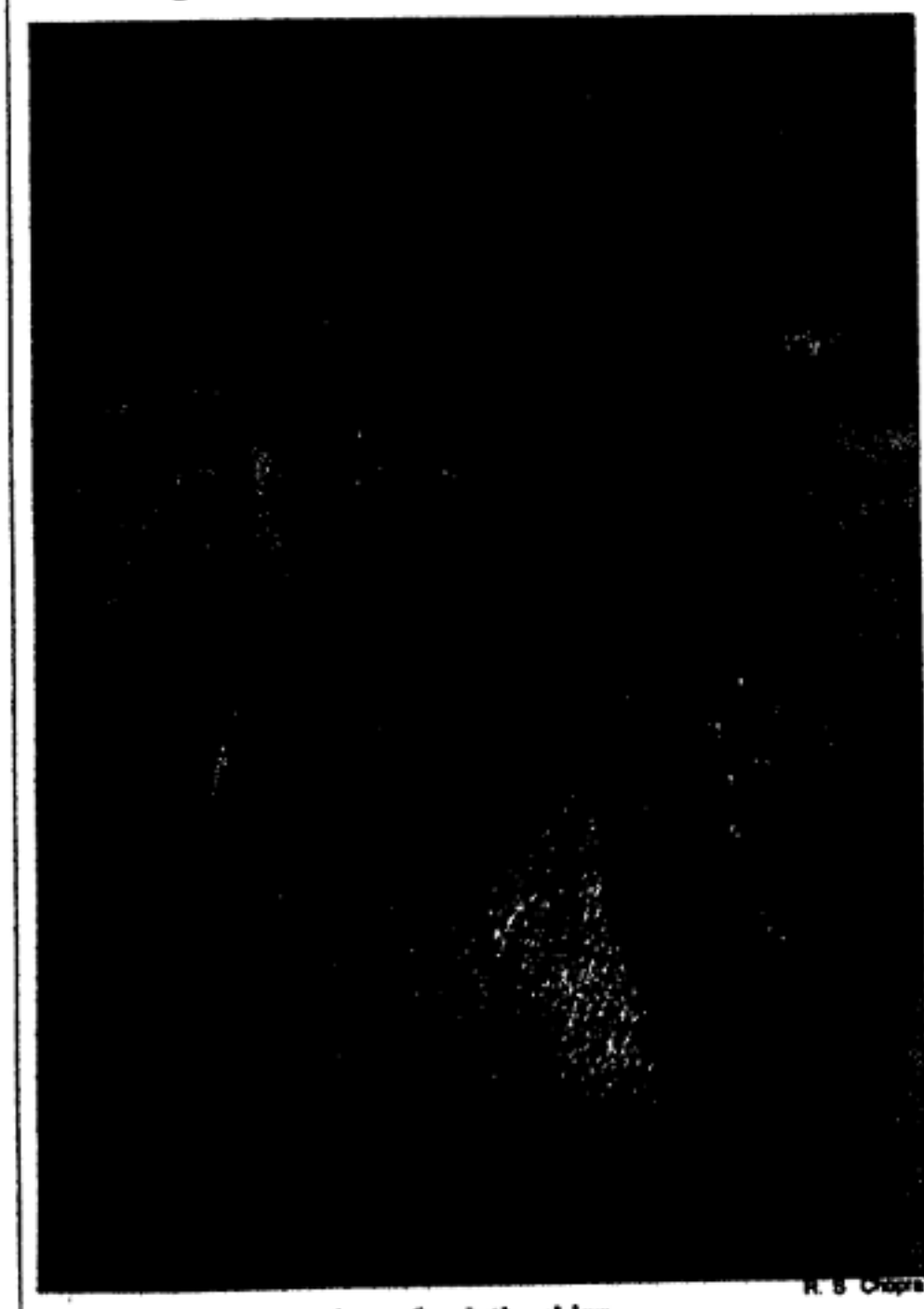


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VARIETY/KHAAS BAAT

Sridevi, with her impeccable manners, is slowly showing signs of change. She has started behaving badly not only with the people in the industry but also with the press which gave her the boost she badly needed. Recently, she forced *Subhash Ghai*, one of the respected names in the Bombay film world, to throw out a group of photographers because she was dressed in a one-piece swimming suit. Complained a senior photographer: "She has been doing all kinds of vulgar things on the screen. But why is she playing difficult with us? I hate such double standards."



Anita Raaj: no wrecker of relationships

Everyone is talking about the sizzling hot scenes in photographer-turned-filmmaker *Akash Jain's Seepiyan*. The talk centres around the bedroom and other such scenes between *Debashree Roy* and *Kanwaljeet*. The last time Debashree hit the headlines was when she almost stripped "because the scene demanded" in *Aparna Sen's 36 Chowringhee Lane*. She would never do it again, she had promised. But that was a long time back.

Remember *Salim* and *Javed*, the most successful of writers in Hindi films? Almost overnight they became stars—producers and directors queued up at their doorstep to sign contracts for they were the makers of many a superstar (*Amitabh Bachchan* was their creation). The duo churned out one hit after another till one day the inevitable happened. Salim and Javed got involved in a major war of egos and finally called it a day. Javed went his own way and wrote the scripts for films like *Betaab*, *Mashaal* and *Duniya*, which did not do too well at the box office. Poor Salim found no work. The good news is that the two have at last realised their folly and decided to come together again.



Debashree Roy: broken promises

The tussle between *Jackie Shroff* and *Anil Kapoor* has reached a very interesting stage. While filmmakers are busy trying to rope them, the two are playing their own clever games of each trying to outwit the other. Anil Kapoor has been facing troubled times. Three of his films—*Latla*, *Andar Bahar* and *Love Marriage*—fared badly and gave him a bad name. Jackie on the other hand had a phenomenal success in *Hero*. The fate of the two will depend on the two films due for release: *Saaheb* with Anil Kapoor in the title role and Jackie as the hero in *Mera Jawab*.

Some actresses like Hema Malini never give up. It's ages since she dazzled on the screen. Some directors and writers are now busy trying to bring her back and Hema is all too willing to help. She has even reduced her fees. Desperation can often sober stars.

DELHI DIARY

First Workman



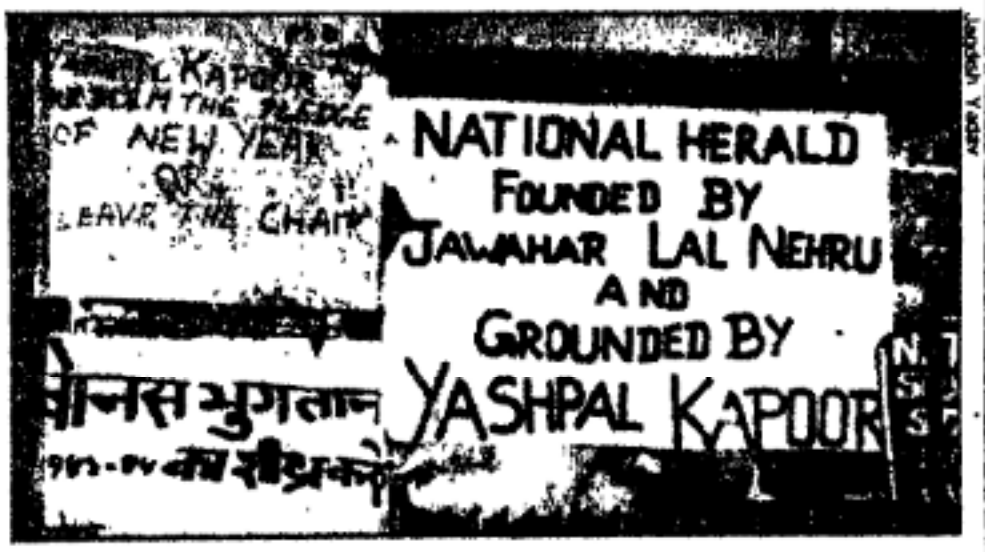
Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is the first "workman" to have become the head of government in India. The "workman" here refers to the definition laid down by the Industrial Disputes Act. Commercial pilots and working journalists, though akin to the white-collared employees, are in fact blue-collared in the eyes of law. These two categories of employees can never be deemed to be executives, howsoever high their salaries may be. The Congress(I) may or may not be able to provide a "government that works," but it certainly has given the country a "workman" PM.

Successor, Not Son

A refreshing aspect of Rajiv Gandhi's speeches has been the fact that he avoids referring to Mrs Indira Gandhi as his mother. Mrs Gandhi used to often refer to "my father, Jawaharlal Nehru" in her speeches. Rajiv Gandhi refers to his mother as the "late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi." Perhaps rightfully the young Prime Minister feels that he is the successor to Mrs Gandhi's political legacy and not merely her son.

Grounded?



Graffiti in India is plentiful, but rarely is humour noticed. The strike at the *National Herald* in Delhi has produced some: "*National Herald*: Founded by Jawaharlal Nehru and grounded by Yashpal Kapoor." The reference is to the decline of this pioneering daily under its present editor-cum-managing director.

Technical Choice?



Krishnaswamy Raosahab

Who will be the next cabinet secretary? Krishnaswamy Raosahab is to retire soon. The seniormost member of the IAS is the planning secretary K.V. Ramanathan. But Mr Ramanathan's name, while being on top of the civil list, was dragged into controversy in 1980. He was the then secretary for petroleum, chemicals and fertilisers and the award of the consultancy contract for the Bombay High gas-based fertiliser units at Hazira and Thal-Vaishet was being discussed.

The matter had been considered by two high-power committees for over three years. The American firm, C.F. Braun, represented in India by the former sheriff of Bombay, Narendra Kapadia, was on the top of the shortlist on both occasions. In 1980, Italy's Snam Progetti suddenly jumped into the fray with political patronage and overruling technical opinion, this firm which had not even been shortlisted, got the contract. Mr Ramanathan opposed this and came in conflict with his minister, P.C. Sethi.

Later, while deposing before Parliament's estimate's committee, Mr Ramanathan was asked whether the award had been changed due to some superior technical grounds. He replied that the new deal had been guided not by technical, but "superior extra-technical" considerations. Now this upright officer is on the threshold of getting the best job an IAS member can aspire for. Will he make it? In all likelihood another good officer, P.K. Kaul, finance secretary, who is next to Mr Ramanathan in seniority, will be the next cabinet secretary.

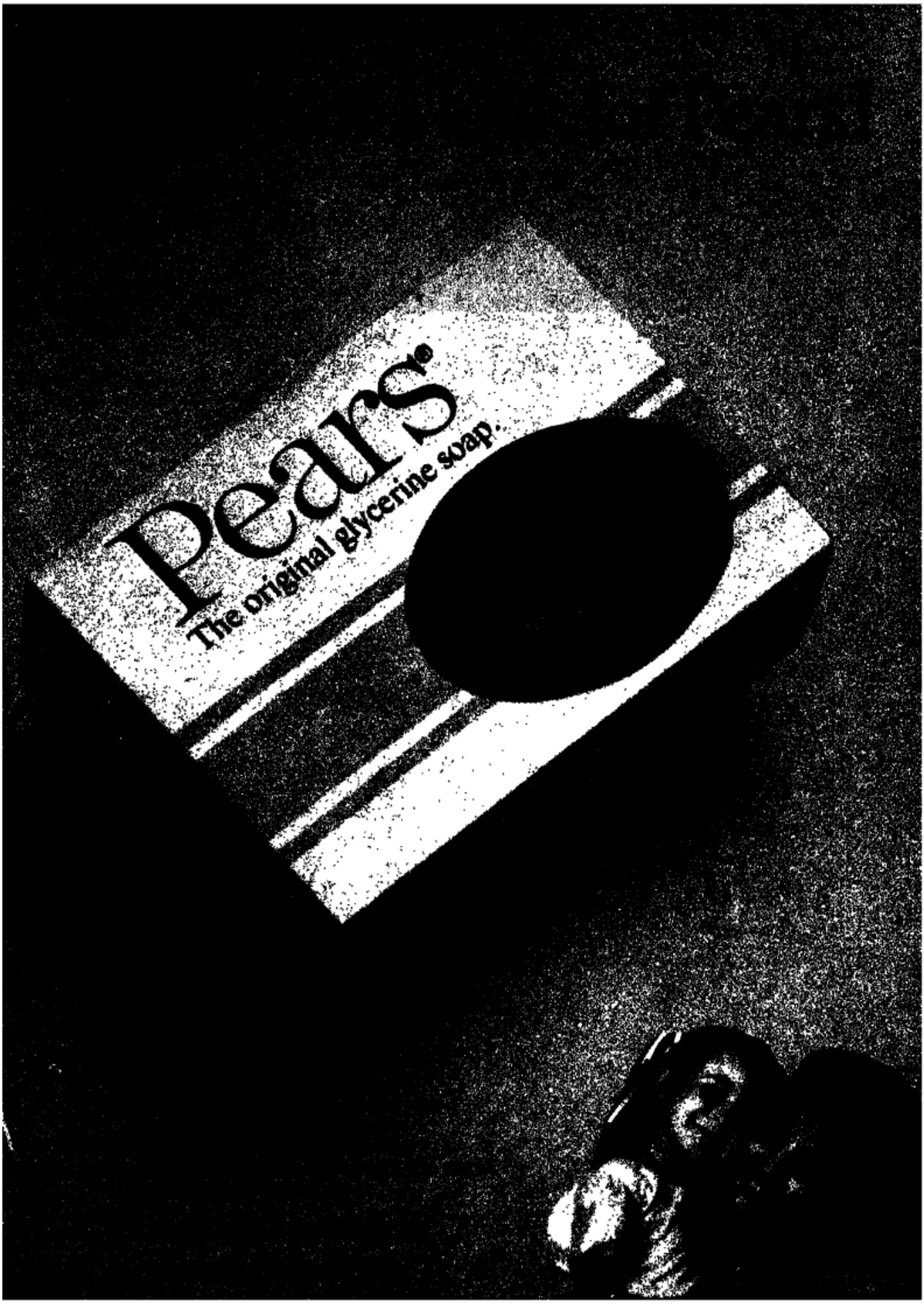
The Haryana Accord



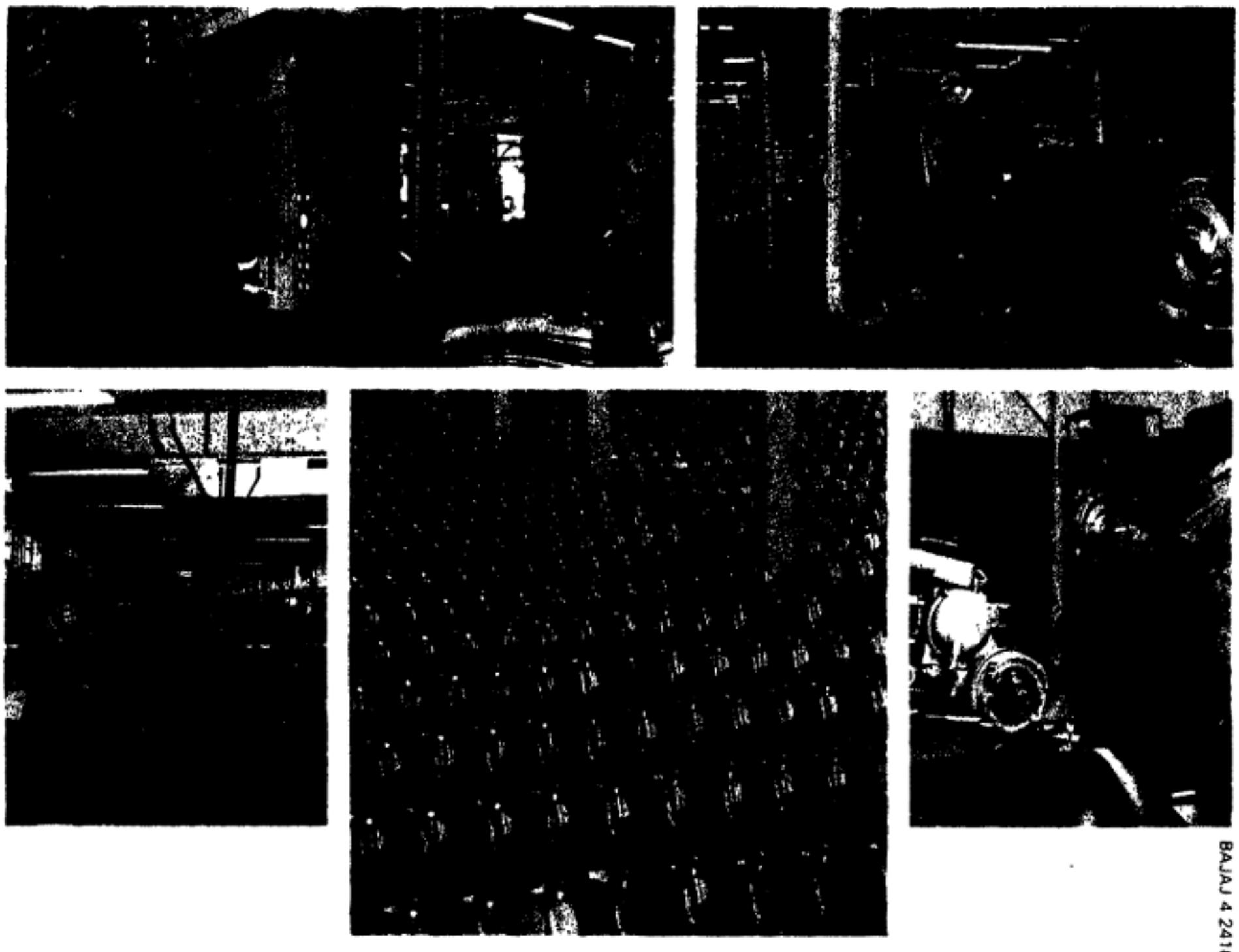
Bhajan Lal

While there is no solution in sight in Punjab, an interesting accord seems to have been reached in neighbouring Haryana. Chief minister Bhajan Lal and railway minister Bansi Lal (the former strongman and builder of Haryana) are said to have buried the hatchet. Soon after the Lok Sabha elections, pro-Bansi Lal men in Haryana were gunning for Bhajan Lal and their main plank was that fresh polls should be held in the state. But when elections were not announced for Haryana along with the other states, Bansi Lal did not even whimper. A Bansi-Bhajan rapproachement could be the only reason for this.

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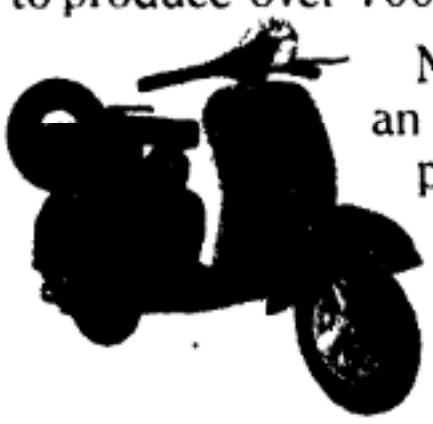
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Tom Nossiter on the Decline of the Leftists

SUNDAY





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Who Will Replace the Angry Young Man?

Who will fill the vacuum created by Amitabh Bachchan joining politics? Girija Rajendran discusses the present talent in the Hindi filmdom.

Old Themes in New Reels

The country's film studios churn out 800 feature films and 650 short films on an average every year. But there is very little innovation in terms of themes. Nikhat Kazmi takes a look at Hindi films produced over the last three years.



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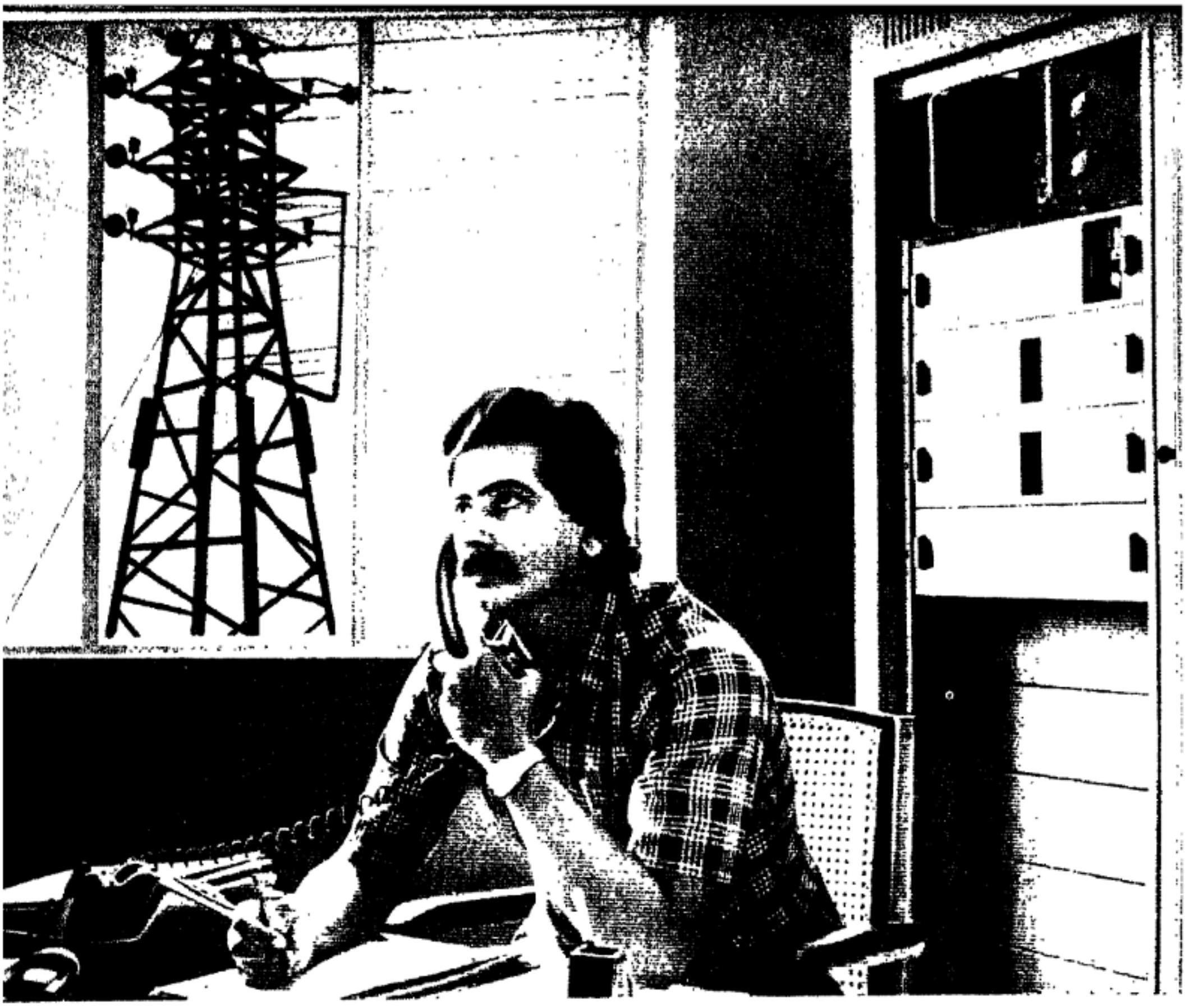


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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Bhopal: People look back in wonder now, quite unable to comprehend exactly why they had been chosen for a tragedy of Old Testament proportions. 'Nightmare' (an unpleasant dream: a dream accompanied by pressure on the breast and a feeling of powerlessness to move or speak—personified as an incubus or evil spirit; a horrifying experience, says the dictionary) has acquired a new dimension in Bhopal. The first indication that something was wrong came with the sound of coughing. Quickly the isolated spells of choking became a general bedlam, and suddenly people realised that there was something horrible and murderous in the air. Death seeped in, white and evil. Those who could, escaped. Those who could not, died. Perhaps this is really how the world will end- not with a bang, but a whimper.

The Union Carbide factory near the railway station looks still and innocent, its rows of shiny silver roofs a precise copy of the traditional factory design. The turret from which the gas leaked has become a bit of a tourist attraction, but it is wrong of course to blame the metal. Human beings were at fault that night, and it is they who must be made answerable. This is an issue over which chief minister Arjun Singh or Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi cannot be partisan: this is beyond Congress and opposition politics: this is a national tragedy which we, as a nation, must learn from. Bhopal can happen again, and in many cities.

It is fascinating that the people have understood this much better than their leaders. It is the poor who first lost their lives and their small wealth in the form of milk or egg-producing animals, it is the middle class who panicked on the day the MIC was being diluted, and sold off their gold at Rs 500 a *tola* before escaping to a city without a Union Carbide factory. But they did not blame the ruling party for what had befallen them. Bhopal, still shivering from the shock in late December, went to the polls only on January 28. The BJP, smashed everywhere else in Madhya Pradesh, tried to salvage something in Bhopal and campaigned on the alleged negligence of the state government. Gruesome posters (hand with long nailed fingers dripping with blood *et al*) can still be seen on the city walls exhorting the citizens to teach the Congress(I) a lesson. Without making any fuss, the people voted for the Congress(I), and in overwhelming numbers. But it would be criminal negligence on the part of Mr Arjun Singh if he took that victory as an excuse for complacency. The people were right in feeling that the Congress(I) did not deliberately engineer this tragedy, but they are hardly going to condone any kind of a cover-up. Nor will activists like Anand Sadgopal of Kishore Bharti, whose social work makes one proud, allow any cover up to take place. Death by gas has become an unforgettable chapter in the history of Bhopal; many generations will be told of the night when the world became a deathly blur of white. And mothers of today and tomorrow will want to know who sent children to their death on 3 December 1984.

Has anyone seen an Assembly election hiding anywhere? We know it is out there somewhere, and simply can't understand why it won't show its face. Its presence has been formally announced, and it is bound by law to be visible on 2 and 5 March. What then is the coyness all about?

Till the moment of writing, there was hardly a sign that within a matter of days ten governments would be elected all over the country. That is no small area. The number of people voting even in this sectional election is more than that which voted in the American presidential poll. The task before the political leaders was sizeable. It seemed, however, that everyone was exhausted after the mammoth effort of the general elections. The opposition did not have much by way of resources even in the more important round; this time it was the petty cash box which was being emptied in an effort to find the bare petrol money. With the balance of money power tilted so heavily in favour of the Congress(I), it is doubtful if Mr Rajiv Gandhi's generosity is going to extend so far as to introduce a few more electoral reforms and provide state funding for election campaigns, as for instance happens in the United States. The main resource of the opposition in 1984 was simply that they were in opposition to Mrs Indira Gandhi. That, as we have seen, did not carry them very far in December. How far will opposition to a new and confident Rajiv Gandhi take them? One gets the feeling that the opposition has given up already, apart from the charismatic Ramakrishna Hegde in Karnataka, the dogged Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra and the brave Biju Patnaik in Orissa.

Certainly the Bharatiya Janata Party, allegedly the sole opposition party in Madhya Pradesh, did not look like an organisation marching vigorously towards victory. Truth to tell, it did not look like any kind of party at all. The main argument in Congress(I) circles, as far as the results were concerned, was whether the ruling party would win 300 seats or more. (There are 320 seats in the MP Assembly.)

The main opposition party in Madhya Pradesh, incidentally, is not the BJP but the Congress(I). To put it more clearly: one section of the ruling party rules, the other section opposes. With the party nominations a clear victory for chief minister Arjun Singh, the real interest in Bhopal lay in finding out to what extent his *khadi*-clad enemies would hurt their own party's candidates. Unlike in a parliamentary poll, where a constituency is so large and the issues so critical that dissenters get submerged in one tide or the other, rebels have some hope of effective sabotage in an Assembly election. A switch of two or three thousand votes can easily turn victory into defeat. If there is any hope for the BJP, it is in such civil wars. But that, at the end of the day, does not amount to a great deal.

It is not apathy which gives the Assembly poll the aura of a non-election, but merely the conviction that it is not much of a contest. Most of the opposition leaders know too that their next real chance will come only when they are five years older; in other words, when Morarji Desai is 93, Charan Singh is 87 and Jagjivan Ram is 81.

Death by gas has become an unforgettable chapter in the history of Bhopal; many generations will be told of the night when the world became a deathly blur of white. And mothers of today and tomorrow will want to know who sent children to their death on 3 December 1984.

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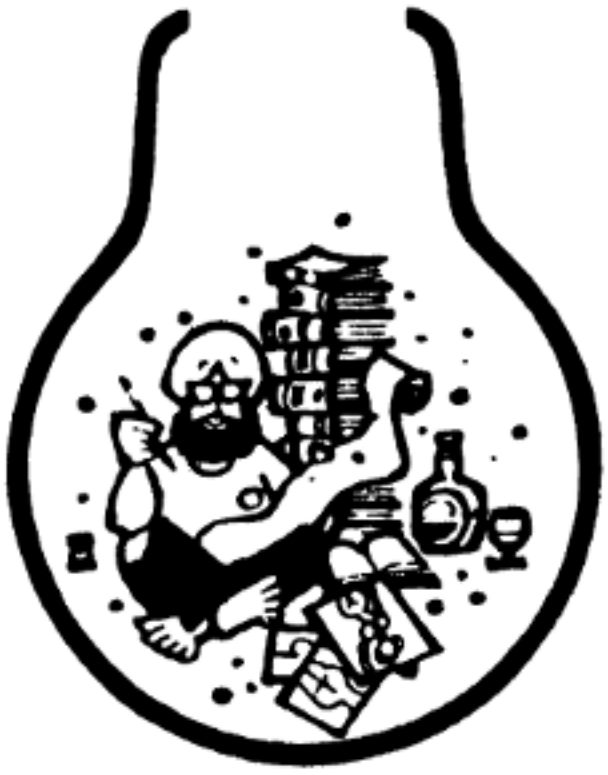
Neither Heaven Nor Hell

Mankind continues to cherish the illusion of divine justice; if not in life on earth, then in life hereafter. I who do not believe in life hereafter, continue to be obsessed with the prevalence of injustice in the world. I would like to ask believers in after-life: "Where is Bhindranwale now? Roasting in the fires of hell as his detractors hope, or seated beside the throne of the Lord as his followers believe? Where are the thousands of innocents who were massacred in the anti-Sikh riots in northern India or perished in the embrace of poison gas in Bhopal? What about the living who perpetrated these crimes? It is evident that none of them will be punished on earth; on the contrary all of them are free, many still in possession of loot and some holding positions of importance. Will they meet their desserts only after demise?

Even the Hindu family of religions (Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism) which do not subscribe to notions of heaven or hell as places of reward and punishment but in *samskara*, the unending cycle of birth, death and rebirth, have succumbed to the notions of *swaraga* and *narak*. Although theologically they stick to the idea of *moksha* as release from the process of being born, dying and being reborn, in fact that *bera paar* (life's boat reaching the opposite shore) is regarded as attaining *vaikunth*—paradise where their souls mingle with God.

To get out of the dilemma of injustice perpetrated by a God assumed to be just, men of religion indulge in convoluted logic. Mother Teresa explains the famine in Ethiopia as an opportunity to give in charity "till it hurts." If she is right, God makes Ethiopian children die of hunger so that the living feel the hurt caused by parting with money for charity. This makes no sense to me.

Christians are bothered by the idea of everlasting damnation. Surely even the vilest sinner should be given a chance to at one for his misdeeds and gain forgiveness! "Yes indeed!" they answer. "For the small-time sinner there is the purgatory where he is purged of his evil deeds and made wholesome enough to enter paradise." One of the joys that the righteous are promised in after-life is a free seat to watch sinners being tormented. That



Gossip sweet and sour

KHUSHWANT SINGH

apparently is the justification for public floggings, tortures and executions which are regarded by many as good entertainment. Christians divide sins into two categories; those that can earn forgiveness and those that entail endless punishment. The Bible says: "When the wicked man dieth, his expectations shall perish and the hope of the unjust man perisheth." (*Book of Proverbs*). To this statement the venerable Bede added, "When the righteous man dies, his hopes do not perish."

So there is a place in after-life which is neither heaven nor hell. You are in limbo as if in a railway station waiting room awaiting the arrival of the right train. The pure board the air-conditioned Rajdhani for paradise; the unpardonable are herded in the cattle truck train bound for eternal damnation. A third train, a slow passenger, stops at every station where minor sinners are purged of their minor sins and ultimately also arrive at paradise.

Islam also has the notion of a middle place, the *pulsaraat*. It is a kind of bridge of doubt over which you have to pass before you reach your ultimate destination. I have always regarded this bridge as a period of uncertainty between declaration of love and response from the beloved. To wit the famous Punjabi Sufi poet, Inayat Qadri:

Pahlee pauri Prem dee
Pulsaratey dera;
Haaji makkay haj karan
Main Mukh dekhaan tera.
Ai Inayat Qadri,
Hath pakreen mera.

(The first step of love I make my home on *Pulsaraat*. Men of faith make pilgrimage to Mecca, I keep looking at your face. O Inayat Qadri Hold my hand and help me across!)

As far as I am concerned, I believe that a clear conscience makes life on earth a paradise and a guilty one makes it hell. My authority for saying so is my philosopher-guide, Allama Iqbal:

Amal Say Zindagi bantee hai,
Jannat bhee Jahannum bhee;
Yeh khaaki hai, apnee fitrat mein
Na nooree hai na naari hai

(T's how we act that makes our lives;/We can make it heaven, we can make it hell,/In the clay of which we are made/Neither light nor the darkness of evil dwell.)

Swastika

The Kipling Journal published by the Kipling Society of which I am a member has a letter from the owner of a book store dealing in rare books about the *Swastika* symbol on the earliest editions of Rudyard Kipling's works. He complains that customers object to it as Nazi emblem till he explains to them it is "Ganesha's symbol" and that Kipling had dropped it after Hitler took it on.

There are many misconceptions about the *Swastika*, the most popular being that it is exclusively Aryan. Nothing of the sort. It has been found in China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Scandinavia, Mexico and Peru. However, while in other civilisations it went into oblivion, it is preserved by the Hindu to this day. The word is used extensively in Hindu ritual following the sacred invocation, *Om*. It is made up of three syllables, *Swa* meaning "well", *asti* meaning "is" and *Ka* which is its noun ending. Put together *Swastika* means "it is well." Hence its use on auspicious occasions. That also explains why the yogic posture for meditation is called the *Svastikaasana* or the good luck pose.

The arms of the Hindu *Swastika* are in the opposite direction of those of the Nazi—although the Nazi shape can also be seen in Hindu temples and homes.

I was curious to know why Kipling regarded it as the Ganesha symbol. He was born in Bombay. It is during the Ganpati festival during the monsoon that you see more *Swastikas* than at other times as Maharashtrian women draw it on floors of their houses and worship it.



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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Collectors' Authority Has Eroded

Once when Jawaharlal Nehru went on a tour of a district town in a state, he was exasperated to find the collector, the superintendent of police, the district engineer, the civil surgeon and many other officers and politicians had gathered to receive him. On his return to New Delhi he wrote to the state chief ministers to issue instructions to the collector (called deputy commissioners in some states) not to disturb their work to attend to VIPs. His letter said: "The collector has to perform certain duties in a year. He arranges his programme with an eye on his inspections, arrangements for appeals, development works, on the spot discussions and so on. To expect him to call off these arrangements for the sake of just attending some occasions where his presence is not essential is unfair to him and unjust to the administration. Once a programme of the collector is out, not only should he uphold it, but everybody should help in doing so, unless there are special reasons to the contrary. The harm done in the collector neglecting normal work is incalculable."

The reaction of Rajiv Gandhi, like his mother's, has been that of tacit acceptance even during the election tours, the collectors have been present wherever he has gone. He has told both ministers and officers to cut their foreign tours and to be punctual but he has said nothing, for example, against the practice of the collector receiving and seeing off a dignitary. At present if the collector is busy in his work and does not show up, the visiting minister or even MLA holds this against him. There are examples when officers have been punished for the "lapse."

Rajiv's first task should have been to tone up district administration because inefficiency, corruption and harassment are rampant there The first note that Lal Bahadur Shastri wrote as Prime Minister was about district administration. He realised how important it was to have development in the districts and how apathetic the local administrators were becoming There was a flicker of interest in remedial measures, but Shastri died within 20 months of assuming office and after him the exercise got buried under more notes and directives.

The entire effort directed towards cleanliness that Rajiv is making, should start in the district. The machinery must work there to ensure that a doctor is in his dispensary and does not sell medicines elsewhere from the limited stock he gets from the headquarters; a teacher is in his school and does not disappear on a part-time job; a *gram sahaik* (village-level worker) helps in the field and does not extract money or misappropriate most of the government's assistance.

One reason for the present condition is the fact that the authority of the collector, once the most feared and respected in a district, has been so reduced that even a petty police official can defy him with impunity. He is held responsible for a mishap, but has no say in the functioning of the law and order machinery, which is directly under the charge of the superintendent of police. There may be something in the criticism that an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) man is made the collector within six to seven years of his joining the service, and is usually too immature for this post. And there is probably a case for senior officers to go into the field to improve the tone and tenor of administration at the grassroots. But the question is not that of the quality of the officer or his age, it is that of his authority: to have to function efficiently, he should have the power to take steps in the best interests of the administration.

Some chief ministers are increasingly setting the collector and the SP against each other so that control of the institution rests with them. Ministers pick up one or the other to show favour and this has played havoc with the administration. But our political masters are primarily concerned with their own interests. In fact, the SP is usually favoured by the politicians for he can help them; the collector can only fret and fume over some of the doings of the SP and even if he were to complain about them in his reports to the chief secretary, he knows that nothing would be done.

There cannot be two points of power. An SP cannot be incharge of all matters in the district because he is a specialist, an expert in law and order and related matters Only the collector can be familiar with all the problems of district administration and take an overall view. But he also competes with the SP in currying favour.

Perhaps the fight for supremacy between the collector and the SP has always been there, but the collector was considered to be in overall charge In a few states he still writes the confidential report (CR) of the SP. The Police Act, which is yet to be amended, gives this right to the collector. It is assumed that in a district the buck stopped at the collector's desk. But now his authority is devalued.

What is important is that the collector be given more undisputed authority. He is the channel through which all government policies and programmes are funnelled and their success or failure would depend on how they are implemented. And it is the collector who has to implement them.

Some chief ministers are increasingly setting the collector and the SP against each other...Ministers pick up one or the other to show favour and this has played havoc with the administration.

Purposeless Revolt

The special report on *Jayalalitha's Revolt* (3—9 February '85) made interesting reading. Nobody in the AIADMK baring MGR has a mass base. In all probability, Jayalalitha was stripped of her post on the advice of MGR. Or else why would Jayalalitha be absent from the reception given to MGR on his arrival from USA?
K. Srinivasan, Madras

• SUNDAY gave undue importance to Jayalalitha. It is preposterous to claim that she has the backing of 60 AIADMK MLAs. All she has is the support of a few disgruntled elements in the party. Jayalalitha's statements to the press questioning the mental condition of MGR has alienated her from the people of Tamil Nadu. Jayalalitha is now a spent force and her future in AIADMK is bleak.
E. R. Rajnarayanan, Madras

• Anita Pratap was correct when she said that if the impression that Jayalalitha has turned against MGR gains strength, her mass base will crumble. Her utterances have proved to be her undoing. The people of Tamil Nadu have turned against her and this was evident the day MGR returned: Jayalalitha was nowhere to be seen.
S. Appu, Madras

• The ruling 'coterie' in Tamil Nadu tried to take revenge on Jayalalitha on the assumption that MGR would not survive. But by god's grace, he survived and now the group has been pushed to a corner.
N. Sundararajan, Madras

• The vitriolic attacks on Jayalalitha by the honourable minister, Kalimuthu, amused me. The minister, who claims to be a doctorate, does not even know the basic etiquettes of civilised life: throughout the interview he refers to Jayalalitha as "it."
B. Uthamanarayanan, Erode (TN)

Picture Power

Photographs can be more telling than the printed word. Sunil Dutta's photofeature on the Gangasagar pilgrimage (*In Quest of Salvation*, 27 January—2 February '85) was a welcome departure from long boring narrations. I hope SUNDAY will make such features a regular issue. There are many incidents taking place around us.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan



Inaccuracies

It is not true that Rajiv Gandhi was born in Allahabad in 1944 as stated by Tariq Ali in the extracts from his book, *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty (The Nation's Grandchildren*, 27 January—2 February '85). Our Prime Minister was born in Bombay.
K. J. Joseph, Shillong

• Sanjay Gandhi married Menaka in 1974 and not in 1975 as claimed by Tariq Ali. By the time the Emergency was imposed, Sanjay was a married man. Moreover, after going through the portions about Rajiv Gandhi, I was still ignorant about the educational qualifications of our Prime Minister. I do not know why the author ignored this aspect.
Ashok Narayan, New Delhi

The Great Betrayal

The investigative cover story, *Bureaucrat, Diplomat, Industrialist, Spy* (3—9 February '85) read like a crime thriller. It is no use blaming foreign governments for meddling in the affairs of our country. There are Indians who are far more harmful to the nation than the foreign hand. As rightly pointed out by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, moneybags wield immense power in Delhi. Things have come to such a pass that in India today one could buy anything with money.
Nirjhar Das Gupta, Calcutta

• The government should take immediate steps to root out corruption from the bureaucracy.
Rudra Dutta Satapathi, Rourkela

• The assassination of Indira Gandhi and the spy scandal has laid bare the cracks in our intelligence set-up. I was alarmed to learn that the spy ring operated for the last 25 years. Coomar Narain's disloyalty will surely go down in history as one of the worst betrayals.
Sangram Mishra, Cuttack

• The entire intelligence organisation should be reconstituted in the wake of the spy scandal.
Rajesh Sahay, Hazaribagh

• I was shocked at the degradation of moral and ethical values in public and political life. Corruption at the highest level is destroying our country. The spy scandal should serve as an eye-opener to all concerned.
M. H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

• *The Russians are Here* has convincingly exposed the activities of the KGB in India. Saumitra Ba. erjee and Shubhabrata Bhattacharya have rightly pointed out that the Russians exploit the communist parties in India to achieve their objective. We only blame the CIA but the KGB is also a serious threat to India's security. We should not be deceived by their firendship. When it comes to the question of the nation's security, we should treat all foreigners alike.
M. G. Mansharmani, Delhi

• Certain vested interests are creating the impression that the CIA is the real threat to India's security and that the Russians are our friends. The confessions of Coomar Narain has exploded this myth. It is time we realised the real intensions of the Russians.
J. S. Pathania, New Delhi

• I was ashamed at the great betrayal of my fellow citizens. Those who were supposed to protect the country turned out to be traitors. I would advise the strictest punishment for the traitors.
Ramachandra Tripathy, Madras

• SUNDAY has rightly observed that the rupee trade arrangement has helped the KGB to operate in India. The government has given preferential treatment to the USSR which has been utilised by the KGB to divert funds for espionage activities.
Tilak Raj Kapoor, New Delhi

Sporting Spirit

M.J. Akbar's write-up on the winter in Calcutta was a delightful diversion from his regular gift of hackneyed politics (*Dateline*, 3—9 February '85). The anticipation of the colourful winter is what keeps Calcuttans going through the sultry summer and damp monsoon.
Padmakar Vyas, Howrah

• Like a true sportsman, Mr Akbar has apologised to his readers for his predictions regarding the fate of the filmstars in the Lok Sabha polls. Like him all journalists should have the courage to admit defeat.
G.M. Ningoji, Yelburga (Karnataka)

• M.J. Akbar has correctly pointed out that "strong doses of courage and ideology" are needed for the survival of the Janata Party (*Dateline*, 6—19 January '85). It is a matter of great regret that the opposition learnt nothing from past mistakes. Why blame the Congress(I) for establishing dynastic rule? The people did give the opposition a chance to rule in 1977. But did the leaders honour the people's verdict? All the opposition leaders were busy furthering their personal ambitions. The author has also rightly praised Rajiv Gandhi for appointing ministers with relatively clean images.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

Noble Ambition

The efforts of NTR to launch a political party at the national level is certainly laudable (*The Ambitions of NTR*, 27 January—2 February 1985). After the Lok Sabha elections the opposition is thoroughly demoralised and badly in need of a leader who can invigorate them. NTR, I am sure, will gradually emerge as a powerful opposition leader. However, it would be wrong to compare NTR with JP.
Bijaya Rath, Kakiriguma (Orissa)

• I was delighted to hear that NTR has decided to extend his visions beyond Andhra Pradesh. The Telugu Desam, being a regional party, can never cater to the aspirations of all the people of India. N.T. Rama Rao's decision to launch the Bharat Desam was timely as the country is in need of an united opposition. NTR's popularity will certainly attract a lot of people towards him.
Dipendra Adhikary, Dhubri

• The Telugu Desam is the only party that can provide some kind of resistance to the Congress(I). After the defeat of most of the opposition leaders, NTR has emerged as the sole hope of the opposition. I am sure the Bharat Desam will help in unifying the opposition.
Muyyam Rajan, Singrauli (MP)



N.T. Rama Rao: charismatic

• In an age when most political leaders are hungry for power and money, NTR's statement: *Politics is Not for Power, It is for Service*, came as a relief to many like me. The Bharat Desam will certainly fulfil the aspirations of the common man.
P. Rajaiah, Hyderabad

Akalis: To Ban or Not to Ban?

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya's statement in his article, *Should the Akalis be Banned?* (20—26 January '85), that the President gave undue importance to the Sikh high priests by seeking forgiveness only shows the little knowledge the author has about the discipline prevalent in the Sikh community. The congregation at the funeral of the President's son-in-law was very thin solely because Gianiji was declared a *tankhaiya* by the priests. This depressed the President and he soon realised the consequences of the punishment. There was no alternative but to seek forgiveness. Such strict discipline has always helped the Sikhs to preserve their unity and identity.

Moreover, it would be wrong to identify the Sikhs with the Akalis. There are very few Sikhs who have anything to do with the Akalis. The Akali Dal is a political party which does not even enjoy the support of the majority of the Sikhs in Punjab. It was the Akali Dal and the Congress(I) that created Bhindranwale.
Taj Singh Lakhmna, Jamshedpur

• Banning political parties like the Akali Dal, though a very revolutionary idea, will not solve problems like the growing militancy of the Sikhs. Such a bold step should have been taken much earlier and now any such promulgation will be labelled as an act of supression. Thanks to SUNDAY for the provoking cover story.
Ajay Pant, Moradabad

• The cover story presented a distorted and biased picture of the aims and objectives of the Akali Dal. Never did the Dal raise demands for Khalistan. It was the Congress(I) which wanted to reap political harvest out of such slander.

To a Sikh, religion is supreme. So there is nothing unusual about a President being declared a *tankhaiya*. Instead of following the path of confrontation, the central government should amicably solve the problems of the Sikhs. It would be a mistake to use force to supress religion. The Sikhs are a brave race and they will resist all such attempts.
T.V.S. Shastry, Warangal (AP)

• The Akali Dal should give up its obstinate stand that the government should first release all Akali leaders under detension before beginning negotiations. Enough harm has been done to the country and now the Akalis should cooperate with the new government to solve the Punjab tangle.
N. Ellango, Tirunelveli

• Tirthankar Ghosh's report on the incident at Maloya (*The 'Martyr' of Maloya*) in which a handful of irresponsible people glorified the act of Beant Singh disturbed me. While condemning such behaviour, I would appeal to SUNDAY not to publisize such happenings as it will lead to bloodshed once again.
N. Akhileshwar, Bombay

• I was surprised that the prefix 'martyr' s being used by some people before the name of Beant Singh. A killer has been placed on the same platform as that of other Sikh martyrs like Guru Govind Singh and Arjun Singh.
Satyabrata Pattanayak, Markona

COVER STORY

REKHA: TWO SCREEN DECADES, 1965—1985

Queen Bee



"It would be so good if serious filmmakers like Satyajit Ray would start making films with Rekha. For then only can Rekha's vast innate talents and capabilities be fully exploited." Coming from as experienced a director as Hrishikesh Mukherjee, this could not have been yet another sweeping statement made by a fan rather than a serious filmmaker. He has worked with the actress long enough to know her inherent possibilities. He adds: "Rekha is the only perfect actress in the film industry today. Despite the presence of such talented actresses as Shabana and Smita who are suitable only for certain kinds of roles, Rekha stands out as someone who can take on any role. Besides, Shabana and Smita do not have the required glamour. Rekha, on the other hand, has both undisputed glamour and tremendous talent. If ever I can make a film entirely of my choice, I will prove this. And make the film I will even though it may be my last work." Some compliment this.

Hindi films happened to Rekha almost two decades ago. And ever since she has created and shattered many a myth—both about the industry and about herself. The enigma she has woven around herself has made her critics throw up their hands in helplessness. Rekha is a riddle many want to solve but few can. It is difficult to uncover the real person under so many shrouds and images to find the different and real Rekha amidst all the epithets that comprise her reputation.

Her film career began in 1965, two decades ago. Rekha has travelled a long way from the early days when she was known for her petulance, irresponsibility and self centredness. The maturity is a mix of public success and personal disappointments. She has won and lost; there is now the objectivity to look at the world's praises with an older eye. Today, even on winning the national award of utmost significance, she says: "I don't deserve the award. It at all this award for best actress should have gone to anyone it is Jennifer Kapoor for her performance in *36 Chowringhee Lane*." Ten years ago this modesty from Rekha would have been unimaginable. But this phenomenal transformation in the star's personality has not taken place overnight.

Rekha's childhood was far from a dream. The daughter of Tamil screen superstars, Gemini Ganesan and Pushpavalli, Rekha witnessed the hard truths of life at a very early age. In her father, she saw the arrogant chauvinist man; in her mother, the helpless woman trying to maintain an equilibrium in domestic life. Finally, she saw her home broken when her parents separated.

Her teens found her whimsical, fat and a tomboy, detesting the thought of anything that did not please her. She protested against all that she was forced to do. It was at this stage, in fact, that the trauma of a broken home began to set in, only to manifest itself in various ways later in her life. Her petulance, then, was not so much due to her hot temper, but the culmination of a bitter past she had left behind. Today, however, there is a difference in her attitude: earlier she did not know how to express her personal experiences and feelings; now she is more composed about it.

Rekha grew up to be a mother's daughter but was totally averse to any kind of compulsion. "Nobody tried to explain the importance of things I ought to have done, with love and affection. If only they had," Rekha regrets, "I would have achieved so much more." It was in this process of understanding others and the desire to be understood that Rekha eventually had to succumb to her mother's designs for her—acting in films. Soon she landed at the Mecca of Hindi films, Bombay. Little did she know then of the life that lay before her. Exposed to one bitter experience after another in the 'big bad world,' Rekha realised the truth of existence and discovered how ugly it was.

When she arrived in Bombay, she was dark and fat and totally unfit for a film career. The search for a godfather was tough, considering she had absolutely nothing to offer to the box-office. It was at this juncture of life that she came across Shatrujit and Kuljit Pal, who signed her on for *Do Shikari*, a film that was to be her first as a heroine, with the then busy star, Biswajit, in the male lead.



Rekha with Vinod Mehra in *Ghar*

◁ **Rekha in *Utsav***

But the going was not so easy. Realising the gullibility and naivete of the girl they had found, the Pal brothers decided to take the fullest advantage. They put up a host of conditions before signing the contract, one of them being 'the kiss.' Rekha agreed and their purpose was achieved. For the first time in the history of talkies, this bold kiss was publicised as never before. News spread like wildfire in the industry and many a producer, eager to exploit the 'new talent' appeared on the scene. A dumb, plain teenager turned into the 'kiss girl' overnight. Not only did the national dailies and magazines splash the news, *Life* magazine too had something to say about the new star.

This took care of her first transformation. But the irony lies in what ensued: *Do Shikari* was shelved and the producers disappeared. It is with a lot of bitterness that Rekha remembers them and the trap she had fallen into. Lapsing into a bout of intense nostalgia she recalls, "I never had any misconceptions about myself. In fact, I used to go around asking people if I had any acting talent and could make it in films as a heroine. Believe me, I was very sincere to people, but what did I get in return? I was frank and vulnerable, and people pounced at even the slightest chance to misinterpret my doings and to malign me. It was then that I first realised how mean people could be."

That was not all. Her off-screen *bindaas* image had so overtaken the actress in her that whoever came to sign her demanded that she indulge in cheap gimmickry under the guise of acting. Her dreams were further shattered and she soon found herself sinking into a depression. Hope reappeared with Mohan Sehgal who realised Rekha's worth and cast her in her first film *Saawan Bhadon* opposite Navin Nischol. A box-office hit in more ways than one, the film catapulted Rekha to higher horizons, though only with limited success. While on the one hand it had widened the scope of her career, it had also narrowed the possibilities. She came to be known, at the most, as a successful B-grade Hindi film heroine, and perhaps a replacement for Mumtaz. Her name began to sell, but merely as a good mass entertainer.

Not only for directors but for her audiences too, Rekha was no more than an actress whose talent lay confined only to cheap and popular song-and-dance sequences. And with this came the reputation of being whimsical, scatterbrain and cantankerous. Producers and directors thought twice before signing her, as tales of Rekha's 'I'm-not-in-the-mood-for-shooting' were rife. She suddenly disappeared from the sets and sometimes never even reported for shooting despite promises. All this and more: she also acquired the reputation of a desperate woman, ready to have affairs with any and every hero she worked with—right from Biswajit through Navin Nischol, Jeetendra, Vinod Mehra and Kiran Kumar. Her off-screen romances became the talk of the tinsel town, and star wives grew wary of the flirtatious Rekha.

Starved for love through her childhood, Rekha was emotionally insecure. Deprived of paternal love altogether, Rekha's search of a man who would love her also carried the quest for a father's love. And as



Rekha: the Brigitte Bardot of India

Rekha relates: "What was I to do? At a tender age, when I should have been playing with dolls, I was burdened with a profession in which I had no interest whatsoever." And whenever she got a chance to get away from the cumbersome world of films, she ran back to the familiar world of juvenile tomfoolery. "Here too, no one ever tried to understand my predicament or to analyse why I was so. On the contrary, only vulgar stories about me were circulated."

A time came when she got so worked up by the tales that were doing the rounds, that she lost whatever little politeness she had left in her. She was a confirmed eccentric and a moody actress as far as the industry was concerned. What is interesting, however, is that despite all the damage the grapevine could do, Rekha's image as a mass entertainer was not affected in the least.

And then it happened: an angry young man walked into her life. He was different from the others and took her seriously. True to the serene and strong image he exuded on the screen, he was the first man in Rekha's life who made her aware of what she really was. With love and caring concern, he opened up a whole new vista of life in front of her. It was he who eventually transformed Rekha into what she is today.

As for Rekha, she found the perfect balance of a father and a lover in Amitabh Bachchan, who brought her search for emotional security to an end. With him, she explored the compassionate side of life and saw meaning to it. The metamorphosis was intense and soon Rekha saw it reflected in others' behaviour too. People who had hitherto scoffed at her began to respect her maturity. She was overjoyed at the change and realised the absolute necessity for it. She learnt to take care of herself and took her work more seriously. This marked the beginning of a new phase in Rekha's life and career—the second phase. Says Rekha: "I now feel that my enemies were all pygmies compared to my friend who is the greatest for me."

The change that first pervaded her personal life now began to affect her work too. Her aspirations grew anew and she devoted herself to her work to achieve untouched heights. With *Namak Haraam*, came a surge of new and different films for Rekha, through *Alaap*, *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar*, *Silsila* and *Khubsoorat*.

Her clowning was gone in no time and the audiences were surprised at the new look she had acquired so suddenly. Her application and dedication became so exemplary that even art filmmakers began to vie for her. A new name was added to the already existing short list of brilliant actresses fit for serious acting—Rekha. With off-beat films like *Kalyug* and *Umrao Jaan*, came the offer for Jabbar Patel's *Musafir* and Rekha felt the importance of being an actress, not just a filmstar.

Today, Rekha is the Brigitte Bardot of India with her extraordinary good looks and brilliant histrionics. She is the fantasy of every man. Unlike other heroines, Rekha's personality has gone from strength to strength over the last two decades. In the twenty years that have passed by, she has achieved new dimensions, both as a person and as an actress.

Yet she stands alone on the shores of the world of transient joys and sorrows, reminding one of Rilke's lines:

She stands on the cathedral's vast ascent
Simply stands there near the window-rose
With the apple in the apple pose
Even henceforth guilty/innocent

Akshay Upadhyaya

Translated from Hindi by Susmita Gupta

'I Am a Rare Person'

Rekha tells Akshay Upadhyaya



Prem & Ghosh



Prem & Ghosh



Nanik Ghosh



Jayanta Das

Q *Don't you feel you have changed a lot of late?*

A: Yes, of course. All human beings change with time.

Q: And how do you feel about it?

A: I feel nice and more than anything else, I feel the change was necessary.

Q: Then, can one infer that the change was deliberate on your part?

A: Oh no, not at all. These things just happen, you know. They come about with the various experiences you have in life, with the different kinds of people you come across and incidents, whether good or bad.

I too underwent the change while the process was on. I never felt anything while it was happening and neither did I calculate the effect of those things on myself. So how can it be preplanned? The change came all of a sudden. I realised it much later and when I did, I felt good Initially, of course, when I first became aware of it, I was rather apprehensive about the whole thing. I wondered what I was heading for and why it was happening at all.

Q: But what was there for you to worry about since the change was not preconceived, as you said?

A: Let me put it this way. I was more curious than apprehensive to know why I had started reacting differently to things and people. I was sure something was happening to me that was inducing me to behave so differently. In fact, I used to do just the opposite of what people expected of me. When they thought I would laugh, I wouldn't and things like that. That's when I first realised I was changing. Naturally I became concerned. But when I noticed it was a change for the better, I was not anxious at all.

Q What made you so sure that the change was something for the better?

A: You see, by then I had seen quite a bit of the world, in the sense that I had learnt to judge people on my own. I could see through them. During my childhood, my parents, rather parent (I never knew what a father was), my mother taught me to look at the world. She told me that if I would behave spontaneously with people, they would respond in the same way. So I learnt to behave naturally and spontaneously. I used to be a simpleton, you know and believed that everyone I met was simple and straight just like me.

But I was proved wrong when I came to Bombay. I realised that what I learnt through my childhood was all wrong, that people were not all so simple as I thought them to be. Now, I am mature enough to know better than to take people at their face

value. I have seen enough to conclude that genuine people are rare.

Q: You just said that you have matured. Haven't you also become cleverer, and isn't this why you can judge people better?

A: Well, cleverness would mean narrowmindedness, meanness and a scheming nature perhaps, which is not what I meant. When I say matured, I mean I have grown up and have learnt to draw conclusions about people on my own. I do find, of course, a majority of scheming people in society

Q: What do you think is the reason for this?

A. This happens only in big cities. Go to any small place, Hyderabad for instance. This too is a city, but the people there are so simple. I feel Bombay is full of such scheming people.

Do you know how easy it is for people to fool others in Bombay? You can sell anything you want and get an exorbitant amount for it. This is possibly because of the glamour and status symbol this city offers. It's amazing the way people from all over India, be it the north or the south, want to come and settle down in Bombay. I don't understand what is so great about this place.

Q: What then brought you to Bombay?

A. I never wanted to come to Bombay. I came here because my mother wanted it. Besides, when I came here I was so young that I wasn't even aware of the place.

Q. Was it because of your desire to work in films or was it just sudden—your arrival here?

A. As I told you, it was all my mother's planning. I was only a kid, a child star working in south Indian films—Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. I was in the ninth standard, when my mother decided that Bombay was the place for me. She wanted me to achieve national fame and not just remain confined to the regional market of the south. She dinned this into my little head and I agreed out of plain unawareness. I was never, in any case, very ambitious and frankly I never wanted to become an actress.

Q: Everyone has aspirations to become something. You too must have had your own dream world or did you never feel the need for this?

A: This reminds me of a joke prevalent in our industry. I mean when filmstars are asked when they first became interested in films, they answer: 'Since childhood.' I'm sorry I can't say that, because truly I never wanted to have anything to do with films.

You see, my mother was an actress and hardly spent any time at home. I grew up imagining that actors and actresses had no domestic life whatsoever. This upset me and I decided that come what may, I would never enter the film world.



No love can be complete without the agony it brings with it. I can say this because I have experienced the pains and agonies that come with love.

I was very fond of dancing. My mother herself was a good dancer and singer. Every girl at home—my cousins and sisters—had to learn dancing. These things are absolutely a must for girls in our family. I too was made to learn dancing. Though interested in the art, I hated the way I was forced to learn it. It ruined my keenness for it. A tomboy that I was, I was interested in other things, and detested the thought of being compelled to do something which did not appeal to me. I still remember being asked to get up early every morning to do *puja*. It's because of that compulsion that I still hate the word *puja*. Not that I don't believe in God, I just can't bring myself to perform *puja* the way it is done.

In the same way, when I found I was being coerced into learning how to dance, I became indifferent to it. I protested. Today, I regret having abandoned the dance practice, for I could have learnt so much. But then nobody had the patience to explain the importance of these things to me with love and care. Instead of convincing me why I should take interest, my mother used to scold me and say that I should do it because she said so. Consequently, I have not trained myself in any field.

Q. I can now understand how this attitude of revolt came to stay in your character. Even when you were getting misunderstood, you probably felt people were imposing their wishes on you and perhaps that is why you were so bitter.

A: That's right. Everything I had done till then, I had been forced into. I wanted to become a dancer, even though I had not trained properly for it; I had plans to become one and used to imagine that some day I would have a troupe of my own and go abroad for performances. I was simply crazy about the idea of going abroad, and had even applied for an airhostess' job because of that. Anyway, when I came here it was because I had to become an actress. I was only 13, did not know a word of Hindi leave alone carry on a conversation in the language.

Q: Then how did you manage your way about this place?

A. In English. While shooting, I used to repeat the assistant manager's words. He used to call out my dialogue. I had a good memory so that was easy. Gradually, I picked up the language.

Anyway, to get back, in Bombay I met these hardcore professional producers, who treated me most ruthlessly. They never realised the child in me. It was only a few people like Mohan Sehgal and Hrishikesh Mukherjee who treated me well. So, disinterested in a film career, I was fed up with the shooting schedules I had to follow round the clock. Thanks to my first film, *Saawan Bhadon* which was an instant hit, I was loaded with at least 20 to 25 assignments which meant double shift shooting right away. It was exasperating. You must have heard all kinds of tales about me and my tantrums about how I used to walk out of the studios at will, irrespective of whether shooting was on. That was ten years ago but people haven't forgotten that. They can't for it's always the bad things that people remember, never the good things.

Q: No, but can you explain why at all you behaved like that?

A: As I told you, I was extremely fed up of films, shootings etc. Like other girls of my age, I too wanted to shop around, to have outings and a social life. Work had started telling on my nerves. Even on Sundays I had to work contrary to my wish. Adamant and stubborn that I was, I just decided I wouldn't take it any more. And at the slightest chance I got to escape from the grind of the studios, I used to drive away in my new car to places I liked. I used to go to the Juhu beach and sit around, have an icecream and while away the time. I had no friends and because I used to talk so much, I was always getting misunderstood. These days I talk much less.

Q: *But there is no reason why people should misunderstand you only because you talked a lot.*

A: Well... it's not just that. As I was telling you earlier, I was very spontaneous in my reflexes. I was *bindaas* and hardly ever conscious of the fact that I was a girl and that I should behave differently. So, used to having my brother's friends around the house, I behaved the way I felt. I used to slap their backs and talk just as they did. Even when I grew up, I could never understand why I should have to discipline myself.

Q: Tell us, how did you eventually prove to people that they were wrong about you?

A: I'll tell you how. Let's start with my performance. A lot of people today feel that I am a good actress, but a good actress I've always been. Many believe that I've improved over the years. Possibly, for many an actress does. But not me, because I was an instinctive actress. Acting came naturally to me right from childhood.

But the fact that I am a good actress, people first realised when they saw me in *Ghar*, in which I played a completely different kind of role. People thought that my performance was many shades better.

Q: You mean you created an environment so that people could think differently about you?

A: Well, if you ask me, I don't think anybody has the time to listen to what you are trying to say, or even give you a chance to speak for yourself, unless you are a 'somebody'. You may be talented, an excellent human being, even reasonably rich, but no one is going to be interested in you till you achieve some standing in society.

It's just that with *Ghar* people noticed this big change in my performance and started attributing it to something in my personal life. They wondered what it was that had brought about such a transformation in my looks and my work.

Q: Was it really due to some incident in your personal life?

A: Well, people thought it was because of my interaction with some people in off-screen relationships which had led to the change. So they got curious.

Q: When did you first realise that you were changing?

A: I don't know when it all began. I wasn't even conscious of the fact that my looks had changed and so had my gait and behaviour. It was only when others started behaving differently with me that the change dawned on me. I felt something was happening. People who used to be impolite with me suddenly started showing respect. Instead of slapping my back roughly as they used to, they now greeted me with a graceful *namaste*. At first I was amused, then surprised, till I finally realised that they were serious. I wondered why and traced it back to the change in my personality which was gradually manifesting itself.

Q: If I am right, the change in your personality was operating on two levels. One was on the physical side of your person and the other on the mental level. Did the transformations set in simultaneously or did one follow the other?

A: In a way, the physical change set in first. That's a long story. Those days I used to suffer from a massive complex regarding my obesity. All through school people had teased me about it and scoffed at me saying: 'She's an actress' daughter, she'll never become one herself.' Even at home I was the fattest of the lot and constantly subjected to comments. I used to be so fretful that I used to retaliate with 'Any-objections?' if I was told I was getting fatter.

Another thing is that nobody takes a fat person seriously. He or she is simply a subject of fun and ridicule. Invariably though, you'll find that fat people are also the jolliest. But their happy-go-lucky attitude is just a front put up to counter the dejection brought by their fatness. I used to feel the same way. Though I had tried everything possible from dieting to the works to reduce weight, I had failed. Oh, it was so difficult, I remember.



You may be talented, an excellent human being, even reasonably rich, but no one is going to be interested in you till you achieve some standing in society.

And then I fell seriously ill. I hadn't fallen so sick in years. I landed at the hospital with typhoid for two months. It was all, of course, because of the endless shooting schedules and all the impossible things I had to do for films. Anyway, it was the long ailment that did the trick. I realised then how drastically I had lost weight.

Q: Normally when one is ill one reflects on the realities of life and comes face to face with many a bitter truth of existence Did you also experience any such feelings?

A: Of course. And for me it was worse, for I was not just physically sick, I was mentally sick too. I was exhausted coping with the film career I had been forced into. While I was sick, I almost died, you know. One day my blood pressure went so low that I was near blindness This is the first time I am revealing this to someone.

Q: *How did you feel then?*

A: I felt I was dying. My blood pressure was collapsing with such rapidity that even the doctors could not diagnose the cause I was trying to speak but couldn't, I could not see anything. All I could hear were faint voices fading into the distance just as you see in films: 'What's happening to you? Call the doctor quick, the doctor came, I felt pins and needles in my back but that's about all. Nothing the doctor did could bring me back to normalcy before eight o'clock the next morning.

Q: Did you have any hallucinations when you felt you were going to die?

A: Oh, I felt terribly lonely and helpless. Anxiety and insomnia had made things worse. I remember how I used to talk to God. God, in fact, has been my dearest friend ever since childhood. I'll tell you how. Whenever I felt hurt and angry with others, at school or at home, I used to run off to the church nearby and spend hours talking to Jesus Christ. I love the peaceful surroundings of a church, which is precisely why I dislike the noisy atmosphere of the temples and particularly the tradition of offering money before God. In any case, like I said earlier, I do not believe in *puja*.

Q: Would you care to explain what you understand by puja?

A: Today I can say I understand all the dimensions of *puja*, but in my early years *puja* to me only meant

getting up at five in the morning and chanting some Sanskrit *shlokas*. However, I feel *puja* in the truest sense of the word, is synonymous with love. To worship is to love.

Q: And why does one love?

A: Essentially for joy. Love brings joy both to the lover and the beloved.

Q: Do you think there is anything such as ideal love? If there is, how would you define it?

A: Well, there can be nothing called ideal love, because love does not manifest itself in a particular form. It has no limits either. Love is love and it is really as simple as that. Love is something you can only feel and experience. I don't think I can exemplify any one relationship as one of ideal love and aspire to achieve those standards myself. There cannot be any strict measure. All I know is that the love I have given people and the love I have got from them is great for me.

There is another thing I feel strongly about. No love can be complete without the agony it brings with it. I can say this because I have experienced the pains and agonies that come with love and which is what has made my love complete.

Q: Can you explain that a bit more?

A: I'll put it this way. Suppose a person I love suddenly hurts me and shatters my dreams about life, I start hating that person and gradually the hate turns into indifference. I develop a don't-care attitude till I think I've forgotten the person. But no, suddenly, this pain tugs at my heart and reminds me of him. So it is the pain that constantly keeps reminding you of the fact that you loved that person. It works like a reminder and keeps you alert.

Q: Do you mean that you have learnt to cope with the agonies of love?

A: No, that's not what I mean. The pain is important but it does not make one happy. I am basically a happy person, and want to make everyone I meet happy. I enjoy it thoroughly when people laugh at my jokes. I want them to make me laugh too. And mind you that's a rare quality in human beings. There are very few people who are jealous of me. Take it from me, there's nobody who hates me. I know a very important and unusual person who smiles every time he sees me. I make him happy and vice versa. He tells me about so many things and also shares his sorrows with me.

Q: Why do you say he is important and what makes him so unusual?

A: Everybody knows he is a famous man. And unusual because he has given me so much. Achieving so much——fame, etc at such a young age is indeed a very big thing for me. I have achieved so many things in life. These remembrances will keep inspiring me through life, just as they have been prodding me to make myself into what I am today. His inspiration has given me the support to face life with all its joys and sorrows. I have learnt to confront situations with courage, anger and even a competitive spirit. This is one thing very close to my heart.



I am basically a happy person and I want to make everyone I meet happy. I enjoy it thoroughly when people laugh at my jokes. I want them to make me laugh too.

Another thing which I value a lot is freedom, and I don't mean living in a free country. By freedom I mean liberty from responsibilities, liabilities and commitments that spring from, say, love. In this respect, I have been very lucky. I have no commitments whatsoever and no responsibilities either. I am responsible only for myself. I have decided that in future too, I will do everything for myself. It may be yoga or anything else for that matter. This, however, does not mean that I am being self-centred.

Q: I appreciate this for I too feel that people who claim to be living for others are actually putting up a facade.

A: Yes, exactly. They are hypocrites. I just cannot bring myself to do such a thing, for I have never been a hypocrite. I can't become one either. And this I feel is one of my strongest points. I am satisfied today for I am free. I am neither married nor do I have children which save me the trouble of obeying my spouse's orders and having responsibilities about my children. I don't have to put up any facades.

I just do what appeals to me, to my 'self.' Lest this be interpreted as a justification for my flirting, let me tell you that I've a lot better to do. But the freedom is essential. Yes, there's one thing which I am very careful about. I try not to hurt anyone intentionally.

Q: Would you call yourself a complete woman?

A: Well, to tell you honestly, I haven't yet become a complete woman, though I want to. Of course I have entered the process of turning into one and it does feel great to be told that I have all it takes to be a complete woman. Again, however, as I said in my interview in *Ravivar*, no woman can be complete till she becomes a mother.

Q: Will you explain this a little more? Are you trying to say that motherhood, which is a projection of another aspect of a woman's personality, is the consummation of womanhood?

A: Yes, that's right... I am proud of being born as a woman, and I pray that I be born a woman, even if I were to live ten more lives.

Q: Is this because you feel that every woman has something of a God within her, which enables her to produce another life?

A: I said that almost a decade ago—that a woman is a mini-God of sorts. Woman, I feel, is a born mother. You can see the maternal instincts in a girl right from the days she starts playing with dolls. Even in a marital relationship, despite the many claims the husband makes of his superiority over his woman, in reality it is the other way round. When a husband comes home to his wife, she mothers him, bearing with all his tantrums and whims. So you see, woman is the epitome of motherhood.

Q: As you must be aware, you are the dream girl of many an individual. What is remarkable is the wide range of your fans, which includes an illiterate rustic on the one hand and very creative intellectuals on the other. How do you feel about that?

A: I should say I am very lucky to be thought of in this way. And that is why I call myself a rare person. As you said, when a villager sees me on screen, he identifies in me a typical young Indian beauty—sprightly, buxom and long haired. He concerns himself only with the

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physical side of my person. Whereas an intellectual finds me bright and intelligent. He concerns himself with the mental level of my person. According to them, I have a rare balance of intelligence and modesty. Though mind you, I have no desire to call myself modest. Modesty today is all humbug. I'd rather be what I am. But I must admit that I have in me a unique combination of physical and mental assets, for which I am very grateful to God.

Q: Do you maintain this attitude in your personal life too? In other words, would you give equal importance to a rustic who simply tills the land and at the same time to Husain whose artistic approach to life you admire?

A: Yes, of course, I admire each person whatever he or she may do—even the maid who comes home to do the dishes. It amazes me the way she works—she is so fit considering she has eight children and the working hours she keeps! I often wonder if I could do that. I appreciate everything that I cannot do myself. There are so many things I would like to do and cannot do for lack of time. I often ask myself why God made only 24 hours to a day and not more. I love painting, for instance, and can hardly devote serious attention to it.

Q: Were you keen on painting from childhood itself?

A: Yes, I never trained in art but I used to paint occasionally, but not since I came here. I used to do oil painting and sketches.

Q: What kind of paintings did you like?

A: I love fantasies and even when I used to paint myself, I loved weaving fantasies into reality. From memory I used to recreate scenes I had come across and then blur them with touches of fantasy.

Q: Have you ever shown any of your paintings to any painter, who might be able to interpret them?

A: No, I want to show them to Husain Sahab, but when I am alone.

Q: Do you have any particular liking for some artists?

A: Yes. I like Husain's horses, Prabha's fisherwoman and there is another artist in Hyderabad by the name of Lakshman who is good too.

***Q**: Although you are already in the medium of communication, have you ever felt the need to widen the spectrum of expression through another medium perhaps?*

A: Actually film itself is a wonderful medium, but occasionally I do feel like writing. And I do—in English. I write poems, but they are so juvenile I hardly ever recite them nowadays.



I have no desire to call myself modest. Modesty today is all humbug. I'd rather be what I am.

Q: Given a chance to make a film, what kind of film would you make?

A: You'll see it when I make it.

Q: No, don't you feel you should venture into something different, and make films which have not already been made?

A: Of course we definitely need some really good films; India can hardly boast of any.

Q: What then do you plan to do?

A: I cross my bridges when I come to them. In any case, what's the use of contemplating the future when I am not even sure whether I am going to last for long. It's better to concentrate on what you are doing at present and derive satisfaction from it. As far as I can foresee, I should be able to sail through easily for another two years. But one never knows, I may not be around in the next six months. After that I plan to go into direction. Actually, one can't say, I might even get married in the meanwhile. Not that I'll be upset if I don't. I have no such plans about myself. Like my mother tells me, everything—marriage and children——has its time and place, and that I have crossed the age for all that. She may be right, you know. However, if my destiny has marriage in store for me, well and good.

What matters more to me is the friendship in any and every relationship. Whether it is my mother, sister, brother, daughter, I'd like to put friendship before everything. Even with my husband, he has to be a friend before I marry him.

Q: Just as we think of you as a glamorous personality, do you consider anyone more glamorous than yourself?

A: America is full of such people.

Q: No, I'm talking about Indians.

A: There's Gayatri Devi and there was Indira Gandhi. And there's my mother of whom I can say so much. She is beautiful both within and without. I can never be like her and that is why she's the only person I'm so jealous of.

Q: Among Indian males, do you consider anyone to be glamorous?

A: For me, a glamorous man must be a total man, irrespective of whether he is perfect. Do you know who I consider a complete man? Shiva. Yes, he was ill-tempered and smoked a *chillum*. So what? I still admire him. Shiva stands out— with his expressive eyes and his overall personality. And what is more, he was so simple. I also admire the way he handled two wives with so much love and care.

Q: You are deviating. Isn't there any such male in India now who you idolise?

A: Yes there is a man in whom I found a glimpse of my hero, Shiva. I cannot name him. He has so much in common with Shiva-- the same serene quietness on the surface and the strength and depth within. Just as Shiva used to give vent to his frustration through *tandava*, which was his special way of expressing himself, this man too has a special way of expressing his feelings. When he is angry he doesn't yell, he doesn't chide me, but explains things to me with love and caring gestures.

Q: How can you gauge that he is angry?

A: From his eyes. And then intuition. Actually once you get to know a person well, you can decipher even his unsaid wishes.

Q: Is it true that you had once tried to commit suicide? Have you actually contemplated such a thing?

A: Oh, suicide attempts have been a part of my life ever since I can remember. I have made several attempts and frankly I am not at all ashamed to admit it.

Dramatic Decades

10 October 1954: Born, Bhanurekha, to Gemini Ganesan and Pushpavalli in Madras. Later to be second of six children.

1964: Chubby little girl in school, known as Big Lotta. Was only interested in reading comics and "Moral science was the only subject that interested me." Family needed money as father had deserted them, so opted for films "where I didn't have to use my brains." Ran away from boarding school chasing celluloid dreams.

1965: Her first film in Telugu. Age: still to complete 11.

1967: Her first film as a heroine in Tamil. Age. 13, studying in class nine.

1968: Spotted by top Bombay filmstar Biswajit at Gemini Studios, Madras, who recommended her to producers from East Africa, Shatrujit Pal and Kuljit Pal. Was signed on for her first Hindi film as heroine, *Anjana Safar*, later retitled *Do Shikari*, starring Biswajit.

1969: Moved over to Bombay. Age: 15. The "sexy new aspirant" began attending every Filmfare Awards function with the ambition of winning an award some day.

1969-end: The sensational kissing scene with Biswajit on the sets of *Anjana Safar*. It created a stir to the extent of being picked up by *Life* magazine, which published the picture of the kiss. The scandal upset her emotionally and was "the first blow" to her mental equilibrium in her film career. Even today, she has unhappy memories of it and says: "They said, *poochha tha*. What *poochha tha?* I didn't know the language, I didn't know anything, I thought I would be raped when I went back to the hotel."

1970: Photographer and publicist Dhirendra Kishen took her under his wing and introduced her to filmmaker Mohan Segal. Cast in *Saawan Bhadon* with co-star Navin Nischol.

January 1971: Her first Hindi film, *Saawan Bhadon*, released and was an instant hit, along with the catchy songs of Sonik/Omi, Verma Mallik like *Kaan mein jhumka, chaal mein thumka*. The film was a silver jubilee hit. Rekha signed about 50 films in the next five years. Age: 16.

1971: Began being publicised as the replacement for Mumtaz, though was clubbed more often with vamps like Bindu and Faryal.

1973: At around this time it was revealed that she had got married secretly to Vinod Mehra and also broken up soon after, thanks to Moushumi Chatterjee's extra-curricular interest in the affair. The "Black Rose's" best friend, "Pinky" (Yogita) offered a consoling shoulder and ended up losing her own beau to Rekha—Kiran Kumar. Prior to that, however, Rekha attempted suicide by swallowing Tik 20 and later explaining it away as a cockroach in her *upma!* Vinod Mehra's sister remarked on the suicide bid then: "A couple of Rekha's films are being released shortly. So this is just her way of building up publicity for them." In June, she went on record as having said: "Gossip is a very small price to pay for fame." In *Stardust Annual's* popularity poll, Jaya figured as No. 1 as the most talented actress (followed by Waheeda Rehman and Hema Malini) and Rekha was second to Mumtaz, but ahead of Zeenat Aman, in the listings for the sexiest actress.

1975: Her friendship with Amitabh grew. Ten years later, she was to state: "I *never* had a best friend. Never had a best friend till ten years ago. When I met this best friend of my life. Who has remained one. Mr Bachchan."

1976: Dulal Guha's *Do Anjane* (with Amitabh) released. For the first time, her acting talent reared its beautiful head. Rekha entered a new phase in her career. The new influence, Amitabh, on her life seemed evident. She also did Hrishikesh's *Alaap* (Amitabh), somewhat in the Jaya mould but being the first film of Amitabh portraying him against his "angry young man" image, flopped badly.



Rekha in *Dharam Karam*

1977: The period when her affair with Kiran Kumar was at its strongest.

1978: Manek Chatterjee's *Ghar* (with Vinod Mehra) hit the headlines. Rekha as an actress came into her own: her finest performance to date and a film in which she looked more gorgeous than ever before. *Ghar* was her first Filmfare award nomination. A step away only from her ambition ten years ago. That year, Nutan got the award for *Main Tulsi Tere Angan Ki*. Met father Gemini Ganesan for the first time.

1980: Mission accomplished. Hrishikesh's *Khubsoorat* (Rakesh Roshan) conclusively proved that Rekha was an actress of undeniable calibre. A superhit with which Rekha won her first (and only, so far) Filmfare award for best actress.

1981: Did two very important films: Shyam Benegal's *Kalyug* and Muzaffar Ali's *Umrao Jaan* Said Benegal: "I saw her in *Khubsoorat* and realised she had a lot of potential." Hrishikesh Mukherjee himself said: "Her role in *Khubsoorat* was written specially for her." Yash Chopra's much talked about *Silsila* was made based on the real life story of Amitabh, Rekha and Jaya, each of them playing their real life roles and Jaya making her comeback specially on the persuasion of Amitabh that he would put an end to his affair. The film, however, flopped.

1982: Rekha wins the Urvashi National award for *Umrao Jaan* from President N. Sanjeeva Reddy.

1983: Gemini Ganesan attempts suicide on 26 September.

1984: Rekha goes on a health kick *a la* Jane Fonda with her *Mind and Body Temple* video cassette and classes.

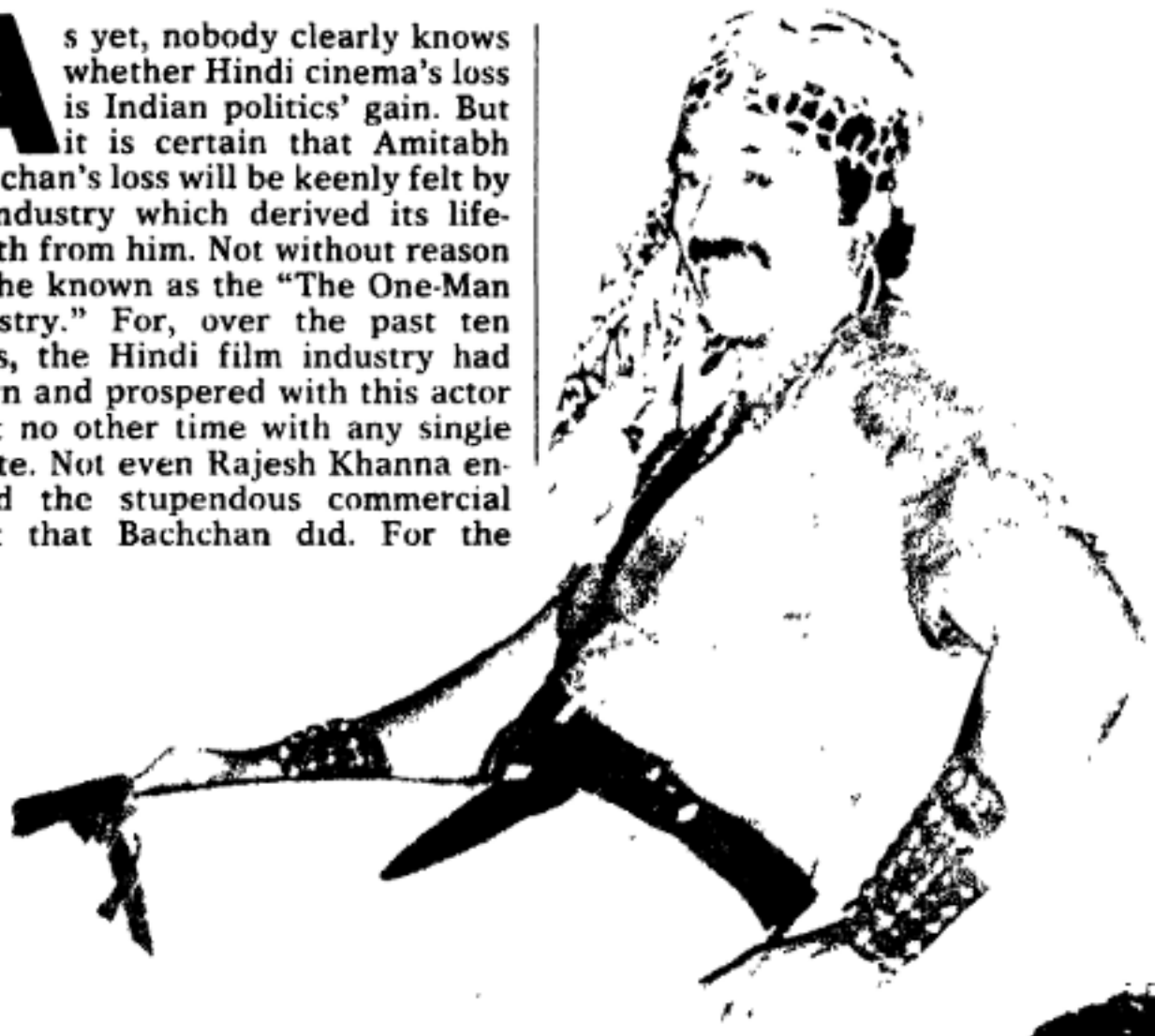
1985: Important films like Girish Karnad's *Utsav*, (Shashi, Shekhar Suman, Anooradha Patel) and Dr Jabbar Patel's *Musafir* (Naseeruddin, Moon Moon Sen) among others. "My reign as No. 1 was over a long time ago," she says today. "But I'm still the best. I'll always be the best."

Anil Grover

Who Will Replace the Angry Young Man?

Despite the talent available in the Hindi filmworld, Amitabh Bachchan is irreplaceable

As yet, nobody clearly knows whether Hindi cinema's loss is Indian politics' gain. But it is certain that Amitabh Bachchan's loss will be keenly felt by an industry which derived its life-breath from him. Not without reason was he known as the "The One-Man Industry." For, over the past ten years, the Hindi film industry had grown and prospered with this actor as at no other time with any single artiste. Not even Rajesh Khanna enjoyed the stupendous commercial clout that Bachchan did. For the simple reason that, at the time when Rajesh Khanna ruled the box-office waves, the overseas market had not opened up the way it did with Amitabh Bachchan.



No wonder the industry breathed and almost died with Amitabh after his near-fatal encounter with death. A pall of gloom spread through the industry when Amitabh was struggling for life. Never before has such a vast and powerful industry depended on one man's health.

But then, as box-office wizard Manmohan Desai, who with Amitabh formed an incredible fantasy-weaving team, puts it: "If anyone really cares to study the box-office graph, he will divine that Amitabh Bachchan has indeed been the sole contributing factor to the soaring fortunes of his starrers. It's no exaggeration to say that Amitabh was number one, two or three—going right up to seventh place. Any other



Raju Upadhyay

(Top) Kamalahasan and (bottom) Deepak Parasar with Salma Agha

actor, no matter what his histrionic stature, came only after that seventh position."

"No other actor," said Manmohan Desai, "could ever sell a film all on his own as Amitabh can do even today. If he quits films, as rumoured, it will take a long, long time for the industry to adjust to the metamorphosed situation. No matter how much those who do not depend on this superstar may want to wish him away. With Amitabh in the cast, producers did not have to worry about either their finance, or their crowd-pulling power. Even films like *Inquilab, Nastik* and *Pukaar*, which are touted as Amitabh flops, have in truth grossed much more than their investment. If producers and distributors still grumble, it is because, with a superstar like Amitabh, colossal returns were expected. That way, no Amitabh starrer has been a disaster."

In spite of the fact that TV and video piracy have cut into the box-office collections of theatres, the fact remains that not one film of Amitabh has really ruined any producer. "This itself is a feat, you will agree, when, even before the master print leaves the laboratory, you find its pirated video cassette flooding the market," says Desai.

Will Amitabh's absence bring about a sea-change in the industry? Manmohan Desai sincerely feels it will, in fact, change the industry's commercial anatomy. As he puts it: "It will make a world of difference at the box-office. If you study the last ten years' collections, you will find that more than 70 to 75 per cent of gross takings have been from Amitabh films. Without him, you just can't expect the same return. Amitabh was a built-in insurance against your film's failure. Suppose the same *Inquilab, Nastik* or *Pukaar* had featured any other actor, it would have been an unmitigated disaster. Today, my *Coolie* is in its 59th week and still going strong all over India."

"Yet, from Amitabh's personal point of view," concedes Desai, "the man was really overdoing things. Especially after his second illness. This was a rare kind of disease in which a patient had to be on medicines for long. Amitabh and his family knew that he could not go on for ever—not at the pace at which the industry was expecting him to work. I knew, for instance, that he had to call a halt to it, sooner rather than later. He had stopped signing new films and had also completed the three films in hand: *Giraftar*, my movie *Mard* and Purnachandra Rao's film. He had kept the industry going long enough all on his own."





Jackie Shroff (above) and Amitabh Bachchan

But Prakash Mehra, the man who transformed Amitabh from a fledgling actor to the stature of a demi-god with *Zanjeer*, feels that though the superstar may not have either the time or the inclination to be as involved in films as before, he may not altogether quit films. "He's said he won't retire from films," points out Mehra. "And I believe him. He may do a film or two in a year. As for me, it will make a very big difference, naturally, since *Zanjeer*, we have made films together right up to *Sharabi*, which is a hit. So, if Amitabh does decide to withdraw from films, it will be a very great loss for one and all."

"I had an English film planned with Amitabh in mind for the lead," said Prakash Mehra. "True I hadn't discussed it with him, for he was busy then with his elections. Now he's become an MP. The film, being in English and for the foreign market, is to have a number of 'hot' scenes. But, now that the situation has qualitatively changed, I don't know how keen Amitabh will be about it. As I said, I had no time to discuss its script with him. If he does decide to work in a couple of films a year, I'm sure he and I will come together again. For you'll never get a more disciplined or better organised artiste."

By contrast, Yash (*Deewaar*) Chopra, who had parted ways with Bachchan after the dismal showing of his much-tomtommed *Silsila*, feels that, in this industry, nobody, no matter how powerful he may be at the moment, is irreplaceable. Says Chopra: "Every time a film personality has departed, be it Nargis, who chose to retire from films, or Amitabh, who's now gone into politics, it has ultimately not made any major difference to the industry. Amitabh or no Amitabh, this industry will not stop making films. And a good film made out of a strong story is going to sell, star or no star. Look at my own brother B. R. Chopra's *Nikaah*. It did not have any top stars—in fact, its heroine, Salma Agha, was a new face. Raj Babbar was then far from being a top-selling actor, while Deepak Parashar was only a top model. Yet the film minted money all over India and abroad. Govind Nihalani's *Ardh Satya* did not have any glamour appeal at all in its star-cast, yet look at its collections! "The industry," I feel, "will find its own substitute for Amitabh. And, when I say a substitute, it's not necessary that another action-oriented hero should take over. When Rajesh Khanna was replaced by Amitabh, Bachchan was not a romantic hero like his predecessor. So now, when a newcomer



Sunny Deol

takes over, it needn't necessarily be another man with an action-oriented macho image. For instance, already we have a toughie-softie in Jackie Shroff. Of course, he has a long way to go before he can really be hailed as another superstar. But what I'm saying is that this industry is throwing up new talents every once in a while. So we needn't despair."

Added Yash Chopra, "Mbreover, with the advent of TV and with video a reality, it's a moot question if the industry could have really continued to afford the kind of super-budget films that Amitabh starrers inevitably were. Maybe production costs will now come down as a result of smaller returns. And, with them, star markets. I never really subscribed to this view that ours is a 'One-Man Industry.' It can't afford to be that, no matter how big a star. Of course, right now, I agree there's no one in sight to replace Amitabh, as we know his star personality. But, as I said, the replacement need not necessarily be another Amitabh. The film market will not collapse as a result of Amitabh's going. This industry has an immense inner resilience to adjust to all kinds of change, as it has shown time and again."

Jeetendra, the only actor who at one stage showed signs of outstarring Amitabh, had to shift operations to the south to remain in the public eye. Jeetendra, of course, has always been a great favourite with southern producers, since he leaves their idea of a box-office formula undisturbed. His successful films made in the south, are mainly those based on Tamil, Telugu or Kannada hits, so that his contribution by way of originality is nil even while his success is assured in the light of regional box office experience.

It was once expected that the star-sons Kumar Gaurav, Sunjay Dutt, Sunil Anand and Sunny Deol would do what their fathers couldn't—offer stiff competition to Amitabh. But they flattered to deceive. The only star-son to pose some kind of challenge was Sunny Deol—big-built like his father—who acted well in his first film, *Betaab*. But, as Manmohan Desai says, it is a long haul still for Sunny to consolidate his position and rise to Amitabhian heights.

Jackie Shroff, having the height of Amitabh but not his build, turned up a winner in an author-backed role in *Hero*, a film on which director Subhash Ghai lavished all his attention so as to "teach the star-sons a lesson." But the distance between Jackie Shroff and Amitabh Bachchan is still the distance between a mere star and a superstar.

A much-touted name is Rajnikanth, the south's Shatrughan Sinha, who somehow held his own opposite Amitabh in *Andha Kanoon*. Rajnikanth may be accepted in the south as a superstar, but has miles to go before he can rule the rest of India the way Amitabh did.

Kamalahasan on whom a lot of hopes were pinned after his stupendous success in *Ek Duje Ke Liye*, has now proved to be only a super talent, not a superstar. Today, he is neither in Bombay nor in Madras. Anil Kapoor has been showing promise, but has neither the personality nor the build to take over. You cannot expect a David like Anil to down a Goliath like Amitabh.

Most of the established names, like Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra, Shatrughan Sinha and Rishi Kapoor, seem to have gone out of focus as far as filling up the yawning first-place gap is concerned. In fact, filmmakers seem to feel that it will be one of the newer crop who will replace Amitabh. That is, if he is replaced at all.

As Yash Chopra pertinently puts it, we may come to have an entirely different definition of a superstar. We may even do away with a one-man superstar image and in his place, have a galaxy of stars lining the horizon in films with more to say and less to pay.

Amitabh Bachchan was the angry young man who came in from the cold and stayed. So long as he was around this industry could jingle-jangle to the rhythm of *dishum-dishum*. The Hindi film industry, for ten long years, was, his private property. The film world was his oyster and he the pearl.

Girija Rajendran

HINDI FILMS

Old Themes in New Reels

What is new in Hindi cinema is the handling of the theme and not the theme itself

From the silent *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) to the three dimensional *Chotan Chetan* (1984, original Malayalam title *My dear Kuttichatan*), Hindi films have been gaining in popularity. For a population, 80 per cent of which cannot read the titles that splash on the screen and 60 per cent of which live below the poverty line, films have become the only transient escape from reality. The country's film studios churn out more than 800 feature films and about 650 short films every year, and an average of 1.25 crore people watch films every day in theatres across the country. This does not include those who watch films on TV or other open-air shows

As a medium that has an octopus-like grip on the Indian psyche, the film has and will have no parallel. As a mirror of popular culture the film works at two levels, the conscious level where there are obvious changes in physical appearance to match those of the film hero or heroine and the sub-conscious level whereby moral values are influenced. As Mrinal Sen puts it: "Even a lullaby is propaganda. It wants to put to sleep one who doesn't want to sleep. So I conclude that all art is propaganda."

The working group on national film policy appointed by the government of India in 1979 recognised the importance of cinema as a medium and it was believed that cinema is the largest disseminator of popular culture and is a major industry in India. Consider these statistics:

- The film industry gives approximately Rs 200 crores annually to the government as entertainment tax.
- Export earnings from films in 1980 were Rs 150 million.

The reach, impact and wealth of the industry is thus mind-boggling. But what about the quality of the films that come out of the assembly lines at an incredible rate of two full length and three short films a day? The Karanth committee estimated that about 65 per cent of the films are flops—or in other words—rejected by the people. About 25 per cent barely manage to recover their investments. Only the remaining 10 per cent of films make sizeable profits and out of these a mere two per cent are block busters.

The year 1983 was a particularly bad year for Hindi cinema as over 70 per cent of the films flopped and a mere two per cent including *Andha Kanoon, Himmatwala, Mawaali, Justice Chowdhary, Avtaar, Souten, Betaab, Masoom, Ardh Satya* and *Beabroo* made big money. Films which did just above average in 1983 were *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye, Subah, Katha, Dard Ka Rishta* and *Arth*. Of the 64 films released in the first half of 1984, barely a dozen can be termed successful. A few more will recover investments after running in 'B' and 'C' grade theatres. The only films to celebrate silver jubilees were *Coolie* and *Hero* which were spillovers from last year.

Despite the setbacks, films keep on coming in torrents, bursting on the Indian mind with the same old story in new colours. For how long will a gullible populace be fed on such glorified rubbish? Is it just the mediocrity and callous arrogance of the filmmakers who preside over the destiny of Hindi filmdom, or is the audience responsible in any way? The filmmakers say that their's is just a case of demand meeting supply. If that is the case, why do filmgoers often reject what they "demand"? Are all the hit films great studies in human character or comments of social or political significance, retort the filmmakers. What then, are Hindi films propagating? A content analysis of Hindi films made between 1981 and 1984 show that thematically they can be compartmentalised into ten categories (love stories, revenge, sacrifice, lost and found, political and social comedy, historical/devotional, family, women and anti-establishment) with occasional overlapping of themes.

Let us take the example of *Coolie*, an excellent "formula film" in the sense that it includes practically all the categories mentioned above. It has the lost-and-found theme where the sons (Amitabh Bachchan and Rishi Kapoor) are separated from their parents due to the evil machinations of the villain, Kader Khan; the revenge theme where Amitabh avenges the disintegration of his family and the maltreatment of his parents; the love theme where childhood lovers Rishi Kapoor and Shoma Anand are separated and the *coolie* Amitabh who falls in love with a first class passenger, the daughter of a top-ranking official in the railways; the political plane where the *coolie* contests the elections against the villain and propagates socialism from the podium; and the social level where it preaches inter-communal harmony by depicting the case of a Muslim boy brought up lovingly by a Hindu *coolie*. Similarly, *Sholay* (1975) contains comedy (Veeru's clowning), tragedy (Jai's death), the revenge theme (Sanjeev Kumar seeking vendetta against Amjad Khan playing Gabbar Singh, the social theme (advocating widow remarriage) and the allegorical/mythological themes (in the personification of a mythological demon Ravan in Gabbar Singh).

Along with recurrent themes and situations there are also types of characters that are portrayed again and again. For example the image of the angry young man is so often repeated that it becomes difficult to distinguish between Amitabh in *Lawaaris, Coolie, Shakti, Nastik, Kaalia*, Rajnikant in *Andha Kanoon, Meri Adalat*, Raj Babbar in *Aaj ki Awaaz*, Dharmendra in *Baazi, Qayamat*, Shatrughan Sinha in *Mangal Pandey, Bheema, Maati Mangey Khoon*, Sunjay Dutt in *Mera Faisla* and Jeetendra in *Meri Awaaz Suno, Himmatwala. Mawaali* and *Zakhme Sher* and many others. Whether it is a single person or a group of persons or a particular system that has enraged them, the fact remains that they are all angry and are out to wreak vengeance on the cause of their fury. Bloodshot eyes, clenched jaws, hammering fists, flying kicks, high-pitched hysteria and a general attitude of scorn, cynicism and bottled-up hate are characteristics of this type who always emerges victorious in his mission of good versus evil.

The development of this kind of a character is particular to societies where three-fourths of the population is powerless and in seeing such a figure each one experiences a personal sense of power. The hero's

battle against oppression becomes the viewer's private war against reality and his victory becomes their victory, even though it is a short-lived one. However, the development of the "vigilante mentality" is an attempt at duping the individual and reflects a fascist tendency. It provides a mere punching bag, a fantasy solution, whereby the repressed individual, sitting before the screen can give vent to his fury vicariously through the single messianic figure on screen. Once a viewer emerges from the hall he is purged of all those "impure feelings" of hate, anger and violence, for has not he been matching the hero fist for fist, fury for fury for the past three hours and all that is left of him now is a triumphant hero?

This is akin to the "hate sessions" that George Orwell talked about in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, whereby all citizens were purged of their unhealthyemotions by chanting violent slogans against the enemy in frequently repeated two-minute "hate sessions." Moreover, the solutions offered through these movies are escapist and tend to beg the question of emancipation by showing that the responsibility of ameliorating one's condition rests on individuals alone: each has to take up arms and fight his own violent battle through the system. Even a new wave film like *Ardh Satya* perpetuates this false belief when at the end of the film the disillusioned police officer kills his tormentor in order to overcome his sense of impotence.

One wonders if that is the solution to corruption in the law and order machinery. If that is, then who is there to reap the benefits of this emancipation? Not Anant Welankar at least, for he will end up in jail. And no one likes to do that. Second, what kind of solution is this? One Rama Shetty will be replaced by another Rama Shetty. The only option left for the common man is to live like Inspector Haider (Shafi Inamdar) with blinkers on.

The second popular character type is the courting hero, either of the Devdas variety as in *Painter Babu* or the macho man in *Betaab*. There is of course the eternal mother figure, who is a paragon of strength, determination, devotion and virtue, the Mother India image as in *Kaamyab*, *Ghar ek Mandir*, *Namak Halaal*, *Coolie*, *Nastik and Rishta Kagaz Ka*. There is also the erring wife who undermines the worth of her husband even though he indulges in an extra-marital affair (*Ek Hi Bhool*), or he relegates her to the background vis-a-vis his family (*Thodi si Bewafaai*) or she may have erred in maintaining herself after marriage (*Grihapravesh*) or she may have transgressed the limits of morality by indulging in a pre-marital affair (*Bezuban, Patthar Ki Lakeer*) or she may be the erring daughter-in-law of *Ghar ek Mandir*, *Mazdoor*, *Rishta Kagaz Ka*, *Teri Kasam*. In any case, she has to end up at the feet of her husband if she wants salvation, otherwise she is doomed forever.

Another popular image is the sacrificing man or woman. Be it the sister in *Tohfa* or *Jeevan Dhara* or the friend in *Raaste Pyar Ke* and *Bemisaal*, the two wives in *Asha Jyoti*, the beloved in *Apnapan*, *Mehndi Rang Layegi* or the ailing lover boy in *Prem Tapasya*. The philosophy thereby propagated is that happiness lies not in acquiring but in distributing. It is only the weak and the wily who want to amass. The noble and the divine are those who have nothing in terms of wordly goods and worldly possessions and it is only the evil and the ignoble who would not like to be noble and divine. Does not this kind of propagated asceticism somehow advocate and perpetuate poverty, loneliness, deprivation and unhappiness?



Still from *Mandi*



Amitabh Bachchan in *Coolie*

Women by far have got a raw deal in Hindi cinema. Society offers no social or moral sanction to the westernised woman (Sareeka in *Shriman Shrimati, Patthar ki Lakeer*), the assertive woman (Tina in *Souten*, Poonam in *Teri Kasam*, Rati in *Mazdoor, Rishta Kagaz Ka*, Shabana in *Thodi si Bewafaai*, etc.), the fallen woman (Rekha in *Prem Tapasya, Maati Mangey Khoon*, Shabana in *Doosri Dulhan, Mandi* etc.), the other woman (Parveen in *Yeh Nazdikeeyan*, Sinita in *Arth*, Rekha in *Silsila*, Sareeka in *Grihapravesh*). These are all transgressors of the moral law and can only be accepted back into the fold after they have sought pardon from their guardians and have pledged to refrain from all further transgressions. The only movies where women have managed any kind of infringement of the so-called moral code with impunity are *Ek Baar Phir* where the woman walks out on an insensate husband unlike *ShrimanShrimati, Swarg Narak* and others where the virtue of the woman lay in trying to adjust with boorish, drunkard husbands; *Arth* where the woman refuses to accept an adulterer husband unlike *Yeh Nazdikeeyan* and *Ek Hi Bhool*; *Subah*, where a woman walks out on a conservative family realising that when it comes to a question of choice, her role as a member of society is more important than her role as a wife and mother; *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye*, where the woman goes to court to fight for the legitimacy of her unborn child; *Insaaf Ka Tarazu* and *Beaabroo*, where victims of rape do not commit suicide but take revenge by picking up the threads of their life once again unlike so many other raped sisters of Hindi cinema for whom the only option left is to either become the mistress of the rapist (Reena Roy in *Inteha*) or to join the flesh trade (Geeta Khanna in *Shrant*) or the ultimate redemption of jumping down a well, a building, a moving train or taking recourse to the fruit knife or the saree's noose (Rashmi in *Aaj ki Awaaz*).

In most of the recent films there has been an unabashed repetition of themes and character types so much so that it has become difficult to distinguish one from the other. There can easily be a blind shuffling of titles without any major change in content. The word "contemporary" to denote present-day Hindi films is a misnomer. Most of the films owe their genesis to the Forties and the Fifties and some can even trace their origin to the era of silent films. It would be small wonder if an octogenarian witnessing the exploits of Amjad Khan in *Himmatwala* proclaims that he had seen him somewhere before, and if memory does not play tricks, he will triumphantly reveal that the landlord/moneylender in *Himmatwala* is just a parody of the moneylender in Baburao Painter's *Savkari Pash* (Indian Shylock) of 1925.

What is new in Hindi cinema is the handling of the theme and not the theme itself, since the issues raised in most of the films have already been raised in the early period of Hindi cinema. An analysis of the films that have been hits in recent years shows that anything that has been different has been applauded by the audience. The rest which have been remakes, re-remakes and some further remakes have been ruthlessly rejected. *Zanjeer* was a success because it was the first of its kind heralding the angry young man. This spawned many other films of this genre and most of them are being increasingly rejected by the audience. Similarly, a survey of the box office hits or the successful films of 1982, 1983 and 1984 clearly shows that a new theme or a new kind of presentation or handling of an old theme has ensured the film's success. *Ek Duje ke Liye* was a typical love story but it was topical and new in the sense that for the first time language was the impediment in the lover's path. *Himmatwala* and *Mawaali* dealt with the same old theme of the hero's fight against the landlord's oppression. Yet it ushered in a new genre of comic villains. The audience received enough material to build their fantasies on. The theme did not matter much.

However, the failure of *Akalmand, Maqsad, Kaamyab*, etc. proved that sex is no guarantee for success. *Insaaf Ka Tarazu, Andha Kanoon* and *Aaj Ki Awaaz* were successful because once again, for the first time, the legal system was attacked and the audience felt that at last their plight as victims of a faulty legal system was being depicted on screen. *Arth, Ek Baar Phir, Saath-Saath* were welcomed by the urbanised, westernised middle-class families. *Ardh Satya* exposed the corruption of the police, which had been brought to light so frequently through newspaper reports on police excesses and police brutalities, hence it had tremendous appeal. *Bazaar* and *Chakra* were brilliant expositions of the plight of brides. No one had talked of them before. *Beaabroo*, besides being loaded with a lot of *masala* had the woman out on a mission of vengeance against pimps and rapists. *Chashme Buddoor* and *Angoor*, those light-hearted comedies were like a breath of fresh air after the mangled, murky world of Amitabh, Jeetendra, Dharmendra and Shatrughan. Hence they did well at the box-office.

The examples are many but the fact is that the audience cannot be easily duped. The average filmgoer is perceptive enough to shun redundancy, irrelevancy and obscurantism and applaud innovation and relevance. The increasing number of flops bear testimony to this fact. Then why is it that these kind of failures are repeatedly produced by the filmmakers? Are they not perceptive enough? Then why the impasse when filmmakers keep on making films and audiences keep rejecting them? Having acknowledged the importance of cinema both as an essential means of income and as a medium of social change, why is it then so grossly misused? In a country where all the resources must necessarily be utilised to the fullest possible extent, if the cause of development has to be furthered, is it not necessary to harness this resource too? There are people willing to wait and watch.

Nilufar Kazmi

The Decline of the Leftists

Tom Nossiter assesses their performance and prospects

Of all the constitutional arrangements that India inherited from the British the most arbitrary—and perhaps the most significant—was the electoral system: single member constituencies and simple majority voting. Whichever candidate gets the most votes in a seat becomes MP even if he or she has far less than 51 per cent of the poll.

In Britain itself the system has led to some oddly democratic results: twice since the war the party with most votes nationally has lost the election and in the last election of 1983 Mrs Thatcher won an overwhelming victory with only 43 per cent of the votes. But Britain—apart from Northern Ireland—despite its relative economic troubles is a united kingdom where the choice of parties has long been straightforwardly Labour or Conservative.

India by contrast is infinitely more complex. No one can say whether, if India had operated on some form of proportional representation, it would have been better or worse governed but we can be sure the Lok Sabha would have been a different place. It is not to diminish Mr Rajiv Gandhi's skill as a campaigner, nor to minimise his appeal that we should remind ourselves that in the 1984 Indian election—as in every one of India's general elections—the percentage of seats in the Lower House bears no relation to the distribution of votes in the country. In 1984, 49 per cent of the popular vote has yielded 78 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha. Had Punjab and Assam gone to the polls the figures might have been shaved a little. But when all caveats have been entered the fact remains that Rajiv Gandhi did win a bigger share of the vote than his famous mother or his illustrious grandfather. The opposition has been even more savagely mauled than in 1980. Why, is the question that exercises the leaders of India's Marxist parties who collectively form the largest opposition group in Parliament. In particular, how should the CPI(M), the premier Left party, react.

The first thing to be said is that to have salvaged so much from the political holocaust was creditable. In terms of votes cast, the CPI(M) has in fact more or less retained its six per cent share of the national vote. In Tripura, the CPI(M) held on to both seats; and in West Bengal the Left Front lost 12 seats to reduce its share of the seats from 38 out of 41 in 1980 to 26 out of 42 in 1984 with the



Ashok Bose

(Left to right) Samar Mukherjee, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Jyoti Basu, B.T.Ranadive, Krishnapada Ghosh and E.M.S. Namboodiripad at a CPI(M) plenum in Howrah

CPI(M) coming down from 28 to 18. The Congress(I) on the other hand went up from four in 1980—a perversely low figure for 36 per cent of the poll—to 16. Last time round the Left Front secured 54 per cent of the poll; in 1984, 49 per cent, the same percentage as the Congress(I) in the state this time—*and* the same as Congress(I) *nationally*.

The real haemorrhaging of support for the Marxist left, however, is in Kerala. There the Congress-led United Democratic Front won 17 of the state's 20 seats and with a little more care could have emulated the clean sweep achieved (against the national tide) in 1977. The CPI lost all its four seats including Trichur which it had held ever since 1957 and Adoor which the party had occupied since 1967. Of the 12 seats won by the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in 1980 six had been held by the CPI(M); in 1984 the party won only one, Kottayam—from the Kerala Congress (Mani). All sitting members were beaten including the Politbureau member, Mr Balanandan, and in Alleppey, Mrs Susheela Gopalan, widow of the legendary A.K. Gopalan.

What makes the Kerala result so dispiriting for the LDF is that it is in the opposition. In a politically volatile state, governments are supposed to lose support; and Communists relish anti-government agitation. Further the United Democratic Front (UDF) government has slipped on almost as many banana skins as there are varieties of the fruit in Kerala. Yet the gap between the LDF and the UDF has grown between the 1983 Assembly elections and 1984 from one lakh to one million votes. Particularly interesting—and from the CPI(M)'s standpoint, worrying—is the fact that Kerala has fallen into line with the country as a whole. The state which has consistently shown great electoral independence of mind from 1957 and the first Communist victory through 1977 and 1980 now appears part of the national political system. At least in West Bengal the Left Front can argue—in private—that one can reasonably expect some erosion of support *by vice* of being in government especially when in key respects one is not master in one's own house. The decline in support for the Left Front in Bengal between 1980 and 1984 is in fact five per cent. The electorate is not entirely the same—deaths, first

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Nripen Chakraborty

time young voters and abstainers—but the overall loss of support is only equivalent to two-and-a-half people in every hundred electors. The Congress(I) on the other hand has gained 13 per cent, a figure which presumably must, therefore, have been topped up by electors who in 1980 voted for third force candidates like the Janata. Not all the results are yet to hand but it is already clear that there were two distinct forces at work: Indian and Bengali. Although West Bengal was to some extent insulated from the national mood, the country-wide factors were evident: the desire for a new start, fear for India's unity, and the appeal of clean-limbed and modest youth. So far as we can tell, women, young voters and Muslim proved especially susceptible.

The national dimension was, however, powerfully cross cut by the provincial. In the Communists' old heartland of the urban industrial south there were stunning losses for the CPI(M). The Congress(I) never for a moment expected to win Jadavpur, Dum Dum or Barrackpore. Indeed the Congress(I) really had little organisation there at all, so poorly did it regard the prospects. Nor can the defeats be attributed to middle class disillusionment with the Left Front. Preliminary analysis suggests that the working class were almost as much affected by dissatisfaction with the provincial government as the lower middle class and the professionals.

By contrast the results in the rural areas are much more heartening for the Left Front. Despite some shift of opinion among small farmers the poor have stayed with the Front partners and the Marxists have maintained their position in the new bases established after 1977 in Midnapore—except Contai—in Bankura, in Purulia and in North Bengal. For both programmatic and tactical reasons the Left Front has concentrated its efforts on rural society at the expense of the urban industrial areas. If choices have to be made, the switch has proved a shrewd calculation. Even after the Lok Sabha election setback, the Congress(I) can only expect to win 120 of 294 Assembly seats.

Kerala is quite another matter. The result is almost as bad as it appears. If there was an Assembly election tomorrow the ruling UDF's tally of seats would rise from 77 to 113 of a total of 140. It is true that the loss of LDF votes between the parliamentary elections of 1980 and 1984 at some six per cent is not significantly different from the Left Front's loss in West Bengal. But in Kerala the trend has long been downwards. It is worth remembering that in 1960 the united CPI won 39 per cent of the Assembly poll against a formidable combination of vested interests, a determined Congress high command and injections of foreign money. By 1982 the CPI(M), the effective heir to the old CPI, managed only 19 per cent. It was of course part of a front but even on a generous assessment of what constitutes a Marxist party, the Marxist vote amounted only to 30 per cent. In Kerala, the Communists have not only been losing old bases; they have been failing to establish new ones. The significance of the contrasting results in Kerala and West Bengal is obvious from the fact that two-thirds of the membership of the dominant Marxist party, the CPI(M), is concentrated in Kerala (38 per cent) and West Bengal (30 per cent). E.M.S. Namboodiripad once said that every vote recorded in favour of the Communist party was the vote of a soldier fighting for the proletarian revolution. On that basis the party has experienced a minor setback in West Bengal but is losing the war in Kerala.

Why are the Communists doing so badly in Kerala? The state has always been very different from any other Indian province. In the past its uniquely high levels of literacy served the Communist cause well. As early as the 1940s literacy was widespread among the poor and this undoubtedly facilitated a genuinely massbased movement. By 1947 vir-

tually every village of any size had its reading room where the Communist party skilfully placed so many of its workers or sympathisers. The radical schoolteacher was equally important. Now the general literacy rate in Kerala is up to 69 per cent—in West Bengal 40 per cent—but that very literacy is working against the party. In the past the CPI successfully mobilised the underprivileged because its message chimed with popular aspirations. Today the daily press magnifies the real and imagined failings of the left from end to end of the state; the cinema constitutes a kind of south Indian Hollywood, and recently has produced films of great cynicism on politics; and now television is occupying leisure hours.

Education and public employment have become avenues of social mobility for backward castes and communities. The late 1970s and the 1980s have seen a resurgence of caste as opposed to class as the basis of Kerala politics: and this has presented all manner of problems for the Communists: at a theoretical level and at a tactical level.

One powerful new factor in the revival of caste and community in Kerala as channels of political action is the impact of Gulf employment and expatriate remittances. This has overnight transformed Kerala into a materialist society. At any one time there are probably nearly 200,000 Keralites in the Middle East and the flow of funds has certainly been Rs 220 crores a year and may have been a good deal more. Hardly a village in the state has been untouched by lavish modern houses, cars and the consumer goods of an electronic age The impact is the more profound because its beneficiaries have been chiefly the formerly disadvantaged Moplahs, Ezhavas and Latin Christians. The once dominant Nair caste, reluctant to engage in manual work, have been left out. In communal terms the result is a measure of levelling out of differences between incomes.

Among the new political forces provoked by these changes the RSS has gained a real hold in Kerala. Its membership may be as much as half that of the CPI(M). Black money has also enlarged the scale of corruption in politics and public life. While the Communist parties have more or less maintained their traditional standards of probity, the situation is highly problematic: Gulf money not only contributes to the monetisation of Kerala politics, it also erodes the parties' actual and potential bases of support. And as class and caste become more loosely related, the CPI(M) faces a dilemma. Ideologically they are committed to a class analysis of society. In the past it was fair to equate caste and class when tackling such key issues as reservation. Now as the gap widens between caste and class the party finds itself torn between the expediency of supporting its notionally backward Ezhava constituency and its doctrinal purity.

In the face of such trends in the political economy of Kerala it would have taken a remarkable party to hold the line. Certainly in some respects the CPI(M) has grounds for being pleased with its achievements: party membership has grown; the A.K. Gopalan Centre has been constructed; and the battle has been courageously fought with the more extreme communal forces. Nevertheless, the CPI(M) does seem to have surrendered its hegemony. On the evidence of the party's own reports it does not appear to be well organised; it has fallen down badly on education; and in this correspondent's view it has lost its sense of direction. Class analysis is honoured in the breach; and the last 1980-81 Left Democratic government was the palest shadow of the first and famous Communist government. It was symptomatic that its collapse should have been precipitated by an inept handling of the law and order issue. If one adopts the parliamentary road—and there is no alternative in India—then one cannot give such hostages to fortune as allowing the headload workers to hold the 20 per cent of Kerala who live in *pucca* houses to ransom. Jyoti Basu—witness the fact that Calcutta is arguably the safest city for a tourist in the world—would not make such elementary mistakes.

The picture in West Bengal though not without blemish is altogether different. From the late 1960s through to 1977 the West Bengal left went through fire; and when the Left Front went to the polls in 1977 it was with a cadre who had suffered deeply for their convictions and who could put before the electorate—especially the rural voter—a 36-point programme of substantial character, notably on land reform. The Lok Sabha results in 1980 and the Assembly election results in 1982 basically demonstrated a widespread confidence in a government which has systematically tackled the rural problem. In the urban areas, as the recent election shows, the Left Front's record was nowhere near so good. In part this arises from a simple political choice: the power base of West Bengal lies in the countryside. In part it arises from the brute economic facts of West Bengal's situation: the loss of the East Bengal hinterland; old plant and machinery; and distance from markets. West Bengal has obviously also suffered from some degree of Central neglect; and the Front's political enemies have taken their opportunities to disrupt industrial life.

However, the government's own performance has not been up to the mark. In transport, power and urban development the failures are real as well as beyond the state government's control.

The CPI(M) attributes some of these problems to growth. Party membership has indeed increased rapidly as has the membership of mass organisations: but quality control has not kept pace. How does one find 47,000 candidates in 1978 for the *panchayat* elections in West Bengal when the party membership then was only around 30,000? How does a small and elderly politbureau cope with all the demands upon it? How can one free the sort of talent required to think through the problem of breaking out of the redoubts in Kerala and West Bengal when inevitably all the talent available is required in those states?

Realistically the Marxist left can only proceed on the parliamentary road, slow and halting though that trek is. Election results and governmental performance are not the only indicators of the success of a left movement in India; but it is hard to resist the conclusion that the West Bengal unit of the CPI(M) is more vindicated by events since 1977 and by the Lok Sabha poll than its Kerala counterpart. Without the Left Front government's record surely West Bengal would also have been swept aloft by the Rajiv Spring tide. No friend of India could not but wish India's Prime Minister success but at least the Communists' conception of the good society will stand in sharp contrast to that pursued by Mr Gandhi, if his vision is not fulfilled.

At least in West Bengal the Left Front can argue—in private—that one can reasonably expect some erosion of support *by vice* of being in government

The Left: An Uncertain Future?

Not if it becomes a broad movement with a coherent orientation, writes Bipan Chandra

Ever since the emergence of the Left as a social force in India in the late 1920s, its future has looked bright. There have been special sunny patches in the left's long history during 1933-41, 1945-47, 1952-59, 1967-71 when a breakthrough occurred or looked imminent. Its achievements in giving a reformist and Left turn to nationalist forces in the 1930s and in helping keep India on an independent, democratic, secular and reformist course after independence have been of a very high order. In post-Independence India, conditions of extreme poverty, inequality, injustice, social oppression, inhuman exploitation, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption, widespread communalism and caste oppression, destruction of nature and environment, etc., have created a permanently favourable soil for the growth of the Left. Increasingly, since the early 1930s, the people and the intelligentsia have been oriented towards socialism.

Yet, there have been prolonged periods of setbacks and stagnation. Today, as India changes before our eyes, as it prepares to enter the 21st century, as the old leaders of the Left, entrenched for decades have passed or are passing away, though the poverty and oppression are still with us, a question mark has been raised around the fate of the Left: Has it a future? And many political Indians—some with glee and others with sadness—are even expressing the feeling that the Left may get marginalised in Indian politics as has already happened in the USA, the Scandinavian countries, and in Mexico and to a certain extent in Britain and West Germany.

But the question cannot be answered astrologically or in the abstract. Its answer depends on what the Left does in the coming few years. The fears can prove right if it does not make a sharp break with its approaches and politics of the past. Above all, its future depends on its capacity to understand the changing Indian reality and the moods of the people.

In the past, too, it has missed opportunities and, therefore, a bright future. In the course of the nationalist movement, the leaders and followers of the Left made heroic sacrifices, toiled hard in the cause of nationalism, and earned the reputation of being the most uncompromising of anti-imperialist fighters. But the Left, as a whole, except for some of the socialists and to some extent Jawaharlal Nehru, failed to evolve a correct relationship with the actual, existing nationalist movement led by the Congress and Gandhi. And, consequently, it remained a minor, though not insignificant, force among the people.

After independence, India entered a period of democratic and self-reliant, though capitalist, development. The presence of the Left—and fear of its resurgence—played an important role in keeping India on the right track in several areas of life, for example, foreign policy, civil liberties, secularism, and a measure of land reforms, especially in regions where Left-led peasant movements were strong. But once again the Left failed to grasp the changing reality; it took some of the parties on the left nearly eight years to even recognise the fact of India's becoming free in 1947. The Left's politics got increasingly distanced from reality. While the socialists gradually faded, the Communists entered long periods of debate and division. Constant political opportunities came the Left's way; and there were always fresh accretions of members and followers. But often the old ones left and the party stagnated.

Which are some of the areas of life and politics that the Left has to rethink if it is to open the way to a brighter future? One major lesson of the last 60 years, reemphasised once again by the recent elections, is that the Left needs to come to terms with the process of the nation-in-the-making and with nationalism. Because of the prolonged colonial rule and the constant threats of foreign penetration and neo-colonialisation, nationalism has a different meaning in the ex-colonies than it had in the European context. Here it is not merely or even primarily a bourgeois phenomenon or the ideological reflex of bourgeois interests. Here it does not reflect the befogging of the people's minds by bourgeois ideology; it reflects the correct grasp of an important aspect of the reality by the people.

A correct grasp of this aspect would enable the Left to reconsider its attitude towards such problems as centre-state relations. It would also enable it to see in a clearer perspective the role of an uncompromising political and ideological struggle against communalism and casteism—a struggle which the Left has neglected for many years now and which it alone has the ideological capacity to wage.

The Left has also to come to terms with a civil libertarian and democratic polity. Such a polity is not just another polity to which civil liberty and parliamentary democracy have been added. It is not enough to see it as a class polity plus democracy. It is not enough to see it as a bourgeois democracy. Despite its class content, it involves a historical leap. The doctrine of the sovereignty of the people and the rights of free speech and press and organisation and association, including the right to form trade unions and *kisan sabhas*, mean a basic change in the rules of political behaviour.

The Left has got to work out the full implications of political work in such a polity. It can be helped by the study of the rich European experience in this respect. But it still has to make its own, original effort, for the Left in Europe has also not been able to find an answer so far. And the experience of authoritarian Tzarist Russia or Kuomintang China or Batista's Cuba has only a limited value.

Unfortunately, with rare exceptions, the Left in India has failed to even pose the problem. It has got itself repeatedly bogged down in problems posed in abstract such as revolutionary versus non-revolutionary path, violent versus non-violent means, parliamentary path versus armed struggle, and so on. But the real problem was, and is, what does it mean to be revolutionary in the context of the India of today? Electoral and parliamentary politics can lead to absorption or co-optation of the Left, but they cannot be bypassed; nor are they to be encompassed by the traditional notion of using them as mere forums of propaganda and measures of the Left's strength. They have to be seen as the political channels through which social transformation is to be brought about. Worked one way, the civil libertarian polity can lead to the perpetuation of the social structure; worked another way, it opens the path to social transformation.

One thing is, however, clear. The

Indian people will not accept the Left unless it is clearly seen as a firm champion of democracy, including its bourgeois version. Socialist democracy must appear as an advance over existing democracy and not as its negation. The Left must distinguish here between the old, Cold War anti-Communist propaganda and today's demands by the people that the Left should show full understanding and appreciation of the democratic system and incorporate it in their day-to-day functioning, especially in states where it comes to power.

The need to understand the changing Indian reality and the imperatives of working within a democratic polity point to the need for certain innovations in certain other fields. For one, the role of intellectuals has to be perceived differently. I refer to their role and not attitude towards them. The latter has, of course, to change, for a certain negative attitude towards them has developed in the last few years. But even at its best, the Left has seen intellectuals as merely an important social and political stratum which is an important part of its social base. Its other role is to act as the propagator of socialist thought and Left parties' programmes. But the role of intellectuals as the interpreters of reality has been usually ignored. This latter role has been assigned to the party leaders. It has been performed with some success by leaders like Lenin and Mao. This was for two reasons: These were exceptional individuals and the reality they interpreted was relatively simple.

India (and, perhaps, the world) of today does not possess such leaders and its reality is extremely complex. It can no longer be grasped without intense intellectual effort. Nor can the lacuna be made up by collective leadership embodied in a central committee whose membership is often engaged in time-consuming day-to-day organisational tasks and, what is more important, lacks the technical competence to grasp the complex social, cultural, economic and political realities. Today, this lacuna can be made up only by teams of intellectuals who are trained for the task and who, at the same time, possess the requisite social outlook and commitment. In other words. the intellectuals need to be seen as thinkers of the movement along with the Left party leaders. Many should, perhaps, even be absorbed in the higher organs of the Left parties as is now the case in Italy and to a certain extent in France and Britain.

This is not to deny the creativity of the masses in political motion. That



B.T.Ranadive (centre) at a conference in Howrah

is also basic. But this creativity cannot reveal itself, cannot concretise its results on its own or in an immanent fashion. Even to benefit from it, even to 'realise' it, it has to be grasped by an intellectual effort. Indian people have been quite creative in their politics; quite often they have been creative under Left leadership. But the Left leaders have failed to analyse and, therefore, benefit from the creativity of the masses active under their own leadership. The requisite intellectual effort has been missing.

One aspect of this failure has been the absence of any serious analysis of the Left's own past or present politics. Past politics have been often denounced after they have proved failures in practice, but they have seldom been analysed. Nor have the successes been studied. There is no serious history of the growth of the socialists during the late 1940s and early 1950s, nor of the Communist growth in Kerala and Bengal or earlier in Andhra. Similarly, the experience of the Left Front government in Bengal, now in its eighth year, remains unstudied. So long as elections are won, this experience will be celebrated. If they are ever lost, it will be denounced.

The Left in Kerala or Bengal would have benefited immensely if it had studied the experience of the Congress governments in the provinces during 1937-39. The experience was very much akin to theirs and had a lot to teach, if approached with humility and not seen in the main as a compromise by the Congress with imperialists, capitalists and landlords. One reason for the failure to take a critical look at the Left governments' experiences in Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and the denunciation as anti-Communist of those who would try to do so from outside the Left parties' ranks has been the fear of washing one's dirty linen in public. But isn't it better to do so oneself and to ask one's friends to do so, rather than have the job done by hostile forces or leave it undone? During 1937-39, Gandhi, Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and the Socialists and Communists constantly evaluated and criticised the doings of the Congress ministries quite publicly. No harm came to the national movement from this. Rather it improved the functioning of the ministries and enhanced the prestige of the movement and its leaders.

There is, then, also the need to encourage fresh and creative thinking and open debate. No tinkering with past politics will do. Nor will any amount of repair. And it is precisely here that a major weakness of the Left has lain. Not a single new idea has emerged on the Left for the last decade or two. The naxalites, who made the effort, merely parroted other people's slogans and tried in vain, though heroically, to ape other people's practices. Some of the new Left do the same—and often they are not even able to see through the old, right-wing wine served in new, left bottles.

This weakness is revealed by the fact that in the last few years the world of Marxism, in the realms of theory as well as practice, has been stirred by a whole range of profound debates; but the Indian Left has contributed nothing to them. Even the issues raised by Euro-Communism were dismissed as revisionist, though India was the only country where the Communist had exercised political power in the states under parliamentary democratic conditions. Similarly, the Indian Left's contribution to the problems of Third World development has been nil, even though India has had rich experience, both positive and negative, in developing an independent economy and a democratic political structure in an ex-colonial society.

The Left should also ponder over the problem of evolving a party structure that is responsive to the needs of the present Indian society. Can the left parties grasp the social reality, analyse their own experience, evolve correct political strategy and tactics, and win the confidence of all strata of Indian people without openness of information and debate within their own ranks? In other words, is it not time to at least question whether not only the distorted Stalinist model evolved in the 1930s but even the original Leninist model of a democratic centralist party is suitable to the present-day needs of building a party devoted to and capable of transforming society? And can today such a party be constituted basically by a band of whole-time cadre paid and, therefore, controlled from the top?

And what does it mean to claim success or failure for the Left? First of all, the Left must emerge as the bearer of an alternative social development. It must represent an alternative social vision and not just an alternative party or government. This means that it cannot have a general alliance with any party that stands for capitalist development. And it can certainly not work or ally with the right-wing parties standing for reactionary versions of capitalist development.

But the Left's task is not exhausted by standing out as a virtuous revolutionary alternative which will capture power one day when the people vote for it or rise in an armed uprising under its leadership. It must struggle for influencing existing development in the direction of its own vision. This means fighting for reforms, not merely to expose the rulers and the social system but to actually realise them in practice. It means posing concrete alternatives and not promising what it will do when it comes to power. A few historical examples may be given. The Left was largely responsible in the 1930s for the National Congress acquiring a radical socio-economic content. Instead of claiming this as a positive feature, many in the Left acted as carping critics of the Congress for not going further. In the early 1950s, the Left movement compelled the government in the PEPSU states and in Telengana to pass and implement radical agrarian legislation. But by asserting that this legislation was bogus, the Left surrendered the consequent political goodwill to the Congress. It has been pointed out by me that the Left has been a major influence in India maintaining or developing some of its positive features. But it has not seen this influence as a part of its success and therefore of the possibilities of its own future.

The Left has also to escape some of its recent shibboleths. For example, the notion that because it is weak in many parts of the country, it must help develop an opposition, whatever its character. The Socialists committed harakiri in adopting this view during the 1950s and 1960s. In recent years, the Communists have taken up the theme of ending the one-party monopoly of power by developing an alternative or an opposition. But is the two-party system at all favourable to the Left except where the Left forms the second force, the alternative? Even a cursory reading of politics in other countries as well as in India would show that the opposite is the case. In Britain and USA, there is no monopoly of one party; the two-party system prevails and there is regular alternating of political power among the two. The Communists are marginalised for decades in the two countries and even the Labour Party left does not know how to escape the firm grip of the logic of the two-party system. On the other hand, the only European country where the Left has succeeded in becoming a force is Italy where one-party rule has existed since 1944. In France, where the Communist Party was quite strong when one-party rule prevailed, it is gradually getting marginalised with the emergence of the two party system. This is also the case in India. In Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Andhra, the strong Left presence has been marginalised as the two-party system has emerged. On the other hand, the Left is strong in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura where the Left emerged as the second, alternative force.

The Indian people will not accept the Left unless it is clearly seen as a firm champion of democracy, including its bourgeois version. Socialist democracy must appear as an advance over existing democracy and not as its negation.

This is particularly the case where regionalism, casteism and communalism are concerned. They are harmful to national unity and integration and to the stability of the state. But they can still provide functional politics to the existing social structure. But they are deadly to the Left. Idealism and emotion around them take the place of idealism and emotion around the ideals of socialism and social justice. They are much more of an alternative to the left than to the forces of *status quo*. NTR or Akalis, not to speak of the BJP and Muslim League, have eroded, and will erode, the Left in a very basic manner.

In the end, it may be pointed out that the Left's growth as a hegemonic force in any country depends above all on its capacity to assume the leadership of social development as a whole. It has to become the leader of society as a whole. In the narrower sense, this means the Left taking up every aspect of social development as part of its activity, from improvement in education, spread of scientific temper and advances in science and technology, to every aspect of culture, to fight against the caste system, to independence, integrity and security of the nation and the nation-state. People should once again learn to look up to the Left where each and every progressive cause affecting society is concerned.

At a wider level, this means that the Left has to be a party which is simultaneously a movement. It has to play the sort of role that the National Congress played before 1947, and assume some of its structural features with, of course, the difference that the latter fought for freedom and the former must fight for socialism even while defending freedom. This means that like the pre-independence Congress, the Left has to accommodate all those desirous of, and willing to work for, basic social changes. There will be contentions among different trends; but they will work together even while each tries to convert others to its point of view. There will be openness, even while there is a minimum of necessary discipline. There will be prestigious leaders, even while there is scope for opposing and displacing some.

The Left has a great future if it becomes a broad movement with a coherent orientation; it will be increasingly marginalised if it fails to adapt itself to the needs of the Indian socio-political development and remains divided into increasingly coterised parties and groups.

'Our Performance Has Not Been Miserable'

CPI(M) leader E.M.S.Namboodiripad told SUNDAY

***Q**: The performance of the Left has been miserable in the last elections though the vote bank has not been substantially eroded. What do you think is the reason?*

A: I do not agree that our performance has been 'miserable.' In fact, the Left parties have done better than the bourgeois opposition parties.

Q: In West Bengal your party is in power and in Kerala in the opposition. You have failed in both the roles as the results signify. Has the party taken measures to bring about better administration in West Bengal and to function as a more active opposition in Kerala?

A: Success or failure in an election should not be judged on the basis of winning seats. There are several other factors which have their impact on the future of political parties. To take a few instances, the Communist Party failed 'miserably' in the 1946 elections even in states like Bengal, Kerala and AP where the party was very strong. Similarly, the entire opposition suffered a defeat in 1971 but could defeat the Congress in 1977. Again, the Congress came back to power in 1980. On the eve of the recent elections, i.e., just before Indira Gandhi was assassinated, a leading figure in the Congress made the public declaration that the party might not secure a majority and on that ground suggested that the present system should be changed to elected Presidents or elected Prime Ministers. These changes in the fortunes of political parties are inherent in the situation.

Q: The defeat of Suseela Gopalan in Alleppey was particularly surprising.

A: I do not understand why you should be surprised. Our party was earlier defeated in Alleppey, for instance, in 1977, 1971 and so on.

Q: In Kerala, why is it that the party did not raise any issues and fight on that as the leading opposition party? Is it because of an ageing, indifferent leadership? The maladministration of the UDF, for instance...

A: We did raise the issues of maladministration, repression, corruption, on the part of the UDF. But the election being for the Lok Sabha and taking place immediately after the assassination of Indira Gandhi it was national issues that were highlighted.

Q: Many observers feel that the slap that the Left Front got in Kerala was because of the blatant communal politics that you follow. You put up, as an exception, a bright young Hindu candidate, Suresh Kurup, in Kottayam, a Christian bastion, and he won convincingly. Wasn't that a signal?

A: I reject the suggestion that we are following blatant communal politics. In Kottayam, you will be interested to note, we got the votes of the substantial sections of Christians in what you call a communal bastion. If at all it is a signal it shows that even the bastions of any particular community are not as vulnerable as one thought.

Q: What will be the party's attitude towards the new government?

A: Our attitude is the same as it was to earlier Congress governments which means: first, basic opposition since it is a government of bourgeois landlord classes and therefore pursues anti-people policies; second, cooperation on those issues of foreign policy where the government adopts correct policies together with criticism of an opposition to policies which are wrong; third, independent mobilisation of the people on the basis of political policies which strengthen the non-aligned movement.

Success or failure in an election should not be judged on the basis of winning seats. There are several other factors which have their impact on the future of political parties...The entire opposition suffered a defeat in 1971 but could defeat the Congress in 1977

Q: What is the party's view of the spy scandal? At least two communist bloc countries were involved in it.

A: Espionage is an integral part of the state regardless of whether it's a capitalist or socialist state. That is why it has become the normal practice of all capitalist and socialist states to declare these people *persona non grata* when they are caught in the act. The point of relevance for us now is the fact that it has been going on in our country for the last quarter century without any effective steps being taken against it. This is a matter of serious concern for every patriotic Indian.

Q: Are there any unity efforts with CPI in the offing?

A: The unity of action, including electoral unity, has been developing and is a continuing process. Whenever there are problems due to which unity cannot be maintained we try to resolve them though we have not succeeded everywhere. Beyond this there is no proposition for unity in the sense of merger since the reasons for which we split still continue.

Q: The CPI(M) has never bothered to groom a second line of leadership. Could that be one reason for the slackness in your party both in West Bengal and Kerala?

A: As a matter of fact we have been and are continuing to train and develop not only the second, but the third line of leadership as well. You can see this if you look at the composition of our party's committees at all levels. It is, however, true that while developing younger comrades we utilise the services of experienced cadre though advanced in years, who are capable of discharging their responsibilities. I also deny the assumption of 'slackness' in our party.

Q: Will you continue to be allied with the All India Muslim League? If it suits you will you align with parties like the Kerala Congress and NDP?

A: Our alliance with the AIML, as with the united ML earlier, is based on their cooperation with us in the struggle against the Congress; a common programme which is accepted by them and us; our freedom of action in relation to the struggle against religious obscurantism and communal separatism on which they may not agree with us. As an instance of the latter, the AIML differs with us on the question of Muslim personal law on which they carry on propaganda which is in opposition to ours. The AIML has not, up to now, expressed any desire to depart from these basic principles. As for the other parties the question does not arise now since they are in the Congress camp and since they insist on their religious obscurantism, caste separatism and so on.

Interviewed by Binoo K John

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self-reliant members of society
captures their progress i





(Clockwise from left) Trying to read through the B
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Out Bravely
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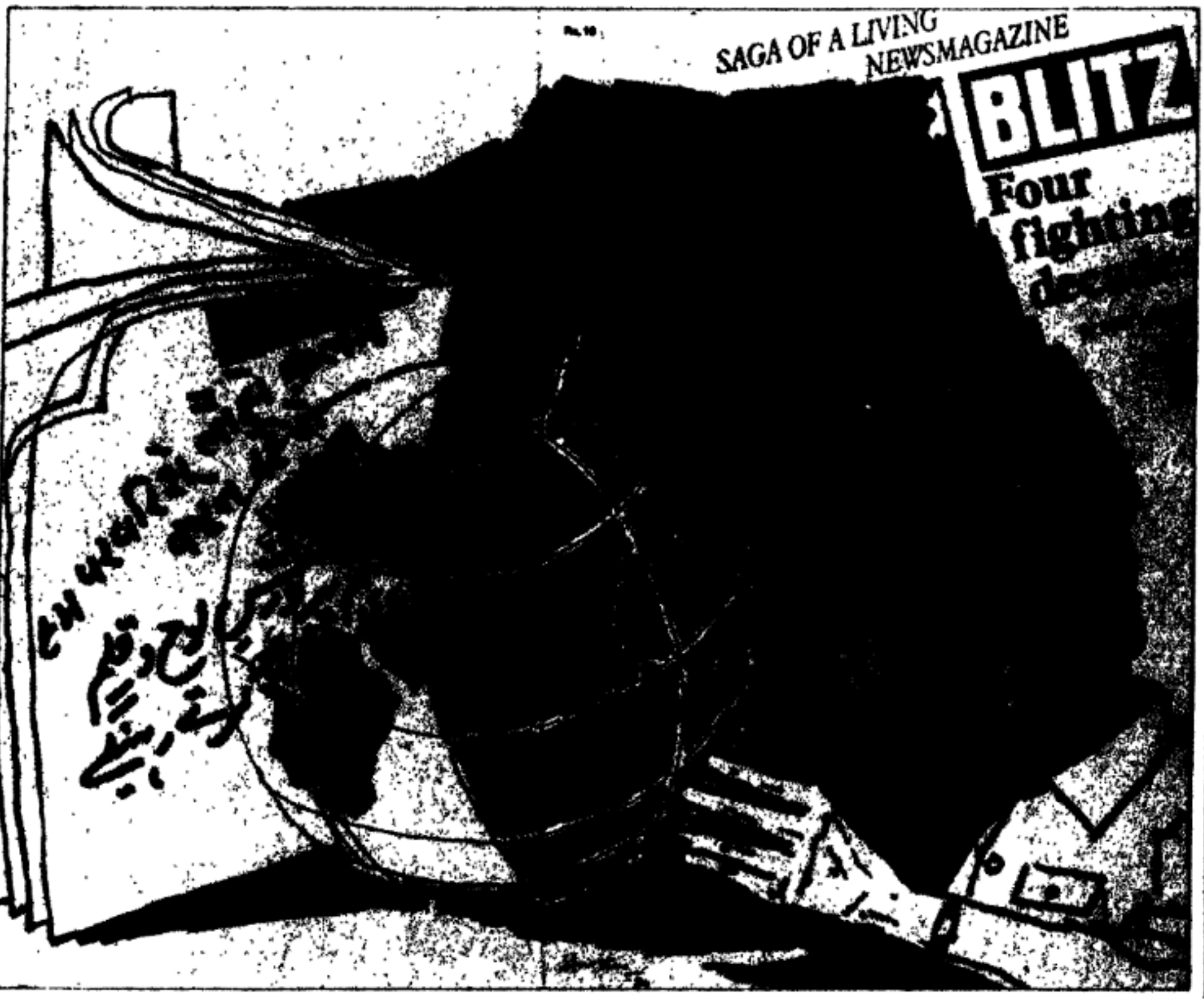
A Forty Year Blitz

A volume to commemorate four decades of Blitz

On 12 December 1940, three men sat around a table at the Wayside Inn, a restaurant near the Flora Fountain area of south Bombay. Nearby, a group of Congress *satyagrahis* who were marching to the Council Hall were being lathi-charged. The air was filled with the shouts of the *satyagrahis* and the muffled blows of the British policemen's truncheons. One of the men leaned forward. "Well, how do we name the baby?" he asked. Seeing the hesitancy of the others, he continued, "Why not *Blitz*? It epitomises the spirit and purpose of the paper we are planning." The other two were in full agreement. Outside, the British had been forced to beat a retreat by the sheer number of the *satyagrahis*, and the three sitting in the restaurant could now hear the Congressmen's voices raised in song. It was like a benediction. *Blitz* soon became one of the most influential newspapers of its time, and is still going strong in its fourth decade.

All the three men around the table that fateful evening—Dinkar Nadkarni, Benjamin Guy Horniman (who proposed the name) and Russy Khurshedjee Karanjia—were to be associated with *Blitz* for the rest of their lives, but none more so than the last named, Russy Karanjia, who has been the paper's editor for over 40 years, and remains one of the most charismatic Indian journalists on the scene today.

The story of the christening of *Blitz* is just one of the many fascinating tales that are recounted in *Four Fighting Decades*, a compilation of the best of *Blitz*. Written by Homi Mistry, a member of the *Blitz* team for nearly 35 years, the volume is in tabloid form, peppered with dramatic headlines, illustrations, cartoons and pictures culled from over 2,000 issues of *Blitz*. The cover has been



The cover of *Four Fighting Decades* : Husain's tribute to the paper

designed and drawn by the inimitable M.F. Husain, and depicts his impression of the psyche of the man who is responsible for *Blitz's* distinctiveness, R.K. Karanjia.

Characteristically, Karanjia's introduction to journalism was through a controversy, although a self-generated one. Fuelling a debate that was raging about Hollywood films, Karanjia, then a young graduate from Bombay's Wilson College, sent a letter to the *Times of India* expressing his opinion. When this was published, the emboldened young man wrote three more letters, all under assumed names and all expressing contradictory points of view. All these letters were published by the *Times* as well. When Ivor Jehu, then deputy editor of the *Times*, met Karanjia by chance at a party and came to know the truth, he was at first annoyed, and then asked Karanjia to meet him at his office the next day as he liked his spirit and style of writing. Karanjia was offered a proofreader's job which he acepted. It did not take him long to become subeditor and then correspondent.

He was subsequently sent to London to serve as an apprentice with the *Evening Standard*. However, Karanjia's restlessness was beginning to surface and he now began to dislike the staid and official style of journalism being practised by the *Times* and the *Standard* in those days. One of the early influences on him in London was that of Hugh Cudlipp, editor of the *Daily Mirror*, a tabloid whose style was closer to Karanjia's heart. (Cudlipp later wrote the famous *Published and be Damned*, which was to become the unofficial motto of *Blitz*).

Back in India, Karanjia left the *Times* and joined the *Sunday Standard* as deputy editor, later becoming editor. His next job was as editor-in-chief of the *Morning Standard*, which he intended to make the country's first tabloid daily. But various managerial and financial crises forced him to resign; he also had reason to feel that the proprietors lacked a clear editorial policy. Along with a group of other staffers who also left the *Morning Standard* and under the guidance of Guy ('Guv-'nor') Horniman, he started *Blitz*.

On 1 February 1941, the first issue of *Blitz* hit the stands. It was designed as a weekly tabloid with 20 pages and cost one *anna* (six paise). The initial capital was just Rs 3,000 and the entire paper had to be set by hand. Very often, the young editor and members of his staff would rush to the press to help the compositors set a paragraph or so to help complete a page. But the very first print order of 10,000 copies fell short of the demand, and a further print run of 5,000 copies was rushed through.

Blitz's early policy was to champion the cause of anti-imperialism and nationalism and to give wholehearted support to popular movements 'All for the people' became the paper's crusading slogan, and this was, forty years later, to be reflected in the motto of the group's latest newspaper, *The Daily*: 'We're on your side.' In its first editorial, *Blitz* emphasised, 'We have no axe to grind—only yours.' This theme was repeatedly stressed and soon won for the paper widespread support.

One of the earliest battles that *Blitz* fought was for the acquittal of a gardener who had been wrongly accused. A Mrs Crawford had written to the paper in November 1941 that the *mali* who was responsible for tending the garden attached to her bungalow had been falsely accused, in her opinion, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment on the charge of brewing illicit liquor. On investigating the case, *Blitz* reporters suspected that a person who stayed in an outhouse attached to the bungalow was more likely to be the actual culprit. *Blitz* published the letter prominently and in an editorial note, appealed for lawyers to arrange for the *mali's* defence. Within hours of publication, half a dozen lawyers offered their services. Initially, the *mali* was released on bail and ultimately, the Bombay High Court reversed the lower court's verdict, acquitting the *mali* honourably.

In a more serious case, *Blitz*, and especially Karanjia, was vociferous in demanding a reversal of the judgment of hanging that had been imposed on K.P.R. Gopalan, a Congressman. Gopalan had been sentenced on suspicion of causing the death by stoning of a police officer during a lathicharge on a meeting of peasants, called by the local unit of the Congress. On the initiative of *Blitz*, a mammoth public meeting was organised at Chowpatty to protest the sentence. Posters displayed there read, 'Gopalan must not hang.' Even Jawaharlal Nehru, in a message to Karanjia, backed the paper's stand and offered his full support. Ultimately the British government had to bow to public pressure and the sentence was commuted to one of life imprisonment.

Not that the pages of *Blitz* remained confined to local affairs.


Saturday August 4 1945

GIVE A HAND TO THE 'NEHRU WEEK'!

BLITZ

"GIVE—TILL IT HURTS!" —SAYS STUDENT CHIEF

Saturday December 9 1944

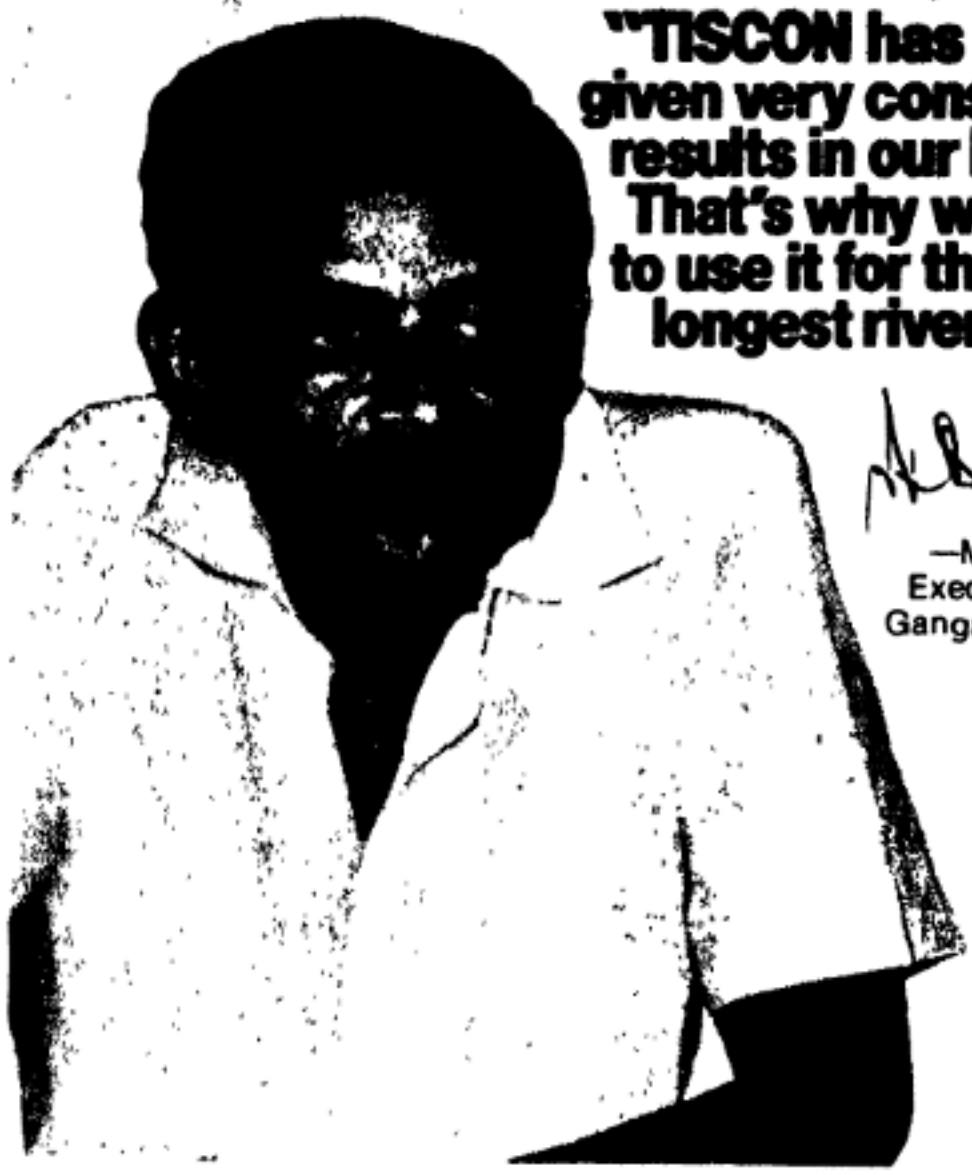
"RELEASE NEHRU!"

BLITZ

THOUSANDS OF READERS FROM ALL PARTS OF INDIA HAVE ASKED 'BLITZ' TO LEAD A HELL-BENT AGITATION FOR NEHRU'S RELEASE. WE, THEREFORE, MAKE 'RELEASE NEHRU!' OUR SLOGAN TILL THE IDOL OF INDIA IS FREE AGAIN. WE WANT YOU TO MAKE THIS SLOGAN THE IMMEDIATE SPEARHEAD OF INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM. ALL ELSE CAN WAIT. FOR WE WANT THE BRITISH RAJ TO REALISE THAT THE CONTINUED IMPRISONMENT OF JAWAHAR IS AN INTOLERABLE THING TO THE INDIAN PEOPLE ..(SEE PAGE 3)

Pre-Independence issues of the paper: attacking the British

Four Fighting Decades by Homi D. Mistry (Blitz Publications, Rs 10)



"TISCON has always given very consistent results in our labs. That's why we decided to use it for the world's longest river bridge."

—Mr A K Bhagat
Executive Engineer
Ganga Bridge Divn. III
Patna

The 5.575 km long Mahatma Gandhi Setu, the main link between North and South Bihar, is the longest river bridge in the world. While constructing it, Mr Bhagat had to keep two important things in mind.

The Bridge had to cater to a discharge of 1,13,300 m^3/second with navigational facilities. It had to be designed for a 'Live Load' of class "70R" or two lanes of class "A" whichever gave the severest effect. As in the past, he found the desired structural support in Tiscon—the superior ribbed reinforcing bar from Tata Steel. Let us find out from him why he chose Tiscon.

"It's the rib pattern that makes all the difference."

"Actually, before deciding on a particular steel, we test it at our own laboratories. And Tiscon has always given us very consistent results. You see, it's the rib pattern that makes all the difference. It is designed to give superior grip.

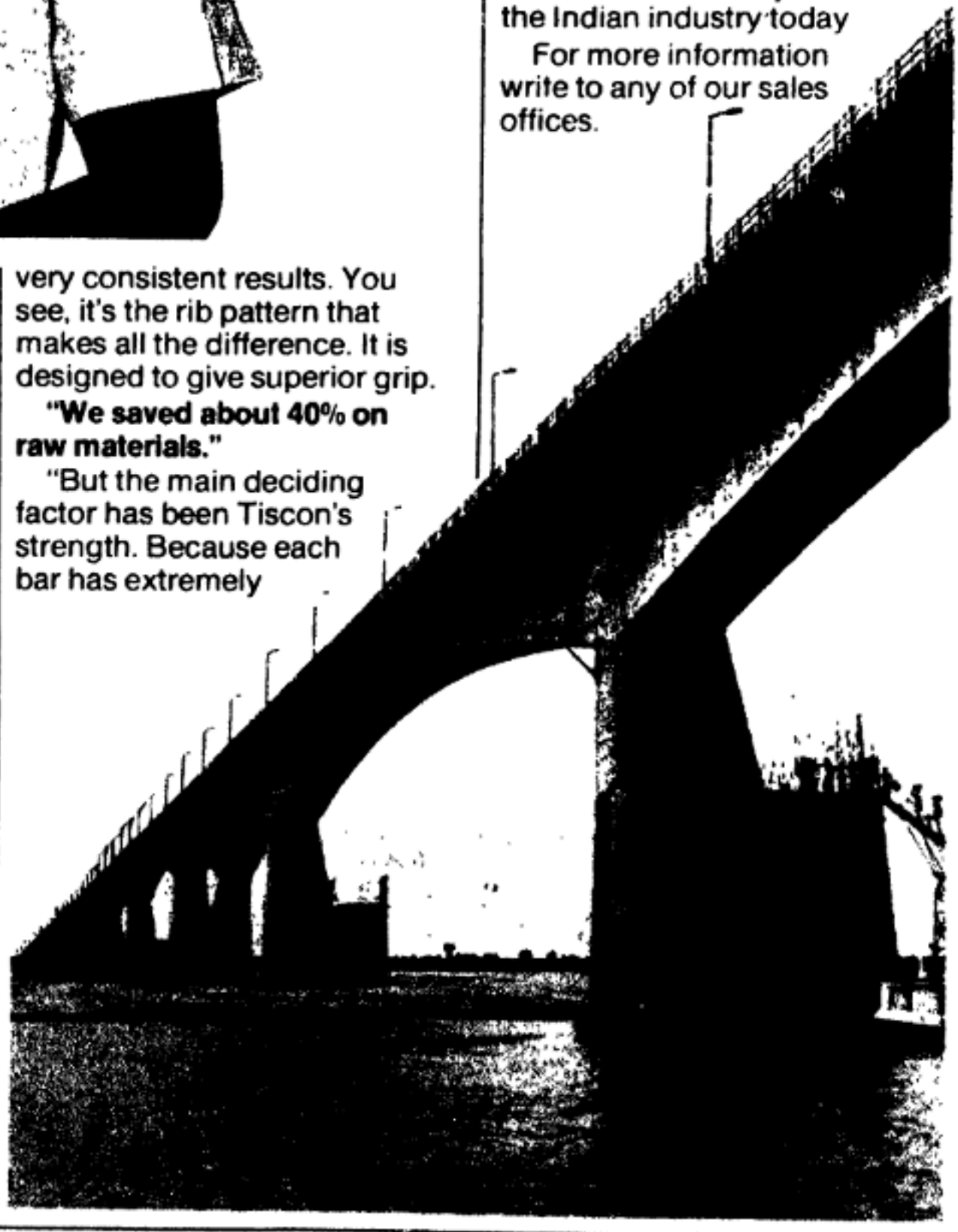
"We saved about 40% on raw materials."

"But the main deciding factor has been Tiscon's strength. Because each bar has extremely high proof stress and ultimate tensile value, the total quantity of bars consumed is much less. We saved about 40% on raw materials. This isn't the first time I'm working with Tiscon. It has given me very positive results in the past.

"I would use it always, without any reservation."

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Even a casual glance at *Four Fighting Decades* will confirm this. Throughout the turbulent years of the freedom struggle, *Blitz* constantly reported on and encouraged the activities of the main freedom fighters. *Blitz* was the first to break the news of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's gallant Indian National Army. Prior to this, all that the Indian papers had published about Netaji's activities abroad had been pure speculation; the real story remained unwritten because of the strict censorship of the British. *Blitz* was also the first to publish pictures of Netaji addressing his INA. At the time of the INA trials too, *Blitz* stood solidly behind the army officers and helped to build up a vigorous campaign for their release. Later, a grateful Sarat Chandra Bose was to write, "*Blitz's* noble work will be remembered not only by those unfortunate people but also by a grateful posterity."

After independence, *Blitz* came to be accepted as a non-party Left wing paper. The movements it backed were those of the common people, and though it never professed a specific ideology through its pages, it invariably attacked corrupt big business and businessmen, and did not hesitate in exposing those in the upper echelons of power. It became a trendsetter by its sensational reporting and exposes, which provided a stark contrast to the staid policy followed by the *Times of India*. In many ways, it was the harbinger of a new type of journalism, and it gave impetus to later magazines and periodicals which tried to emulate its style. *Blitz* was attacked and dragged to court on many occasions, but always emerged with its head bloody but unbowed. Karanjia himself stated in an interview many years later, "We have been called 'black', 'red' 'yellow'...all the colours possible, but so long as I am read, I mean *read*, I care a damn about all this."

An interesting aspect of *Four Fighting Decades* is a number of 'boxes' which provide fascinating and sometimes humorous sidelights into the way in which *Blitz* obtained and reported the news, and with many pithy comments about the personalities involved. One such 'box' deals with Jinnah's death (which occurred on 12 September, 1948). On 24 August of the same year, *Blitz* frontpaged a story which declared, 'Jinnah Dying: Blackout on news of Mr Jinnah's illness: Doctors give up hope of cure.' At that time, barely half a dozen close officials around Jinnah knew the truth, and to the rest of the world, the news came as a complete surprise. *Blitz* secured this



Editor R.K. Karanjia

scoop by intercepting the text of a top secret message between two high-ranking Pakistani officials and by corroborating it with Jinnah's doctor in Bombay. Another such 'box' deals with 'the romance of Nehru's red rose', and recounts two (possibly apocryphal) stories associated with Nehru's habit of wearing a red rose in his buttonhole.

According to an article by Mrs William Randolph Hearst (the wife of the press baron), a young woman who had never known, nor been formally introduced to Nehru, used to stand and wait outside his house every morning. As Nehru appeared to leave for work, she would shyly hand him a rose, which Nehru was gracious enough to slip into his buttonhole. This continued for many weeks until one day the woman stopped her daily visits. Nehru decided to continue the habit, and asked for a fresh rose to be provided to him every morning.

The other story is more down-to-earth, both metaphorically and literally. Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, who was before independence a member of the Viceroy's executive council, was vacationing in Lyons, France, when he was attracted by a variety of rose grown (as he found out) by a French millionaire in memory of his beloved. Sir Girija brought back a graft of the bush and planted it in the garden of his house. Subsequently, Lord Wavell (then commander-in-chief and later Viceroy of India) became enamoured of the flower, and had it replanted in his living quarters. This later became the official residence of the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. The flower soon caught his eye, and he began the practice of wearing a fresh rose in his buttonhole everyday. Later, Sir Girija narrated the story of the rose to Nehru, who then started taking personal care of the plant.

No mention of the fortunes of *Blitz* over the years without reference to the activities of its editor would be complete. *Prensa Latina* once termed Karanjia a 'chronicler of revolutions, biographer of revolutionaries.' Russy Karanjia has lived up to this title with the panache of a buccaneer. By constantly frontpaging the travels and exploits of its editor, *Blitz* came to be inextricably linked with the name of R.K. Karanjia in public memory.

Karanjia is a widely travelled man and possibly the most peripatetic editor alive. There is hardly an area of significance in the world that he has not visited. His interviews with prominent foreign personalities appeared constantly in *Blitz*. A headline in *Four Fighting Decades* proclaims him to be India's ambassador extraordinary; this was hardly an exaggeration in the Fifties and Sixties. Khruschev, Castro, Chou en Lai, Nasser, de Gaulle, Tito, Churchill, Soekarno, Ho Chi Minh, Kennedy, Haile Sellasie: these are just some of the world leaders that the editor of *Blitz* has encountered. At the same time, he also built up a store of goodwill for India on his travels.

Karanjia had always shared a special relationship with the Egyptian President, Nasser, and it was this relationship that was the bedrock of his crowning triumph in the field of international relations. It was mainly because of Karanjia's mediatory efforts between Nasser, Khruschev and the Iraqi Prime Minister, General Kassim, that the USSR agreed to help finance and build the Aswan Dam on the mile. In recognition of his efforts, Nasser bestowed upon Karanjia his country's highest honour, the Republican Order of Merit (Grade One) in June 1965. Inscribed on the medal in Arabic were the words: 'To one who merits the best.'

Towards the end of the volume, the author states, "Perhaps no other paper in the world has been banned, burnt, bayoneted and bludgeoned umpteen times not only in India but in far off places like Kenya, East and South Africa, Pakistan and even Nepal, than *Blitz*.' The paper's impact has, indeed, been tremendous and *Four Fighting Decades* shows that over the years, *Blitz* has lived up to the promise of 'free, frank, fearless' displayed so prominently beside its editorials. The volume is not merely an effort to commemorate four decades of *Blitz*; it is also a personal tribute to its editor, a genius of Indian journalism.

Sanjay Sipahimalani

GUEST COLUMN/RANJIT SAU

Poised for the Great Leap

The refrain is thrilling; it makes you look forward; it lifts your sight to the horizon : On to the next century. It is appearing in every stanza of the chorus in Delhi. India is setting out to enter the new era with poise and dignity. How would the world look like then? What would be the scenario around us? Where would Europe and America be by that time in terms of technology and production.What would socialist countries be doing then? Can India meet the challenges and seize the opportunities? What are the challenges and opportunities, any way?

Economists would be hard pressed to face these questions. Many of their apple carts have been upset; many a theory reversed; umpteen corollaries set aside, by the march of events during the past three decades. If they are still not a vanishing species, their resilience must be remarkable. Indeed, the economy is more like an organism that grows and ages, than a machine that can be refixed by changing defective parts. There is a basic difference between physics and economics. Unlike the laws of physics, the laws of economics are subject to evolution, because the economy itself evolves; with it economic theories.



Ronald Reagan: deficit budget and defence spending

During the early part of postwar period the policy stance of West European and North American countries was inclined towards fiscal measures; taxation, public expenditure, and welfare programmes were the main instruments for steering the economy. Conventional wisdom had it that the primary responsibility of government was to provide the right level of aggregate nominal demand; if it was done, the supply side would take care of itself. In the second half of this three-decade period, almost the opposite of it came to be the dominant creed; it is now the supply side that is said to be in need of official attention. If President Kennedy could be considered the most prominent representative of the demand-side school that ruled earlier, we would have a bit of a difficulty to choose the chief spokesman of the currently fashionable supply-side doctrine, for there is a keen competition in this respect between President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher.

While the mood and tone in campuses have a strange ability to set itself in line with the gyration in official economic philosophy, the fact remains that perhaps there is an objective reason why economic thinking has taken such a 180-degree turn. In West European countries, for instance, public expenditure had risen phenomenally, from some 25 per cent of the gross national product to over 40 per cent, within a span of about two decades; and with it had risen the marginal tax ratio to the point of hurting incentives to work, save and invest. With this alteration in such vital parameters of the economy there had to be a change in conventional wisdom.

Among the advanced capitalist countries including Japan it is evident that the United States alone had succeeded in making a sizeable recovery from the recent recession; others are on the way, but their signals are rather feeble. There are two interesting sidelights in the story. First, even though President Reagan's name has got so closely stuck with supply-side economics, his actual actions are, in nature, distinctly demand-including Keynesian: huge budget deficit, enormous defence spending, and tax cut. Second, the advanced capitalist countries are following widely divergent paths. While the US is on an expansionary fiscal track, Japan, West Germany, and the UK are moving in the opposite direction. If, nevertheless, we have to extrapolate into the next century on the basis of such bizarre data, we would hazard the following guess. The so-called 'Reaganomics'— in its unique combination of myth and reality— will inform much of policy making and university teaching in the coming two decades that will coast into the new century. The world capitalist economy has lived so long with Keynesian ideas; now it will lend its ears to Professor Milton Friedman for a while.

The decline and fall of the Bretton Woods arrangement in the early 1970s is a watershed in international economic relations. The regime of fixed parity that had been in place so far gave way, around 1973, to a system of floating of major currencies. This switchover raised great expectations. Fixed exchange rate entails a diminution of national economic sovereignty; whereas free exchange rate means greater freedom. Or so it was thought. If you have a fixed exchange rate to defend then all your domestic economic activities have to be subordinated to that end; your entire economy in that case becomes vulnerable to disturbances from without. Instead, if you let your exchange rate modulate keeping with world market conditions, this particular variable can absorb a good deal of external shocks leaving you at peace to adopt domestic policies at will. So goes the argument. In the post-1973 theatre of floating currencies the advanced capitalist countries, accordingly, dreamt of being economically somewhat immune from overseas interference. But in fact the experience turned out to be entirely different. An uncounted factor crept on to the scene: huge amounts of hot money moved across national boundaries often at the speed of an electronic impulse. Indeed, exchange rate variation was too weak an instrument to stem the tide of dollars of various shades frantically seeking interest rate differential. The economies of the US, Japan, France, West Germany, and the UK are once again found to remain exposed to each other as ever before. Flexible parity has brought no additional freedom.

Meanwhile, one notes that the latest US economic recovery owes no less to the downward adjustment of

real wage rate as to the active fiscal policy. It also transpires that the US has lost export competitiveness mostly in those industries where the trade union has been strongest. The United States would probably meet the situation in days ahead by keeping the demands of labour subdued. Other capitalist countries are likely to follow suit, since they are all in the same boat of inter-dependence, or, if you like, of fierce mutual competition. The pattern of technological development will be chiselled to fit the occasion.

It is much more difficult for us to make similar prognosis for socialist countries. So our sketch of the kingdom come is incomplete. Anyway, how would India find herself at the turn of the century? In one sense the contrast between India and the advanced capitalist countries would be sharper. When the latter would be increasingly pressing for labour-saving devices, India would be desperately trying to grapple with the problem of creating more jobs for its teeming millions. At the same time, India has to modernise the economy in terms of technology and productivity. Reconciliation of these two sets of conflicting imperatives is the hardest item in the country's agenda for the proposed glorious entry into the next century. The plant and equipment which would be available from advanced capitalist countries would ferociously dismiss labour; they would be more so than ever before because the reigning doctrine there believes in keeping a bit of unemployment for the sake of moderation in wage rate. India, therefore, will have to bridge the disjunction that prevails between modernisation of the economy by means of advanced technology and equipment, on the one hand, and the attainment of full employment, on the other. In a way, this is an ancient question on which economists have debated by now for nearly two centuries.

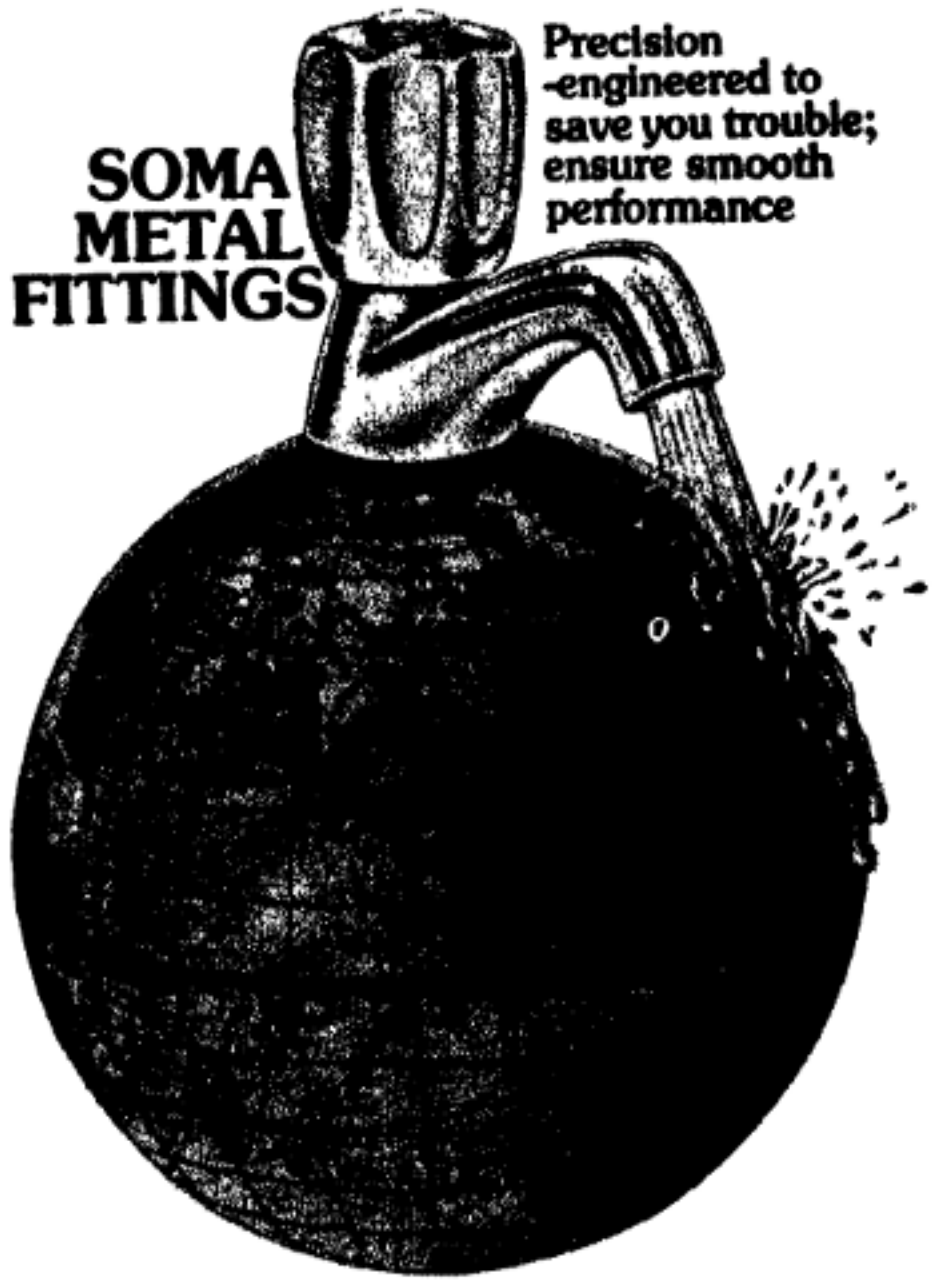
There have been ups and downs in economists' approach to the problem of mechanisation vis-a-vis maintenance of employment opportunities. They have woven their theories, as is expected, with the yarn of contemporary historical records. From the criss-cross of their numerous theorems a few principles stand out in bold relief. It is often possible, with appropriate programming, to introduce new technology and more efficient machines without a negative impact on total employment in the country. At least three things are necessary for this. First, the volume of investment must be stepped up as far as possible. Second, the labour-intensity of technology has to vary over types of industries in a certain way. There are two kinds of industries : one produces 'basic' goods like minerals, steel, power, railway services; while the other gives outputs like TV, motor car, textiles, etc. Which are meant for household consumption. It is in the over-all interest of labour that the former industries are run at minimim average cost regardless of the effect on their direct employment, and that the possibility of greater absorption of labour is explored in the technological frontier of only the second category of industries. The public sector should take special note of it because most of the basic industries fall in its purview. Third, in every industry the capital cost should be economised even at the price of a higher operating cost, subject to the condition of profitability.

If you ask five economists , it is said, they would come up with six opinions. And John Maynard Keynes would possibly have two of those. But on the three principles, given above, the scope of disagreement is hopefully much less.

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Children of Despair

They flee their homes only to enter a world of cruelty



Sujit Ghosh

A girl carries bricks at a construction site: heavy burden

Every year, thousands of anguished little children from poverty-stricken areas of Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, kicked and beaten by their parents for "doing nothing" to earn their keep, flee their homes, only to enter another world of cruelty and deceit: in the numerous roadside *dhabas* (eating places), hotels and restaurants of Lucknow and Kanpur. They travel alone, with the little money they have stolen, or saved up, and stray into Lucknow's Charbagh railway station, where they loiter about in search of work, ragged, hungry and broke. Hawkeyed "agents" on the lookout for cheap hands, pick them up, promise them good jobs and hand them over to the *dhaba*-owners for a "commission" of Rs five on each boy. The promises, of course, are a dupe: it is a miserable existence; many of the children are hardly ever paid their dues, and some not paid at all; they are given two meals of dry *rotis* and *sabzi* a day if they are lucky, and sleep on the pavements outside the *dhabas*, or on the cold, hard floor. Some are sexually assaulted by their owners or the older employees. Absence from work or broken glasses invite loud abuses, often violence. The owners spare no one. And the children suffer in silence, if not in the hope of getting paid some day, at least for the food they can never hope to get at home. Those who cannot bear the hardship return home as they came—hopeless and broke. For the hotels and *dhabas*, business is brisk. Running expenses are few, and on a hot summer day, with items like *lassi* and fruit juices being served too, earnings could go up to Rs 200. The labour, too, is cheaper then, with the harvest season over, unemployment widespread, and the children fleeing to the cities in vast numbers.

Akbar Ali, surprisingly mature for his 15 years, was dressed in a tattered shirt and dirty trousers, and running a slight fever when we met him in Lucknow's GPO park. He looked tired and forlorn, and told us that he had not showed up for work for the last two days. "Why should I?" he asked, rubbing the sleep off his eyes. "He has not paid me yet." Akbar had been hoping he would get his dues, Rs 400 or so, and go back home, but in vain. He had worked in Mushtaq's Park Hotel, a *dhaba* beside Capitol cinema in front of the GPO park for just over a year. "I have kept an account of my dues. He (the owner) also has a book. But when I found he was not keen on

paying me, I stopped going to work."

Akbar's father Hussain lives at home in Liluah, near Calcutta, with his little brother Asghar (8) and sister Munni (16), both of whom go to school. His mother had died long ago. Hussain, a worker in a local jute mill in Liluah, had been out of a job for nine months after the mill closed down. "There was no money to feed us. I, too, couldn't find work in Liluah. So, one day, I left with two friends, Amar and Pappu. We took the train to Benares. I fell ill on the way. My friends asked me to accompany them when they got off at Benares. But I didn't. The train went on to Lucknow. I reached Charbagh at 8 am. For the journey I had Rs 50 with me, which I had earned by selling sugarcane in Liluah. I had spent it all. I was hungry and went looking for some water to drink. Then I met Ishtiaq. He offered me a job in Mushtaq's hotel, for Rs three a day. I served water and cleaned tables. They gave us lunch at 12 noon. We slept in the hotel. There were five others like me. And none had been paid their dues."

Did he keep in touch with his father? "I can't write. Never went to school. And I have not met my father since I came away last year. They don't even know I'm here." He wiped the sweat off his forehead. "But now I want to go back. They hit me in the face. I am looking for another job. If I don't find one, I'll go back home."

Akbar also complained of homosexual advances from an older waiter in the *dhaba*, Thomas. "He comes after us at night, usually. But you should ask the younger boys, Ajoy, for instance, what he does to them." Thomas also does business on the side as a pimp. Homosexuality seemed widely prevalent in most hotels and *dhabas* where children are employed.

Asked what he planned to do in future, Akbar said, "I myself have not been able to go to school and get a proper education. But I want my brother and sister to keep studying. I will work and earn for them." He said he had not heard anything as yet about the jute mill in Liluah which had closed down, but he hoped it had reopened and his father had started working again. "I'm going home anyway."

Thirteen-year-old Ajay Kumar Singh, from a fairly well-to-do Rajput family who own ten *bighas* in the village of Chauhan ka Purwa, Chhattarpur, had less convincing reasons to venture into Lucknow's *dhabas* for work. But he came, nonetheless. He was never treated well at home, as the black sheep in a family of three brothers Ajay, Vijay (11), Vinod (6), and three sisters Usha (10), Uma (5) and Kanchan (3). His father Laldas Singh (45) and mother Sita (35) do not know he is in Lucknow. Ajay had studied up to class seven in the Junior Basic Vidyalaya, Chhattarpur, near his village, but later dropped out. A recent recruit in Mushtaq's *dhaba*, he has been working there for the last four and a half months.

"My father beat me because I wasn't working. We have a lot of land. We grow *arhar*, wheat and paddy. Our house has seven rooms. We are fairly well off. But he still wanted me to labour. So I ran away." Is he in touch with his parents? "He can't write letters. He's illiterate."



Gopinath Kochare

Akbar Ali (15) at GPO Park, Lucknow

Bhagwan Das (14), another of Mushtaq's cheap hands, is from the village of Phagaura in Faizabad district. His father Ram Deo (45), lives at home with his mother and three brothers, Om Prakash (12), Budha Ram (6) and Bhagwandin (22). Three of his sisters had died in the floods. *"Nikai se aadmi bach nahi saktey* (No one can be safe from the floods)," he says, remembering the disaster. The family has some land but the wheat and *arhar* they grow on it is not enough to see them through a year.

"I've been working for five months in Lucknow. I came here with Sant Ram (14), also from my village. He works in Charbagh I ran away from home after I was beaten up for doing something wrong," he said. "Rakesh got me into this job. First they promised to pay me Rs 90 a month. But they gave me only Rs 120 for five months' work." Bhagwan said Mushtaq treated his boys well only when he had a lot of people coming to his *dhaba* and business was good. And that was usually when there was a "good" film running at the movie hall nearby, Capitol. "All they need is money. Once people stop coming, they abuse and beat us. Now there's a hit coming, and I think I'll leave."

The *dhabas* in Charbagh, which attract a lot of customers from the crowded railway station, are probably the largest employers of child labour in Lucknow. The jobs are often for the asking. Any child found wandering about in the neighbourhood is instantly recruited—though hardly ever paid. Each *dhaba* for this reason, has a high turnover of waiters.

We found Om Prakash from Sultanpur walking disconsolately towards a movie hall after he had decided to stop going to work in a nearby *dhaba*. It didn't even need a question to search his thoughts: "They don't pay us, *saab*. They give us nothing," he said as we walked alongside. He was finding it tough surviving without money and said he wouldn't mind working in somebody's home as a fulltime servant. As we walked towards the station, Om Prakash was accosted by an "agent" and whisked away before we could even speak to him again.

The trade in child labour in Lucknow which has remained subdued for the last few years, seems to have begun again in full swing. According to one estimate, about 30 persons function as "agents" for recruiting children at Charbagh railway station. Most of the children belong to Nepal (as many as 50 per cent) and the rest to Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur, Basti, Sultanpur and Deoria districts, among others. The average monthly wage promised to each is Rs 75, which is never paid in full. Four years ago, a racket in child labour had been busted by the police, and the culprits arrested. Later they were all released on bail, and now allegedly operate with the connivance of the GRP and RPF at Charbagh.

"The problem of child labour," says Mr A. B. Lal, director of the Bureau of Child Research and Welfare, a voluntary body engaged in a variety of child welfare projects, "is not only unique in our country but also in other developing countries. As a social problem, it has more or less become a characteristic feature of social welfare and consciousness."

In March 1979, the then labour minister, Mr Ravindra Varma informed the Rajya Sabha that India



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had the largest number of child labourers in the world, constituting 4.7 per cent of the total child population, according to the 1971 census. Mr Varma also said that the total number of beggars and vagrants below the age of 14 in the year 1971 was 1,47,963. This figure should have increased considerably by now.

A study conducted by the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi, came to the conclusion that it would be an unrealistic attempt to reduce the population of child labour, as this would only aggravate the misery of the poor. The institute, in another study on working children in Bombay, found that the economic factor compelled children to work, and they often acted as the sole breadwinners for their families. In fact, if the Minimum Wages Act was strictly enforced, the study found, the adults in a family would not force the children to take to work. It said that more than 50 per cent of parents and employers were against the abolition of child labour; rather they preferred working conditions to be improved. Also, a large number of working children were ready to avail themselves of educational opportunities, if offered any. As many as 79 per cent of the employed children and 66 per cent of the self-employed children expressed a desire to take up education provided it did not disturb their work schedule. About 94 per cent of the parents thought education was essential for their children.

The fundamental rights granted by the Indian Constitution fully protect the rights of children. They state that "no child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in other hazardous employment" (Articles 15-24). Article 39 states, "The state shall, in particular, direct its policies towards securing the health and strength of the workers, men, women and children, and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations not suitable to their age or strength." Children and youth have been legally protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment

Has enough been done to attempt to fulfil these solemn directives in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, with a population of 11,062,000 roughly 40 per cent of whom are children? Today, UP has the highest infant mortality rate in India—159 per 1,000 live births—and infant deaths account for 35.1 per cent of the total deaths in the state. A large number of children also suffer from diseases like polio, diarrhoea and goitre.



Gopinath Kochunni

Kids at work at a *dhaba* near Charbagh

As for the problem of child labour, in spite of the fact that various Acts have been passed by Legislatures to prohibit child labour, a large number of children continue to work in exploitative conditions mainly in agriculture, and small-scale and cottage industries, where labour is unorganised. To make things worse for children, agriculture is seasonal, and after the planting and harvesting seasons are over, they have to migrate to the cities to earn whatever they can. About 80 per cent of India's labour force is agricultural, but labour is employed for an average of only 189 days a year in agricultural pursuits. There are other forms of rural employment, too, but an agricultural labourer still faces about 100 days of total unemployment each year. During this period, women go to the cities, even with babies in their arms. They sometimes force their children to beg. The situation in a year of drought or floods can well be imagined.

It is important, therefore, to provide for some alternative means of livelihood during these 100 days of unemployment. The government should also look into the problem of child labour to see if it cannot be abolished for socio-economic reasons at this stage, or later. What are the various measures necessary to protect the health of working children, and provide for their education and development? Are existing laws adequate to regulate child labour? And can a comprehensive single Act be formulated to regulate the working conditions of children wherever they are employed so that their health is not damaged and growth not stunted?

"What is needed is a coordinated and integrated approach to child welfare," says Mr Lal. According to him, the state government officials often pose as major obstacles in the way of child welfare: "Under the present set-up, although there are some very good schemes for child welfare, like the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), which is very realistic, they are never properly implemented." Since all child welfare schemes are planned, and funded by the central government and it is left to the states to implement them, a great deal depends on a state government's bureaucratic efficiency, "The Uttar Pradesh government cannot even implement its own schemes, let alone others'. All the government officials do is pass the buck."

Mr Lal said that the involvement of people in general, and voluntary agencies in welfare schemes was essential for their success. It was because such participation was lacking in the state that the massive increase in expenditure on child welfare over the years has proved fruitless. "About Rs 16 lakhs has been spent on various projects. The ICDS programme which was started in 1975 to reduce child mortality and child morbidity is now being expanded. The scheme had clearly envisaged participation of people and voluntary agencies. But we have been left out. As a result, the state government demands the fuel and rent for the *anganvadi* centres, though these centres should be in the charge of villagers. The government should involve the people at large if it wants to improve the lot of children."

Can Uttar Pradesh's children wait?

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

ESSAY

How Valid Are Confessions?

The spate of confessions in the Patiala House Courts in the capital in recent days has thrown up the question: How valid are confessions made by the accused in the eyes of law? Except if a crime takes place in a fit of passion, like murdering a paramour found in bed with his wife, where the man surrenders to the police in remorse, of course with a sense of job accomplished, voluntary confession by a criminal is rather rare. Even in the case of the Abhayankar murderers in Pune or the Chopra children murderers in Delhi, the criminals went on pleading their innocence till the time of going to the gallows. Criminal laws lay down the steps to follow in detection of crime and the procedure to investigate and bring the culprits to book. At the same time, the golden thread that runs through the entire set of criminal laws is that the accused is presumed innocent unless proved guilty beyond any doubt. He is given all the facilities to defend himself to prove his innocence.

Around 1872, when the Indian Evidence Act was being codified, Justice Stephen defined confession as a statement by a person charged with a crime as distinct from a statement in a civil matter. The term 'confession' has not been defined in the Evidence Act. In 1881, Chief Justice Sherwood said, "There is no branch of the law of evidence in such inextricable confusion as that relative to confessions." From the standpoint of reason, a confession may be subject to grave infirmities as it is extremely improbable that a person should accuse himself of a serious crime. It may have been made from some false hope of benefit, or fear of injury. The mind of the criminal may be excited or morbid and the confession may be an offer of compromise to the prosecution.

Judges are not unanimous about the judicial value of confessions and have treated them as a class of evidence by themselves. A voluntary and genuine confession is legal and sufficient proof of guilt. The confession of an accused is substantive evidence and a conviction can be solely based on it. There is no legal bar to a conviction being based on a voluntary confession, if believed to be true. This 'if' is crucial as how do we believe that a confession has been voluntarily made? For, paid informers, treacherous associates, angry victims and overzealous police officers—these are the persons through whom an alleged confession is often presented.

That is why the law requires that the criminal, intending to confess, be kept in judicial custody, tells him that the confession may be used against him and warns him that he is under no obligation to confess. He is given enough time to reflect before he comes forward to confess. Even after recording the confession, the magistrate has to certify that he was satisfied that the criminal was not under any threat, inducement or pressure from anyone, and that he confessed voluntarily. The environment under which a criminal is confessing must be absolutely free and even a slight doubt vitiates the nature of the confession. A voluntary confession of guilt proceeds only from penitence and remorse and it usually comes from a person who commits a crime in a fit of passion. A person who is committing crimes over a period of time would not be in such a frame of mind to volunteer a confession.

As confessions are voluntary, the persons making them are not under oath and they cannot be subjected to cross examination, as in the case of a witness giving evidence. Despite such a tenuous link between confession and other evidence as required by the criminal law, the police and the CBI for over a decade have taken the easy way out and collected evidence by securing confessions through repeated pressures on the persons implicated. As the investigation begins, the implicated persons are not told whether some of them would be the accused or witnesses for the prosecution. By calling them for 'informal' interrogation at an office, they are questioned extensively and their answers recorded, tallied with the answers of others and the investigation proceeds only according to such statements. After a few months, the implicated persons are given typed pages, arranged through statements in such a way that a continuous reading in a court would secure conviction, according to law. One group of persons would be asked to swear them as affidavits, as if they were taken from witnesses, and for more hardened ones, in the shape of confessions. The list of witnesses for the prosecution and the accused is kept open and interchangeable till the last moment, depending upon how the persons implicated are behaving in swearing affidavits or confessions.

Once in a serious criminal case, the CBI was caught at their own game. A senior government official, implicated in the case along with others, went on meeting the CBI officials in



A suspect in the recently busted spy case being taken to the court of Bharat Bhushan

'informal' interrogation and answered all kinds of questions put to him, spread over a few months. The answers were dictated by the CBI official to the stenographer and typed statements prepared regularly. On the pretext of correcting the answers, the implicated official without knowing whether he would be witness or an accused, used to write a few words or sentences in his own hand on those typed pages. One day he was given a few neatly typed pages with the instruction to go and swear it as his affidavit in a court. On reading he found it contained many points not mentioned by him during interrogation by the CBI. On the plea of refreshing his memory, he asked for the corrected pages which were given to him. He quietly took photocopies of those pages and showed them to the court. Later, at the time of his giving evidence on oath he told the court that his affidavit was prepared by the CBI for swearing and it was not his own. The evidence was tutored and fabricated to suit the case and forced upon the witness.

Further, in the Indian Evidence Act, there is an extraordinary provision in Section 30 which reads, "When more than one are being tried jointly for the same offence, and a confession made by one of such persons affecting himself and some other persons is proved, the court may take into consideration such confession as against such other person as well as against the person who makes such confession." It is an exception to the rule of English law which clearly lays down that a confession by an accused is evidence only against the maker and not against others who may be tried along with him. Under Roman law also, confession of a prisoner is not admissible against his accomplice. This provision has been adversely commented upon by various judges as it creates an exception to the fundamental principle of criminal law.

The Supreme Court of India observed in a case, "A co-accused who confesses is naturally an accomplice and the danger of using the testimony of one accomplice to corroborate another has repeatedly been pointed out. The danger is in no way lessened when the evidence is not on oath and cannot be tested by cross examination." At another place in a separate case, the Supreme Court said, "Though confession may be regarded as evidence in that general sense because of the provisions of Section 30 of the Evidence Act, the fact remains that it is not evidence as defined by Section 3 of the Act" (which mentions statements by witness, and not accused persons).

The term 'confession' has not been defined in the Evidence Act. In 1881, chief justice Sherwood said, "There is no branch of the law of evidence in such inextricable confusion as that relative to confessions."

In a trial of a murder case, a famous writer once narrated a real life testimony of a witness which might be of interest here. It was not the case of a confession in the strict judicial sense. In a dispute over a plot of land, there was a fight among the villagers and a person died of injuries on the spot. About ten persons were accused of killing the man and had to face trial in the local court. They engaged an English barrister to defend them. In the course of the trial, the statements of the witnesses for the prosecution were recorded, except that of the widow of the murdered person which was scheduled for a particular day. The barrister arrived in the town the evening before and heard the local defence lawyer. After he left, a young man spent some time with the barrister.

The next day, after the statement of the widow was recorded and she, as the only eyewitness to the murder, had identified all the accused persons, the barrister took permission from the court and produced the young man before her, and asked whether he was at the place where the murder took place. The widow said no, he was definitely not there and he had no part to play at the time of the quarrel leading to the murder of her husband. Then the barrister placed the young man as the only defence witness. At the witness box, the young man narrated how he had come running from his house to the field, holding in his hand a wooden dumb-bell with which he was exercising. In the confusion, during the quarrel and the fight, he tried to separate the people who were fighting, when the dumb-bell struck the head of the person who died on the spot. On the basis of this statement, all the accused were let off, but the police did not arrest the young man as no evidence was available independently to implicate him in the crime except his own statement.

A Legal Correspondent, New Delhi

CONSUMER COMES FIRST

BAZAR ON WHEELS

NEW DELHI: "Bazar on Wheels" has registered a record sale of Rs. 2 crores, 38 lakhs and 83 thousand since its inception in October, 1983 till December, 1984. The share of the Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation in this is Rs. 1 crore 51 lakhs and 75 thousand and that of Delhi Consumer Co-operative Whole-sale Store is Rs. 87 lakhs and 8 thousand.

Disclosing this, Jag Parvesh Chandra, Chief Executive Councillor said that the Bazar on Wheels was launched by Delhi Administration to protect the interests of consumers specially in areas where people of the weaker sections live. It is selling essential items of day-to-day consumption at reasonable prices at the door steps of the people in resettlement colonies and Harijan Bastis. To the inhabitants of these areas, who have a lean pocket and can ill-afford to purchase essential items from the open market, this regular alternative market on wheels is proving a boon.

He recalled that the Bazar, comprising 34 vans (23 of Delhi State Supplies Corporation and 11 of Delhi Consumer Co-operative Whole-sale Store), sells these items daily through its 95 outlets in different parts of the city: sugar, tea, pulses, exercise books, vegetables, mustard, coconut and imported oils, controlled cloth, soaps, spices, potatoes and onions. Items like tea, sugar, and pulses are provided in sealed plastic bags of 1 kg. and those of vegetable oil in special polythene packing of the same weight.

SPY SCANDAL

Are the Russians Involved?

A few Russian embassy officials have returned to Moscow

The spy case, which has been the only exciting development in New Delhi, apart from the ruling party revolt, in 1985 so far, has thrown up some interesting sidelights. A few questions have been answered. Too many suspicions have been raised. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has created history by bluntly telling the visiting Prime Minister of Poland, General Jaruzelski, that he did not consider spying by the Polish embassy personnel posted in New Delhi to be a friendly act. Normally when spies are discovered in foreign embassies, the host government expels them from the country. In this case, while the government has confirmed that France, Poland and East Germany were involved in the spying activities of Coomar Narain, the principal accused in the spy scandal, no one has been declared *persona non grata*. The French deputy military attache, Colonel Bolley, left quietly. The French government on its own recalled its ambassador to this country (and the foreign office accorded him a farewell too). But in the case of the East Bloc countries, no such departures from the missions in New Delhi have been made public. Why was this silence maintained? Was it because India values its traditional ties with the Soviet Bloc and thereby did not want to embarass the Warsaw Pact nations? This could not be the reason, because had it been so, then the Prime Minister would not have been so blunt with a visiting foreign dignitary. The only plausible reason why silence has been maintained about the activities of the East Bloc embassies is that something is being hidden.

According to informed sources, two members of the Russian embassy staff who left the country after the Coomar Narain episode did not do so on their own accord. They were not asked to leave either. But when the confessions revealed the involvement of some members of the Russian embassy staff, the embarassment was avoidedby their quiet departures to Moscow. If the Polish and the German Democratic Republic embassies were involved with Coomar Narain, it is axiomatic that the KGB was lurking somewhere behind. One wonders why the Russian involvement, is being zealously kept secret. If there was any Russian involvement, then that should be disclosed. Conversely, if the Russians are clean on this score, that too should be clarified. A leading daily, the *Indian Express*, had carried reports to the effect that the Soviet embassy too was involved in the case.



Rajiv Gandhi (right) with Polish Prime Minister General Jaruzelski

If an official spokesmen can be so frank as to tell the press that the Prime Minister of India had spoken to General Jaruzelski about the spying case, then similar staightforwardness about the Russian involvement too should be forthcoming.

The counter-intelligence wing of the intelligence bureau, which handled the case mainly, has now become the butt of criticism in a section of the press. Such a case of busting a spy ring has been unprecedented. And coming close on the heels of the Larkins case, credit should be given where it is due. Some questions, however, are unanswered. It is a fact that the former defence production secretary, V.M.C. Sarin, had sought routine clearance for his staff from the IB last year. In the case of both Amrik Lal and Jagdish Arora, clean chits were issued. In Amrik Lal's case, the clean certificate came as late as December 1984. According to this clearance report, nothing adverse had been noticed about Amrik Lal "since 1948." One wonders how such reports were given. If Amrik Lal had been under surveillance for the past few months, then December 1984 was hardly the time to clear him. Possibly it was a strategic move, to keep the spy ring going till the time was ripe to strike. But in that case, clearance need not have been sent, it was a routine clearance after all, and certainly no one would have pursued the matter.

Another disturbing aspect in the case has been the way *in camera* proceedings of the confessional statements have been made public. Only the presiding magistrate and his staff and the lawyers present could be privy to the hearings. Who leaked the details ? However, there is a silver lining : in his confessional statement, Coomar Narain has not said that he was spying for 25 years, as press reports so far have alleged. What he is believed to have said is that he was serving the firm, SLM Maneklal, for 25 years. His spying activities began in the early part of this decade. It is heartening to know that the multinational spy, who basically worked for the Eastern Bloc, was not active for a quarter of a century. The fact, however, remains that his activities were discovered only latc last year and the culprits were nabbed in record time. With the dust slowly settling down, it may also be appropriate for the government to announce if any senior officers were at all involved with Coomar Narain. To keep the bureaucracy under a cloud for too long is not healthy. If no senior bureaucrat is involved, that should be announced.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

MRS GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

The Accused are Charged

But the charge-sheet leaves many questions unanswered

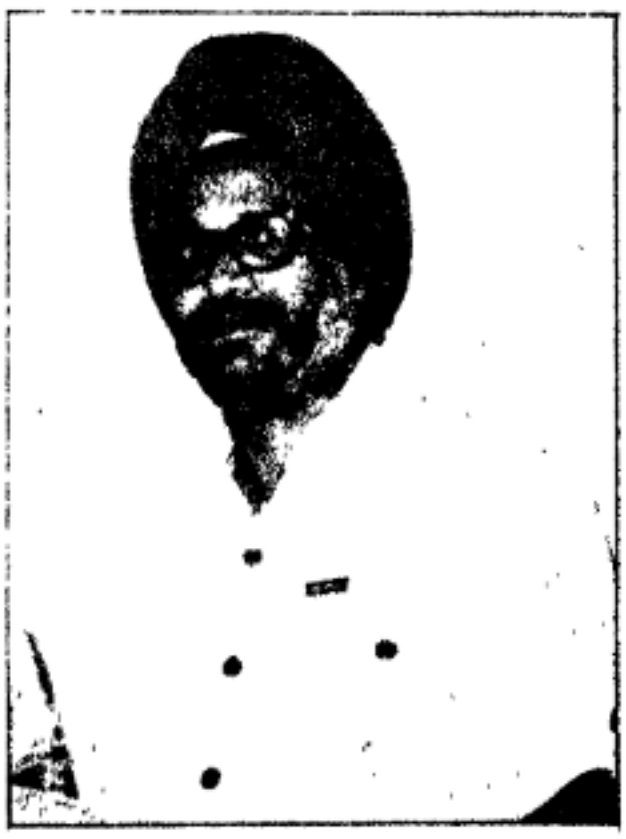
One hundred and two days after Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination, a charge-sheet has been filed in the courts. Four persons (including the deceased Beant Singh) have been accused of murdering the late Prime Minister and 144 persons, including her personal aides R.K. Dhawan and M.L. Fotedar and her valet, Nathuram, have been cited as witnesses. Fresh light has hardly been thrown in the eight-page *challan*, which has left many questions unanswered.

The charge-sheet, filed on 11 February, has named constable Satwant Singh, Balbir Singh and Kehar Singh as the prime accused persons in the case. Sub-inspector Beant Singh is the deceased accused. The accused persons are charged under Sections 120 B, 109 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) read with Section 302 IPC and substantive offences under Sections 303, 307 IPC and 27/54/59 of the Arms Act. The charge-sheet handed over to the three surviving accused on 11 February reads: "All the four accused were party to a criminal conspiracy to commit an illegal act, to wit, to commit the murder of Smt Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India."

It describes lucidly the well-known sequence of events which led to the murder: "At about 0910 hours, accused Beant Singh opened fire from his revolver and accused Satwant Singh fired from his SAF carbine at Smt Indira Gandhi, as she was approaching the TMC gate. Accused Beant Singh fired five rounds, whereas accused Satwant Singh fired 25 shots at her... Indira Gandhi sustained injuries to her person due to the shots fired at her by accused Beant Singh and Satwant Singh and fell down on the pathway. Smt Indira Gandhi was immediately taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, where she succumbed to the injuries the same day."

The charge-sheet concludes: "Accused Beant Singh died on 31 October and the charge against him abates. The charge-sheet against accused Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh is submitted on the evidence mentioned in it... the accused are in judicial custody since 29 November, 5 December and 6 December respectively. They may please be summoned and tried according to law."

The charge-sheet was filed in the court of S.L. Khanna, chief metropolitan magistrate maximum, before the period of 90 days judicial remand could expire and an appeal could be filed to release any of the accused on bail. The charge-sheet was handed over to the defence counsels of the accused persons, without any other relevant documents in the case. Enclosed with the *challan* was the list of 91 documents relevant to the case and not the documentary proof itself. The list includes the FIR report, inquest report, remand papers, postmortem report and the conviction slip and other circumstantial evidence collected by the investigating agencies after the assassination.



Kehar Singh

Another revealing document placed before the court along with the charge-sheet is the list of 144 witnesses in the case. The list includes some of the people closest to the late Prime Minister including Rajinder Kumar Dhawan, her special assistant, who was only a step behind the Prime Minister when she was shot down, Makhan Lal Fotedar, her political adviser, Nathuram, her personal valet and Rameshwar Dayal, her special security officer. There are several other persons listed who have become witnesses to the assassination. The statements of each of the 144 persons will constitute evidence against the accused and will be responsible for influencing the final verdict of the court.

The charge-sheet is in some respects a disappointing and incomplete document for it leaves several questions unanswered:

- Under what circumstances was Beant Singh, who fired the first shot at the Prime Minister, himself killed?
- Why did the commandos of the Indo-Tibetan Border Force (ITBP), (who were posted on duty at the Prime Minister's house at the time of the crime), fire at the two assassins, killing Beant and critically wounding Satwant when they have strict instructions not to fire above the waist in such an emergency?
- Was there a third assassin who was party to the crime, as had been disclosed earlier, and if there was, was he of Hindu or Sikh faith?
- Who besides the prime accused in the case are the other persons suspected of involvement or complicity in the assassination?
- Are there any charges against Simranjeet Singh Mann and against Jasbir Singh who are undergoing preventive detention for the case under NSA?
- What about the alleged involvement of a foreign power or a "foreign hand" in the murder?
- How were the chief accused in the case financed and who were the masterminds behind the conspiracy to kill the Prime Minister?
- How was there a total collapse of security arrangements once the shoot-out had occurred?
- Have those accused in the case confessed to their crime, and if so what are the contents of their confessional statements?

The charge-sheet does not provide the answers to any of these questions. In fact, it throws very little new light on the case and discloses very little about the antecedents, background and motivations of the accused persons. The picture that the charge-sheet paints is that both Satwant Singh and Beant Singh were the chief executors of the crime and were instigated and assisted by the other two accused persons, Balbir Singh and Kehar Singh.

It is clear, however, that the most vital link (and now the most important undertrial in the country) is Satwant Singh, the 22-year old constable from Gurdaspur who fatally wounded the Prime Minister by firing 25 shots at her from his SAF carbine No. WW-13980 at point-blank range. Though the *challan* does not state this, Satwant Singh immediately after the act threw up his hands in surrender, which further deepens the mystery as to why Satwant was

himself attacked. Satwant Singh was a few minutes later transported in an ambulance to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital, where he was treated for multiple bullet injuries.

As prime accused and only surviving assassin, Satwant Singh became the focus of attention for the various investigating teams and the intelligence networks working on the case. Satwant Singh was transferred from the hospital to the capital's Tihar Central Jail and remanded to judicial custody. Considered a "VIP prisoner," Satwant was kept in solitary confinement in ward number one of the "A" class prisons at Tihar, protected by a 250-strong force of the Tamil Nadu Police (TNP). Satwant Singh is believed to have recorded his first (and perhaps only) confessional statement on 1 December before Bharat Bhushan Sharma, additional metropolitan magistrate in the presence of his own counsel, I.U. Khan. According to Khan, in the statement, Satwant Singh categorically admitted that he had killed the Prime Minister at the behest of Beant Singh. The confessional statement which will be the most vital piece of evidence against him, ran into 15 pages and took two-and-a-half hours to be recorded during the in-camera proceedings within the cell of the accused.

After providing Satwant legal protection for a short while, Khan refused any further involvement in the case. Satwant Singh's power of attorney or *wakalatnama* was later transferred to R.S. Sodhi, a Supreme Court lawyer and convener of the Sikh Soldiers, Legal Aid Society, who had previously taken up counsel for Kehar Singh. The other accused in the case and is also the defence counsel for the third accused, Balbir Singh. Sodhi is being assisted by a junior advocate Ashok Aggarwal. According to Aggarwal, Satwant Singh has in the weeks following the assassination, given the intelligence men and police a confused picture of the plot. Aggarwal told SUNDAY: "He (Satwant) has no mental balance and changes his version every time he is approached by us. He has even given contradictory reports of the murder to his father, Tirlok Singh when he met him in jail."

According to those known to Balbir Singh and his lawyers, this acount of the involvement of Balbir Singh, a Delhi Armed Police sub-inspector as stated in the charge-sheet in the conspiracy is by far an accurate one. Ashok Aggarwal told SUNDAY that during his interviews with Balbir Singh, the latter had openly confessed that he had been contemplating the assassination of Mrs Gandhi since June, last year. Balbir had approached several persons who could assist him, including Gurbaksh Singh, Dilip Singh and Virendra Singh, now all witnesses against Balbir. Aggarwal also disclosed that Balbir had in fact, planned to use a remote control process to "do the job" whereby the residence of the Prime Minister could be blown off with the pressing of a button.

On the day of the assassination, Balbir Singh was not on duty at the Prime Minister's house. He was picked up from his house at Najafgarh Road on 2 November after Vimla Devi Khalsa, wife of Beant Singh had named him as one of the chief conspirators. At the time of his arrest, a hand-written note was recovered from him. The note, (which is listed as item No. 21 in the list of documents) indicated planning, movements and conduct relevant to the assassination of the Prime Minister in chronological order. Presently under judicial custody in Tihar Jail, Balbir Singh is believed to have told his lawyers and relatives several times: "If Beant had not done the job, I would have soon accomplished my mission."



Beant Singh (standing) at Kehar Singh's son's wedding

The third accused, Kehar Singh, son of Atma Singh was an assistant in the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals and is a maternal uncle of Beant Singh. According to the charge-sheet, Kehar Singh is alleged to have "taken accused Beant Singh to the Golden Temple in Amritsar on 20 October where accused Satwant Singh was also to join as part of the mission..." Kehar Singh is also charged with making both Beant Singh and Satwant Singh undergo an "amrit chakra ceremony" on 14 November and 24 November respectively.

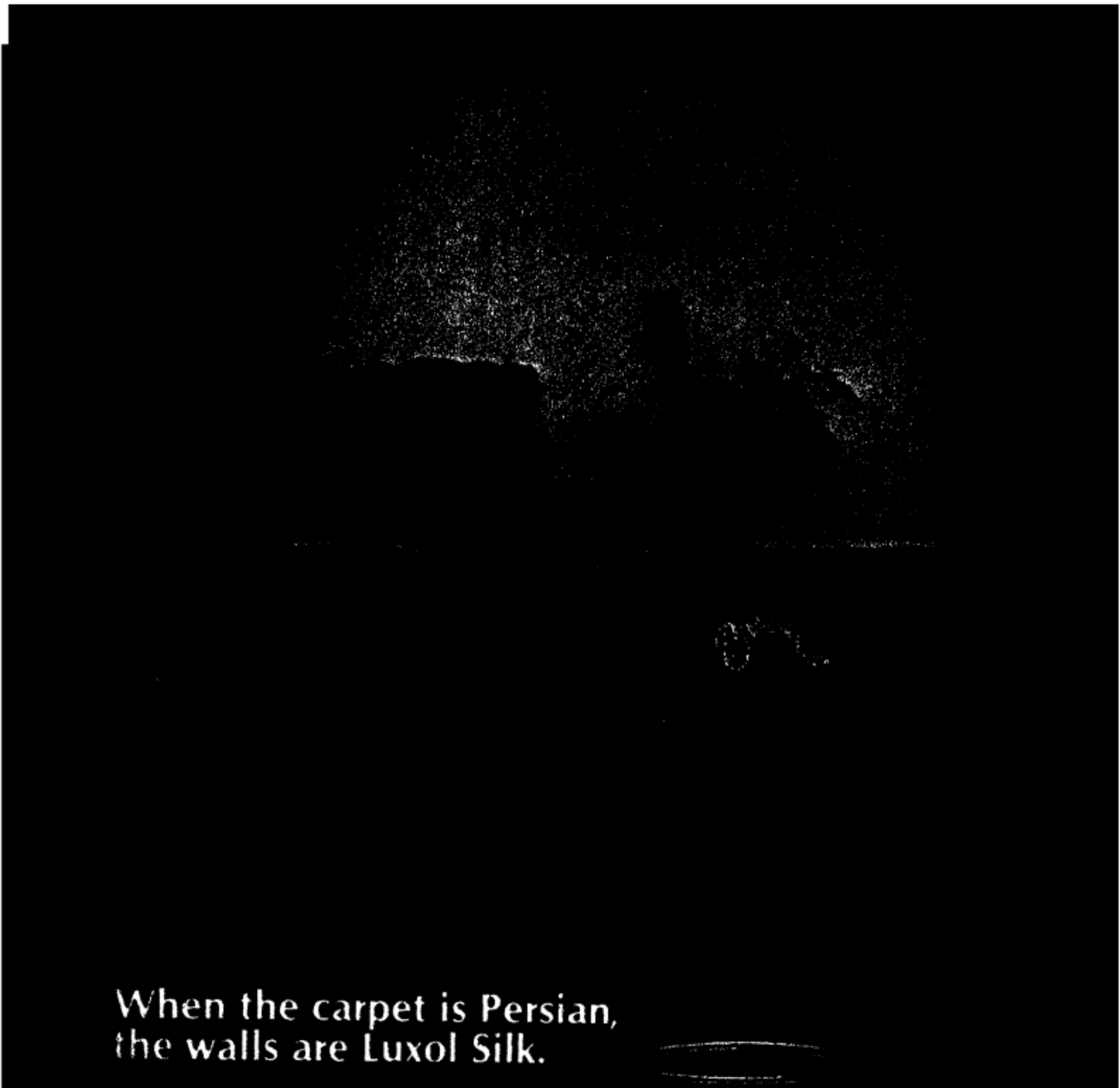
Kehar Singh was once again named as a co-conspirator in the case by Beant Singh's wife and was picked up from his residence at Quarter No. 171, Sector XII, Rama Krishna Puram. At the time of his arrest a gold *kara* and gold ring, belonging to Beant were recovered from his residence. The items are now listed as number 51 in the list of properties of the case. After his arrest, the services of Kehar Singh were suspended and on 12 February, he was dismissed from service under Article 113 of the Constitution by a Presidential order.

The family of Kehar Singh alleges that he is being kept in judicial custody without any charges being filed against him. Kehar Singh's wife, Jasbir Singh told this correspondent how immediately after her husband's arrest, both of them were taken to the Yamuna Velodrome for interrogation and alleges that her husband was tortured physically to make him confess to a crime he had not committed. "They used to throw hot pepper in his eyes and beat him up. At the velodrome they did not let him sit down for six days. When I saw what they were doing to him, I used to faint and seeing my poor health the police sent me home."

Aggarwal feels that among the three accused persons he was defending in the case, Kehar Singh is by far the most composed and straightforward. He explained that the IB wanted Kehar Singh to turn approver in the case and make false allegations against some persons.

Meanwhile the work of the Anand Ram enquiry team is in full swing. Many prominent persons have been summoned to its office in the Vigyan Bhavan complex and questioned. Recently, a senior Delhi police officer, Dr K.K. Paul has been posted in the team. The charge-sheet apparently is quiet on many aspects of the enquiry being conducted by the Anand Ram team.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi



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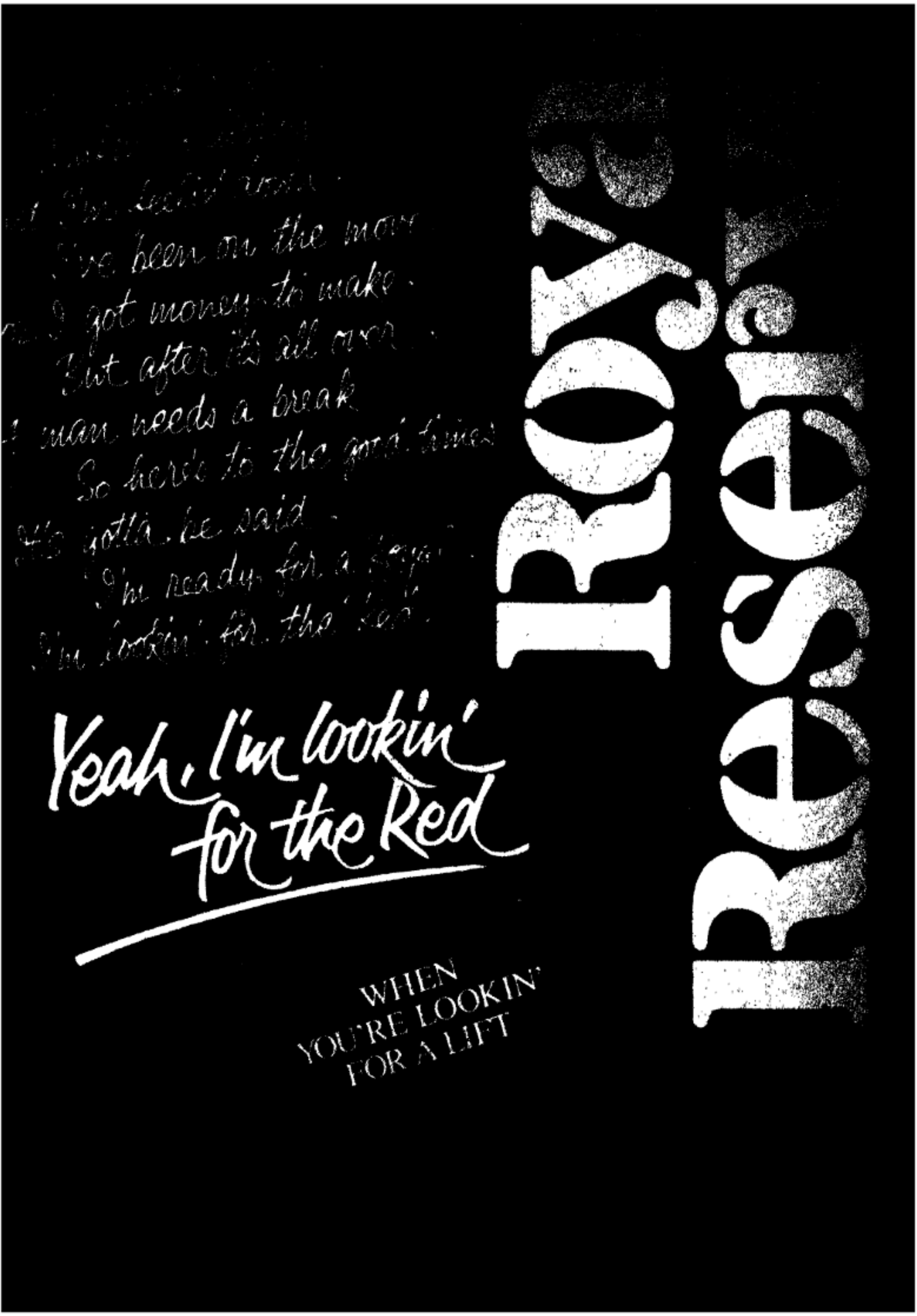
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I've been on the move
I got moves to make
But after it's all over
I sure needs a break
So here's to the good times
We gotta be said
I'm ready for a lift
I'm lookin' for the Red
Yeah, I'm lookin' for the Red
WHEN YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR A LIFT
Red

TAMIL NADU

Setting the Party in Order

MGR restores normalcy in the AIADMK

M.G. Ramachandran's political strategy even after his brush with death continues to be based on suspense, surprise and secrecy. Within a week after his return, complete political normalcy was restored with MGR in total control of the situation.

When he met the Governor on 7 February, MGR had stated he would submit the list of the council of ministers on 9 February. That day he sprang his first surprise—only he would be sworn in on 10 February and the list would be handed over in two days. As everybody realised that the list would be the index to MGR's mind, there was tremendous anticipation and MGR chose to sustain the suspense for another two days.

On 14 February the list was finally released and two senior ministers V.R. Nedunchezhian and S. Ramachandran (Panrutti as he is called), were sworn in a day ahead of their other cabinet colleagues. The third 17 member MGR cabinet had the same ministers with the same portfolios. Only eight junior ministers (the previous MGR ministry had a strength of 25) were dropped. MGR, at present, is fitter than before and contrary to the impression given by Nedunchezhian, Veerappan and the doctors treating him, (that it would be advisable for him to be CM without portfolio), MGR has not only retained all his original portfolios but has taken an additional nine portfolios. Another important aspect of the ministry is that the main rival groups in the party of Nedunchezhian, Veerappan and Kalimuthu have been left intact. The only minister whose portfolios were reduced was Thirunavukkarasu.

But the compensation comes in the form of the special treatment to Panrutti. Unlike Thirunavukkarasu, Panrutti, who supports Jayalalitha and the Congress(I), had kept a low profile even though Veerappan's close friend Musiriputhan (president of MGR fans association) openly accused him of being Tamil Nadu's Bhaskara Rao. MGR has demonstrated since his return from New York that Panrutti and K. Rajaram, speaker of the dissolved Assembly, are his favourite and most trusted lieutenants. Of all the partymen, MGR has held the maximum number of 'briefing sessions' with Panrutti.

Speculation is rife about the events that took place during MGR's hospitalisation. From very reliable sources, SUNDAY has learnt what really happened. Soon after MGR had his stroke, doctors said that it would be impossible for MGR to function again. The lobbying began and Veerappan took the lead.

As the interim chief, he felt Mrs V.N. Janaki, MGR's wife, would be the best bet and to curry favour, he launched the scathing diatribe against Jayalalitha. Though Janaki was nervous of being CM, she relished the idea of becoming kingmaker and to vanquish Jayalalitha, her husband's other woman. The best person in the circumstances however, was V.R. Nedunchezhian, the seniormost person in the AIADMK, and acceptable to all sections of the party. The anti-Jayalalitha stance of Veerappan attracted people like P.U. Shunmugam (party general secretary), K. Kalimuthu and Musiriputhan. This coterie began to strengthen its hold over the party and the government. Veerappan wanted to prop up Nedunchezhian till such time MGR returned from New York and till then he (Veerappan) would mobilise all the MLAs. On his return, MGR could be made CM without portfolio, while Veerappan would become the most important centre of power.

Unfortunately, Nedunchezhian, and his wife, B. Vishalakshmi, an ambitious woman, realised what Veerappan was up to. He saw no reason why he should not attempt to strengthen himself instead of being Tamil Nadu's perennial number two man. He established links with chief secretary K. Chockalingam and formed a coterie within a coterie. Nedunchezhian transferred K. Mohandas DGP in charge of crime and intelligence. At that point MGR returned and surprised everyone by the extent of his recovery.

MGR is naturally angry with both Nedunchezhian and Veerappan for their machinations. But the latter is a loyalist and with MGR back, is content to remain subservient. Nevertheless, MGR has put both in their places and has often curtly instructed Nedunchezhian to leave the room.

SUNDAY's report that the coterie was taking decisions without MGR's knowledge was vindicated when one of the first things MGR did as CM was to reinstate K. Mohandas. SUNDAY learns from a reliable source that MGR was unaware of the decision to divest Jayalalitha of her post as deputy leader of the AIADMK Parliamentary group. At the time of going to press, Jayalalitha had not yet met MGR which was surprising considering that MGR has seen a large number of people. By maintaining a low profile, Jayalalitha is hoping, though not very confidently, that she will get justice from MGR. A source close to MGR told SUNDAY, "Why doesn't Jayalalitha get off her high horse and meet MGR at the secretariat? This is no time to sit on her pride." The source added that there would be a reconciliation between MGR and Jayalalitha though the former was very piqued by her outburst.

Now that MGR is fully in control, the AIADMK will remain cohesive. MGR can ruthlessly axe anyone he wants and there is little anyone can do about it because his popularity is at an all-time high.

Anita Pratap, Madras



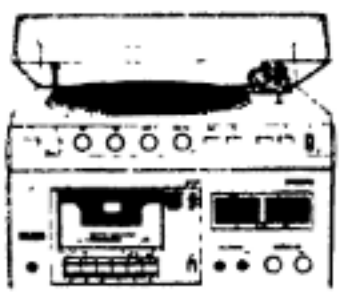
Governor S.L. Khurana (left) with MGR

PHILIPS

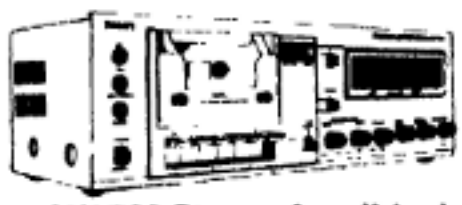
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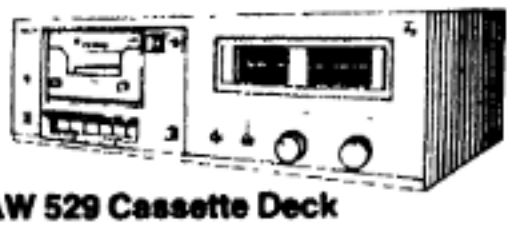
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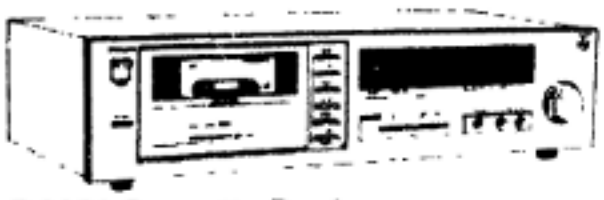
New AF 549 Music Centre: Amplifier-Cassette deck-Turntable-in-one
- 65 W total peak music power



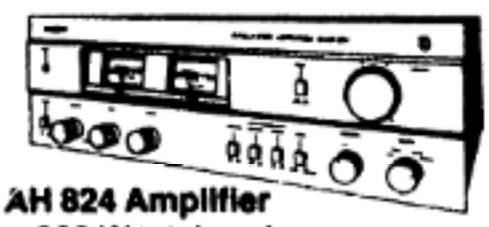
New AW 729 Stereo Amplideck
- 65 W total peak music power



AW 529 Cassette Deck
- Electronic motor speed control



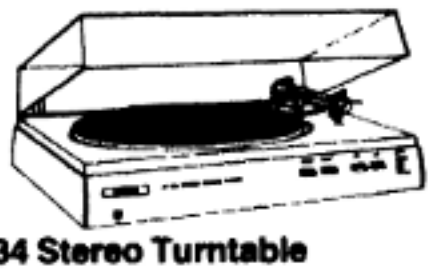
F 6121 Cassette Deck
- Servo mechanism for smooth operation
- Dolby* NR System
- Metal tape compatibility



AH 824 Amplifier
- 300 W total peak music power



AF 834
Electronic Speed Control Turntable
- Stroboscope pitch control and magnetic cartridge



AF 734 Stereo Turntable
- Compatible with most stereo two-in-ones and amplifier systems



AF 534 Compact Stereo system
- 65 W total peak music power



AH 719 Tuner Amplifier
- 120 W total peak music power



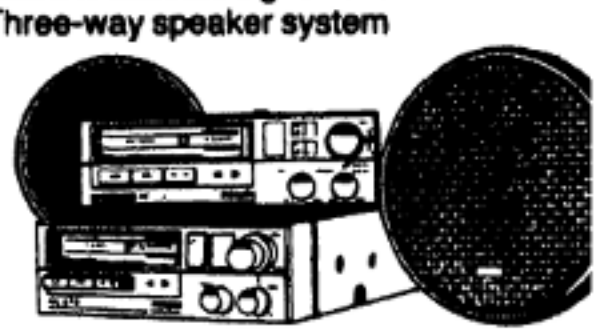
AH 718 Tuner Amplifier
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Philips Rack System
- Comprises of F 7226 Direct Control Turntable, F 6121 Cassette Deck, AH 824 Amplifier and AH 426 speakers

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AH 426 Speakers
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Recommended Stereo System Combinations

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B	AF 834	AH 719	F 6121	AH 425
C	AF 734	AH 718	AW 529	AH 435
D	← AF 549 (Music Centre) →			AH 435
E	AF 734	◀ AW 729 (Amplideck) ▶		AH 435
F	◀ AF 534 (Stereo System) ▶		AW 529	AH 435

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OBM/38

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Congress(I) versus Congress(I)

The unrest is affecting party morale

Even if the rebels do not pose a threat to the Congress(I)'s poll prospects in the March elections, they will certainly have a tremendous "nuisance value." Much is being said of the number of rebels in the field. Officially, the party claims their number is not large but it is a fact that the number of rebels runs to thousands.

The ruling party would like the people to believe that the emergence of rebels proves how popular the Congress(I) is. There is some truth in this assertion but the emergence of such a large number of rebels also indicates that those denied tickets are in no mood to take this lying down. This has already had, to some extent, an adverse impact on the unity, discipline and morale in the party. "If we are corrupt, so are those who have been given tickets," say the rebels. They point out that numerous relatives of important politicians have been given tickets. "Who says that *bhai-bhatijawaad* in the Congress(I) has ended?" they ask angrily.

Obviously, while Rajiv Gandhi and party leaders will in their election campaign emphasise the "clean image" of the party, the rebels will do their best to show how "unclean" the chosen ones are. Irrespective of whether the rebels make a dent or not in the Congress' fortunes, it is apparent that the targets of attack will be the husbands, sons, wives and daughters of those who have been dropped.

How can the son or the wife be clean if the head of the family has been denied a ticket? Why should the "ticket" remain within particular families? Why are those involved in scandals being nominated by the ruling party? If they have been nominated because there were only wild allegations against them but no evidence, then why has the same criteria not been applied in the case of those who have been rejected, especially the sitting MLAs?



These are the questions the rebels are asking. They are finding it difficult to break away from the Congress party whose members they have been for several years and which has made them into *lakhpatis* and *crorepatis*. But they are finding the humiliation too much to bear. So while some are mentally prepared for expulsion, many others feel that it will be in their own interest to bide their time and wait for happier days when their keenness to "serve the nation" will be rewarded. Hence, the promises by axed ministers to faithfully serve the party even though they have been dropped. They have promised to work for the success of the official nominee in the hope that their "unflinching loyalty" (a euphemism for self-survival), will not go unnoticed.

While such rejected aspirants may be playing their political cards right, the rebels too can be regarded as making a major contribution to the cleansing of Indian politics by highlighting the seamier side of the Congress(I) nominees. Quite apparently, many disappointed partymen are of the view that Rajiv Gandhi could not be expected to know the background of each and every candidate. He has gone by the advice and recommendations made by chief ministers, PCC(I) presidents, AICC(I) observers, central ministers and other sources.

Had he known that relatives of dropped ministers and legislators were being given tickets, would he have not taken action, ask the rebels. They claim that Rajiv Gandhi has been kept in the dark by vested party interests who wanted their nominees included in the final list by hook or by crook. These "not-too-serious" rebels are inclined to give Rajiv Gandhi the benefit of the doubt. But the "hardline rebels" reject this theory. Rajiv knows everything, they maintain. He has allowed *"bhai-bhatijawaad"* because he was not serious about implementing the party's guidelines.

The Congress(I) has a lot of explaining to do about certain figures. It was officially claimed that the number of sitting MLAs dropped was 1,000. But it is certainly not more than 600. Again, though there was a ban on relatives being given tickets, how is it that nearly 160 relativs have been nominated? These include two nephews of the Bihar chief minister, Chandrashekhar Singh, and the son of the speaker, Radha Nandan Jha, in Bihar, sons of four dropped ministers in Rajasthan, sons of two dropped ministers in Maharashtra and the husband of another dropped minister in that state along with the son of a member of the selection panel, and as many as 25 "relatives" in Madhya Pradesh.

Will this affect the chances of the Congress candidates? It is quite likely that the chances of quite a few nominees might be ruined. But, if another "Rajiv wave" develops, then all these factors will be swept aside.

Gopal Mohite, New Delhi

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CONGRESS(I)

Sitaram Kesri to be Removed?

AICC(I) treasurer's days may be numbered

Many eyebrows were raised when, during the reshuffle in the AICC(I) by Congress(I) president Rajiv Gandhi, the treasurer, Sitaram Kesri, was not dropped. New general secretaries and joint secretaries were appointed, but Sitaram Kesri continued as treasurer. However, the axe is likely to fall soon after the Assembly elections. Kesri has survived so far only because Rajiv Gandhi wanted to make sure that all the relevant records regarding payments were taken away from him. He might have also wanted time to think of a successor.

Rajiv Gandhi's eagerness to replace Kesri is in keeping with his determination to provide a clean and efficient administration in the government and in the party. While Kesri may be efficient, there are serious allegations that some people in the AICC(I) office receive a 'cut' in every deal that the AICC(I) enters into. This includes the production of election material like flags, posters, pamphlets, *bindis* and also the utilisation of vehicles like trucks, tempos and taxis.



Sitaram Kesri

For the seven years that Kesri has "faithfully" served the AICC(I), he has allegedly been a key beneficiary in all monetary transactions. Even in the distribution of party funds to candidates, Kesri is alleged to have cornered his share. Within the AICC(I), it is said that Kesri and a few of his henchmen in the administration have been ruling the roost. Not a single file requiring financial sanction by Kesri is signed unless the "cut" is paid, it is alleged. Kesri's days are numbered. His replacement may come from the Youth Congress, as Rajiv Gandhi may choose to place greater trust in some young MP who he thinks can fit the bill. One general secretary of IYC, who had served in the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) earlier, may be Kesri's replacement.

Two other 'VIPs' likely to be dislodged after the Assembly polls are Mr M.L. Fotedar and Mr Chandulal Chandrakar. Fotedar will have to go because Rajiv Gandhi does not desire anyone from among his mother's close aides to remain close to the centre of power. Fotedar may be accomodated as a minister in Jammu and Kashmir if Rajiv Gandhi wishes. Chandrakar is likely to be eased out because of his incompetence in dealing with a major ministry like rural development where a lot of dynamism and hard work is necessary. Moreover, Chandrakar had hardly acquitted himself successfully as an AICC(I) general secretary in charge of press relations and publications. His replacement, Srikant Verma, despite shortcomings, has proved that Chandrakar could have done better.

Gopal Mohite, New Delhi

DMKP

A Crumbling Edifice

The Jats at Chhaprauli revolt against Charan Singh

The octogenarian DMKP leader, Chaudhary Charan Singh, faces a revolt from his partymen at Chhaprauli, an Assembly segment of the Baghpat Lok Sabha seat, considered to be his domain for the past three decades. In this Assembly election, the Chaudhary has given the DMKP ticket to his daughter, Saroj Verma which has led to a major revolt among the dominant Jats of Chhaprauli. The nomination of Saroj Verma was opposed by ten block *pramukhs* of the constituency but the Chaudhary ignored all protests and the Jats of Chhaprauli have now decided to join the Congress(I).

The Jats in the Chhaprauli Assembly segment have always voted for the Chaudhary since the pre-independence days. But now, for the first time things are looking difficult for the Chaudhary. The Jats are now openly coming out against the "dynastic attitude" of the Chaudhary. The *pradhan* of the Kaithal village in Chhaprauli, Chaudhary Jagnu Singh told SUNDAY, "We have always supported Chaudhary and his candidates, in all the elections we always gave lakhs of rupees to the Chaudhary, but this time the Jats will not support him and his daughter. We are not bonded labour of the Chaudhary, as he thinks, we also know how to show him our teeth." This opinion is shared by other influential Jats of the area as well. Casteist politics has its pitfalls: the Jats resent the fact that Saroj Verma has married outside the caste. And Satpal Malik, a Congress(I) MP and once the most trusted man of the Chaudhary and former general secretary of Lok Dal was responsible for the volte-face in attitudes.

Why did the Chaudhary give the ticket to his daughter? According to party sources, Mr Charan Singh feared that his daughter would join Mr Ram Naresh Yadav's Lok Dal (R) and gave her the ticket only to keep her in the party. But he never thought that the Jats of the Chhaprauli area would rise up in revolt. In fact, they have suggested that the DMKP support independent candidate Ram Pal Singh and retire Saroj Verma. The Jats of Barnawa and Baghpat Assembly constituencies too are unhappy about the nominations of Bhopal Singh and Sahib Singh, respectively

The DMKP, once the "dominant party in the north" were wiped out after the Lok Sabha elections as only three candidates including Mr Charan Singh won and of them, Mr Vijay Kumar Mishra, Member of Parliament from Bihar has defected to the Janata Party along with Rajya Sabha member Mr Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav. Mr Ramashankar Singh, a lone party MLA in Madhya Pradesh and party state president has defected to Congress(I) with about 5,000 supporters and Mr Ram Naresh Yadav, who has now been expelled from the party, has filed his nomination as an independent and formed the Lok Dal (R). As he has a better image in the state compared to many DMKP leaders, it is a blow to Charan Singh. With the Jats of Chhaprauli also in revolt, DMKP's "dominant" image is fading away.

Jagmeet Uppal, New Delhi.

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DISASTER

Floating Inferno

34 die in liner blaze

It was a gruesome combination of *The Poseidon Adventure* and *The Towering Inferno*. On Monday, 12 February at about 2.00 pm a fire broke out in the 'D' deck of the prestigious passenger liner M. V Chidambaram while it was at sea killing 34 persons and injuring many more. The ship plies between Madras and Singapore, via Kuala Lumpur. Narrating the tragic events of the day, Captain Rakesh Anand said that the fire was noticed in one of the exhausts of the galley in the 'D' deck. Even as the crew and some passengers were trying to put out the fire, the flames spread into the bunk class of the 'D' deck, the cheapest accommodation on the ship containing nearly 300 passengers. The liner can accommodate a total of 1650 passen gers and nearly 200 crew.

Many passengers were sleeping when smoke engulfed them. In the stampede for the exits, many could not escape because of the confined space and the narrow exits. The inflamable foam cushion seats and baggage that contained large quantities of synthetic fabric made the 'D' deck a furnace. Trapped in the confined space, they were charred to death. In fact, parts of the bodies could not be differentiated from the burnt bits of luggage.

It took five hours of vigorous fire fighting to bring the flames under control and it took 16 hours to extinguish the fire. Apart from the 34 dead, many were injured and goods worth lakhs of rupees were destroyed. The 19-year-old Chidambaram which was due to be scrapped in June 1985 andwas making its last voyage was totally crippled

The fire had broken out when the ship was 300 nautical miles away from Madras. When the fire was finally put out, the ship was found to have listed by ten degrees. But since the engine was working, the captain declined to evacuate the passengers and decided to return to Madras. The ship was finally berthed at the North Quay of Madras Harbour at 5.30 am on 14 February. However, it was only at 9.05 am that the first passenger walked out.

It was a nightmare for them and they were glad that it was over. But the frightful images are etched in their memory. The 65-year-old Thangarasu recollects that awful moment when he saw a father and son clinging together and clawing the air desperately as they were engulfed in the billowing smoke The passen gers had done a lot of shopping either for themselves or to resell in Madras. The Chidambaram has always been used for smuggling in goods. In fact, a number of agents are usually sent by big smugglers to bring in contraband goods. The Port Trust authorities, Customs officials, are all involved in the rackets.

It has been established beyond doubt that the fire fighting equipment in the ship was inadequate. Captain Anand and Admiral R K. S Gandhi, the chairman of the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) that owns the ship, however, claimed that the fire safety equipment had not been faulty. Given the extent of devastation it is clear that the fire raged on for hours something that would not have been likely had the equipment been in working condition. Several passengers testified that none of the fire extinguishers worked and that they had to put out the fire by pouring buckets of water, which took considerable time resulting in extensive damage. Another aspect that indicts the crew of negligence is that five of the eight exits of the bunker section were either locked or jammed.

If the crew had the presence of mind, they could have tried to open these exit points. Several passengers who were lucky to have escaped stated that they had tried in vain to open some of the exit doors. The crew is also guilty of misleading the passengers Shortly after the fire broke out, it was announced on the public address system that a fire had erupted in the 'D' deck, but had been contained when the fire was still spreading. This led to a rush by the passengers to try and retrieve their belongings, stopping people from trying to escape from within. According to forensic science experts, a number of the passengers could have died of asphyxiation.

Though they were handicapped by the failure of the fire fighting equipment some of the crew fought valiantly to control the fire. But for the crew and passengers, the fire could have easily spread. A number of passengers testified that Capt. Anand kept his cool throughout the crisis and was prompt and effective.

Anita Pratap, Madras

BUREAUCRACY

Removing the President's Men

Are all the bureaucrats who came to the capital after Giani Zail Singh shifted to the centre being shunted out? The answer is. yes. Giani Zail Singh came to the centre in 1980, when he was made the union home minister. Before that the present President of India had confined himself to Punjab politics. It was but natural that Gianiji's presence in New Delhi would bring in its fold the posting of some of his chosen officers. Five IAS officers from Punjab were brought by Giani Zail Singh in 1980: S. P. Bagla, I.J.S. Bindra, S L. Kapur, A. S. Chhattar and K. S. Bains. The tenure rule is now being used to send all of them back.

S. P. Bagla was an important bureaucrat in the days when Giani Zail Singh was the home minister He was the joint secretary and establishment officer in the department of personnel and was secretary to the cabinet's Appointments Committee and all top-level postings were processed by him. A few months before Giani Zail Singh became the President in 1982, Bagla was sent to Washington as the minister, economic affairs in the Indian embassy there. His three-year term is now over and Bagla has been posted back to Punjab.

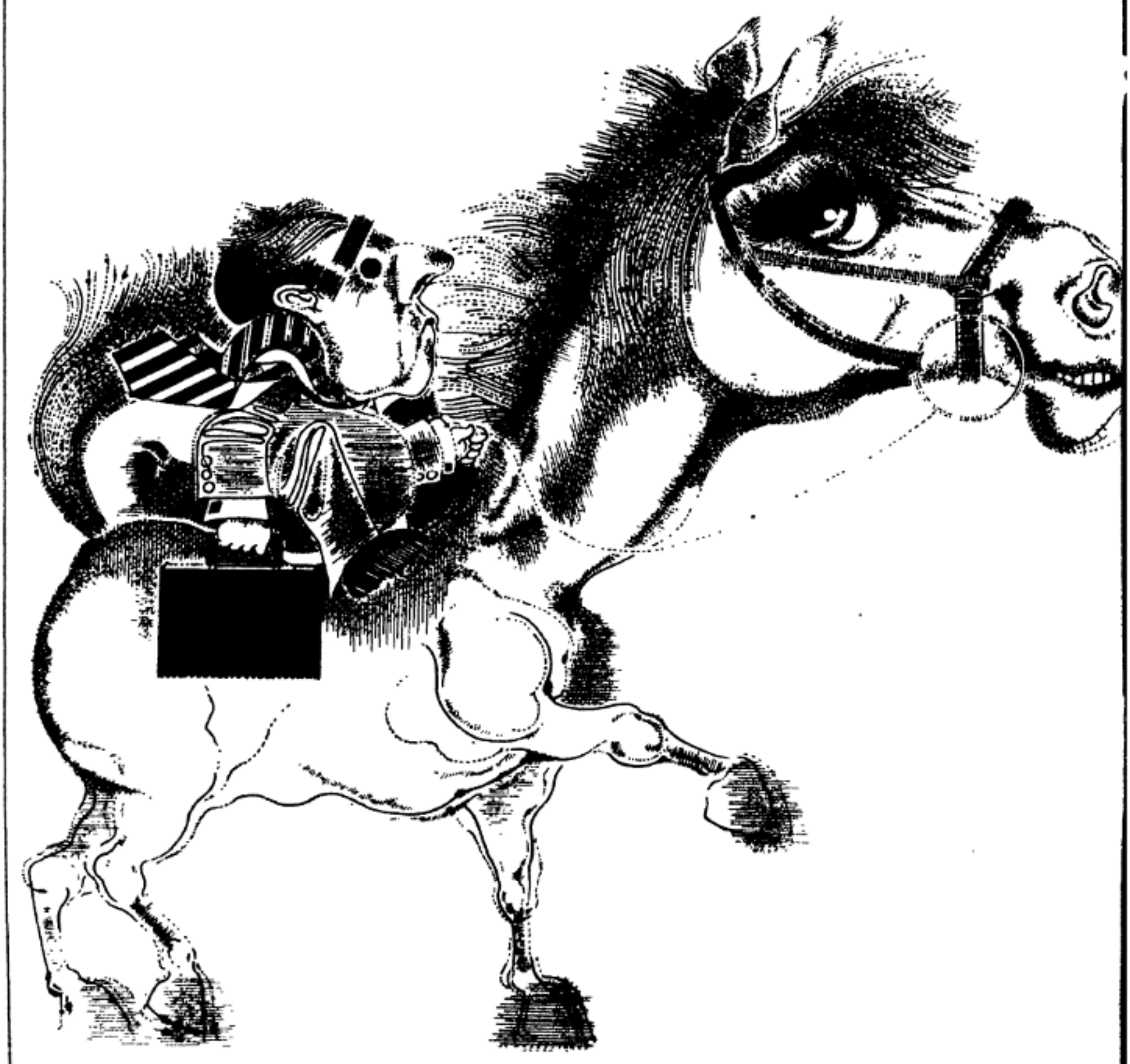
The return to Punjab of I. J. S. Bindra has raised eyebrows. He was the special assistant to Giani Zail Singh in the home ministry and is now the President's S.A., a post in which he should normally be allowed to continue till the President desires his services. The insistence on tenure rule for Bindra is being made despite the President being keen to retain him in Delhi.

S. L. Kapur was brought in by home minister Zail Singh as joint secretary in charge of broadcasting and TV in the information and broadcasting ministry. He has now gone back to Punjab as transport secretary. Two other men of Gianiji's who are in the reversion list are A. S. Chhattar, joint secretary in charge of foreign trade in the commerce ministry and K. S. Bains. joint secretary in charge of foreign collaborations in the industry ministry. Both officers have been given their reversion orders and are likely to be posted to Punjab in the next few months.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

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Follow these and a few other tips and *you* can save 10% of *your* fuel bills. And India's!

Conservation at home

Don't leave your burners on unnecessarily. Use the right sized container Use the small burner as often as possible Keep the water quantity to the bare minimum. Use the pressure cooker. Soak ingredients and allow frozen food to reach room temperature before cooking them.

Use the lid on a vessel to avoid heat loss. Clean your burners and wicks regularly.

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In irrigation pumps our experience proves that farmers can save 30 to 40% diesel with a few minor changes.

Conservation in industry

Because of eight primary reasons boilers in Indian industry are wasting up to 25% of the total fuel oil used. The reasons are different but the same is true for industries that utilise furnaces. This results in an annual loss of fuel worth Rs. 270 crores

1299 industries in India, however, have followed PCRA's advice and have saved substantial amounts immediately.

What you can do to help

We are all probably responsible for wasting fuel in at least one or probably even three of these areas.

Remember, ultimately we have to bear the cost, as user, consumer, manufacturer, shareholder or as a citizen of India

So let's work to end this waste. In some areas you can begin today In others areas you may need to get in touch with us Do that We'll work with you

PCRA

Petroleum Conservation Research Association

306, Sethi Bhawan, 7 Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110 008

PCRA is a Government sponsored organisation and a representative of India's petroleum companies in areas related to conservation.

PCRA's four major conservation targets are the Industrial, Agricultural, Domestic and Transport sectors.

PCRA's services are free. Savings achieved by PCRA through conservation exceed Rs. 100 crores per annum.

Oil isn't going to last much longer. Use it with wisdom.

ULKA-D-PCRA-058/2A

An Experiment in Smoking



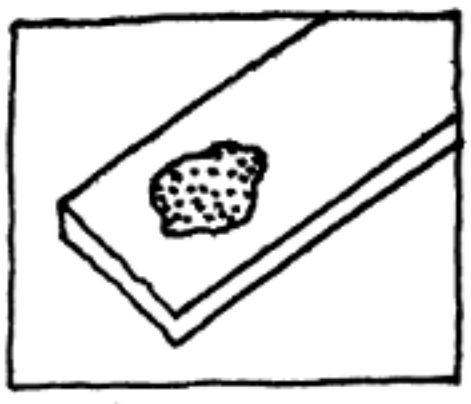
An experiment in anti-smoking health education carried out in England has succeeded in dissuading a good number of children from smoking. The first 12 months of a two-year project to assess the effects of smoking on children aged between 11 to 18 years, has shown that a high proportion of them have given up smoking as a result of the project, which was supervised by Dr Peter Travers of the School of Education at Exeter university in south-west England.

In the project, rules for the lung functions were laid down and the effects of smoking upon the lungs demonstrated. A simple and accurate spirometer (which measures air inhaled and exhaled during respiration) was developed by Dr Travers. This allowed schoolchildren to make their own lung function tests. "It has already been shown that smoking does produce respiratory obstruction in the lungs," said Dr Travers. "Another interesting result showed that children who are non-smokers are liable to have poor lung function test results if their parents are heavy smokers. As a consequence, some parents have given up smoking."

No Toothpicks, Please

Those of you who use toothpicks after lunch or dinner are advised to refrain from such a practice: it could be fatal. A researcher at the Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, has called attention to a public health threat that injures some 8,000 people every year. Many of the injuries are minor, but there have been a few deaths and close calls. In one case, a man was suffering from symptoms similar to those of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Doctors found a toothpick lodged in his liver.

Keeping Blood Fresh



Blood clotting comes as a relief to most people, but not to biochemists, whose problem is keeping blood samples fresh while they are being delivered to laboratories. To help facilitate biochemists, Britain's Corning Medical and Scientific has recently come up with an ingenious adaptation of the familiar syringe plunger that helps withdraw blood, mix it with an anti-coagulant and seal the container, all in a go. To take samples, the plunger is set at the desired volume and the needle inserted into the artery. Blood then fills the sampler until it touches the plunger, immediately displacing all the air through three equally spaced channels around the plunger. When a microporous hydrophobic filter positioned above these pores is touched by blood, it seals immediately. It is also preloaded with fast dissolving heparin, and this anti-coagulant mixes with the sample as it is taken. It can be operated with one hand so that needle movement can be kept at a minimum thus reducing patient trauma.

The "Heimlich Manoeuvre"

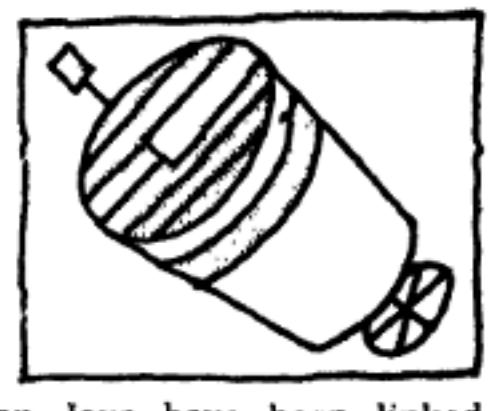


If you find someone choking or having an obstruction in his throat, don't slap him on his back. Try the "Heimlich manoeuvre." This involves encircling the victim from behind so that the rescuer's grasped hands press hard into the abdomen, forcing the diaphragm upward and creating a rush of air that expels whatever may be stuck in the windpipe. This anti-choking strategy has been discovered by Dr Henry Heimlich, of Xavier university in Cincinnati, USA, who recently won the Albert Lasker award, one of the most prestigious prizes in medicine. Dr Heimlich states that should the victim be alone, he should thrust his fist into his abdomen or if that fails, lean over the back of a chair or the edge of a table in such a way as to apply pressure just below the rib cage. He maintains that his technique is so simple that in one case a four-year old boy saved his younger brother. This discovery has won Dr Heimlich plenty of recognition from the 10,000 Americans it has saved from death since 1974.

Hope for the Blind

Air France, one of the world's leading airlines, has come up with a unique system of integrated bureautics for the blind. This system, which was designed by a blind, young engineer, Mr Philippe Balin, gives them access to textual information in Braille that has so far prevented them from joining the working world. The advantage offered by this system is that a blind person can use it with as much ease as anyone else and that, to have access to the stored data (in Braille or otherwise), the operator who is not blind does not have to know Braille and the blind operator does not need to be able to read.

Teaching Through Satellite



The remote Eastern Island universities of Indonesia, using two channels of the country's recently upgraded communications satellite, have established a satellite curriculum. Teachers and technicians at 11 classrooms on Java, Borneo, Sulawesi, Seram and Irian Jaya have been linked together by PALAPA, which orbits about 700 kilometres above Jakarta, bouncing messages to a total of more than 100 receiving dishes scattered across 3,000 miles of the archipelago. Using 11 of these "earth stations," the Indonesian Distance Education Satellite System, or INDESS, is seeking ways to make up for a shortage of teachers.

The INDESS student sits in a normal classroom—except there is a microphone on his desk and a video "blackboard" in front of him instead of a teacher. He hears the teacher's voice "live" and there is a tutor at each classroom. The student can discuss questions with his tutor and, if necessary, speak directly to the teacher.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

THIS INDIA



Illustration Debashis Deb

BOMBAY: A BEST single-decker bus was stolen from the Wadala depot on 23 January. Strangely enough, it was none other than the BEST driver Appa Rajaram Kunte who had taken it for a joy ride to Satara. ACP Anpat and senior inspector Takne of R. A. Kidwai Marg police station who received a complaint about the theft of single-decker bus No MRL-5655 on route No 61 spread their dragnet all over the city in vain. Later, they were informed that it had been driven to Satara—*The Daily* (D.N. Rajan, Kalwa)

FARIDABAD: Candle makers of Haryana never had it so good, thanks to the cut in power supply to domestic consumers between ten pm and six am. Never did the industry earn so much even during Diwali days. The situation has come to such a pass that wax, that was being quoted at a discount till November last, is sold at 100 per cent premium today—*The Times of India* (B.K. Salwan, 99 APO)

TRICHUR: Mr M.V. Cheeran, president of the Voters' Forum at Kunnamkulam, can now rejoice by shaving off his drooping beard. It has been the resolve of this 71-year old man since June 1982 not to shave his beard till the central government introduced legislation banning political defection. The first thing Mr Cheeran did after he came to know of the passing of the Anti Defection Bill was to send a letter to the Prime Minister congratulating him on his bold initiative in introducing the bill—*Indian Express* (A. V. Ramamurthy, New Delhi)

JAIPUR: Brishbhan, an employee of the erstwhile union territory of Ajmer, who was deprived of his promotional benefits following the merger of Ajmer with Rajasthan in 1956, finally got justice after nearly 30 years of continuous struggle. Brishbhan was working as an accounts officer at the time of the merger. He was reverted to a junior position by the Rajasthan government despite the directions by the central government to give him his due under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956—*Indian Express* (N. Balan, Madras)

CALCUTTA: A convict involved in a bank dacoity and sentenced to life was found by a Calcutta detective police officer in the Chetla area. Nilmoni Ghosh, on being challenged, produced a release order passed by the Alipore Central Jail authorities on the strength of a Supreme Court acquittal order, dated 12 December 1983. But the judges—Mr Justice P.N. Bhagawati, Mr Justice A.N. Sen and Mr Justice R.N Misra—had not passed any such order. The West Bengal chief secretary, Mr S.V Krishnan, said the Supreme Court order looked "valid" but subsequent investigation revealed that the judges did not sign any acquittal order of Nilmoni Ghosh and another accused, Jagjit Singh. Nilmoni Ghosh has been rearrested—*The Hindu* (K. Vittal Shetty, Bangalore)

BOMBAY The Bombay Telephones have not learnt anything from the barrage of press criticism on its efficiency. Recently, the general manager of Bombay Telephones, who was unable to attend a press conference due to illness, tried to call Patrakar Sangh, the venue of the meet. All he got were wrong numbers—*Free Press Journal* (K. S. Mahalingam, Bombay)

NEW DELHI: Kishan Lal Kohli, a Bombay businessman, duped another businessman of Rs 50,000, courtesy wrong telephone connection He was however later arrested by the police Mr Kohli was staying in a hotel at Asaf Ali Road Mr Rakesh Kumar, a businessman of Karol Bagh, came to the hotel to make the payment of Rs 50,000 to Mr Jagjit Singh, who was also staying in the hotel Mr Rakesh Kumar did not know or recognise Jagjit Singh and was going to make the payment as part of a business deal following a call from his own relation in Bombay. When Rakesh Kumar asked the telephone operator to connect him to Jagjit Singh his telephone was wrongly connected to Kohli, who impersonated himself as Jagjit Singh and called Rakesh Kumar to his room. After a brief discussion he took Rs 50,000 from Rakesh Kumar—*The Hindustan Times* (R. Behera, Rourkela)

WITHOUT COMMENT

We have done in weeks what could not be done in 20 years—Rajiv Gandhi, on the Anti-Defection Bill

Elections in Mizoram are like going to church—clean and cheap—Lal Thanhawla, chief minister of Mizoram, in *The Herald Review*

Mizo people are very peace loving. There has never been a murder case for 20 years—Mizo leader Laldenga in *Weekend Review*

He (MGR) went to America as our chief minister, underwent treatment there as our chief minister, and has now returned to us as our chief minister—Tamil Nadu finance minister Nedunchezhyan in *The Week*

For development one has to be a bit rash. One has to be a little strong to get the development work done—Bansi Lal in *The Sunday Observer*



I used to eat *puchkas* sitting on the pavement and I'm prepared to do it still. It may not be what people in my position are expected to do—but I'm not a parrot in a gilded cage—Rasi Mody, TISCO chairman, in *Gentleman*

A serious 'art' film which only ten people want to watch and understand isn't cinema. It's a waste of celluloid—Bhagyaraj in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

I've never been read much in India. Also, if you're not 100 per cent Indo-phile, you're automatically assumed to be Indo-phobe—Ruth Jhabvala in *Asiaweek*

If I was to be reborn as a man, I would like to be Amitabh Bachchan. And if I was to be reborn as a woman, I would like to be Lata Mangeshkar!—Jagjit Singh, *ghazal* singer, in *The Sunday Observer*

BEGINNING 24 FEBRUARY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The stars shine brightly on all financial deals finalised this week. Businessmen should not hesitate to take risks. This is an equally lucky period for lovers: you can materialise marriage plans. The domestic front will remain calm but avoid arguments with elders in the family. However, the phase is not good for professionals exercise tact while dealing with your superiors.
Good dates: 24, 26 and 28
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: South-east



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This week you will come in contact with an influential person who will be of immense help to you in future. A journey undertaken during the middle of the week will prove financially profitable. On the professional front some of you may be promoted Businessmen will also make steady progress This is an excellent period for marriage negotiations. Watch your health closely.
Good dates: 25, 27 and 1
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Financially, your position will improve this week but avoid extravagance. This is the ideal time to solve legal problems Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway The domestic front will provide you with all the energy to embark on new ventures. However, this is not a favourable phase for love and marriage negotiations Your health will also bother you
Good dates: 26, 28 and 2
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 8
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is a particularly lucky week for lawyers and politicians Those employed in the private sector will also be rewarded for their service. Businessmen are likely to bag lucrative deals. At home your relatives will be a source of joy. Friends will prove to be very helpful to you. This is the ideal time to get married. Your health will improve markedly.
Good dates: 24, 25 and 27
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: West



LEO (15 August—14 September) The stars are particularly favourable to businessmen this week. Push your efforts to the utmost and do not hesitate to undertake risky ventures. Things are not so bright for those in service: despite your honest efforts, you may incur the displeasure of your superiors. However, this is a good phase for matrimonial negotiations. Keep a sharp eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 25, 26 and 28
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Enemies will be active during this period: do not take even your close friends and relatives for granted Financially you will run into rough weather. Someone at home may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden. On the business front things are not so bleak go ahead with expansion plans. The period is also favourable for love and marriage negotiations.
Good dates: 26, 27 and 1
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: South



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) If you are in love and willing to get married, this is the opportune time to do so. Prospects are also bright for businessmen and professionals. Artists and sportsmen are likely to win rare honours. The domestic front will remain inspiring. However, you should avoid unnecessary arguments with friends and relatives. Those above 40 should be careful about their health.
Good dates: 27, 28 and 2
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Students are advised not to fritter away precious time: try to make full use of the opportunities that come your way. This period is extremely favourable for servicemen: a promotion cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will also find this phase lucky. The domestic front will remain calm. Your financial position will improve.
Good dates: 24, 27 and 1
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a lucky week for all of you. Superiors will recognise the good services of professionals while businessmen will get an opportunity to expand their business. Speculative ventures will yield fruitful results. Financially, some of you are likely to gain money or property through an unexpected source. The period is also lucky for lovers and eligible bachelors.
Good dates: 25, 28 and 2
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North-east



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is an extremely lucky week for most of you. The domestic front will remain inspiring. Financially most of you will gain money or property through inheritance Sportsmen and artists will benefit from this favourable phase. A letter at the end of the week will bring pleasant surprise. However, this is not a good period for lovers. avoid adventurous plans.
Good dates: 26, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 1, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This week you should avoid quarrelling with family members at home. Your children may be demanding but deal with them sympathetically. Your health will add to your worries. However, you will make steady progress on the professional front. This is also a good period for businessmen. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. A letter will bring good tidings
Good dates: 28, 1 and 2
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



PISCES (15 March—14 April) An unexpected journey is in store for you this week. You will be busy with social engagements but do not overstrain yourself as this may have an adverse effect on your health. For professionals a promotion cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will also make steady headway. The period is also good for marriage negotiations. The home front will remain peaceful.
Good dates: 24, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east

For those born on the 25th, 26th or 27th of any month:

Most of you have a casual approach to life. You fail to utilise the opportunities that come your way. You rely too much on fate and are god-fearing by nature. Most of the problems that you face are your own creations but you tend to blame your fate for them. Constitutionally most of you are weak and this leads you to shun adventurous and challenging plans. Women born during this period are very popular and hardworking.

VARIETY

CHESS

A new game in an old variation can sometimes rekindle interest in abandoned theoretical territory. The following game for example could well be instrumental in sparking off some exciting battles in a line long considered just a bit too wild.

White: V. Tukmakov. Black: G. Ligterink. King's Indian Defence. Wijk aan Zee 1984.

1 P–Q4 N–KB3 2 N–KB3 P–KN3
3 P–KN3 B–N2 4 B–N2 0–0
5 P–B4 P–Q3 6 N–B3 N–B3
7 0–0 P–QR3 8 P–KR3

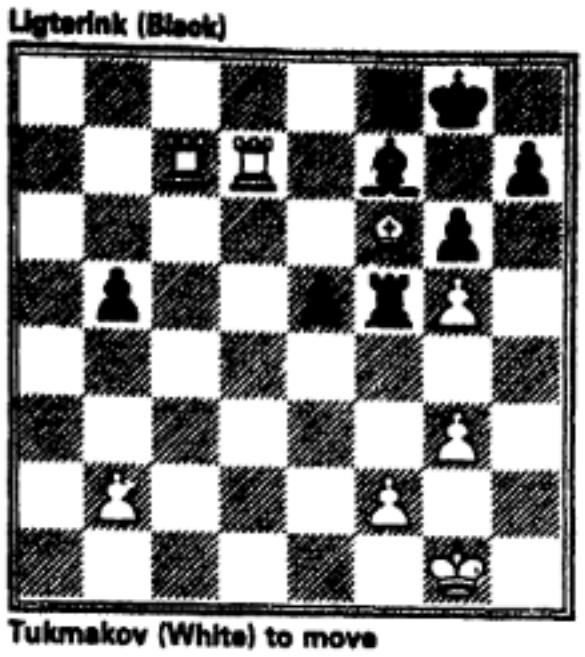
If at once 8 P–K4 B–N5 gives Black easy play.

8 . . . R–N1 9 P–K4 P–QN4
10 P–KB1?

An intriguing moment. This thrust is well known after a preliminary exchange of pawns, viz. 10 PxP PxP 11 P–K5 N–Q2 12 N–N5 PxP!! 13 BxN PxP 14 NxNP R–N3! 15 NxQP N–N1!! with better prospects for Black (!), so what difference does the omission of 10 PxP make? My guess is 10 . . . N–Q2 11 P–K6!? PxP 12 P–Q5 PxP 13 PxP! (13 QxP+? K–R1 14 QxN B–N2!) followed by 14 N–Q4 with dangerous compensation for the pawn. Ligterink is not tortured by curiosity.

10 . . . PxKP 11 PxKP QxQ

Ligterink (Black)



Tukmakov (White) to move

12 RxQ N–Q2 13 P–K6! PxKP
14 PxP PxP 15 B–B4

The dust momentarily settles with White holding an obvious initiative for his half-pawn investment. Tukmakov is a wonderfully fluent player of such positions.

15 . . . P–K4 16 B–K3 N–B3
17 QR–B1 B–Q2 18 N–Q5 NxN
19 RxN B–K1

Sad necessity, 19 . . . B–K3 failing to 20 N–N5. Black's position is becoming a horrible jumble.

20 N–N5 N–N5 21 R(5)–Q1 P–B3
22 B–B5 N–Q4 23 BxN+

Good judgement and calculation, leading by force to a winning endgame.

23 . . . PxB 24 BxP B–R3

The main point of White's play was 24 . . . R–B4 25 P–KN4 R–B5 26 N–K6 R–B2 27 B–Q6 and if 27 . . . R–N3 28 R–B8!

25 P–KR4 BxN 26 PxB

The opposite bishops offer no salvation. The activity of White's forces is overwhelming.

26 . . . R–B4 27 RxP B–B2
28 R–Q7 BxRP 29 B–B6 B–B2
30 R(1)–B7 R–KB1 DIAGRAM
31 P–B4!

Displaying an evil sense of humour. If 31 . . . PxP 32 P–KN4 R–Q4 33 RxR BxR 34 R–N7+ etc.

31 . . . P–R3 32 BxP Resigns.

After 32 . . . PxP 33 P–KN4 RxP 34 BxR PxB 35 P–N5 Black is in a hopeless state.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

There is a special quality about the bridge played in the London Business Houses League. Just glance at the East hand below. What result would you anticipate on his cards? Perhaps, on a lucky day, a small penalty against Four Hearts or Four Spades. No, it was 1700 from Five Clubs doubled!

Dealer North E-W vulnerable

	♠ Q 8 ♥ K ♦ Q 10 9 7 6 2 ♣ K 7 4 2	
♠ A K J ♥ A Q J 9 ♦ A ♣ A Q J 6 3	N W E S	♠ 10 9 7 6 2 ♥ 8 7 6 4 2 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ —
	♠ 6 4 3 ♥ 10 5 3 ♦ K 6 3 ♣ 10 9 8 6	

At the first table there were two passes and South then tried a psychic One Club. The bidding continued:

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
—	—	No	No
1♠	dble	2NT(1)	No
3♣	dble	No	3♥(2)
No	4♥(3)	5♣(4)	No
No	dble	No	No
No			

(1) Conventionally showing the values for a double raise in clubs.



(2) Three Spades would be more natural.
(3) A little dull, but perhaps he had played against . . .
(4) . . . this opponent before.

East-West collected 1700. At the other table:

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
—	—	No	No
1♥	2♥	3♦(1)	No
No	4♣	4♦(2)	4♥
No	4NT	No	5♣
No	5NT	No	6♣
No	6♠	all pass	

(1) Very unsound when you know that your side is outgunned.
(2) Still there, however!

East managed to go one down for a swing of 1800, an unusual number.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. The main waterway of which European city is called the Grand Canal?
2. What are skerries?
3. Which capital city of the world is named after a British Prime Minister and the victor of a famous battle?
4. To whom is the authorised version of the Bible dedicated to?
5. What is the thermal barrier in aircraft construction?
6. Name the only mammal in the animal kingdom which flies?
7. In India it is the Param Vir Chakra, in England it is the Victoria Cross. What is the French military cross called?
8. Name the nine headed serpant in Greek mythology which grew two heads every time one head was cut off
9. Gold Coast is the former name for which African nation?
10. Indian test cricketer Ravi Shastri recently equalled a world record by hitting six sixers in a first-class match. Who was the bowler?
11. The Arc de Triomphe was built to celebrate what events in history?
12. In medical terminology, what is acute coryza?

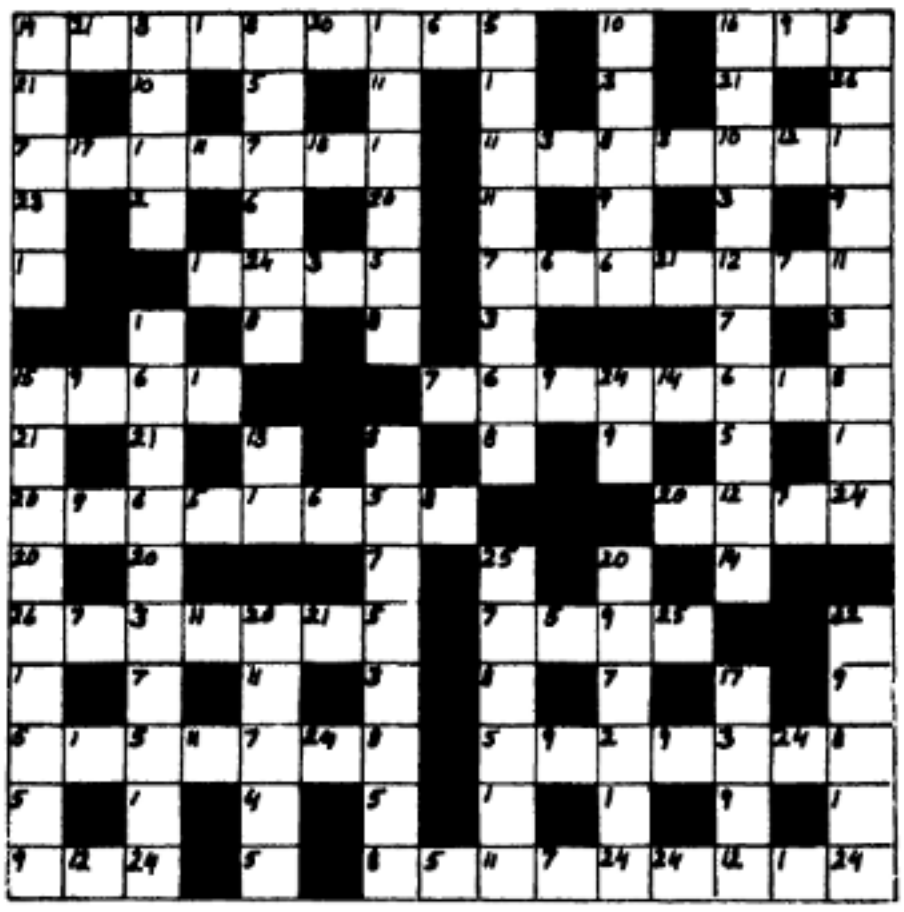
ANSWERS

1. Venice
2. Rocky islets just off the Norwegian coast which protects the mainland from the cold Arctic winds.
3. Wellington in New Zealand.
4. James I of England, also known as James VI of Scotland.
5. It is the maximum heat, (generated by friction when the aircraft moves through the atmosphere,) an aircraft can stand.
6. The bat.
7. The *Croix de Guerre*.
8. The hydra.
9. Ghana.
10. Tilak Raj.
11. The military victories of Napoleon Bonaparte.
12. The common cold.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



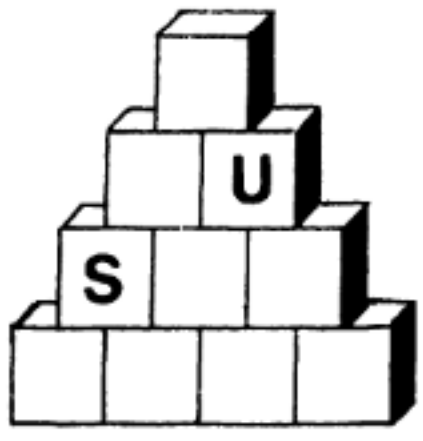
REFERENCE GRID

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				T				O				

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
						C						

Each number in this grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. Three letters have been given to you in the reference grid to help you make a start. Can you now substitute the rest and complete the grid?

Blockbuster



C,T,T,L,L,R,A,U,S,E

Fill in the ten letters given above into the squares of the blank pyramid so that these form eight four-letter words reading downwards.

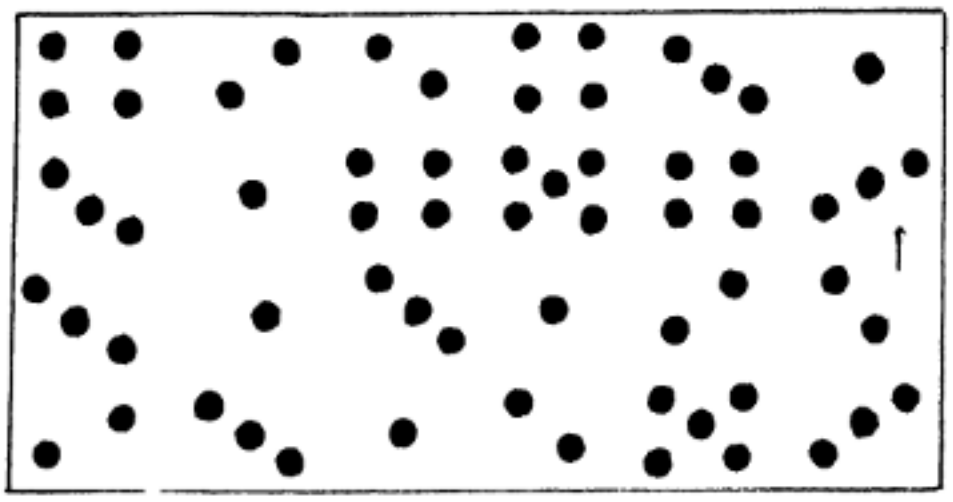
Witsharpener

By a strange coincidence, five men living in adjoining houses on Nehru Road are all very keen gardeners. But they specialise in growing a different flower and vegetable each, for which they always win a prize at the local flower show. The numbers of their houses are 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and they grow between them, roses, nasturtiums, chrysanthemums, dahlias and gladioli, and cabbages, peas, radish, cauliflowers and lettuce. We know that:

1. The man who grows gladioli also grows cabbages and he does not live at no. 1 Nehru Road.
2. Girish is the chrysanthemum expert.
3. Rajiv, who does not grow dahlias lives at No. 5.
4. Indranil does not live at no. 4 where roses are grown.
5. Cauliflowers are grown at no. 2.
6. Bahadur wins a prize each year for his radish.
7. The number of the house where Samir lives is three less than the house of the person who grows peas.

Can you work out the number of the house in which each man stays and indicate in which flower and vegetable he specialises?

Figure it Out



Here is a box of scrumptious chocolates. Can you divide them into eight lots of three boxes, each set of three containing the identical number of chocolates?

What's in a Word?

How good is your vocabulary? *Without* looking at a dictionary, can you match up the following list of words with the correct description?

1. DACHA	A. A tropical fever
2. DAPSONE	B. To lynch
3. DARIOLE	C. A Russian country house
4. DENGUE	D. Harsh settlement
5. DIKTAT	E. A drug used for leprosy
6. DEWITT	F. A shell of pastry

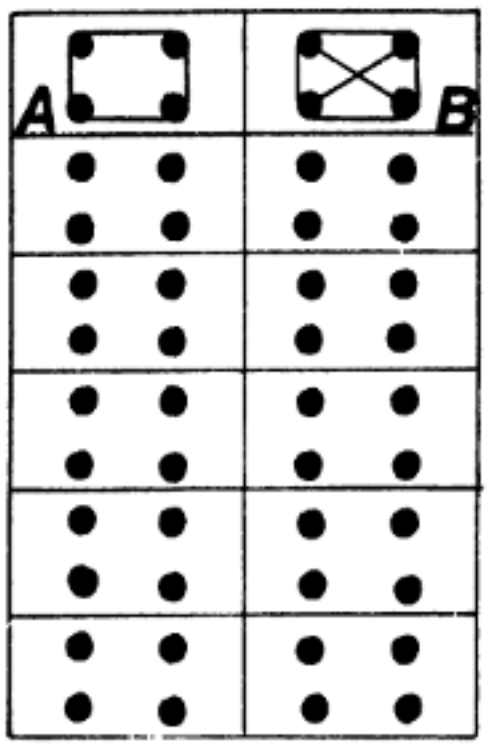
Scrambles

Using the letters of ASPEL, make suitable words to fill in the blanks and complete the sentence.

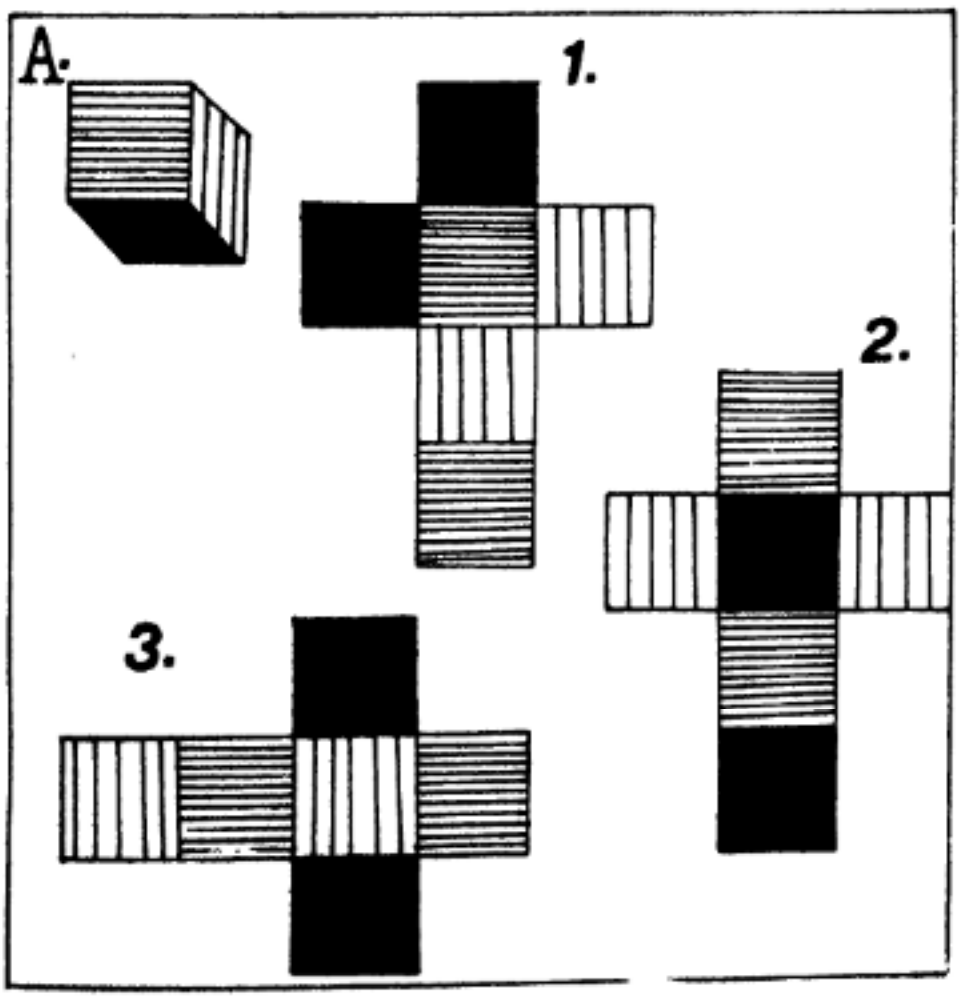
When Mr ASPEL has a —, he behaves in an extraordinary manner. He rushes into the garden and — around to the accompaniment of — of laughter, kicking at each and every — of stone and tearing off the — from each flower, with all his wife's — to control himself falling on deaf ears.

Mindbender

You can see in the picture given below how four dots have been joined by 4 lines (A) and 6 lines (B). Can you now find ten other ways of joining remianing groups of dots using 5, 4 and 3 lines?



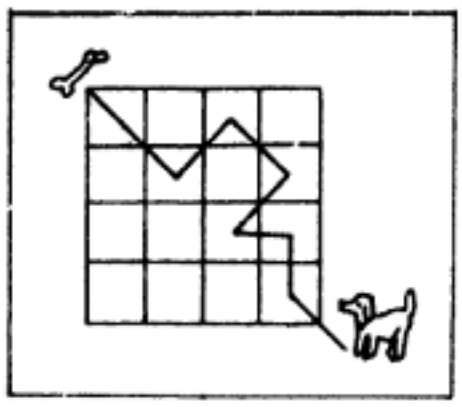
Shape Sleuth



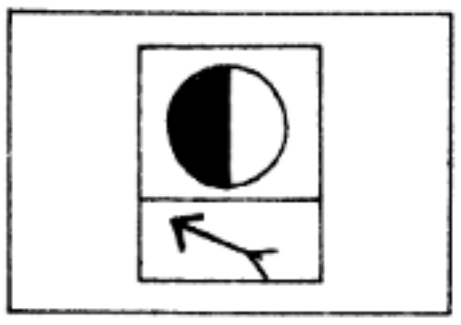
Which shape will make a cube which is identical to cube A?

Solutions to last week's Teasers

Mindbender:



Mindbender:



Face Facts:

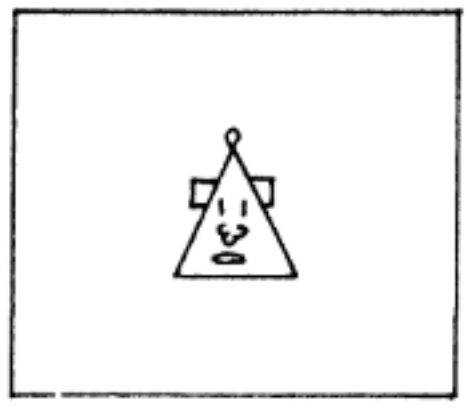
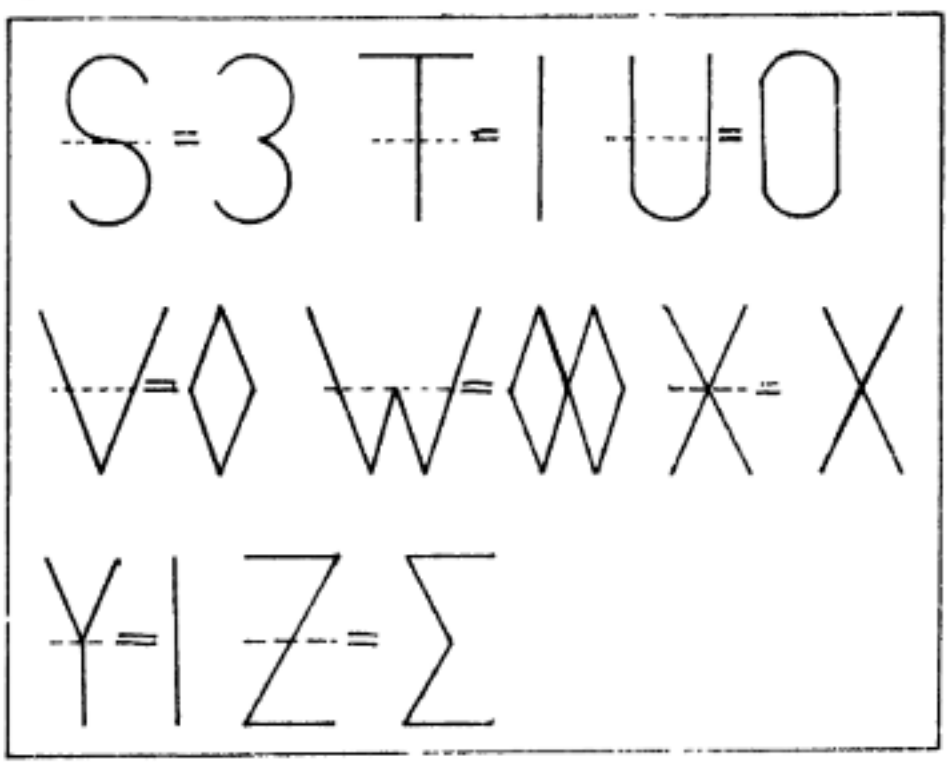


Figure it Out: 1—B, 2—C, 3—A

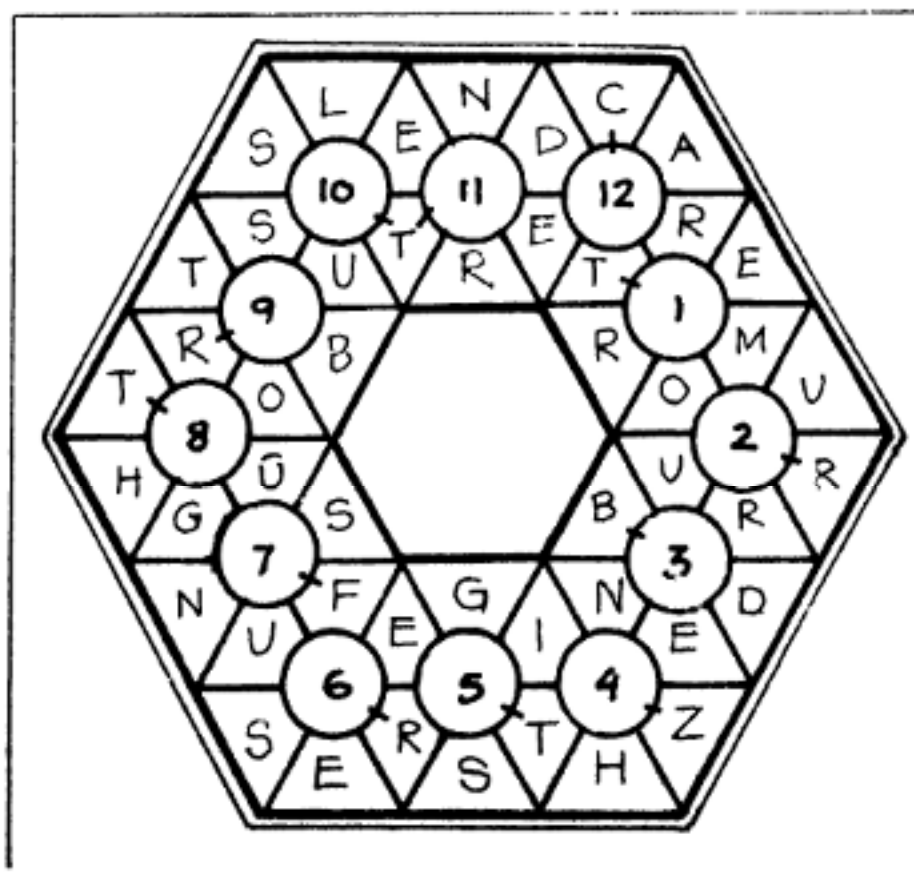
Quick Think: 6009

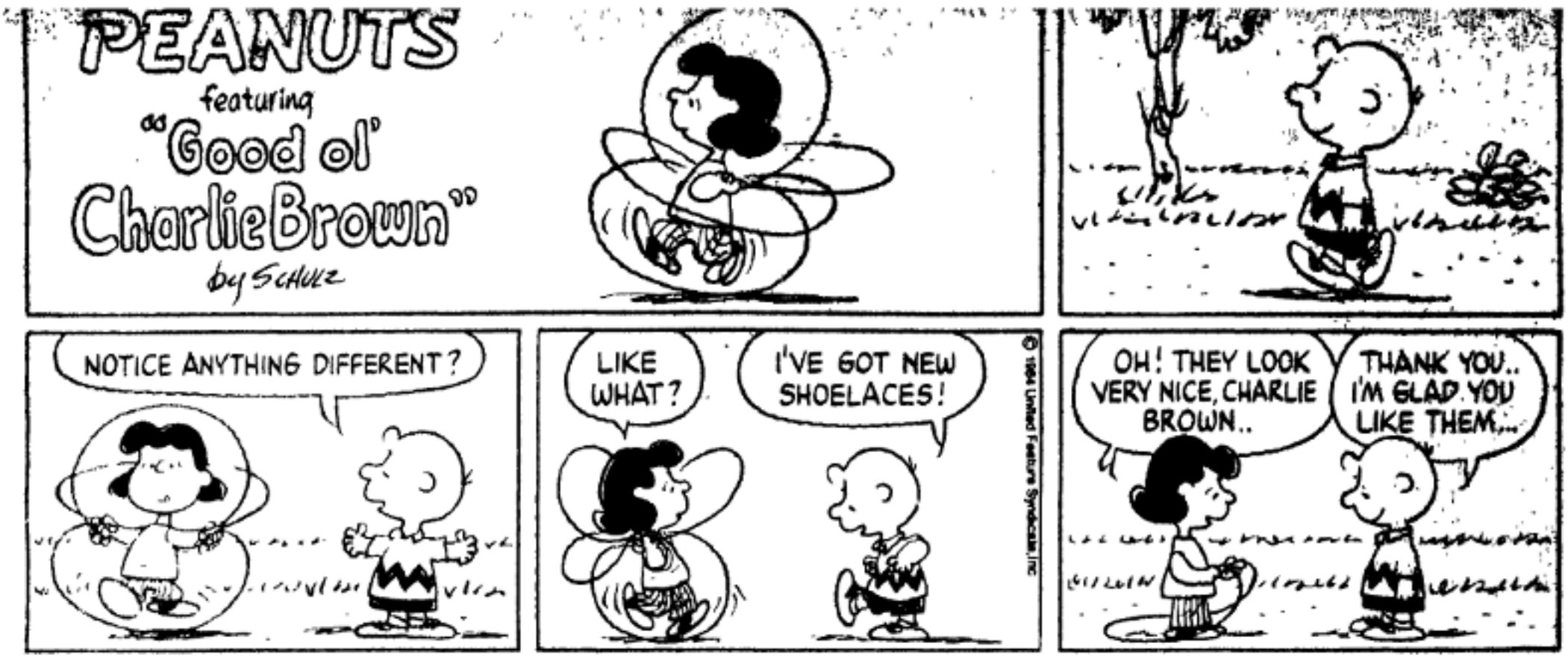
Eye Wash: The odd one out is no. 5

Quizzbizz:



Wordplay:





SCIENCE

Scanning the Tumour

A new way of spotting breast cancer—based on scanning with a light beam instead of ultrasound or x-rays—could promise a screening method that is cheap and consistent, and, most important of all, able to detect malignancies at an early stage.

Nine out of every ten women discover their own malignancies by touch or by sight. But doctors fear, with good reason, that a tumour large enough to be felt or seen has gone too far to be curable. Yet, found early, breast cancer can be cured about 85 per cent of the time. Found at stage two (of four medically recognised stages), it is cured in just 40 per cent of all cases. The final two stages are more often fatal. So, the problem is not simply to find the cancer, but to find it at its origin.

The new screening method is the result of work done by a company called Spectrascan in South Windsor, Connecticut, on an instrument that views the interior of the breast as a child with a flashlight might study the anatomy of its hand. An intensive lightsource is directed to six areas on the breast, and the emerging rays are measured according to their wavelengths and brilliance. Lightscanning locates cancers because malignant tumours absorb and transmit light differently from other tissue within the breast.

The device refines a technique first suggested in 1929 by Max Cutler who worked basically with a flashlight. The new machine, called Lite Scan, is a good deal more complex. It uses alternating bursts of infrared and red light which are shone through the breast. An infrared sensitive video camera records the invisible rays as they emerge, then passes its picture to a computer and colour encoder for analysis, and thence to a television screen for display.

Recent studies of 2,000 women by Mr Christopher Merrit, a radiologist at the Ochsner Medical Clinic in New Orleans, indicate that a high ratio of infrared to red light transmission denotes a potential cancer. The television monitor shows such an area as a bright blue patch. The picture can also be displayed in black and white to measure luminescence. For reasons yet to be grasped, malignant tumours absorb light to a greater degree than all other substances within the breast. Cysts filled with clear fluid, fat and mammary glands all permit more light through. The dark contrast of the tumour appears clearly on the screen.

For the present, lightscanning will be treated as a complement to x-rays and ultrasound. X-raying continues to be the leading technique; it finds about 85 per cent of all cancers.

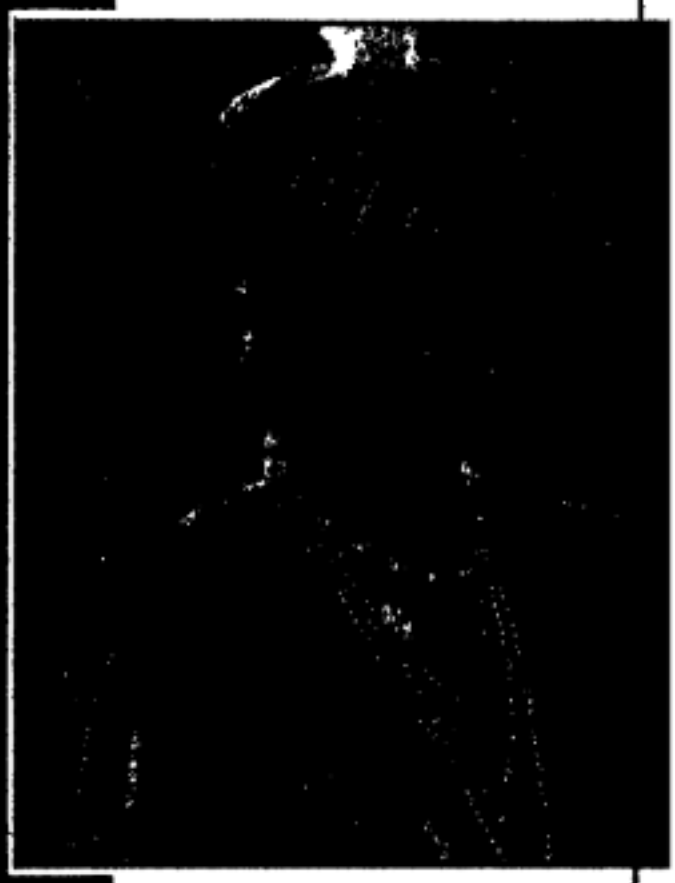
The x-ray method provides inaccurate information on the dense breasts of younger women. It misses many cancers; and even diagnoses some that do not exist, causing unnecessary surgery. Furthermore, young women with a family history of breast cancer—who are therefore considered high risks themselves—undergo years of x-ray screening. This means frequent exposure to the ionising radiation that can stimulate the very disease it is designed to eliminate.

By arrangement with **The Economist**

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she has to play second fiddle to an actor like Raj Babbar. She is now doing second-rate roles in third-rate films. Love is alright but love and career are two different things." Smita's close friend who wants to go unnamed remarked. But the truth about their "beautiful relationship" is still a secret.

The only positive outcome of the film which Simi tried to make in America with money from two Indians settled there, is that it brought *Marc Zuber* and *Anooradha* close together. The film overshot its budget and production has been stalled but the Zuber-Anooradha love affair shows no signs of stalling. The artistes who were involved in the film have started work elsewhere and Simi is desperately running hither and thither. The death knell for the film, it seems, will soon be sounded. But for Marc Zuber and Anooradha it might soon be wedding bells.

If all actors had understanding wives like *Anil Kapoor's Sumita*, then their domestic lives would have been more peaceful for them. Anil has been teamed with almost all the young sexy heroines and the gossip press has written everything to project him as a man of many women. The girls linked with him include *Meenakshi Sheshadri* and *Sridevi* but Sumita takes all these stories with "bags full of salt because I know my husband." Is Anil Kapoor laughing behind poor Sumita's back?



Sensuous Sen from Calcutta is now like the moon paled by clouds. She is sick and tired of all she did to promote herself, all the exposure of her body she resorted to in order to get more exposure in the gossip press. *Moon Moon Sen* now wants to concentrate on her career.

...'s group, and (inset) Anil Kapoor: many women?

DELHI DIARY

Arun Versus Arun


Arun Nehru


Arun Singh

Of the two Aruns around Rajiv Gandhi, Arun Nehru seems to have fallen back in the race. Parliamentary secretary Arun Singh is way ahead. In the tickets distribution for the Assembly elections, Arun Nehru, who was the supremo during the Lok Sabha polls, had to take a virtual backseat. His senior in the ministry, finance minister V.P. Singh, had a greater say in Uttar Pradesh matters this time. He, however, is not being totally ignored. When the king of Bhutan came to the capital in early February, Arun Kumar Nehru was made his minister-in-waiting. This is not a weighty job. For instance, when a foreign dignitary goes to meet the Prime Minister, the minister-in-waiting is literally made to wait in the ante-room, while the dignitaries talk to each other. Another development on the Arun Nehru-Arun Singh front has been that being the parliamentary secretary, Arun Singh meets the PM regularly. As minister of state for power, with a cabinet minister above him, Arun Nehru's official engagements do not include frequent meetings with Rajiv Gandhi. And of late the Prime Minister's office has been insisting that nobody should meet the PM without prior appointment and ministers of state are given appointments only if there is some genuine work and when the cabinet minister authorises him to discuss something with the PM.

Unrecognised

Rarely do hijackers surrender without preconditions. Even more rare are instances of hijackers being extradited to the country where the crime was committed, after the hijacking is over. In the case of Indian Airlines Boeing 737 which was hijacked to Dubai via Pakistan in August last year, both happened. The person whose diplomatic skills brought about this unprecedented surrender and extradition was Romesh Bhandari, the new foreign secretary, who was then one of the secretaries in the ministry of external affairs. But he was not among the senior government officers who received awards on the Republic Day. Three secretaries to the government have been given Padma Bhushans and Padma Shri awards this year. Romesh Bhandari's name too had been considered. But someone in the foreign office hierarchy canvassed against him. Thus an unprecedented effort went unrecognised.

Audit Blues?

Mahesh Chandra Sarin, who has proceeded on leave from the post of defence production secretary, would not have been in his present state but for a major departure in procedure made last year. The post of the comptroller and auditor-general of India (CAG) has been a post traditionally manned by a member of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IAAS). Last year, when the post fell vacant, M.C. Sarin was the seniormost IAAS officer and Mrs Indira Gandhi had almost cleared him for being the CAG. But at the last moment, departing from past practice, the then union home secretary, T.N. Chaturvedi, was made the CAG. Before him no civil servant, including those of the prestigious ICS, had held this post. Why was the top audit post given to an IAS bureaucrat and not a seasoned auditor? The grapevine has it that with the accounts of the Asiad-82 coming up for audit, mere experience in the audit and accounts service was not found sufficient. Hence the rejection of M.C. Sarin, who, like his illustrious brother H.C. Sarin, ICS (presently India's ambassador to Nepal) had a clean record.

Majestic House

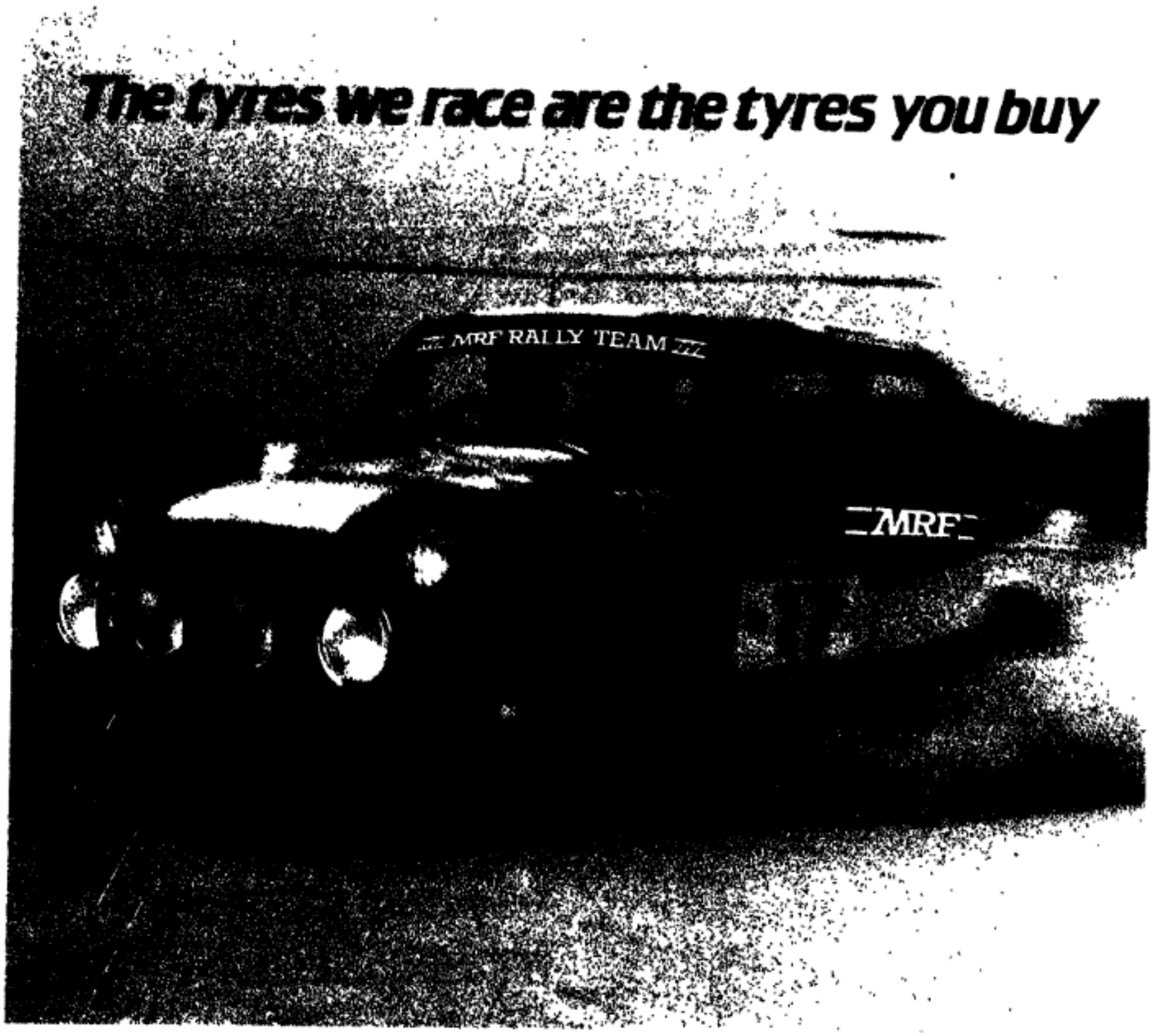
The houses in the Asian Games village were majestically built. Now that they are offered for sale, many public sector companies have opted to buy them, for accommodating their top executives. The State Trading Corporation (STC) too had acquired a house in the "village." But this will be no ordinary house. Renovation running into lakhs of rupees is being undertaken: the entire flooring may be of marble soon, it is learnt. Even when the two houses on Race Course Road were renovated recently for shifting the PM's residence, marble flooring was not thought of. Someone in the STC certainly has a better idea of living.

Trusted Foreigners?

Crude are the ways of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). In its export and import deals, it trusts foreigners while ignoring Indians. Nearly Rs 8,000 crores worth of imports and exports are being undertaken annually these days. The refineries in India are not properly equipped yet to process Bombay High crude. So this is exported. Apart from the crude oil, the imports include kerosene, diesel, naptha and furnace oil. Even at the going rate of a minimum of six per cent commission the amount involved as kickbacks alone could be anywhere near Rs 500 crores. Only foreigners are being entrusted with these transactions, with tenders not being given to Indians at all. The advantage of this arrangement is that corruption, if any, is done abroad. The shores of India are not affected by the kickbacks of these deals.

D.E. Nizamuddin

The tyres we race are the tyres you buy



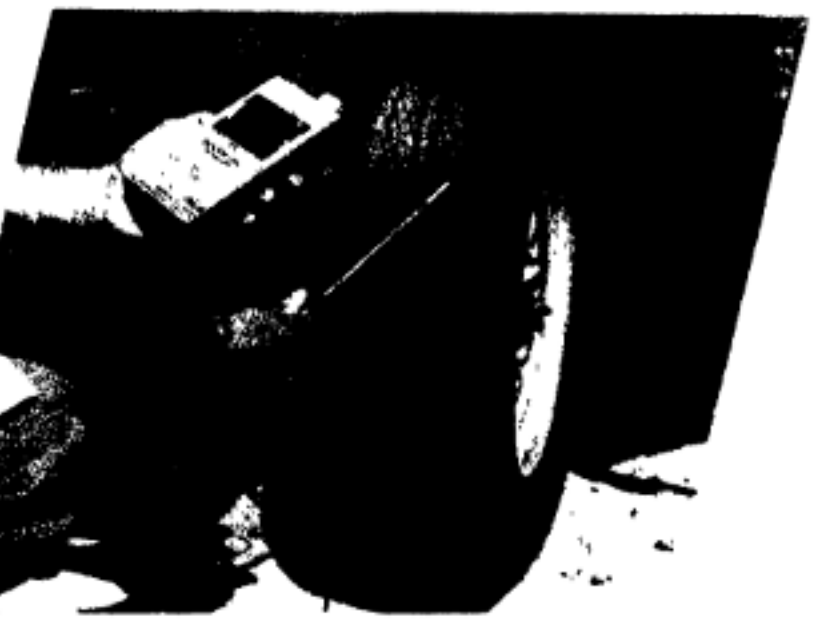
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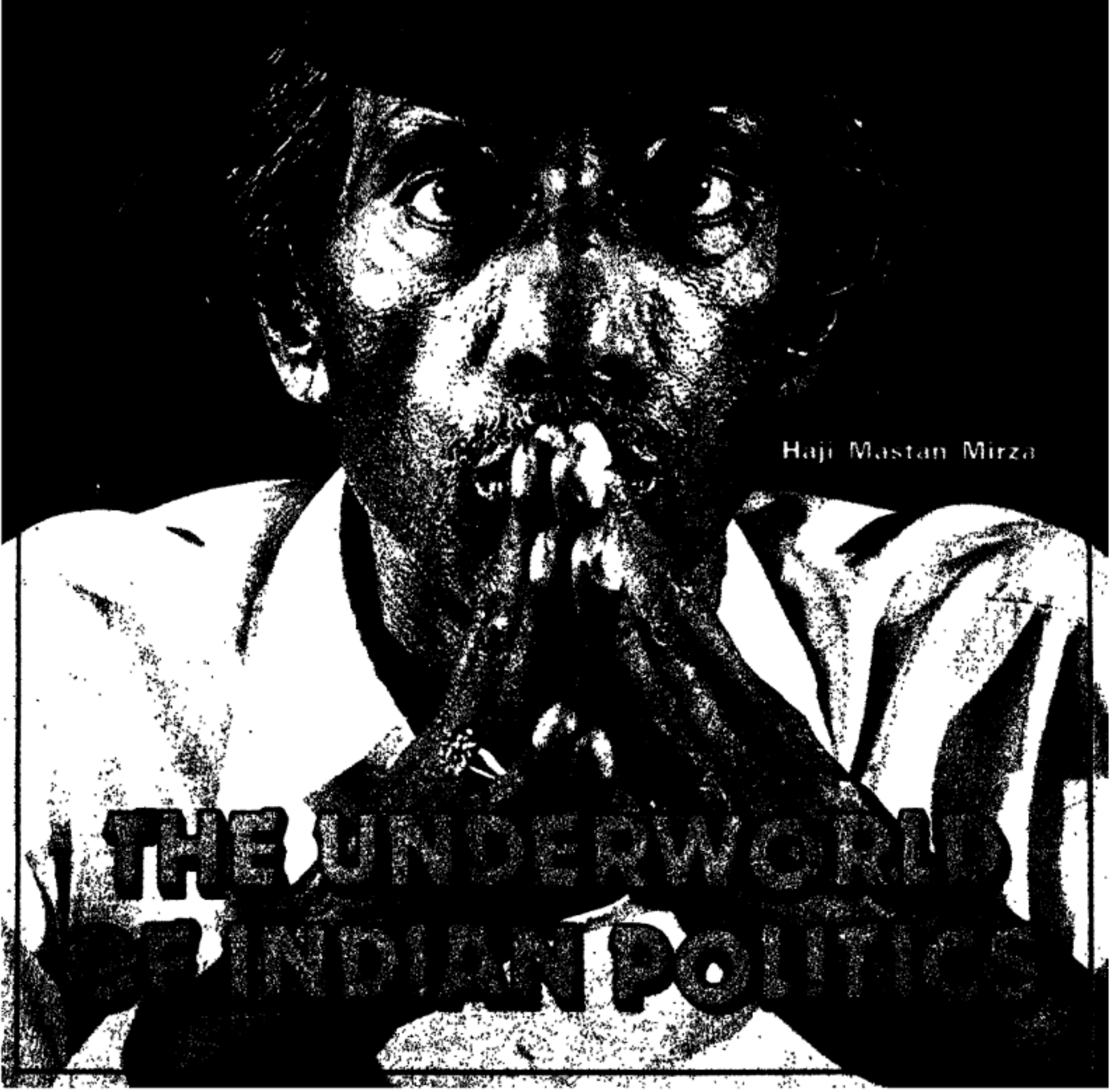
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SUNDAY



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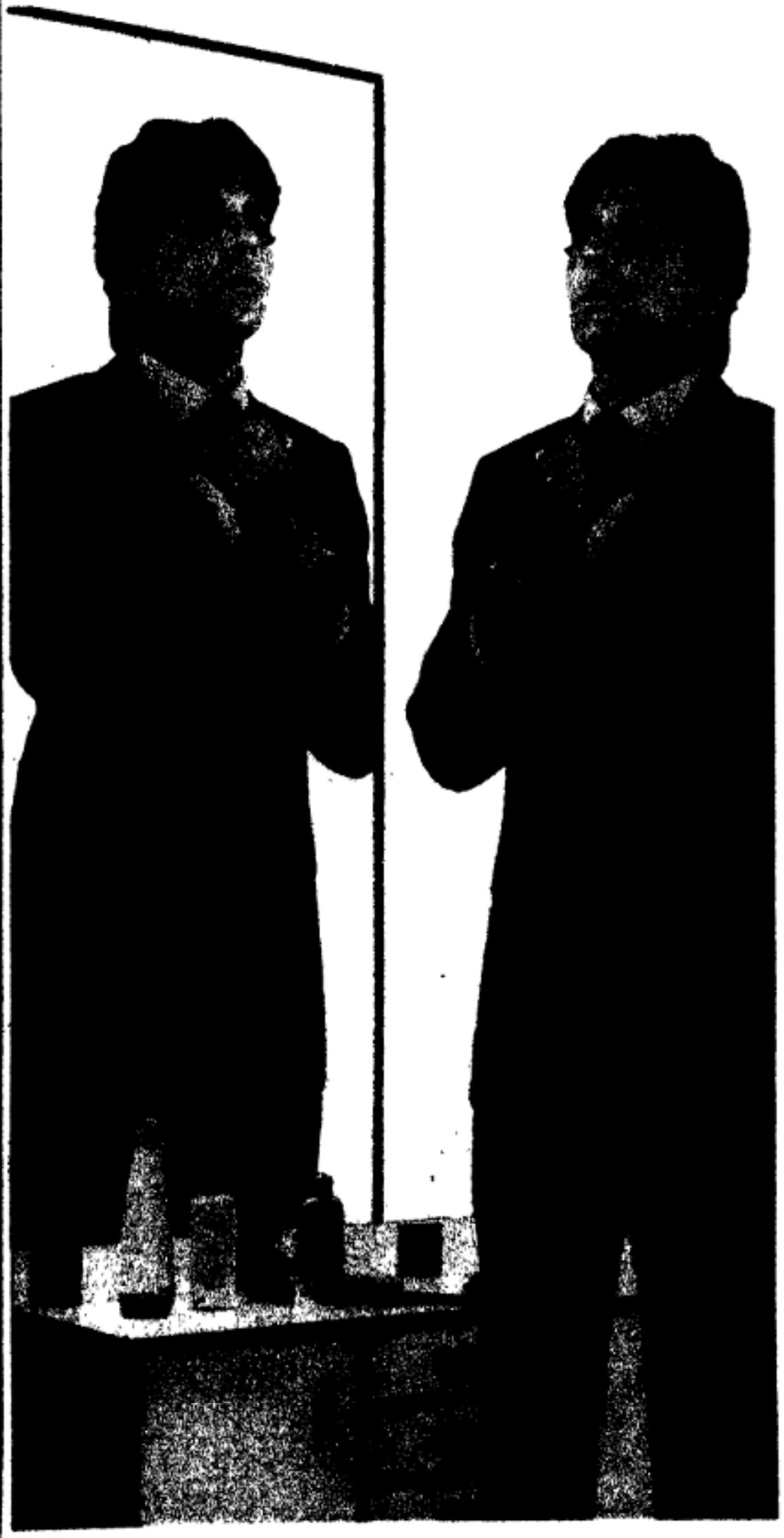
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The Underworld of Indian Politics

A large number of Congress(I) and opposition candidates contesting the Assembly elections have criminal records. Sankarshan Thakur visited Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to take a look at the murky side of Indian politics. Plus Olga Tellis investigates into the criminal-politician nexus in Bombay.

'Politics Mein Sab Chor Hain'

An exclusive interview with Haji Mastan by Dhiren Bhagat

SUNDAY SPECIAL 48

A Haven for Smuggling

On 6 February the customs authorities intercepted a mechanised sailing vessel,Al Saras, and three other vessels at the Mandvi port in Kutch and recovered contraband goods worth Rs 4.5 crores. It was the biggest-ever haul in recent years. A report from Tushar Bhatt.



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SPECIAL REPORT 32

Assembly Line

SUNDAY correspondents analyse the pre-poll scene in the states where Assembly elections will be held on 2 and 5 March.

SPECIAL REPORT 43

Sri Lanka's Unwanted Tamils

Ever since the outbreak of the ethnic riots in Sri Lanka, the exodus of Sri Lankan Tamil families to India continues unabated. Anita Pratap reports from the Mandapam refugee camp near Rameshwaram on the plight of the refugee families and the steps taken by the Indian authorities to meet this influx.

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PUNCHLINE/ABU



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M. J. AKBAR INTERVIEWS THE PM

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India: The Future

My friend D. P. Das specialises in collecting books with the most bizarre kind of information. One series entitled *The Book of Lists* contains information such as "men and women who slept with three or more celebrities...preserved sex organs of famous men...authors who had books published by the age of ten...the most boring authors of all time...prominent people put on trial after they were dead," and so on. The latest of his acquisitions which he presented to me on my birthday is entitled *The Book of Predictions* in which scholars, scientists and astrologers have expressed their opinion on what the world and its citizens will be like in the centuries to come. My knee-jerk reaction on receiving this book was to turn to the index and find out what these gentlemen had to say about India's future.

1. "Between 1982—1992 India along with South America, Africa, the Muslim world and South-East Asia—because of commitments to traditional fanatic religions—will have collapsed into violence, famine and disease. By 1992 the entire world except for North America and Australia will be communist controlled."

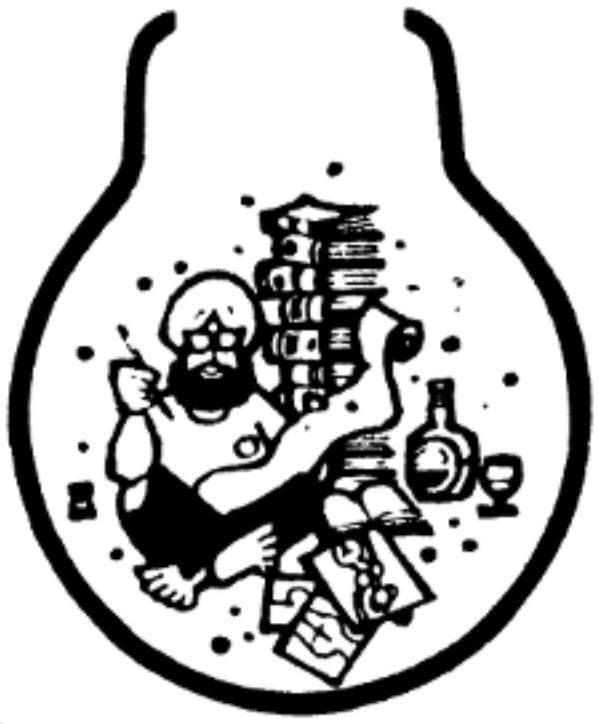
2. "By 1995 parents will be able to choose the gender of their children before conception. Hence in countries like India where male offspring are desired there will be significant changes in gender proportions in the population."

3. "By 1987 India will be one of the nations, including several Arab countries and Brazil, to have its own satellites in orbit."

4. "In the winter of 2025 an outbreak of a new, unidentified and particularly lethal influenza virus will appear in India and then spread rapidly throughout the overpopulated cities of that subcontinent...untold thousands of people worldwide will succumb to the new flu strain before it finally burns out six months later."

5. "Between 1982 and 1992 continued crop failures due to world climatic changes will coincide with population growth. The result will be mass starvation and food riots. Deaths will be counted in the hundreds of thousands, then the millions. Relief measures will be only a drop in the bucket. It will appear to the developed countries that the situation is insolvable."

6. 1985: "A bloody conflict will erupt between India and Pakistan." This is predicted by a psychic lady named Bertie Catchings of Texas.



Larry Siegel of California puts the Indo-Pak confrontation to 1989 when "both sides will use nuclear weapons, destroying major population centres."

The only comment I make on these predictions is in one word: hogwash

Gita Psychology

I have this unhealthy obsession with sex, religion and death. The first I have experienced and laud as the most rewarding experience of life. The second I indulge in the hope of finding answers to the whence from and why for of my existence. The third I await with considerable trepidation because the closer I get to it the more I am convinced that it is the final full-stop. There is no heaven or hell, no life hereafter, no reincarnation.

However, no sooner I get a new book on any of these three topics I put aside other reading to see if it has something I have not seen before. The latest arrival on my table is Swami Rama's *Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita*. Not philosophy but psychology. And by a Shankaracharya who resigned the high honour to practise *yoga* (presumably *Hattha*) and was able to demonstrate that he could stop his heart from beating and come back to life when he willed.

I have read many interpretations of the *Geeta*. Tilak's, Gandhi's, Vinoba Bhave's and Dr Radha Krishnan's each with a distinct emphasis of its own, but largely veering towards it as the supreme gospel of work ethic (*karma yoga*) without concern for profit or loss: *nishkama karma*. I had not seen it as a treatise on psychology because apart from enjoining the need for conquering one's ego and self-discipline, I found little that could be regarded as antidote to psychological problems. However, Swami Rama has extracted quite a lot out of the *shlokas* which may be read with profit. His translations of the original is excellent, his commentary very illuminating. What I find somewhat off putting is making an essentially spiritual pursuit in the quest of the self into a business with meditation centres, organised tours and sale of gew-gaws such as medallions, meditation shawls, cushions, *yoga asana* suits and *agarbattis*. Swami Rama's Himalayan Institute is as much a business enterprise as those set up by Acharya Rajneesh, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Yogi Hari bhajan.

The best summary of what I regard as the essential message of the *Bhagavad Gita* is contained in Kipling's short poem, *If*

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat the two impostors just the same
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
with sixty second's worth of distance ran,
Your is the earth and everything that is in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man my Son!

Gay Mughals

I am not sure of the precise meaning of the word gay. Does it apply to males who are exclusively homosexual? Or does it include men who normally consort with women but occasionally deviate and have sexual relations with other men? If the latter, then a sizable proportion of celebrities could be described as gays. Shakespeare's sonnets reveal his passion for a boy. Sultan Mahmud's love for his slave, Ayyaaz, is as celebrated an example of consuming passion in Urdu poetry as that of Majnoon for Laila. Mughal Emperors, despite their well stocked *haremns* confessed to lusting after boys. I had read of Babar's crude comparisons of parts of the male anatomy to water melons but had not realised that his son, Humayun, inherited the same trait till I chanced upon a couplet composed by him:

I saw a Hindu boy arrayed in battle,
His face was flushed as if with wine,
"Your ruby-red lips bewitch me," said I,
"Humayun, they are not made of stone," was his reply.

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অভাবনীয় আনন্দ-উপহার

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এককালীন গ্রাহকমূল্য ৯০ টাকা

সম্পাদনা ও দীর্ঘ ভূমিকা : সুকুমার সেন

অমর কথাসাহিত্যিক শরৎচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের যাবতীয় উপন্যাস ও অন্যান্য সমুদয় সাহিত্যকর্ম এক মলাটের মধ্যে ছাপা হয়ে বেরচ্ছে আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স থেকে। সুকুমার সেনের সম্পাদনা-ও দীর্ঘ ভূমিকা-সমৃদ্ধ এই অখণ্ড গ্রন্থের নাম 'শরৎসাহিত্যসমগ্র'। বাঙালী পাঠকের ঘরে-ঘরে অপরাজেয় কথাশিল্পীকে পৌঁছে দেবার মহান সংকল্পে উদ্বুদ্ধ এই প্রকাশনার মান যেমন উঁচু, দাম তেমনি সুলভ।

সব-সেরা টিস্যু কাগজ। সুবিধাজনক ও শোভন আয়তন। সামনে পড়া যায় এমন ১২ পয়েন্ট ফোটো-সেট হরফ। অফসেটে ছাপা। দামী কাপড়ে ও বোর্ডে বাঁধাই। প্লাস্টিক ল্যামিনেটেড জ্যাকেট। বাজার-চলতি সংস্করণের ফোটোকপি নয়, নতুন ভাবে সাজানো। কেউ যদি প্রিয়জনকে এই অমূল্য গ্রন্থ উপহার হিসেবে পাঠাতে চান, তারও ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে।

অখণ্ড শরৎসাহিত্যসমগ্র'র মূল দাম **১২০ টাকা**। আগাম গ্রাহকদের জন্য এককালীন গ্রাহকমূল্য **৯০ টাকা**।

দু-কিস্তিতে দিলে গ্রাহকমূল্য ৫০ টাকা করে **১০০ টাকা**। ডাকে নিলে সবক্ষেত্রেই ৬·৫০ পোস্টাল চার্জ অতিরিক্ত দিতে হবে।

তিন ভাবে গ্রাহক নেওয়া চলছে

- ৬৭-এ মহাত্মা গান্ধী রোড, কলকাতা ৯ ঠিকানায় অবস্থিত আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স এর ছোটদের বইয়ের দোকানে মুদ্রিত আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করে টাকা জমা দিয়ে, গ্রাহক হবার ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে।
- আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স প্রা. লিমিটেড ৫ বেনিয়াটোলা লেন কলকাতা ৭০০০০৯ এই ঠিকানায় ডাকে টাকা পাঠালেও সরাসরি গ্রাহক করে নেওয়া হচ্ছে। সেক্ষেত্রে মুদ্রিত আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে হবে না। এখানে টাকা পাঠাতে হবে মনি অর্ডারে কিংবা ব্যাঙ্ক ড্রাফটে। বাইরের স্টেশনের চেক নেওয়া হবে না।
- ইউনাইটেড ব্যাঙ্ক অব ইণ্ডিয়ার সারা ভারতের নির্বাচিত ১২৯টি শাখার মাধ্যমেও গ্রাহক হওয়া চলছে। তালিকা নীচে দেওয়া হল। ব্যাঙ্কে মুদ্রিত আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করে, টাকা জমা দিয়ে, গ্রাহক হতে হবে। যিনি যে-শাখায় গ্রাহক হবেন, সেখান থেকেই তিনি বই পাবেন।

যাঁরা এর আগে প্রকাশকের ঠিকানায় গ্রাহক হবার জন্য টাকা পাঠিয়েছেন অথচ বই পাঠাবার ডাকখরচ হিসেবে অতিরিক্ত ৬·৫০ পাঠাননি তাঁরা দয়া করে অনতিবিলম্বে ৬·৫০ টাকার পোস্টাল চার্জ পাঠিয়ে দেবেন।

ভি· পি পিতে অখণ্ড 'শরৎসাহিত্যসমগ্র' পাঠানো হবে না। গ্রাহক হবার পর মোটামুটিভাবে চার মাসের মধ্যেই যাতে গ্রাহকরা বই পান, তার জন্য সব রকমভাবে চেষ্টা চলছে। বই বেরুলে কাগজে বিজ্ঞাপন দিয়ে জানানো হবে।

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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Are Naxalites Dedicated?

"Power flows from the barrel of a gun," is a slogan I have seen scribbled in red all over Hyderabad That quotation from the late Mao-Tse Tung's obsolete *Red Book* is a sure sign that some Naxalites are still around. That is not very surprising, because it was in Andhra Pradesh that the Naxal movement had the greatest impact soon after Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal launched a violent uprising in Naxalbari in West Bengal in 1967.

Some of those who had participated in or sympathised with the Telengana movement in 1948 were the ones to react and start the new movement in the state. There was an outburst of violence in Srikakulam district It was so "effective" that the 1970 political report of the Naxalites, who had by then organised themselves into the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), linked it to the "prairie fire" which, they hoped, would spread to other parts of India in the form of an "armed peasant guerilla struggle."

Fifteen years later, Srikakulam, to quote police sources, is "the quietest district" in Andhra Pradesh. Not even a whisper of revolt is heard and the state government which has a special force to combat, what it describes, "the Naxalite menace," has withdrawn it from there. The Naxalites themselves admit that "the parliamentary system has overtaken the district."

The real reason is that the elan of the movement has suffered and the dedication and idealism which distinguished the Naxalites from the general run of Communists has declined. Ideologically too they have suffered with Mao and what he stood for declared outdated even in China. Though one-third of the Naxalites in the state are highly intelligent and motivated, the others are anti-social elements who have joined the movement to make money for themselves. The government's estimate is that besides extorting money from villagers, the Naxalites or those who parade as such get at least Rs 12 to Rs 15 lakhs per year by terrorising arrack-sellers.

Those whom the so-called Naxalites kill or attack are not always landlords, moneylenders or police informants. Several small landholders have been killed because someone has bribed the "Naxalites" to settle a personal account "Many times ordinary men have been killed," the police sources say This could well be true, though the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) at Hyderabad does not corroborate this. In fact, the PUCL alleges that police wrath is directed against anyone who talks of civil liberty and "N.T. Rama Rao has punished even some of those who had agitated for him after his government's dismissal in August 1984."

Despite differences in ideological beliefs, many in the student community are still sympathetic to the Naxalite cause One-third of the college-going population is believed to be under the influence of Naxalites.

Vengal Rao, a former chief minister—when he was in office in 1967 made a concerted drive against the Naxalites—believes that all universities and colleges have been "affected by the Naxalites." K. Ramachandra Reddy, then inspector-general of police, who defended the police action before the Bhargava Commission was appointed to inquire into Naxalite activity in Andhra Pradesh, supports Vengal Rao's contention but blames the "starry-eyed liberals for condoning murders by the Naxalites " He has no hesitation in saying that "the Naxalbari uprising was a manifestation of the cult of violence to capture political power" contrary to the dictates of the democratic system.

If one were to judge by statistics, the Naxalites are guilty of more violence than before According to official figures, during 1984 they committed 44 murders and 383 other offences, including eight dacoities and five cases of amputation of limbs, against 26 murders and 389 other offences in 1983. Police sources consider the motive for these crimes to be "loot, murder and rapine," without any ideology behind them. The truth lies somewhere in between. the Naxalites have lost leaders like T. Nagi Reddy and most of the squads and *dalams* they formed from 1969 to 1977 in different parts of the state are now shorn of any ideological thrust. Many of those calling themselves Naxalites have acted as "hired assassins wherever engaged by political or local factions." The "true" Naxalites have links with the Chinese communists, and continue to get Chinese publications and writings for inspiration, though much that they contain devaluing Mao's "thoughts" must be demoralising for them They are anti-Soviet and pro-American in their approach, and this often puts them in odd company.

Whether all those who claim to be Naxalites remain firm in their conviction or not, the fact is that their influence has spread to one-fourth of Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the districts of Warangal, Karimnagar, Khammam, Adilabad and Nizamabad (the People's War Group is active in these areas).

Nonetheless, the Naxalites have lost much of their credibility with liberals by indulging in indiscriminate killings Their association with criminals has also caused a serious setback to the genuine movement. But as long as the climate of exploitation by contractors, *zamindars* and similar people remains Andhra Pradesh continues to be a fertile ground for resistance to grow, however wanting the new crop of Naxalites may be.

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OPINION

Spicy Gossip

It would be more apt to christen Khushwant Singh's column, *Gossip, Sexy and Spicy*. Mr Singh never loses an opportunity to write on sex and related matters. Of late he has started writing provocative and biased articles. I took particular exception to the article where Mr Singh made martyrs out of the two assassins of Indira Gandhi.
B.R. Dinesh Chandra, Bangalore

• It is time SUNDAY stops publishing Khushwant Singh's vulgar jokes.
Zafre Alam Khan, New Delhi

• I would rather have Khushwant Singh write on sex than to read his articles on the Punjab tangle. Mr Singh is causing a lot of resentment and I would advise him to stick to light topics in the interest of the nation.
Eravinalloor Karunakaran, Calcutta

• I welcome Mr Singh's suggestion that the government should institute a judicial enquiry into the anti-Sikh riots following Indira Gandhi's assassination (*Gossip*, 10—16 February). But what about conducting a similar investigation into the violence unleashed by Sikh extremists against Hindus in Punjab prior to Operation Bluestar?
Subhendu Rath, Rourkela

• Khushwant Singh has once again stressed the need for a judicial enquiry into the Delhi riots. In support of his demand Mr Singh has quoted two reports compiled by eminent citizens implicating some Congress(I) leaders. While the demand seems reasonable, I wonder where Mr Singh and the eminent citizens were when innocent people were being killed in Punjab. Why didn't Khushwant Singh raise his voice when extremists had taken over the Golden Temple?
S. Venkatasubramaniam, Calcutta

• I had always found Khushwant Singh's column thought-provoking. But I could not understand Mr Singh's logic of referring to 1985 as the 'Year of the Ass' (*Gossip*, 10—16 February). The youth of India, let alone the youth of the world, cannot be represented by the young MP whom Mr Singh ridicules. It would be unfair to label the youth as relations of the much-ridiculed beast.
Ahalya Hejmadi, Bhubaneswar

• I took exception to Khushwant Singh's description of 1985 as the Year of the Ass.
Laya Adhikari, Krishnanagar (WB)



A Bold Step

There was nothing unusual about the cover story, *Women in Rajiv's Politics* (10—16 February). Ever since the days of Sarojini Naidu there have been no dearth of women in Indian politics. Only till recently, our country was ruled by a woman. In India men and women enjoy equal opportunities and the call for 'emancipation of women' is nothing but a political gimmick. Political parties have raised this slogan whenever they were in need of votes. I would advise our Prime Minister to tackle much more burning problems like poverty.
G. I. D'Souza, Bangalore

• Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's emphasis on the role of the women for the progress of the country seems to have created a sense of euphoria among many sections of the public. The landslide victory of the Congress(I) in the parliamentary elections is believed to be due to the massive support the ruling party got from women voters. It is thus natural that Rajiv Gandhi will flatter this vote bank. Only time can tell whether the intentions of the Prime Minister are honest.
Satish Shirali, Bahrain

• Rajiv Gandhi's emphasis on improving the plight of Indian women was encouraging. Women should be made equal partners in nation-building and I am sure that they will be able to shoulder responsibilities thrust on them. The interviews with eminent women personalities made interesting reading.
P. Govind, New Delhi

• The Prime Minister has rightly stressed the role of women in national politics. Indian women have lagged behind only because they were denied opportunities to prove their worth.
Radha Kanta Rout, Bhubaneswar

• The decision to make education free for girls upto the high school is a bold step taken by the Prime Minister. I also welcome the formation of a separate ministry for women.
Bithika Mohanty, Keonjhar

Factual Errors

This has reference to Tariq Ali's *The Nation's Grandchildren* (27 January—2 February). The very first line of the extract is erroneous: Rajiv Gandhi was born in Bombay and not in Allahabad.
Veena Kulkarni, Bombay

• Tariq Ali writes that Amethi had been Nehru's constituency and after his death his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit represented the constituency. But neither of them represented Amethi. In another place the author talks of Rajiv Dhar, the son of the D.P. Dhar. The author is mistaken: the person concerned is Vijay Dhar.
C.B. Tripathi, Bhubaneswar

The extract presents six characters: Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Feroze Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. But the author has very little to say about Sanjay and Rajiv Gandhi. In particular I expected a lot more on our Prime Minister. I only hope that Rajiv Gandhi understands the woes of the poor and the deprived since he never struggled in life like his grandfather or his mother.
Kartikeswar Behera, Anandapur (Orissa)

Welcome, *Teasers*

I would like to compliment SUNDAY for introducing two pages of *Teasers* every week. All my family members are great lovers of puzzles and quizzes and there are few Indian magazines that cater to such needs with the result that I had to depend on books and magazines from abroad. I am sure that there are many others who feel the same way as I do. What about reviving the *Science for Children* column?
A. Khanna, Calcutta

Right Move

Rajiv Gandhi's efforts to ban political defections are certainly laudable *(Anti-Defection Bill: A New Beginning*, 10—16 February). In India politics is nothing but just another trade. It is thus natural that politicians will switch sides whenever they find their party in trouble. Banning defections by law will certainly infuse morality in Indian politics. The birds of a fair season should be taught a lesson.
Abir Padhy, Berhampur

• While appreciating the Anti-Defection Bill, I would also recommend a law prohibiting a person from contesting from more than one constituency.
Suman Narayan Misra, Balasore

Sane Voices

Anita Pratap had correctly analysed the basic causes underlying the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka *(Sri Lanka's Voices of Reason*, 10—16 February). Inspite of the moderate Sinhala's demand for a political solution, the haughty attitude of the Sinhala Buddhists is worsening the situation. Moreover, some vested Western power blocs are deliberately keeping the tension alive in Sri Lanka. Things have come to such a pass that even the cabinet of President Jayewardene is divided regarding the Tamil issue: the President had to sack a minister.The army is not the answer to the problem. Unless the ruling party realises this the country is heading for a fresh crisis.
Rathesh Jha, Bhagalpur

Image-building

People are anxiously waiting to herald the birth of the Bharat Desam (*The Ambitions of NTR*, 27 January—2 February). The opposition badly needs a leader and a plank to stage a comeback. NTR's brainchild will surely provide the much needed alternative to the Congress(I).
A. Shajahan, Trivandrum

• The proposed launching of the Bharat Desam is a desperate attempt by the Andhra Pradesh chief minister to project himself as a national leader. If NTR has genuine intentions of serving the downtrodden Indians, he would not have launched the Telugu Desam which serves the interests of only a section of the population. I am sure the Bharat Desam will be a flop. The people have reposed faith in Rajiv Gandhi thereby indicating that they will not tolerate regionalism.
P.P. Beeran, Hafr-Al-Batin (Saudi Arabia)

Violence Should be Condemned

I do not agree with Kuldip Nayar's view that *Appeasing the Sikhs* (3—9 February) is the first reasonable step towards solving the Punjab problem. The government has always been generous to the Sikhs and is willing to compromise on a number of issues to solve the Punjab tangle. But the Sikhs have shut their eyes to reason. Certain vested interests are deliberately trying to build a wall between the Hindus and the Sikhs. Unless the moderates among the Sikhs condemn extremist activities and unless they extend their hand of cooperation, there is no way out
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• I differ with Mr Nayar regarding the appeasement of the Sikhs. From the very beginning the Sikh leadership did not condemn the extremists with the result that the unfortunate decision to send in the army to the Golden Temple had to be taken. Even now the Sikh high priests hesitate to decry violence.
Falguni Basu, Calcutta

• I welcome Kuldip Nayar's suggestion to establish a National Security Council on the pattern of that in the USA *(The Foreign Office Mess*, 27 January—2 February). However, unlike its counterpart in the USA, the NSC should not meddle in the affairs of other countries.
Neeraj Cummar Bansal, Moradabad

Our Politicised Bureaucracy

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya rightly highlighted the link among the *Bureaucrat, Diplomat, Industrialist, Spy* (3—9 February). Corruption among the bureaucracy has endangered the security of our country. It is high time the government took note of such people. The intelligence set-up should also be revamped
K. Rachappa, Hyderabad

• It would be preposterous to assume that we can dispense with bureaucrats. They have become an integral part of our political set-up and the only way out is to inculcate in them a sense of patriotism. What this generation needs are patriots.
Banamali Panda, Puri

• The investigative cover story on the spy scandal failed to answer the question as to why the persons concerned were selling secrets to both the CIA and the KGB. It isridiculous to suggest that the two superpower intelligence agencies were sharing secrets.
Sanjib Raut, Keonjhar

• *The Decline and Fall of the Indian Bureaucrat* was illuminating. The political leaders are to be blamed for the corruption that has seeped into the bureaucracy. During the early Sixties, the political masters were dedicated individuals inspired by noble ideals. They were always willing to heed the advice of bureaucrats. But the picture is quite different now: politicians run after money and power and they use bureaucrats to their advantage. The bureaucracy has become highly politicised. The bureaucracy should first be freed of political pressures if the country wants to be restored to its old glory.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

Printer's Devil

In *Delhi Diary* (10—16 February) the name of Woomesh Chandra Bonnerji has been misspelt due to a printing error. This is regretted—Editor

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I Bijit Kumar Basu hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Bijit Kumar Basu
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COVER STORY

THE UNDERWORLD OF INDIAN POLITICS

A large number of candidates with criminal records are contesting the elections to the Bihar and UP Assemblies



Photographs: K.M. Kishan

In early February, Bir Bahadur Singh, an independent MLA from Bihar strode into one of Patna's posh hotels with his band of armed bodyguards. The tall, bearded, brusque man tugged a goat which his men hacked to pieces in public and then had it cooked in the hotel's kitchen. The gruesome picnic over, the gang strolled out. Not a word of protest was uttered by the hotel authorities.

Bir Bahadur Singh is an impulsive, short-tempered man, some say, a schizophrenic. It takes little for him to resort to the drastic. Sometime back he pushed a ticket collector out of a running train just because he had asked for a ticket and, on another occasion, almost gagged a friend with whom he was drinking. There are few crimes that Bir Bahadur is not charged with committing: murder, abduction, rape, molestation, gangsterism. He carries unlicensed arms, stays at any hotel that he pleases without paying, roughs up any woman that catches his eye and is a professional jailbird. This is the only reason why he is also an MLA. His image is an asset and his flourishing career an apt commentary on the socio-political state of Bihar.

Bir Bahadur Singh was just another son of a Rajput landlord from Bhojpur till the murder of his father at the hands of a backward caste man. He avenged it and soon established his reputation as the lord-protector of Rajput interests in the area. He became a ruthless killer whose personal army struck terror specially among the backward castes. Followed pats from caste-brethren in the political world and secret requests for assistance. Then, in 1980, Bir Bahadur used the muscle he had assisted others with for himself and became an independent MLA from Jagdishpur. Since then, the honourable representative of the people has been to jail, and even detained under the NSA, several times. And all this time the Congres s(I) government buttressed, patronised and used his talents to score political points. During the byelections he was even bailed out of jail to oversee booth-capturing operations. Today, Bir Bahadur is preparing for his second election, again as an independent MLA from Jagdishpur. Most observers feel he would have no problems getting the mandate, or to put it otherwise, forcing it. He might not even have to actually capture booths this time: the people of Jagdishpur do not want to earn Bir Bahadur Singh's wrath by

◀ **Independent MLA Bir Bahadur Singh**



Sanjeev Toni



Ram Naresh Singh

आशकरन संखवार

182, साऊथ एवेन्यू
नई दिल्ली -110 001.

लोकसभा क्षेत्र, घाटमपुर, कानपुर देहात।

दिनांक : 31.1.1985

सेवा में,

माननीय श्री राजीव गांधी
प्रधानमंत्री, भारत सरकार एवं अध्यक्ष,
अखिल भारतीय कांग्रेस कमेटी (इ)
नई दिल्ली -110 001.

विषय : श्री शिवनाथ सिंह कुशवाहा, पर्यटन राज्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार के विरुद्ध भ्रष्टाचार एवं आतंक के सम्बन्ध में संलग्न प्रमाण-पत्रों सहित प्रार्थना-पत्र।

माननीय महोदय,

विनम्र निवेदन है कि 294 घाटमपुर विधानसभा क्षेत्र से श्री शिवनाथ सिंह कुशवाहा विधायक चुने के बाद उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार में राज्यमंत्री के पद पर मनोनीत किए ---। इन्होंने अपने कार्यकाल में पांच लाख से अधिक मीट्रिक टन गन्ना खरीदने के ठेके दिलवाए हैं। इनके परिवार के सदस्यों ने पचासों बन्दूकें, रायफलें -- लाखों परिवारों की लूट -

Shri Rajiv Gandhi
Prime Minister of India and President AICC(I)

182 South Avenue
New Delhi 110001
Dated 31/1/1985

Respected Sir,

I humbly beg to say that after being elected from the Ghatampur Assembly constituency, Mr Shivnath Singh Kushwaha was made a minister of state. During his five years in office, scores of dacoities have been committed, dozens murdered, thousands of families looted and even breasts of some women were cut off by his nephew and dacoits whom he patronises. He has struck terror in the region and the entire population of Ghatampur Assembly constituency is pained. His repeated assertions that he has nothing to do with his nephews are absolutely baseless. As proof I would like to say that one of his nephews who is studying, stays at his official residence in Lucknow. His brother and another nephew have forcibly acquired a contract to supply sugarcane. They opposed me in the Lok Sabha elections and even kept all the election material for their own purposes.

In these circumstances, I pray to you not to select him as a candidate from the Ghatampur Assembly constituency. At the same time I should like to say our image in the region has been tarnished and winning the election is impossible.

With respects
Your humble servant,
Ashkaran Sankhwar

Letter written by Ashkaran Sankhwar to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi levelling charges against Shivnath Singh Kushwaha, a minister in the UP cabinet

defeating him.

Crime has become an inextricable part of politics in Bihar and the nexus between criminals and politicians almost endemic. People with gory criminal antecedents have held cabinet posts. Smugglers and bootleggers have run ministers, rapists have dominated proceedings in the Assembly where mafia dons and gangsters come loaded with arms and guarded by gun-toting musclemen. The custodians of Bihar have proclaimed, with some pride, that they maintain gangs of *goondas* and that doing so is "necessary for political survival." So is, perhaps, holding the masses in general at ransom. A slogan being used by candidates in several constituencies this time is: "Send me back to Patna as your legislator or else you shall not live in peace." It is a threat the people know can be carried out with impunity.



Illustration Bulbul Sharma

"We are just waiting for the day when the percentage of criminals in the Assembly crosses 50," remarked a senior Bihar MLC and added, perhaps with a touch of humour, that the state Legislature could then pass a law that a woman resisting rape could be convicted. While this might be a bit far-fetched, the rise in the number of people with criminal backgrounds entering politics is alarming. A record lineup is contesting the Assembly elections this time. Many of them will win while Bihar's slide into barbarism continues.

Nothing makes it more evident than the Congress(I) list of candidates itself. After all the brooming and pruning, the number of people with criminal records behind them is between 35 and 40 while the count of those who have links with or shield criminal elements, much more. Some of them are caste barons too important to be displeased, others simply too resourceful to the party to be ignored.

Take the case of Sagir Ahmed, the Congress(I) candidate from Raxaul, on the Indo-Nepal border. His men have been caught and charged for various offences, including smuggling, on many occasions. He himself has been at the centre of such a scandal that even a chief minister like Dr Jagannath Mishra had to drop him from his ministry. Sanjeev Prasad Toni, contesting the elections from Phulwarisharif near Patna, is still known as the local *dada* of Patna: a man who has seldom flinched from using muscles to gain political strength. There is Kumud Ranjan Jha whose behaviour towards women has not been appreciated by many and his accomplice in many an escapade, Satyadeo Singh alias Sahdeo, is the Congress(I) nominee from Khagaria. Harilal Ram from Bechahan is charged with the rape of a minor harijan girl and Raghunath Pandey from Muzaffarpur is so powerful that he runs a parallel administration of his own, defying the authority of the government. Then there are the mafia bos-



Rashtriya Sanjay Manch leader Vinod Singh with the president of the RSM, Menaka Gandhi

ses of south Bihar: at least ten of them are in the fray from various constituencies in Dhanbad, Palamau and Hazaribagh. Some of them have even migrated to other constituencies in central and north Bihar which is already buzzing with candidates who are said to have helped in capturing booths for VIP candidates of the Congress(I) in the last Lok Sabha elections. Among them are the two men who personally "looked after" the polling booths in the constituencies of Mrs Manorama Singh, the wife of the Bihar chief minister, and Satyendra Narain Sinha, the Rajput chieftain of Bihar. But, perhaps, the most surprising is the choice of candidates brought in on the "new and clean" criterion. In several cases, the "unclean" have been replaced by candidates whose pasts are just as murky. Malo Devi, known to be a bootlegger, and who has a couple of warrants of arrest against her head, has got the ticket from Farwah In the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, this lady was accompanying the local Congress(I) candidate on his campaign rounds. But the moment he came to know of her antecedents, he told her he no longer needed her services. Ask any knowledgeable person in Patna and he will tell you that the Congress(I) list in Bihar abounds with such "colourful" personalities. And how many more such characters lurk behind the new names nobody knows today.

The Congress(I) is not the only party that has in its ranks such criminal and dubious elements. Crime has become a political necessity, something without which any party or group finds the going difficult. The opposition parties this time have an equal share of gangsters and criminals representing them. In the forefront is the Janata Party which, apart from fielding the notorious Dhanbad mafia don Suryadeo Singh, has also adopted some who were cast away by the Congress(I) because of their criminal backgrounds. The party leadership openly justifies and accepts it Answering questions at Patna sometime ago the Janata Party leader Syed Shahabuddin said that assistance could be taken from all kinds of people for electoral purposes In another statement Karpoori Thakur, a former chief minister of Bihar, did not hesitate to say that his men would fight the elections with guns this time. Karpoori Thakur was, perhaps, more desperate in his intent but he knows only too well that elections cannot be won without resorting to the gun in Bihar. His own government at one time was assisting politics to the dirty depths it is in today.

But, perhaps, the grip of crime on politics and society is best exhibited by the number of independent MLAs who rule the roast by sheer muscle and firepower: Vinod Singh, the "sadist" of Palamau, Sardar Krishna Singh, the terror of Gaya, and the dreaded Birendra Singh Mohabia, of Jandaha.

Vinod Singh who, according to the police is a "sadist who enjoys killing people" at one time faced more than 70 criminal charges He can kill people in public, threaten and abuse senior police officers, dodge the law with impunity and still remain an honourable MLA. Sardar Krishna Singh, a bhumihar landlord-turned-Sikh from Gaya, began as a caste gangster terrorising harijans and giving protection and assistance to upper caste politicians. By 1980, when he won the Assembly elections as an independent candidate from Arwal, there were already half a dozen serious charges, including murder and abduction, against him. He was, in the early part of his career as an MLA, used and patronised by the then chief minister Dr Jagannath Mishra. It was only when he became too much of a liability that Dr Mishra felt obliged to expel him from the party. But there was nothing that could stop Krishna Singh's rise in politics. The tall hefty Sikh who is

Mala Devi: The Congress(I)'s "Clean" Candidate

Mala Devi has suddenly become a much-talked about woman in Bihar. Not because she allegedly runs a few *bhattas* of illicit country liquor, has two warrants of arrest against her and is wanted by the excise department but because she has been given the Congress(I) ticket for the Assembly elections: one of the "new and clean" faces that the party is bringing in. Even senior Congress(I) leaders were surprised how someone like her could have been given the nod in the midst of "operation cleanup." Some protested and it was hoped her name would finally be struck out but Mala Devi, known affectionately as Malo Devi by men around her, stuck on and filed her nomination papers at the Patna collectorate on 6 February.

She could have been taken into custody that day. Excise officials were watching her from their office right beside the collectorate but they did not dare. How could they? As one senior excise official put it, "Do I stake my job by arresting someone who has been given a ticket by the chief minister?" So Malo Devi roams around freely on the campaign trail today, promising "cleanliness and efficiency," with all the respectability of a Congress(I) candidate around her.

Malo Devi's activities are an open secret. The *bhattas* that she runs single-handed, are famous in and around Fatwah, a highway township 25 kilometres east of Patna. Her job, they say, is to smuggle in industrial alcohol from the West Bengal border and convert it into liquor at her *bhattas*. She has been running this illegal trade successfully for years allegedly with the connivance of the local authorities. Once when an excise inspector by the name of Ghaffar tried to conduct a raid on her establishment, she and her patrons beat him up. Malo Devi herself proudly admits having done so. The police did not



K.M. Kishen

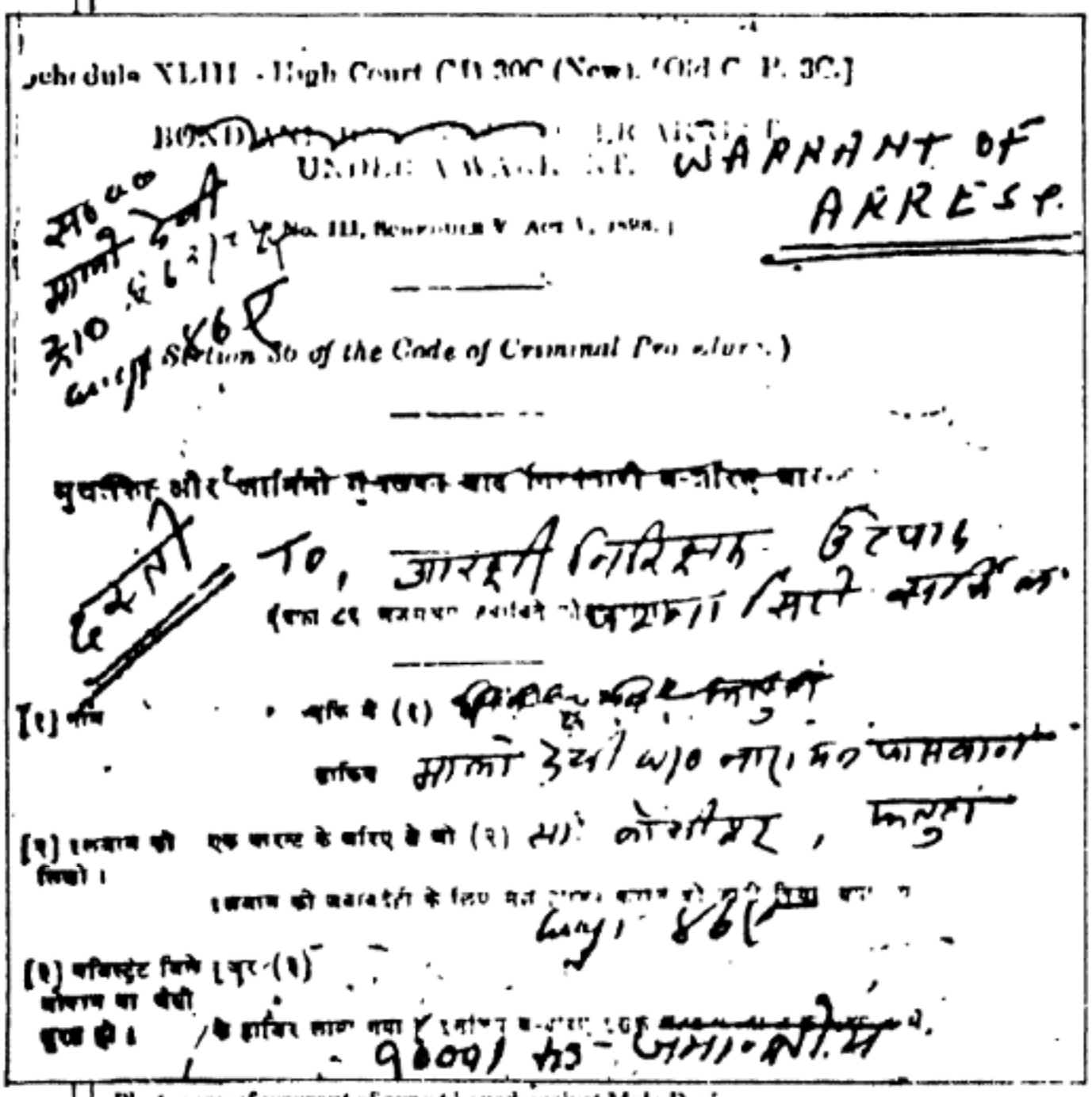
Mala Devi

interfere. According to some Fatwah locals, they are, in addition to being "indebted" to her, also afraid of the muscle-power she has at her command.

"*Galat aarop lagane waale ko aisa hi karna chahiya* (This is the treatment that should be meted out to a man who levels false charges)," she says, sitting inside her dingy Fatwah hutment surrounded by drunken "campaign strategists." It is late in the night and she has just returned from her rounds. "She is an extremely popular woman in the area and very simple too. Don't ask her too many questions," says one of the many men around her, perhaps, afraid that she might speak indiscreetly in her excitement. She has already committed a lapse in telling us that she has received promises of support from "some underground people."

She claims that all her earnings come from the fishing contracts that she has and says the warrants were inspired by people who had become jealous of her. But right outside her house, people talk openly of the "woman of many ways" and cut nasty jokes. In Patna, leaders express shock at how this unlettered, non-political, "uncivil" lady got herself a ticket.

Sankarshan Thakur



Schedule XLIII - [High Court Cr. P. C. 30C (New) / Old Cr. P. C. 30.]

BOND / UNDER SECTION ... WARRANT OF ARREST.

[See Form No. III, Rule ... Act V, 1898.]

(See Section 80 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.)

To, ... Constable

(Name and designation of police officer or other person to whom the warrant is directed.)

[1] Whereas ... has been charged before me (1) ... and has failed to appear when required and whereas it is probable that he will abscond;

[2] You are hereby commanded to arrest the said ... and to bring him before me (2) ... to answer the said charge [or to give security for his appearance before me for the purpose of answering the said charge].

[3] You are hereby directed to cause the said ... to be detained in custody until he shall be delivered by due course of law.

Dated this ... day of ... 19...

Photocopy of warrant of arrest issued against Mala Devi

always surrounded by armed bodyguards is now contesting elections from Arwal once again, even though the Congress(I) has "disowned" him. His musclemen maintain that their leader will always be an asset to the ruling party. His campaign headquarters in Patna is full of posters depicting Rajiv Gandhi as his leader.

Birendra Singh Mohabia is another MLA with a gory track record. His main platform in politics is terror. When he goes out campaigning, he openly proclaims that if the people want to live in peace they must send him to the Assembly. "If I remain here, your lives and properties shall never be safe," he said. Some time ago, just to give more teeth to his threats, Mohabia bought a mad elephant from the cattle fair in Sonepur and let it run amuck whenever he pleased.

Most of these lawless elements, even though they are independents, enjoy the patronage and protection of the powers that be. The relationship works smoothly, to the benefit of both sides. The birth of the criminal elements in the state's body politic has taken place in the lap of the feudal set-up with its deep-rooted caste rivalries and economic backwardness. It was usual for most landlords and *zamindars* to keep packs of *lathaits* (those who wielded the *lathis*) and criminals at their beck and call, to terrorise the poor tenants and extort money from them. Though officially *zamindari* is no more, the same ethos still pervades the countryside of Bihar. The economic



Sagir Ahmed

advancement of the backwards and the social awareness among the harijans has only aggravated the tensions in the rural areas of Bihar. Since it was, by and large, the upper castes which ruled the roast in government and politics, the oppressors got away with the worst of crimes, whether it was rape or plunder The politicians who depended on them for capturing booths during the elections or keeping the wrong castes at a safe distance were only obliged to bail them out when they got on the wrong side of the law. The politician-gangster nexus in Bihar has come to be the rule rather than an exception.

Even today the name of Kamdeo Singh, the bhumihar gang leader of Begusarai, comes up every time one talks about the relationship between crime and politics. The top leaders of Bihar, right from the days of "Bihar Kesari" Sri Krishna Sinha, made it their business to pay court to the so-called "Robin Hood of Begusarai," specially those belonging to Singh's caste. Even Dr Jagannath Mishra thought it discreet to call on the family members of the dead gangster (Kamdeo was killed in an encounter in 1980) before starting his election campaign.

Soon it was not a mere nexus between politicians and gangsters, both working in tandem. Came a time when gangsters themselves got into politics, fought elections and became MLAs, even ministers. Both crime and politics pursued the same goal: power. And, at one point, merged.

Compared to Bihar, the neighbouring Uttar Pradesh may seem almost a haven of peace. But only comparatively speaking. The crime-politics nexus is as much a reality in UP as in Bihar, except that the terror here is not so open, so naked. The various ministries in the last decade-and-a-half have had men with criminal pasts. Smugglers, drug-runners, patrons of dacoits, hijackers, murderers, you name it. No less than nine NSA detainees are contesting the Assembly polls.

It is in Uttar Pradesh that the



Illegal country-made firearms seized by the Bihar police

Rajiv Gandhi axe is said to have fallen the heaviest on men with shady records. Yet the list of Congress(I) candidates bristles with nearly three dozen people who have been or are involved in all manner of nefarious activities. Perhaps, the most glaring case is that of Shiv Nath Singh Kushwaha, an MLA from Ghatampur in Kanpur district and minister of state in the present government. Apart from being involved in the sugarcane scandal which attracted the attention of the Lokayukta, Kushwaha is alleged to be the patron of a ruthless gang that has struck terror in Ghatampur. One of his nephews, is today an NSA detainee, and another is said to have forcibly wangled a profitable sugarcane contract. While the UP tickets were being discussed in Delhi, Aashkaran Sankhwar, the Congress(I) MP from Ghatampur, had written to the Prime Minister about Kushwaha's misdeeds and pleaded with him not to give the ticket to the man. But he got it. His political godfathers are all over the place, from Lucknow to Delhi. Even the Lokayukta's report against him, in the beginning of 1984, did not deter his patrons.

Gulab Singh, who ironically became the first Congress(I) winner in the present elections (unopposed from Chakrata), had a thriving poppy farm near Dehradun. When this was detected, the then chief minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh bundled him out of the ministry. The moment V.P. Singh resigned, Gulab Singh bounced back into the ministry. Sripati Mishra obviously had different standards for his colleagues. What new considerations prompted the ticket distributors this time in spite of the cleanliness drive is not known.

Gulab Singh and Kushwaha are not the only jarring names in the "clean list" from Uttar Pradesh. Rajdhar Mishra, the Congress(I) candidate from Karvi in Banda, has a record too. Devendra Pandey, the well-known hijacker, was selected while his co-hijacker Bhola Pandey was guillotined for having a bad image. Markande Chand, the ruling party nominee from Gorakhpur, is said to have snatched the revolver of a police officer sometime ago, and has been charged for that offence. The record of Umeshwar Pratap Singh, the party candidate from Karnailganj in Gonda, is at best dubious. At one time he was charged in a murder case, and though he was acquitted, there are complaints from prominent people in his constituency that he was involved in the rape of a harijan woman.

Prominent people in the party have also been patronising a dreaded gangster like Harishankar Tewari of Gorakhpur, an NSA detainee who is contesting the elections from jail as an independent. In his gang wars with Birendra Pratap Shahi, his rival in east UP, more than a hundred people have died during the past year. Gorakhpur is something like Bihar's Dhanbad, a honeycomb of criminals and dacoits. Interestingly, the Congress(I) candidate now opposing Tewari had himself been expelled from the Congress(I) during the Lok Sabha elections for supporting Tewari. The man, Bhringunath Chaturvedi, was perhaps considered the best bet against Tewari.



Suryadeo Singh



Sardar Krishna Singh

The opposition parties are of course not far behind in setting up men with tarnished records to fight the elections. Laturi Singh, a former Congress(I) MLA, now adopted by the DMKP (Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party) was at one time facing murder charges. Anwar Mohammed Khan, also of the DMKP, and facing similar charges, is in the fray from Kayamganj in Farukhabad. The Janata Party has fielded, in Jaunpur, a man who was involved in the sensational theft at Varanasi's Vishwanath temple. The CPI can boast of having set up at least two men who have similar records.

But all these are perhaps just small fry compared to the great dons of politics under whose arms they thrive. Far more perverse and damnable are the powerful pillars of society, the bosses in high places who get away with the worst of crimes, the ones who use the petty criminals for their own ends and then discard them to keep up their own veneer of cleanliness and incorruptibility. While they thrive, the charade of cleanliness in politics can only remain a mockery.

Sankarshan Thakur, Patna and Lucknow



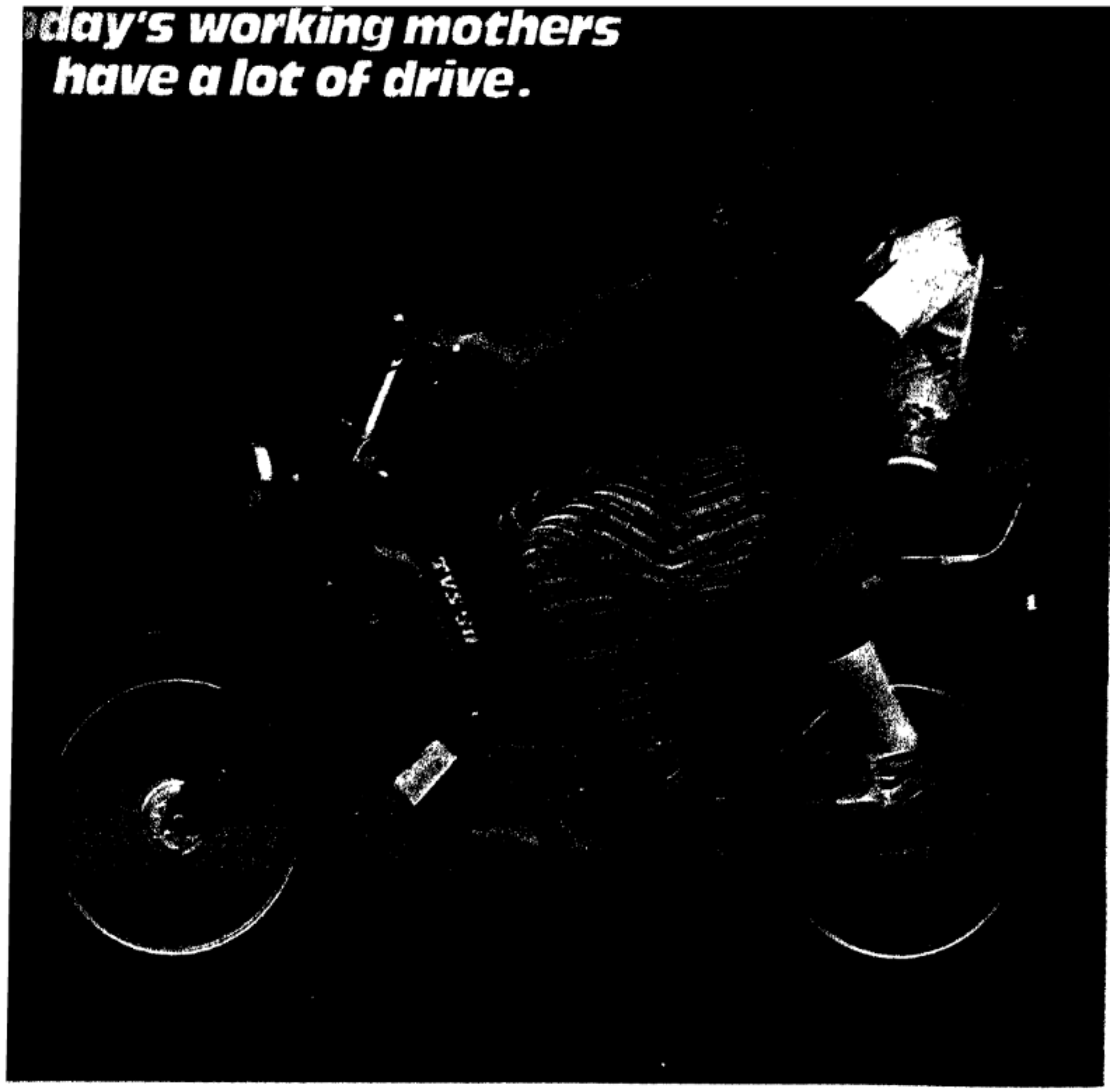
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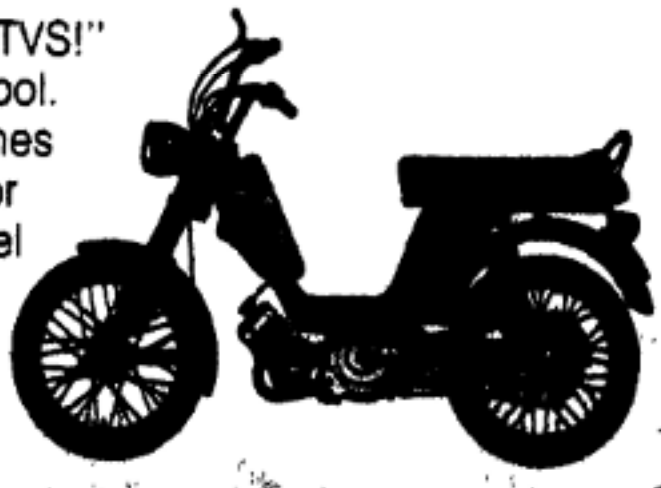
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Crime and Politics

In Bombay the criminal-politician nexus is well-entrenched

The new Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi talks convincingly of bringing in cleanliness into the administration. He even told a police meet in Jaipur recently that "from now on there will be no interference in the working of the police, so there will be no excuses." But if anyone tries to clean up the mess caused by the biggest name in Bombay's underworld, Varadarajan, he would probably meet his Waterloo in the creeks of Dhravi or Matunga. Varadarajan, a Tamilian from the Mudaliar community controls dock thefts, bootlegging, *matka* and has at least some of the MPs of Tamil Nadu in his pocket. For instance, over a year ago, when he was to be detained under COFEPOSA for smuggling on the Konkan coast, it was reportedly the home secretary of Maharashtra Mr B.D. Chowgule himself who turned down the demand for his detention. Even the customs officials were upset about this.

Nearly three years ago, a new deputy commissioner Y.C. Pawar took charge of the Matunga police station. Since Pawar would not kowtow to him, Varadarajan tried his best to get him transferred. When he failed he brought pressure from three MPs of Tamil Nadu, one each from the Congress(I), the AIADMK and the DMK. Through these MPs he allegedly got the AICC(I) general secretary K. Moopanar to speak to Maharashtra chief minister Mr Vasantdada Patil about it and got Mr Venkatasubbaiah, the former union minister of state for home, to discuss the transfer with the director-general of police, Maharashtra, Mr K.P. Medhekar. Perhaps, this is the only case where Varadarajan has not had his way. But he has not spared Mr Pawar: he has tried to break him psychologically and physically. His gang has filed four criminal cases against Mr Pawar in the magistrate's court and no less a criminal lawyer than Mr Ram Jethmalani has been engaged for this purpose. The case has been dragging on for two years and Mr Pawar has had to appear nearly a hundred times in court wasting nearly three hours every time. This way the police officer is kept engaged in the court and subjected to humiliation and stress. Pawar, according to one source, has stopped all the illegal activities of Varadarajan in his "domain" that stretches from Matunga to Dharavi and Sion. Antop Hill at Wadala is the hub of his empire. Pawar, a police officer brought to Bombay nearly three years ago from the mofussil area is probably one of the few persons that Varadarajan has been unable to purchase. His trouble with Varadarajan, it is said, started when while travelling in his official car he gave chase to a vehicle carrying liquor. The vehicle would not stop and on the contrary the vehicle driver and his accomplices dashed against his car and even threw stones at it. Pawar finally caught them, and the next day he hauled up the owner of the vehicle, Thomas Kurien alias Khaja, beat him up and humiliated him in public. On that day the move to oust Pawar began with a vengeance. Khaja owns 20 cars which he uses for transporting illicit liquor and now this lucrative trade has been stopped.

Khaja and his gang members made a complaint against Pawar to the magistrate but the complaint was turned down on the grounds that sanction was not given by the government under the Bombay Police Act. They then went in appeal to the Bombay High Court which said there should be a preliminary enquiry by the police. The judges made remarks that Pawar had acted in a high-handed manner and it is very reliably learnt that the government pleader had tried to suggest to the police commissioner that Pawar be transferred. The police commissioner, however, did not yield.

Another official who is now under pressure due to the political clout wielded by the underworld is G.R. Khairnar (43), ward officer of 'G' North ward. There are 42 unauthorised places of worship on pavements between Prabhadevi and Sion, an area of 10.9 sq km. It is estimated that in the whole of Bombay there could be 450 such unauthorised places of worship. It is mostly the underworld characters who are behind these places. They are not only a means of earning money from gullible devotees (anywhere between Rs 100 to Rs 500 daily) but is a cover for drug peddling, prostitution and gambling. In the second week of February, Khairnar had demolished some of the unauthorised places of worship in the Mahim area. There was a hue and cry on the first day until the citizens realised that these were really dens of anti-social elements.

Khairnar had hit at the lucrative trade of a number of underworld dons, believed to be underlings of Varadarajan. They even called for a *bandh* in the area the following day but it was a partial success. Among those who protested against the demolition was said to be the chief minister Mr Vasantdada Patil's brother-in-law Mama Phalke. The Phalkes, who are brothers of ex-MP Shalinitai Patil, have their base in Mahim. According to reports, Mama Phalke had told the inspector of the police station there that he had got the permission of the chief minister to rebuild the temples that were demolished. Accordingly, his people began reconstructing the temples but they were demolished again. Around this time there was a call from the Mantralaya to the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) enquiring about the goings-on. While the BMC spokesman refused to say what the call was about, stories soon spread that Varadarajan had seen the chief minister and that Khairnar would be transferred. A citizens' committee headed by Mr Nilakant Khadilkar, editor of *Navakal* backed Khairnar and so did every man in the municipal corporation. Khairnar, however, is still there, but he has been asked to stop demolitions of all illegal places of worship.

It is understood that while the temples were being demolished, a known flunkey of Varadarajan came and requested the corporation employees that the demolitions be stopped but they did not pay heed to him. Varadarajan then appeared on the scene and it was made known that he would be seeing the chief minister. Khairnar has had several encounters with Varadarajan's men. Once they came and occupied all the chairs in his office. Khairnar escaped by locking himself in his room. Police help came after more than half an hour though everyone knew what was happening. The same story was repeated during a raid on Antop Hill where a former collector of Bombay was personally supervising the demolitions. The collector was abused by the

members of the Varadarajan gang and had to bear it silently. In fact, some police officers themselves have reportedly told Khairnar that he should "adjust" himself with Varadarajan. In 1978, Khairnar was transferred on a request from a Janata legislator and orders from Sharad Pawar who was then the chief minister.

Another underworld name is that of Kheshav Bhosale who has been involved in the Raj Bhavan smuggling case and innumerable other rackets. He is presently detained under COFEPOSA but is contesting as an independent candidate from an Assembly constituency in Raigad district. Bhosale has asked for parole and so powerful is he even now, that the government did not bother to oppose it when the application came up for hearing on 19 February. The police had sent their representatives to court but the judge said that they had no *locus standi*. The police had to then ask the government to send someone to oppose the parole order on 20 February. Bhosale has had his way in everything until now. A dismissed constable, he joined the Congress(I) and had even contested, unsuccessfully, the municipal elections some years ago. He was close to Mr Ramrao Adik, the former deputy chief minister and Mr Jambuwantrao Dhote. When he was caught for the Raj Bhavan smuggling case, he was found hiding in the home of a minister owing allegiance to Mr Dhote and Mr Adik.

Bhosale's links with the Mantralaya are well-known. When the police refused to give him a licence for a hotel, the minister of state for home, Mr Vilasrao Deshmukh, personally overruled the police objections. In fact, Mr Deshmukh has overruled all objections the police have put up to guest houses in the Colaba area, which are misused for nefarious activities.

How do people like Varadarajan destroy the quality of life of the people and a city? Describing Varadarajan, a senior police official said that if the chief minister runs the government and the police commissioner is in charge of law and order, then Varadarajan is in charge of all the counterforces to these two institutions. He cannot operate unless he gets the cooperation of these two institutions: the government and the police. In fact, he could not stay out of jail for a single day if he did not have their backing. Money is of no consequence to him. He has a large insatiable ego. He gives money in plenty and is even believed to have financed the wedding of the daughter of a police official. He plays on the religious susceptibilities of the people and has direct contact with politicians. His activities which range from illicit liquor, drug peddling, *matka*, gambling and prostitution affect the lives and well-being of the people both young and old. It saps their will, energy and morale.

If one wants to improve the quality of life in Bombay, one will have to tackle Varadarajan and his empire politically. The police alone will not be able to stop the activities of the dons of Bombay's underworld. Among the first people to wait on the home of a candidate who has got a ticket to contest an election—whether Lok Sabha, Assembly or municipal corporation—is the underworld "dada" or his flunkey who may have a more "respectable" image. The message is simple: "We are always at your service should you need us." Political parties, particularly the Congress(I), have no cadre of their own and so they take the



Sandeep Shankar

Haji Mastan in the docks at Bombay where he once grew up as a labourer

"services" of the vast hordes of unemployed on the payrolls of the underworld "dadas" for pasting posters, putting up banners, shouting slogans, packing *morchas* and *padayatras* and then as election day nears, keeping a track of those on the voting lists who are either out of town or unlikely to vote and then arrange for bogus voting on the day of actual voting. It is all done so professionally that it is difficult to pinpoint bogus voting. Slum-lords, because of boothwise counting, are in a position to terrorise slumdwellers who do not vote as they are told. So, the candidate is beholden to the underworld "dada" from the day he gets a ticket. And if he wins the election, it is an endless process of *quid pro quo*. That is where the political clout comes in.

Mr Nilakant Khadilkar, editor of *Navakal*, a Marathi daily and probably better known as the father of the chess queen Rohini Khadilkar, said, "The present election system requires a candidate to have a minimum of Rs 25 lakhs. Where is this going to come from except from capitalists and the underworld? The present political parties also do not have a clear ideology or cadre to work for them and so they are forced to depend on the underworld. I have watched Murli Deora's election from South Bombay and saw this in action. All propaganda becomes easy when you make friends with the underworld."

In Bombay, where the underworld wields political clout in proportion to his capacity to terrorise and kill, though Haji Mastan Mirza is one of the best known names in the city's underworld, his colleagues and those who know him say he cannot be called an underworld person. He was only a big-time smuggler and today he commands the "respects" of the underworld because he is the oldest surviving member of the fraternity. Mastan also worked for the Galadaharis. The real underworld characters who wield clout are people like Varadarajan of Matunga and his associates, Darshan "Tilu" Singh and Khaja.

Varadarajan and Yusuf Patel, who is primarily a shrewd businessman, have been responsible for the transfer of several honest policemen, municipal engineers, municipal ward officers who did not do what they said or who exposed them. Yusuf Patel, it is alleged, has been responsible for wrecking the career of a brilliant IAS officer Arun Bhatia who was collector of Bombay. Finally even the honest municipal commissioner D.M. Sukhtankar had to leave overnight for insisting on demolishing eight floors built illegally by Patel in a building at Warden Road. He also insisted on giving notices to buildings like Zia Cooperative Housing Society, Om Chambers, Arihant and Tirupati.



Yusuf Patel

Arun Bhatia who was collector of Bombay in 1983-84 had exposed construction irregularities in four properties belonging to Yusuf Patel. The illegal increase in the use of area totalled 9,195 sq yards which would mean a profit of crores of rupees for Patel and his brothers who own the property. As both the corporation headed by the municipal commissioner Sukhtankar and the anti-corruption bureau soft-pedalled on the issue, Bhatia sought the help of the press to expose what seemed likely to be pushed under a carpet of silence. The result was that Bhatia was transferred after less than a year in office as collector. In fact, he was reverted to a lower designation in the Mantralaya home department. Strangely enough, only in February 1985, after Mr Rajiv Gandhi was Prime Minister for nearly four months with his "accent" on clean government, did the state government sanction the prosecution of Mr P.D. Haval, superintendent of the Bombay city survey and land records department of the collectorate of Bombay and two of his staff members "for FSI (Floor Space Index) malpractices in conspiracy with Yusuf Patel and other builders." However, prosecution has yet to be launched against Yusuf Patel and his associates.

Meanwhile, the then municipal commissioner who was accused by Bhatia of non-cooperation himself became a victim of the FSI scandal when he insisted on demolishing eight floors built off Warden Road. About 2,737 sq. metres of the 36-storeyed building had to be demolished. Mr Sukhtankar would not play the mantralaya's game quietly, so he was transferred back to the Mantralaya overnight. The new administrator in his place stayed the demolition in December 1984.

Another instance of the nexus between the mantralaya and the underworld which gives the latter political leverage, is the one involving the minister for transport and jails, Prof. S.M. Aseer, a former MPCC(I) president. Incidentally, both Prof. Aseer and Mr Vilasrao Deshmukh have got tickets to contest the coming Assembly elections. In August last year, two allegedly notorious criminals, Babu Resham and Ramakant Naik, who were sentenced to life imprisonment, were let out on parole by the minister Prof. Aseer. This would not have come to light had not two petitioners, Mr J.V. Shetty and Mr S.K. Shetty, filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court asking for details regarding the conditions under which parole was granted. These two criminals and a third person, Arun Gawli, who were involved in the Parasnath murder case were given bail while their appeal against the life sentence was pending in the Bombay High Court. The government itself got this bail order cancelled. But during that period they had murdered Sridhar Shetty, relative of the petitioners. Justices S.P. Kurudkar and N.M. Qazi charged Prof. Aseer with gross contempt of the High Court as he passed parole orders despite an order to the contrary of the Bombay High Court. The government quietly withdrew the parole permission.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

'Politics Mein Sab Chor Hain'

Haji Mastan told Dhiren Bhagat

Beyond Bhiwandi lies Kalyan. It is a small town in Thana district whose inhabitants operate powerlooms, grow watermelons and rice. One-fifth of them are Muslims, another fifth Dalits. Earlier this year, when Haji Mastan Mirza announced his intention of opening the Dalit Mussalman Mahasangh office in Kalyan—an illegal pink-walled shed no more than eight feet by fifteen, clumsily erected overnight—the deputy commissioner had issued an order prohibiting him from entering the town for 21 days.

On 19 February, Mastanbhai finally entered Kalyan. I was with him in his ramshackle 1960 model Fiat. It was dark, a little before midnight. The driver didn't know his way, and anyway Mastanbhai had thoroughly rattled the poor man with his sharp backseat supervision *(light bandh: dekh ke nahin chalta;* etc.). Then, suddenly the crowd began surrounding us, began crushing the doors. Some sat on the bonnet, others danced in front of the car slowing us to a crawl.

More than a thousand shouting figures dragged the vehicle through Kalyan's smelly gullies, finally taking us to the *chowk* where the blue-and-white pandal stood. (*"Neela Daliton ka rang hai, safed hamara,"* I later heard Mastan explain to an Urdu journalist from Delhi.) *"Safed hamara?"* the journalist asked, incredulous. *"Haan,"* came the ingenious reply. *"Mussalman ko sirf aman chahiye."*

I saw only one bearded face that night. No *kurtas*, not even the shiny blue and violet Bhindi Bazaar specials, no *pajamas*, no *tehmats*. Only shirts and trousers and the occasional dark jacket. No *sherwanis*. I suspect that every Muslim boy in Kalyan had turned up that night. They were cheering lustily. After all, during the riots last May, how many rich Muslims had bothered to visit Bhiwandi distributing medicines, or guns?

The speakers were angry and the crowd wanted them to be angry. *"Ham Hindustani hain,"* a short dark speaker yelled into the microphones. *"Ham Hindustani hain aur ham Hindustan lekar hi rahenge. Hamen Pakistan nahin chahiye."* Applause. *"Kyaa ham bewakoof hain ki apna hi banaya hua Taj Mahal ham chod ke kahin aur chale jaayen?"* Delirious applause.

In contrast, Mastan was cool. No shouting, no noise. In the manner of a jocular compere he sang out *shers* and *latifas*. If Khushwant Singh ever campaigned for the Assembly elections, I imagine his speeches would be quite like Mastan's; the *shers* would be better, the *latifas* just as crude.

"Ham aapko ek sher sunainge," began Mastan.

"Jab bhi gulshan ko khoon ki zaroorat padi
Sab se pehle Musalmaanon ki gardan kati
Phir bhi kehte hain yeh eh-le-chaman
Yeh chaman hamara hai, tumhara nahin."

What do you expect? It went down like a shot.

"Chalo, ek aur sher sunainge," said Mastan.

Dushmano ne to dushmani kee hai
In puleeswaalon ne bhi kyaa kami kee hai?"

Then there was no holding him back.

"Ham aapko ek aur sher sunainge ab." That was greeted with laughter.

"Bhes badla, kyaa huaa
Dil ko badalna chahiye
Dalit aur Mussalmaanon ko takraane ke liye
Gaay ka kaleja chahiye."



Haji Mastan Mirza.

Mastan is particularly proud of this *sher*. One of his boys in Aurangabad, he claims, is in jail because of it. As he begins the last line he holds his palms apart as if he were holding a football: the young boys lap it up.

"Ek aur sher sunainge ham." Loud laughter. It is his *takiya kalaam*. He has hit the right note. He will now pile on *sher* upon *sher:* excess is the key.

"Sarfaroshi ki tamanna
Dalit aur Mussalmaanon men hai
Dekhna hai zor kitna
Baazu-e-Patil men hai."

Mastan always dresses in white, white or cream. For the meeting in Kalyan he wore a cream terylene Jodhpuri with matching trousers. The next day for the hunger strike at the Nagpada police station, he was wearing a loose white terycot shirt. He looks like a very clean peon. He has few obvious extravagances. The State Express cigarettes he chainsmokes remind you of his affluence. In his Mohammed Ali Road office too, there is a curious mixture of new technology and old ways: the dial of the black Bombay Telephones receiver is locked to prevent unauthorised calls. But when Mastanbhai wishes to speak to someone, a sidekick flicks the buttons on a remote control job and the call goes through the shiny black receiver.

Mastan speaks in a Bombay dialect of Hindustani (*khallas* meaning "finished" is a favourite word). He is clueless when it comes to dates and does even keep track of the precise number of candidates he is fielding in the elections. (When I asked him, he said 23, later 24. In Kalyan, I heard a party worker being told 20. Someone told the press it was 50. *"Woh bhi theek hai,"* Mastan said to him gently, *"Ham support to bohat ko kar rahen hain."*) He frequently forgets names. But for all that, there is a way in which he is always alert. He misses nothing. His dark sticklike frame is constantly animated, his glazed bulbous eyes are always watching. One of his men had warned me that he was a man of few words and that he would soon dry up when I began the interview. They were wrong. He was loquacious, voluble and spoke excitedly for an hour-and-a-half.

Q: *Let us start with your ancestors...*

A: I never saw my grandparents, not even my father. I was born here in Maharashtra, in poverty in a *jhonpda*.

Q: Who were your ancestors?

A: They were businessmen from the south. From Tamil Nadu. Ramnath.

Q: When did your family turn Muslim?

A: We have been Muslims from before. *Sunni Mussalman ka yahi matlab hai, sun kar iman liya.* Eighteen people came to India, Mughals or whatever: today there are 20 crore Muslims in India.

Q: When did your family first hear of the Paigamber?

A: I don't know, I don't remember.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A: Crawford Market.

Q: People say you grew up in a packing case...

A: No, no. Not a packing case. We lived in a *jhopadpatti*. Musafirkhana, Saboo Siddique Road.

Q: When did you start work?

A: From my childhood I have been a *mazdoor*.

Q: What was your age at that time: five or six?

A: Haan. *Badmaash tha main.* I would run about, not attend school, for 15 days at a time I would not attend school. It was a municipal school: Fatima Bai School, near Crawford Market.

Q: What jobs did you do?

A: I sold tea, sold *chikki*, sold magazines in a cinema, sold liquor, everything. Everything a man should do I did. What an animal should do I never did.

Q: Then you became a coolie...

A: *Coolie*. That's what I was all along, a *coolie*. Everything I have said to you, all these jobs, they were *coolie* jobs. Then, from the age of 12, I worked in the docks. After that I had a cycle shop, a *beedi* shop. That was my idea all along, that I should own something. I used to see everyone's cars. I had to come to Mahim on a cycle. I wanted to travel in a car.

Q: When did you buy your first car?

A: I have never bought a car.

Q: But what about the Fiat we were travelling in?

A: That too is not mine (*laughs*).

Q: When did you first travel in a car?

A: I was about 30 then. I was still a *coolie*.

Q: What do you dream of at night?

A: Only frightening dreams. *Shaitaan aaya, bhoot aaya (laughs).* What passes through the brain all day, that is what one sees at night. I have only frightening dreams.

Q: When did you learn to read and write?

A: During the Emergency, when I was in jail. I learnt Hindi then.

Q: Why Hindi? Why not Urdu? Was it because it is the national language?

A: No, no, no. Hindi was easier to learn, that is all. I was alone in the cell. I had no teacher. I asked for some books by which one may teach oneself. A, B, C, D, *bhi pada hamne, phir chod diya.* If I had the time I would have learnt Urdu as well.



In this world everyone is corrupt, has to be corrupt: the businessmen, the poor, the government. If they did not have to do *badmaashi, phir Allah ne Jannat aur Jahannum kyon banaaya?*

Q: When did you decide to enter politics?

A: I have always been in politics. I have always done political work in my area. *Jahan baat chalti thi, madad karta tha.*

Q: Did you do union work?

A: No, but when (Maharashtra CM) Vasantdada put me in jail after Bhiwandi, I distributed medicines to those who had been beaten, who had been burnt, distributing clothes, medicines, *unke phursaane haal poochte the ham.* The government did not like this, they caught me and put me in jail under NSA for 25 days, without any proof...

Q: Which jail were you in?

A: Thana jail.

Q: What is it like in jail?

A; *Bhai, jail to jail hi hai.* There were all of us in jail, the Shiv Sena people, ourselves. We used to talk to them. Caste, community, one forgets all this in jail. *Yeh baaten bhar ki hain.* This chap Jai Gurudev, he was with me in jail once in Agra. We got on famously. There was no question of *jaat*, I used to give him tea. I, a Muslim. He would drink tea made by me.

Q: What else do you recollect of your stint in jail?

A: What memories does one have of jail? In jail, I was considered a particularly dangerous character. They would take me in alone, with 20 or 25 guards around me. *Uspe ek sher bolta hoon main:*

Kaamp rahi hai...(pause)
Kaamp rahi hai...(long pause)
Baad men batayenge.

Q: You were talking about why you entered political life...

A: Yes. I said to myself, why be afraid of them? If they can put us in jail when we are innocent we might as well do something and then go to jail. Why be afraid of them? They are putting us in jail anyway.

Q: How many times have you gone to jail?

A: Two, three, four times.

Q: When was the first time you went to jail?

A: In 1964, when the Emergency was on.

Q: Which Emergency?

A: Indira Gandhi's Emergency. Just before that.

Q: You mean the 1975 Emergency. What happened?

A: There was this director of revenue intelligence. He took me in and asked me: 'What are you up to?' I said: 'What shall I say?' He said you did such and such (thing). I said, yes I have done it. But when he took the pen and asked me to sign the statement, I said, 'What are you doing?' I denied it all. I said: 'I don't know what you are talking about.' He said: 'I won't leave you.' *Maine kaha mat chodna. Aur kyaa karoge tum?* What other power have you got? I left his office, found out about a girl he used to visit, got her to implicate him. She went and told him about it. He had me arrested. For nine months I was under arrest. Ram Jethmalani tried to get me bail, no luck. I even hired Kumaramangalam, had to go to the High Court. Finally, I got out on Rs 20 lakhs bail. It was the highest bail till then. *Phir main choot gaya us case men.* Till today nothing has been proven against me in a court. But while the case was on the direc-

Mastan: The Politician



Haji Mastan — Sondeep Shankar

The government has thrown a spanner in Haji Mastan Mirza's election machinery. The news that Rs 1.5 crores has been received by Mastan from Saudi Arabia has caught his followers by surprise. The general secretary of the Dalit Muslim Suraksha Mahasangh (DMSM), the young Syed Hamid said, "This is a conspiracy to malign us. Our money is deposited in our account at the Moreland Road branch of the Memon Cooperative Bank. The account is in the name of the Mahasangh and it is operated by me and two other secretaries. We have about Rs 10,000 which has been collected from membership fees (Rs 14 a year). You can look into our accounts." Hamid sees this as the government's "first step to try and crush us."

For the Lok Sabha elections, the Mahasangh had two candidates. One of them, Sceraj Mirza, a former journalist, polled the highest votes in the Nagpada and Chinchpokli constituencies, in fact, higher than Dr Datta Samant and the Congress(I)-supported candidate Mrs Rosa Deshpande. Their other candidate Khalil Zaheed, editor of the controversial *Akbar-e-Alam* also polled around 70,000 votes in Aurangabad. They claim they were responsible for the defeat of the Congress(I) candidate, a former minister of state, Mr Abdul Azeem. Said Hamid, "We can at least throw out the Congress(I) wherever we have our candidates. So this is the reason they want to crush us. This is only the first step."

However, Hamid could speak only for the Mahasangh. He could not say whether Mastan had received this money personally. He emphasised that it had not come to the party. According to the government, the National Commercial Bank of Jeddah purchased Indian currency worth Rs 1.5 crores from an Indian Bank and this amount was allegedly earmarked for the election campaign of Haji Mastan's party. If such money has come, the office-bearers of the Mahasangh have obviously not been taken into confidence. Hamid claims that "we have no money even for posters and propaganda material on the scale that is needed." He added that "it is obvious that the government is scared of our agitation, protests and resistance to oppression." He explained that hitherto there were no organisations to voice the oppression of the minorities and said that the Mahasangh for the first time was doing this. "We are aggressive in our democratic, progressive actions," he said.

That the government is apprehensive about the nuisance value of Mastan's entry into the election fray is obvious in the arrest of the candidates and supporters of the Dalit Muslim Suraksha Mahasangh. The joint president of the Mahasangh, Prof. Jogendra Kawada, was detained under the National Security Act on 22 February at ten in the night when he was scheduled to address a meeting of the party's candidate. Syed Dawood, at Kannad *tehsil* near Aurangabad. Jogendra, a young fiery Dalit leader and professor in Ambedkar college, Nagpur, heads his self-styled Dalit Liberation Army and has joined hands with Haji Mastan Mirza to form an organisation for the uplift of the minorities and the scheduled castes. The Mahasangh has fielded six candidates in Bombay and seven in the rest of Maharashtra while they are supporting five candidates of the Muslim League in Bombay and nine in the rest of Maharashtra. One of their candidates, Sarfraz Arsu from Nagpada has been on indefinite fast since 21 February, to protest against the harassment of the party's candidates. Among those arrested was the Bhiwandi candidate, Isa Azim, editor of the *Bhiwandi News* which was responsible for inciting Muslims. This had sparked off the riots in May 1984. Isa has since been released. The other candidates are mostly "businessmen" and one is a builder. One of them, Arif Ahmed, is an ex-councillor and office bearer of the Janata Party which he has since quit.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

tor began publicity against me. *Government ne mujhe mashoor kiya.*

Q: There is all this talk of clean government these days. What do you make of it?

A: All this is (only) talk. What can Rajiv do? A man spends Rs 30 lakhs to get elected, buys one-and-a-half lakh votes at Rs 19 a vote, what will he do? He will have to convert it to Rs 300 lakhs. *Paagal kutte ne to nahin kaata ki siyaasat men apna paisa kho daale. Yeh haqeeqat hai.* This is the reality. A man has got to provide for his children, for his grandchildren. *Paagal to nahin, paise lagga doon...* There is a system. People don't just get into politics for nothing.

Q: Is there no escape from the system?

A: The system can only begin to get clean when you pay a policeman a minimum (salary) of Rs 2,000 a month. Start him at Rs 2,000 and go up to Rs 5,000. Instead, they start the policeman at Rs 300. At Rs 300 a month, how can a man be honest? You say: *Do bachche bas.* But do you know how much it costs to give a child milk for the month? Rs 150. For two children, Rs 300. And then the policeman has to feed his children, clothe his children, give his wife a sari. *Yahaan to system rakhana chahiye London ka.* Here, after retiring, a man becomes an insect. Worse than an insect. But in London, after a man retires he knows he will be taken care of. Not just for the police, all government servants. *Agar aadmi ka pet bhara ho to woh do rupye maangneke liye nahin jaayega.* Why does a man rob? Why does he do wrong? because his stomach is empty. When he is hungry he will do anything in the world, no matter how terrible. *Kyonki pet men aag lag rahi hai.* When his stomach is full he will say: no I will not do this. But all they say these days is: We will clean up this, we will clean up that, we will remove the bank directors. If you want to clean up, you have to give people what they need. You must understand their difficulties. In our Islam, in the time of *Hazrate Umere Farooq*, the Hazrat would drape a cloth and walk in the city at night, hearing everything: who needs what, who is hungry, who is thirsty? And, before the morning the needy would get what they needed. In this world everyone is corrupt, has to be corrupt: the businessmen, the poor, the government. If they did not have to do *badmaashi, phir Allah ne Jannat aur Jahannum kyon banaaya?*

Q: *Given this reality, do you think Rajiv is capable of really changing anything?*

A: The fact is, he has come under the influence of the RSS. Whatever the RSS says, he does. *Aur RSS inko dubaa dene waali hai, yeh aadhi chaddi waale.*

Q: What proof do you have of this. Why do you say this?

A: We have a candidate, Ameen Khandwni, in BHINDI Bazaar. He used to do things for the Muslims, built a *musafirkhana* for the *hajis.* The Congress party has denied him a ticket, has given it to a Hindu woman. This is the work of the RSS. Then there is Maulana Kachoochi. They didn't give him a ticket because he speaks up. In Aurangabad, Chaturvedi is a good man, he speaks against the RSS, (they) didn't give him a Congress ticket. Those Muslims in the Congress, they are worse than dumb buffaloes, (but) a dumb buffao has its horns.

Q: Some people feel that people like Gandhiji did more for the Muslims than any Muslim has ever done. Do you agree?

A: No, he didn't do much for the Muslims. *Oopar se shanti shanti kehta tha, andar se kranti.*

Q: What sort of kranti?

A: *Maaramari, hallad.,* This is no new thing. Bhiwandi is no new thing. It was not the first *hallad* I have seen. I have seen three such disturbances. I was young when the navy *hallad* took place. We threw stones, chasing the *goras.* The leaders told us: "No one will fire on you." *To ham bohat himmatwalle ban gaye the: ham pe koi goli nahi maarega.* Then they began the firing: *tha, tha, tha.* Many died. I survived. I hid behind a barber's shop, near Crawford Market. Before that too, I had seen riots, Hindus and Muslims killing each other. They used to cut people into pieces and throw them in the gutter. British *karva raha tha. Kabab men haddi.* They had to do it, had to rule here.

Q: Could it not be the case that he who has to rule has to do such things?

A: Yes, absolutely. Definitely. Otherwise you cannot rule.

Q: Since you are so realistic about these matters why then do you blame the government for its role in riots, for its failure to do things? Ho sakta hai yeh bhi maajbooriayaan hain sarkar ki?

A: I agree *sarkar* has to do *badmaashi,* the business*wallahs* too have to do *badmaashi, kaala karna padta hai, peela karna padta hai.*

Q: Then why do you get so upset when they lock you up under NSA?

A: It is their job to punish troublemakers. I agree. You have caught me. But why have you not caught Bal Thackeray? I was troubled. When you have caught me, why have you not caught Thackeray? (If Bal Thackeray had been arrested) Then I would have said: *Barabar kiya hai.* If we do wrong, catch us by all means, but catch them as well: that is justice. Krishna Menon used to say no gun has been manufactured that can



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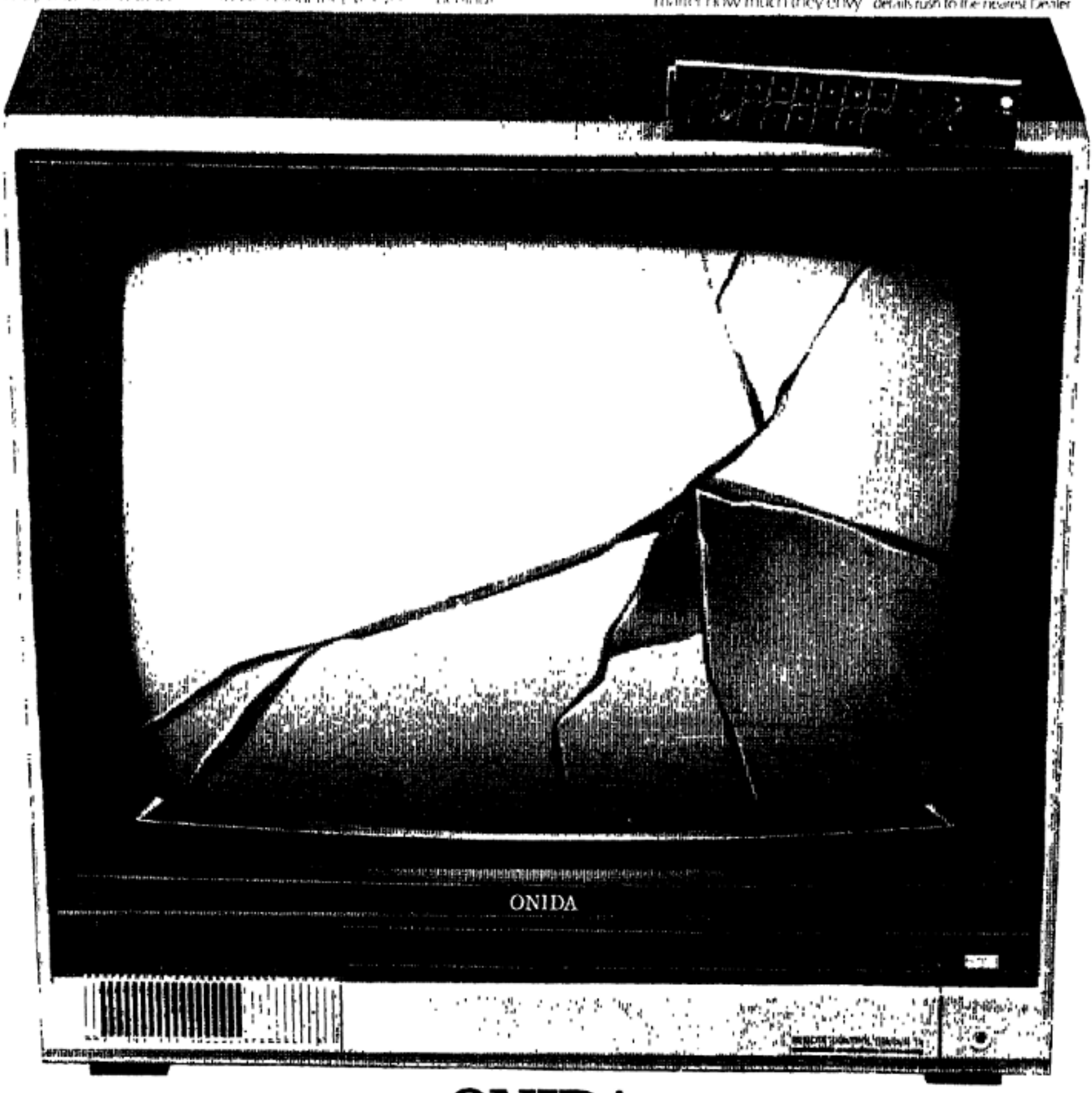
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Avenues O 119 85

fire in only one direction. But our Maharashtra government has manufactured such a gun.

Q: Given your view of the badmaashi *in India, do you think Sanjay Gandhi was a good man?*

A: Yes, he was a very good man, clever, strong. (He) could control people. I liked him a lot. He was the right man for India. He was daring. *Kuch tod bhi deta tha to kehta tha: Dekho, bhai maine tumhara masjid nahin toda, tumhare masjid ke agal ka angaan toda hai.* He was strong enough to say that. He would break houses, temples. I think his mind worked on Amercian lines, not Russian lines. A very good man. He thought, why should the Tatas and the Birlas alone do well? Let everyone come in, let everyone do well. Why should one businessman have a monopoly? Now all his men have been destroyed. Even in Indiraji's time (this happened), but whoever was left has been finished now. Take Kamal Nath. He was a good man.

Q: What do you think of the Muslim leadership in this country?

A: They have all been traitors. Not one Muslim leader has done anything for the Muslims.

Q: What about Syed Shahabuddin? What do you think of him? Have you met him?

A: No, I have not met him. Don't know much about him.

Q: What about Syed Bukhari?

A:(He is) Useless.

Q: What about Antulay?

A: His biggest fault was that he took cheques. Fool. Why did he have to take cheques? .Such an idiot. I don't know how he passed his *barristeri* (law). And then he talks too much. His other big mistake was he left the Congress party. Now he is finished.

Q: What do you think of Dumpy (Akbar Ahmed)?

A: *Dumpy men himmat nahin hai.* I have seen this. He came here, to my home, attended my daughter's wedding. Dumpy (then) made a statement: 'I had gone to Mastanbhai because he had given the Congress so much money.' Why are you afraid to say you had come to my house? If I had gone to a *daku's* house and I was asked about it, I would not say: 'No, I haven't been there.' Dumpy is not strong enough...he won't make a good leader.

Q: What do you think of Rukhsana Sultan?

A: Good woman. I have known her, haven't met her for a while though. She can become a leader, she is a good woman. I had said to her: 'Work for our party.' She turned it down. You see, she is an old Congress supporter. She's a strong woman.

Q: People think of you as a criminal...

A: People call me a *badmaash.* To this day I have never carried a knife in my pocket. Films like *Deewar* are *bakwaas.*

Q: I understand you are acting in a film.

A: Yes, my picture is being made. I am acting as the hero. Like this *Gandhi* film, this will be a film of my story. Ali Raza is writing the story. It will be called *Paatal Ganga. Yehi hai, bhai kismat hoti hai, yeh hota hai, woh hota hai, maramari hoti hai, goondon ko maarna...*



Politics *mein sab chor hain.* Do you think any election can be fought without black money? Of course, the Congress has spent black money. Why don't you call Rajiv Gandhi a criminal? Nothing has been proved against him, nor has anything been proved against me.

Q: But you say you have never carried a knife in your pocket.

A: Yes, it won't be like *Deewar.* Ali Raza has said himself, I was talking to Mastanbhai and he was speaking with his eyes. *Yeh aankhon ka tazaara nazaara vahan batayenge.* Like the *Godfather*, a very good film. I didn't like the second part, but the first part is very good. As long as the Godfather is alive, *tab tak bade maze ki baat hai woh.* There are some very good things in the film: he never tells anyone to kill people. *Par jo aadmi khade hote hain paas men, woh khud samajh jaate hain kyaa hai man men iske.* This is what it is like in real life. Goondas don't yell when they tell their story. They look at their boss, and they understand what he wants. But in *Paatal Ganga* I will also fight.

Q: Have you ever fought in your life?

A: No. But otherwise it will be just a documentary. Cinematic *rakhna hai.*

Q: People have begun to get worried now that criminals like you are entering politics. How do you respond to that charge?

A: Politics *men sab chor hain.* Do you think any election can be fought without black money? Of course the Congress has spent black money. Why don't you call Rajiv a criminal? Nothing has been proved against him, nor has anything been proved against me. And anyway as for the people if they call me something why don't they call Valmiki anything? *Haan wohi Valmiki jisne pothi likhi, Ramayana likhi.* He was a *daku.* Today, people speak of him with respect. *Insaan galti ka putla hai, galti men insaan paida hua hai.* He can change.

Q: What evidence is there that you have changed?

A: I myself am the evidence before you.

Q: Why did you withdraw your nomination for the Lok Sabha from Bombay South? Many people feel you had a deal with Murli Deora and that your political activity was merely a way of cashing in on your popularity among the Muslim youth. That popularity could only get you something with which you could bargain with the Congress in the state.

A: That is not true. I withdrew my nomination because I had fielded two other candidates and I felt I had to campaign for them, in Aurangabad and in Bombay. In both constituencies we defeated the Congress candidate even though we did not win ourselves. Aurangabad is a huge constituency and it is very far from Bombay. I stood down so that my boys could do better.

Q: Will you ever contest an election again?

A: No, never. I will put up candidates, campaign for them, support them, but never contest an election.

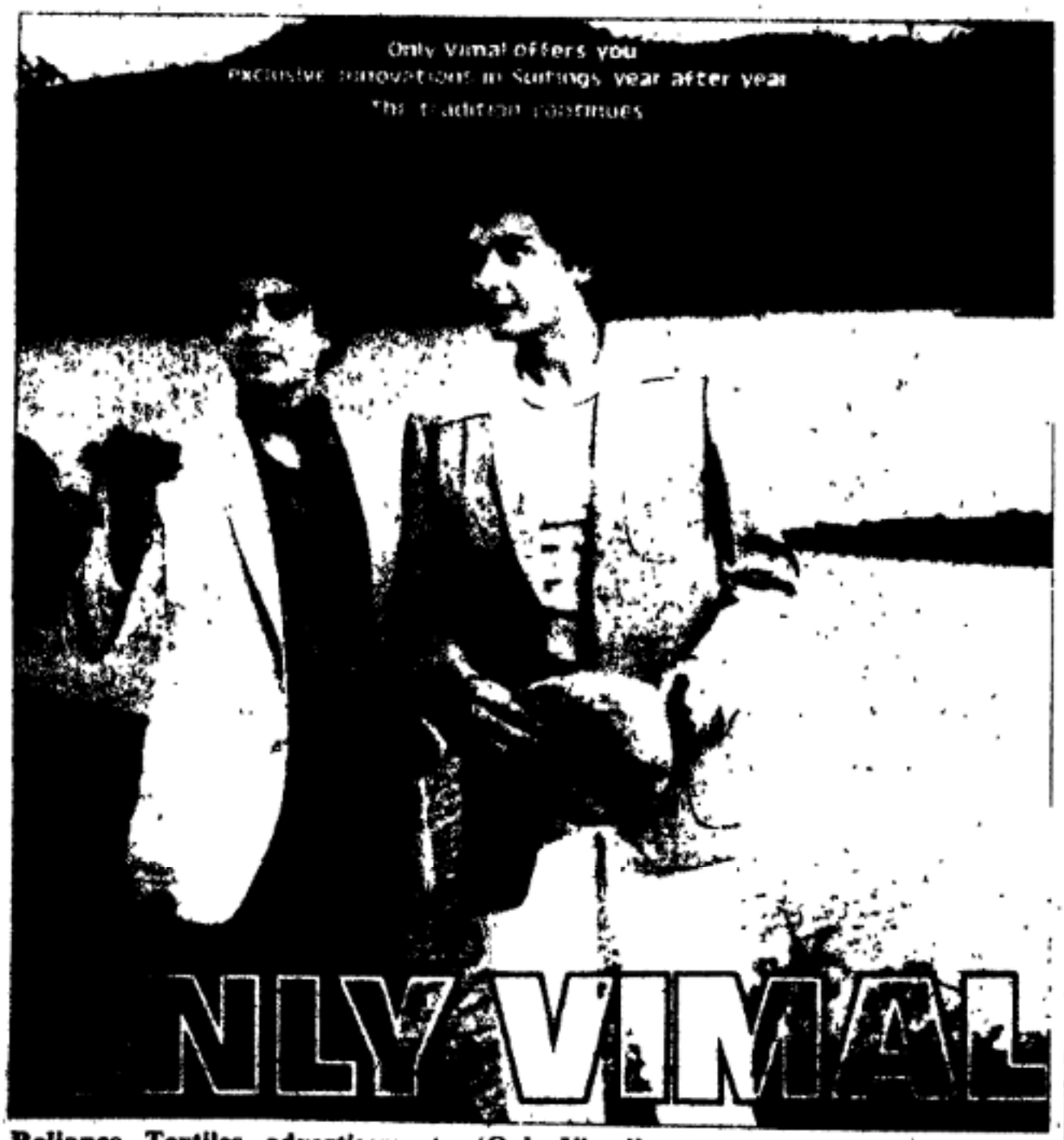
Q: Why not?

A: To earn a name one does not have to contest an election. (Take the case of) JP: which election did he stand for? Gandhi: which election did he stand for?

(Of these states, only UP had Swadeshi Polytex's unit; the rest were virgin areas.) So, not only was the stipulation regarding the size of the plant reversed, but a plant was allowed to be set up in Maharashtra when Dhirubhai Ambani moved the application for his staple fibre unit at Patalganga. Besides, the concept of joint sector ventures was forgotten. Thus, while giving the letter of intent to Reliance, the Maharashtra government's rejected application for joint-sector ventures was forgotten. Many applications from other parties in the Gujarat and Maharashtra region, which had been turned down, too were ignored. At one go three stipulations were overlooked.

In the case of Ambani's TPA plant also, major policy formulations were swept under the carpet. The feedstocks of the Mathura Refinery in Uttar Pradesh is capable of producing 1,50,000 tonnes of TPA annually. The Planning Commission and the petroleum ministry officials had envisaged a joint-sector project based on Mathura's paraxyline, which was to be located at Salempur in UP. Paraxyline is the raw material for TPA and DMT (dimethyl terephthalic), both of which substitute each other as inputs for polyester production. (While Ambani is setting up his TPA plant at Patalganga, the Wadias of Bombay Dyeing are also putting up a DMT plant in the same place. As a result, the entire DMT and TPA capacity in the country is being installed at the same location.) Suddenly, when Reliance applied for the TPA licence, the size of the Salempur plant was slashed to half and it was decided that while Ambani would set up a 75,000 tonne plant based on Mathura's paraxyline in Maharashtra, the project in UP would be of 75,000 tonne capacity. The then petroleum secretary, Lavraj Kumar, did not appreciate this scheme. Overnight, he was replaced by A.S. Gill. The TPA project of Ambani sailed through and both the licence and foreign collaboration clearance for this "prestige" project were given in October 1984. (A.S. Gill was among the 17 officers superceded by P.K. Kaul for the post of cabinet secretary. Gill recently quit the government.)

By getting the licence for MEG, Reliance would now become its largest manufacturer in India. At present two firms are producing MEG: the Baroda plant of Indian Petro-Chemicals Ltd (IPCL) and the Thana-Belapur belt unit of Nocil. While the IPCL unit's capacity is 20,000 tonnes, Nocil's capacity is 10,000 tonnes. The IPCL proposes to set up a new plant at Usar in Maharashtra, but the combined capacity of these units will not be able to match Ambani's Patalganga plant's 40,000 tonnes. Thus; thanks to Pranab Mukherjee's efficiency, Reliance will have the largest staple fibre plant, the largest MEG plant and, ultimately, due to the captive nature of the TPA and MEG production of Reliance, "Only Vimal" will not remain merely successful advertising copy but be an economic reality as well. The Reliance stranglehold over polyester will surpass any monopoly control seen before.



Reliance Textiles advertisement : 'Only Vimal'

Thapar, DCM, Mafatlal, Birla, Bombay Dyeing, Goenka, Modi, Orkay, Godrej—these are blue chip names. But Reliance surpasses them all not only in the sharemarket but in wielding influence in New Delhi as well. While Ambani's projects have been cleared one by one, rather at one go, the projects and interest of these houses have been affected in one way or the other. In many cases these corporate giants have watched with amazement the impunity with which Ambani's files have moved. Apart from textiles, Ambani has now turned his attention to detergents. In August 1984, he was granted the licence for a 50,000 tonne capacity linear alkyl benzene (LAB) plant. LAB is a raw material used in making detergents. The foreign tie-up was cleared in October. The location of the plant is still undecided, though Ambani is boasting about this diversification. At one stage, Vishakhapatnam was rumoured to be the proposed location. Now it is said that Ambani's favourite area, the west coast, will be the site of the LAB plant. A location near Hazira is being considered, it is said. While Reliance moved its application for LAB (it is an imported item now) which is a bio-degradable input for detergents produced from petroleum, the union government had before it a joint-sector proposal of the Gujarat government and Godrej for a similar project. The Godrej proposal, which was submitted before the Reliance LAB plan, was for the production of alpha olefin, which is also a bio-degradable input for detergents and is made from rice-bran oil. Someone in the government realised that there was a dearth of rice-bran oil in India, hence the alpha olefin project was shot down. The combined

strength of the house of Godrej and the Gujarat government wilted before the might of Reliance. When the LAB plant goes on stream, Reliance will slowly extend its stranglehold on the detergents industry as well. People of India will not only be dependent largely on Ambani for textiles, but for detergents too.

Another Ambani project which went through in the days when Pranab Mukherjee was the finance minister was his purchase of the Chembur unit of Union Carbide. It is said that the Reliance link-up with Union Carbide was to have extended to Bhopal as well, but providence saved Ambani. This deal was in its infancy when the gas tragedy took place. The Chembur unit in Bombay, which has been purchased by Ambani, used to produce polyetheline, ethelyne oxide, propelyne benzine and acetiline black. Ambani proposes to produce linear low density polyetheline and high density polyetheline. Low density polyetheline is so far not made in India. It has a higher strength than the existing polyetheline available in the country, which is made by Polyolefin Ltd., a Mafatlal group company. Ambani is slowly reaching for monopoly control in this field too.

The latest Ambani project which has not attracted much attention is not located within the Indian peninsula. The Andaman and Nicobar islands will soon have a large mechanised farm unit of Dhirubhai Ambani. Production of edible palm oil is Ambani's latest venture. Permission has been granted to him to move to the erstwhile "Kalapani" and strike gold.

The Ambanis have controlled the union government's decision-making machinery to their benefit for the past decade. Now some strains have begun to show. To begin with, there are reports of differences within the family. Dhirubhai Ambani's brother, Ramniklal Ambani, is said to be having differences with Anil Ambani, the younger son of Dhirubhai, over the functioning of the Ahmedabad plant, which is an ultramodern textile unit. Last year there was some labour trouble in this unit, but somehow the news was suppressed in the media. More than these, the new posture of the government may worry the Ambanis. Apart from three proposals being held up, the way the excise duty on polyester yarn was suddenly rationalised in the second week of February shows that the influence of Reliance may be on the wane. In the duty policy formulated by Pranab Mukherjee, there were three duty slabs. The government had declared yarn upto 350 deniers as textile yarn and put a flat duty of Rs 90 per kg. Between 350 and 749 deniers, the duty was Rs 65 per kg and above 750 deniers, it was Rs 18.75 per kg. In this scheme, big manufacturers, notably Reliance, Orkay and Petrofils benefited to the tune of Rs 70 crores per annum. The government's exchequers received Rs 70 crores less of duty because the big manufacturers, taking advantage of latest technology, showed the product of 750 deniers and 355 deniers yarn used to draw out finer deniers for texturising. In one stroke of the pen, finance minister V.P. Singh rationalised this and made an uniform duty of Rs 83.75 per kg applicable on all yarn. As a result small units, which were paying Rs 90 till now, will pay less. For big units the hike from Rs 18.75 to Rs 83.75 is a big jump.

The political influence of the Reliance group, however, can never be underestimated. Since V.P. Singh refuses to meet individual industrialists, it is difficult to float rumours about "proximity" to the finance minister. Equally inaccessible to hangers on is the Prime Minister's principal aide and personal friend, parliamentary secretary Arun Singh. Reliance men, however, have been spreading stories about the "friendship" between Arun Singh and Dhirubhai's son, Mukesh Ambani. To stress their point, they point out that when Rajiv Gandhi (then AICC general secretary) went to Geneva last year accompanied by Arun Singh, Mukesh Ambani too had been taken along. While it may be true that Mukesh Ambani was in Geneva simultaneously with Rajiv Gandhi and Arun Singh, no indications are available so far that the Ambanis were part of the VIP team. Such stories, however, have to circulate. When a bubble is created, myth and fiction have to be relied upon to keep it from bursting. One has to see how the new wave government, which has been relentlessly talking of "clean" administration tackles such pressure-tactics. Surprisingly, while in the field of fertilisers the government had split up the investment into many hands in the private sector, in an allied field, petrochemicals, a monopoly was allowed to grow. Will the "clean" government undo the wrongs of former ministers like Pranab Mukherjee?

Despite difficulties now being faced by Ambani, the clearances already given by Pranab Mukherjee have brought Reliance Textile Industries on the verge of emerging as India's biggest private conglomerate in the next few years.

Four in a Row

In the government's latest list of foreign collaborations which it has approved, Reliance Textile Industries figures in five places. In the list published in February, which details the tie-ups cleared in the last quarter of 1984, serial numbers 166, 167, 168 and 169 are all related to Reliance. The Ambanis have gone one step further than a hattrick.

A total of 193 tie-ups were approved between October and December 1984. Apart from Reliance Textile Industries Ltd, 222 Maker Chambers IV, Nariman Point, Bombay 400021, no other name is repeated in the list. The tieups listed by the government are:

- Serial number 132: Reliance with Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd, UK for purified terephthalic acid (PTA): technical collaboration.
- Serial number 166: Reliance with UOP Processes International (Inc.) USA, for PTA: technical collaboration.
- Serial number 167: Reliance with UOP Processes International (Inc.) USA, for linear alkyl benzene: technical collaboration.
- Serial number 168: Reliance with Union Carbide Corporation of USA, for mono ethylene glycol and its byproducts: technical collaboration.
- Serial number 169: Reliance with E.I. Du Point, i.e. Chemtex Fibres Inc., 850 Third Avenue, New York: collaboration for (I) production of polyester yarn of triobal cross section, and (II) production of low denier per filament: designs and drawings.

Even the Tatas and Birlas could never have bagged four consecutive serial numbers in the same clearance list. After all, Reliance is different.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

INVESTIGATION

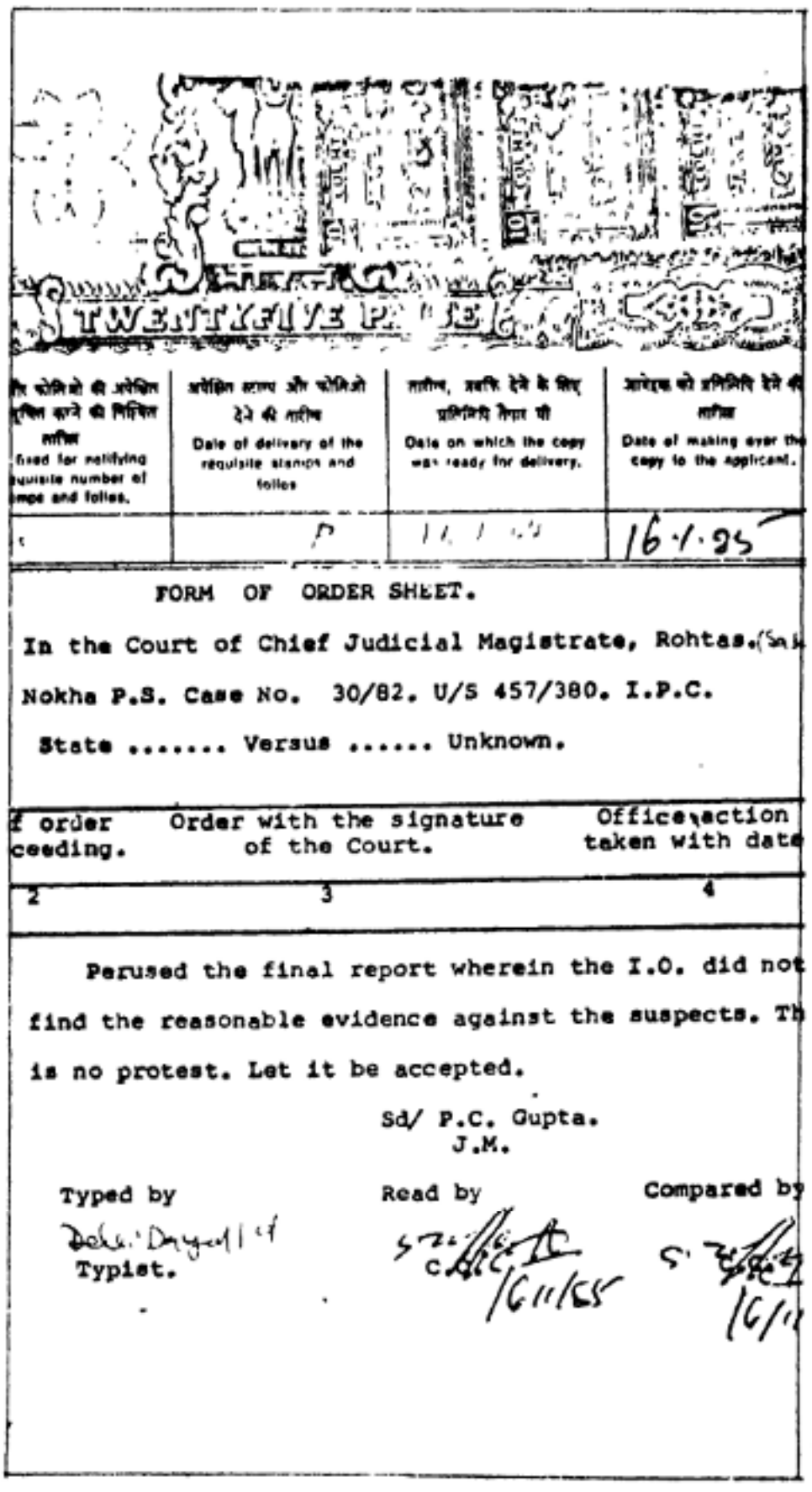
Innocents in Bihar Jails

A racket in fake warrants thrives in Munger

Nageshwar Tanti had just started arranging the trays in his sweet shop in Murgiachowk, Munger (about 200 km from Patna), when he heard someone call him from the road outside. Wiping his hands, he stepped out and saw the havildar of the local police station. What does he want now, this early in the morning, the young sweet-seller thought to himself, cursing the policeman under his breath. Policemen from the nearby Kharagpur police station visited the shops in the bazaar at least once a day to pick up whatever they fancied without, of course, paying a single paise for them. Perhaps, the havildar wants a kilo of sweets, Tanti thought to himself, and decided not to entertain him.

"Do you know I can arrest you?" the havildar started the conversation. Shocked, Tanti had no reply. He had never stolen, never done anybody any harm. Why, then, was he being arrested? "Come with me to the police station. I will show you your warrant of arrest," said the havildar.

By then a number of people had assembled around them and as is usual in such cases, people started cutting nasty remarks about the sweet-seller. Humiliated, Tanti had no other alternative but to follow the policeman. At the police station, Tanti was shown his arrest warrant. It was signed by the judicial magistrate



TWENTYFIVE P...E

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FORM OF ORDER SHEET.

In the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Rohtas.(Sa...

Nokha P.S. Case No. 30/82. U/S 457/380. I.P.C.

State ..... Versus ..... Unknown.

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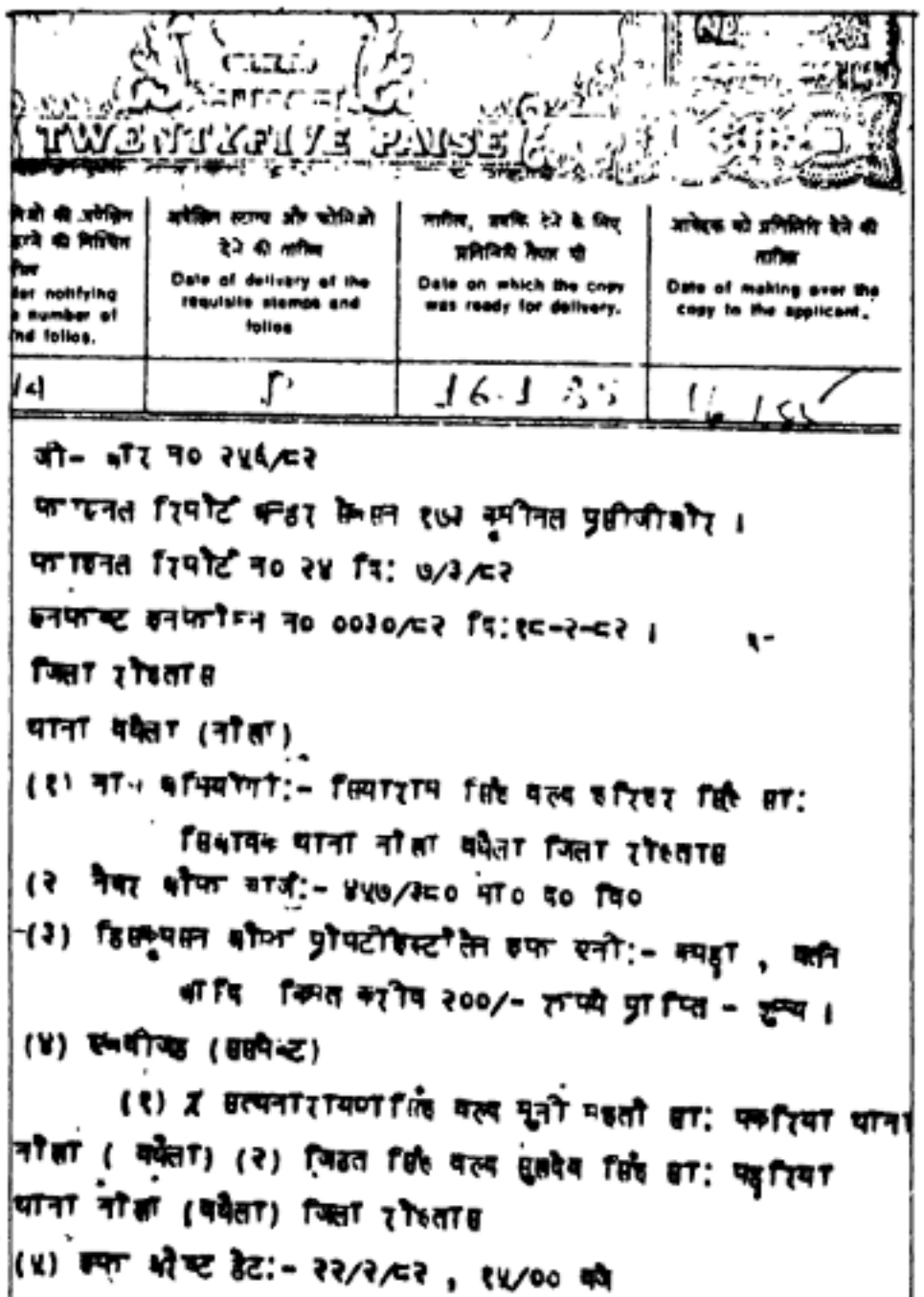
Perused the final report wherein the I.O. did not find the reasonable evidence against the suspects. Th... is no protest. Let it be accepted.

Sd/ P.C. Gupta.
J.M.

Typed by — Typist.

Read by

Compared by



TWENTYFIVE PAISE

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जी- कॉर नं0 २५६/८२

फारवर्डिंग रिपोर्ट अन्डर सेक्शन १७३ दण्डित प्रक्रिया संहिता ।

फाइनल रिपोर्ट नं0 २४ दि: ७/३/८२

इनफार्मेशन नं0 0030/८२ दि:१८-२-८२ ।

जिला रोहतास

थाना नोखा (बबेला)

(१) नाम अभियोगी:- सियाराम सिंह वल्द हरिहर सिंह सा:

सिकरिया थाना नोखा बबेला जिला रोहतास

(२) मैसर कौफ चार्ज:- ४५७/३८० भा० द० वि०

(३) डिसक्रिप्शन कौफ प्रोपर्टी/हिस्टरी केस इफ एनी:- क्यूड , कैश

बरामद किया करीब २००/- रुपये प्राप्त - शून्य ।

(४) एक्यूज्ड (डिफेन्ट)

(१) X सत्यनारायण सिंह वल्द मुनी महतो सा: पकरिया थाना नोखा (बबेला) (२) जितन सिंह वल्द सुखदेव सिंह सा: पकरिया थाना नोखा (बबेला) जिला रोहतास

(५) डेट ऑफ हेट:- २२/२/८२ , १५/०० बजे

(६) कालम नं0 ६ नील

(७) कालम नं0-७ नील

(८) कालम नं0 ८

यह कांड दि:१८-२-८२ को वादी सियाराम सिंह वल्द हरिहर सिंह ग्राम सिकरिया के पार्ट ब्या न के आधार पर विरुद्ध भारत धारा ४५७/३८० काफ किया गया ।

इस कांड में बरामद करीब कोई छूटी दिखाई पड़ी

Certified copies of the case under which Nageshwar Tanti was served a fake warrant



Nageshwar Tanti in his sweet shop: bewildered.

(first class) of Sasaram, P.C. Gupta. The warrant had been issued in case No GR 256/82. Tanti's crime: violating Section 379 of the IPC. The policeman said that since the warrant had been signed by the Sasaram magistrate, the crime must have been committed in Sasaram district.

"But I have never been to Sasaram in my life," Nageshwar Tanti stuttered. The policeman did not know anything. It was a warrant from the court and all that he was doing was carry out the court's orders. However, if Nageshwar Tanti could give him some money, he was willing to suppress the warrant for a few days. Otherwise, threatened the police man, Tanti would have to go to jail.

Within the hour Tanti had paid the policeman. One of the constables from the police station offered Tanti some advice. If he was indeed innocent, as he had been saying all along, all that he needed to do was get a certified copy of the case from the judicial magistrate's court in Sasaram. Early next morning, Tanti went to Sasaram and with a lawyer's help located case No. GR 256/82. The case, in fact, had been settled on 7 March 1982.

This correspondent was shown a certified copy of the case. The complainant was one Siaram Singh of Siwak, police station Nowkha, Rohtas. He had lodged the case against Satyanarain Singh and others also from Siwak. Only after Nageshwar Tanti placed the certified copy of the case with the police was he allowed to go free.

Nageshwar Tanti is one of the lucky ones. Not many possess the money needed to hire a lawyer. A large number of people, similarly implicated, have had to spend a number of days in jail before it was finally found out that warrants under which they had been arrested were false. According to Lokenath Kuswaha, an advocate's clerk-turned-social worker, who has been keeping track of such cases, "There are at least 5,000 such cases in Munger district alone."

It is easy to acquire and send a fake warrant in any one's name. According to a senior police official in Munger, such warrants have been in circulation since 1975. The whole thing is handled by two or three intelligent, educated people with connections in the courts and the police set-up. All they have to do is get hold of a requisite warrant of arrest form which is easily available with junior officials of the district courts or can be bought for a nominal sum of 10 paise from most stamp vendors in the court premises. The form is then filled in: the case number and the sections of the IPC do not matter. It is then stamped with the round rubber seal of the concerned judicial magistrate. Such rubber seals can be easily manufactured at any rubber stamp maker's shop. All that remains to be put on the form to make it look authentic is an initial of the judicial magistrate. A government of India envelope is then acquired from the despatch department of a court through a peon or a clerk. The warrant is then sent to the office of the superintendent of police from where it is referred to the officer in charge of the police station in whose jurisdiction the alleged "criminal" lives. It is from here that the police take over.

In most cases, those who receive such warrants are illiterate and too scared of the police. Naturally, when the police demand money to suppress the warrant, the hapless people have no other alternative but to pay up or suffer the humiliation of being paraded through the streets in handcuffs.

It all started in 1975 when a large number of people from Sundarpur village on the outskirts of Munger town started receiving such warrants for crimes they had never committed. Informed an elderly Baleswar Mandal, "Ours is a small village and

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Lokenath Kuswaha with xeroxed copies of fake warrants: a one-man crusade

most of us did not want to be humiliated. What else could we do? And for those of us who are in government service, we could tell no one in authority that we were going to be arrested. For then, we would be sacked. Neither could we argue our innocence with the police."

The villagers decided to talk to Lokenath Kuswaha, a young man from the village who had a lot of connections in the Munger court because of his work as an advocate's clerk. Remembers Baleswar Mandal, "We sincerely believed Lokenath would be able to help us." Kuswaha tried his best to unravel the mystery of the fake warrants but he was unsuccessful. Perhaps, the whole racket would have gone undetected if a lawyer practising in the chief judicial magistrate's court in Munger, Bhajan Mani Chakrabarti, had not received a warrant of arrest in his name.

Recalled Mr Chakrabarti, "It was around April 1977 that the officer-in-charge of the Kotwali, Mr Nisar Khan, summoned me from my house in Sakin Raigarh. He told me that there was a warrant of arrest in my name. I did not realise that the warrant was a fake one. I told the officer to show me the warrant." Mr Chakrabarti, an elderly gentleman, continued, "I had been charged under Section 376 in PS case No. 21(4)/77. Section 376 deals with rape. Me, an old man, was charged with the rape of a girl in Hirapur, near Dhanbad." Mr Chakrabarti sent off a petition to the chief judicial magistrate, Munger, saying that he had been wrongly accused and that the warrant was a fake one. Could the authorities look into the matter? "So many years have passed but nothing has been done yet," said Mr Chakrabarti.

There was, however, one man who was trying to do something. It was Lokenath Kuswaha, Around November 1976, said Kuswaha, "I often wondered to myself why so many people from my village were being implicated through such false warrants." At the end of that year, Kuswaha had given up his job to devote himself full-time to social service. "My father had died and I thought of doing something for society," said Kuswaha. However, before leaving his job, Kuswaha had asked one of the young, educated men from his village, Devender Prasad, who just hung around the court doing odd jobs, if he would like to take over as the advocate's clerk. Devender readily agreed.

Soon afterwards, Kuswaha received a complaint that Devender was throwing his weight around in the village. He would often threaten the simple villagers with dire consequences if they did not do as he ordered. Most of the times, the tussles between the villagers and Devender occurred over simple things: who would fill water at the village well first, etc. Said Kuswaha, "Brahmdev Mandal's wife, Gayatri Devi, had a fight with Devender's wife over something, one day. Within a week, the police came searching for Gayatri Devi with a warrant of arrest. Again, when some cows belonging to Rameswar Shaw trespassed into Devender's garden, a warrant of arrest was found in the name of Shaw." By then, Lokenath Kuswaha was sure that Devender was behind the fake warrant racket. And, in fact, when Kuswaha did confront Devender with his hunch, he was told to mind his own business.

One person took it upon himself to defend those who had been served such fake warrants. In fact, he still does that if he gets a chance. He is Mr Basisht Lal, a senior practising lawyer in the Munger court. According to him this practice of serving fake warrants "started in collusion with the police and the court staff. It is merely done to implicate innocent people and put them in trouble. Of course, in the process, the police make a little."

Chand Kesri, a railway employee was one such person whose case had



Subhas Mandal (right) with two of his relatives in Sundarpur who have received fake warrants

K M Kishan

been handled by Mr Lal. "Kesri had been served a warrant from the court of the chief judicial magistrate, Bhagalpur," said Mr Lal. After detailed discussions with Kesri and preliminary investigations, Mr Lal was certain that the warrant his client had been served with was a fake one. "I had two options open before me," said Mr Lal, "One, to advise Kesri to surrender to the police or to apply for anticipatory bail." An application for anticipatory bail was made but before it came through, Kesri was kept for a week in the police lock-up. In that period, Mr Lal sent a special messenger to Bhagalpur court to get the certified copies of the case his client had been charged with.

Another case which Mr Lal remembers vividly concerns Company Paswan of Jamalpur. Paswan, also a railway employee, was told by the police that there was a warrant of arrest for him. It had been issued by the chief judicial magistrate, Dhanbad. When Mr Lal appeared in court on behalf of Paswan, the then chief judicial magistrate, Munger, Mr G.N. Chandra dismissed the case in no time at all. Mr Chandra later told Mr Lal that the signature on the warrant was fake. "Mr Chandra knew," said Mr Lal, "because the chief judicial magistrate at Dhanbad was his childhood friend."

According to Mr Lal these fake warrants can be eliminated altogether if the police is a little more vigilant. The police should not accept those warrants which are not sent through the messengers of the court or by registered post. Three years ago, in fact, the then chief judicial magistrate of Munger, Mr Bindeswari Dubey, issued strict instructions to the Munger jail authorities in a fake custody warrant case that the jailer should not accept warrants sent by ordinary post. Mr Dubey's instructions continue to be on the files serving only as a record, never to be followed.

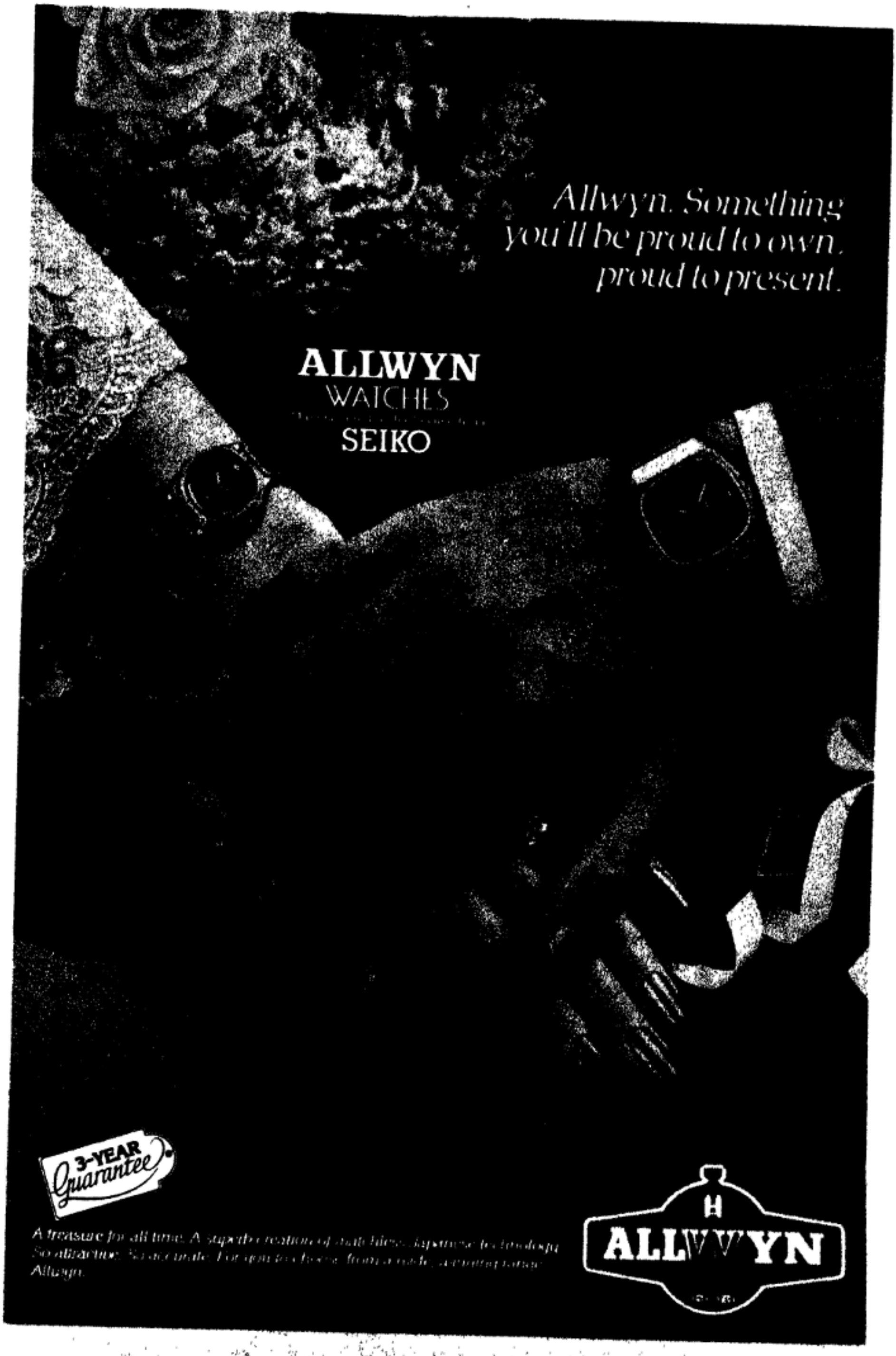
Meanwhile, the racket flourishes thanks to the police. Lokenath Kuswaha had with tears in his eyes complained to the superintendent of police, Munger, Mr Rakesh Jaruhar, to investigate the matter. "I had shown the SP *sahab*, the xerox copies of one of the fake warrants." said Kuswaha. "I told him to search Devender Prasad's house but someone tipped him about the raid and no incriminating evidence was found."

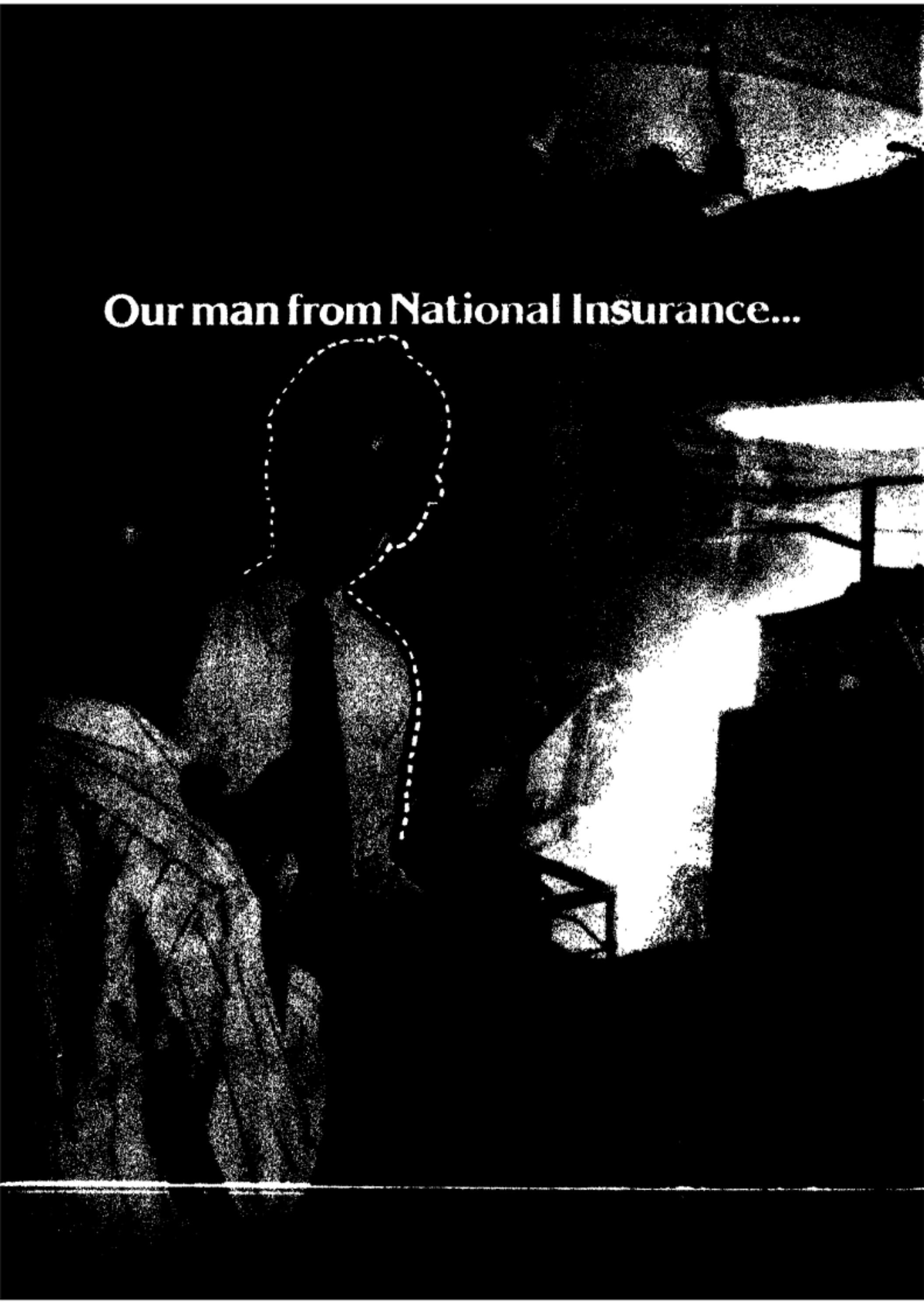
When this correspondent met Mr Jaruhar, he said that he had heard about the racket from his other officers. "Everyday there are hundreds of cases which take place in my jurisdiction The warrants which come to me are sent directly to the police station concerned. It is not possible for us to check and verify each warrant before serving them."

Today, there are a number of people in Kuswaha's village, Sundarpur, who have been unfortunate enough to receive such fake warrants and undergo the consequent harassment more than once. Kuswaha recounted the case of Subhas Mandal, a worker in the Munger ITC factory. On 1 February 1985, as Mandal was preparing to take rest at around 2.30 in the afternoon, the police from the local police station informed him about a warrant of arrest in his name. "I was there when Mandal was shown the warrant by the police," said Kuswaha. "I have seen so many such warrants that this one was not new to me. From the handwriting, I could make out that it had been filled up by a child. But the police was unable to help Mandal. He had to spend a few days in jail till the investigation was completed." There are some other villages like Sundarpur, whose inhabitants have had to undergo the harassment of fake warrants. These villages around Munger are: Sherpur, Shyampur, Nayagaon, Sitakund, Dilwarpur and Gharhara. Hundreds of families in these villages have been reduced to penury because of such fake warrants. Said a senior police official who did not wish to be named, "These warrants, you see, are a source of blackmail. The local policemen who go to serve these warrants mark the 'victim's' houses. Whenever the police feel like they can go and extort some money from people saying that there is a warrant of arrest in their names. Everyone tries to keep as far away from the police as possible so people pay up willingly to avoid problems."

In these circumstances, it is Kuswaha alone who has been waging war single-handedly against the fake warrant racket. "I have had to sell my land and the little I possessed to release my relatives who had been trapped with such warrants. My wife and children hardly get two square meals a day. But I will see the end of this before I die," he promised.

Tirthankar Ghosh, Munger


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The Chikan Workers of Lucknow

It's a cruel trade that thrives on debt and poverty

A strange silence pervades the dusty, sun-baked Muslim village of Chhanayya on the Lucknow-Hardoi road. A small cluster of mud and concrete houses on either side of a winding dirt-track, the village strikes the intruder as a strictly private place: the women and children are wary of outsiders, especially when their menfolk are away, speak in undertones and stay indoors nearly all day, glued to their work—embroidering piles of *kurtas* and sarees to fine patterns with threads of varied colours. The women, many of them with babes in arms, squat in the courtyards or on their doorsteps, stooping to peer at each stitch they make. The work must go on all the year round—even if the workers' backs ache and their eyesight fails—for the precious 25-75 paise it brings them per piece from middlemen who carry the clothes away to cloth dealers in Lucknow's Chowk and Aminabad bazars, for sale on the local, national and foreign markets at whopping profits.



Ravi Kapoor

A Chikan worker in Chhanayya

It is a cruel trade that runs on two premises—that finesse and craftsmanship be damned; and it is the trader at the head of the line who alone dictates terms because the workers and middlemen, far from being his partners in business, are slaves bound to 'serve' him by continuing debt. For the workers there is only misery. And even those free from debt must work with needle and thread to survive because their men can hardly earn enough to feed their large families. They are a few of the 50,000-odd Chikan workers' families—seven or eight members in each—spread over Sandila, Malihabad, Kakori, Lucknow, Bakshi ka Tal, Chinhat, Barabanki, Masauli, Sitapur, Rae Bareili, Sultanpur and Mohanlalganj.

Salma (30) spoke shyly from the threshold of her house in Chhanayya, while a crowd of girls peered from behind: "Earlier the *dalals* gave us 40 paise for each *kurta*, now they give 50 paise. They give the thread. I manage to make two to three *kurtas* a day. All of us work here but still it isn't enough." It takes her three days to finish a ladies *kurta*, she said, the kind she was working on, a light blue *kurta* embroidered in white. "Sarees take much longer. We don't take sarees because *kurta* work is faster and easier." Salma's family, among the poorer in the village, are landless.

Fatima (25) sat down on her doorstep to speak to us: "We have been doing this for ages. Women in most homes do this work. We all started when we were the age of these *laun-*

diyas (girls) you see here," she said, pointing to a couple of ten-year-olds who were standing by, listening. "We have no land at all, so we have to survive on Chikan work. When our eyes grow weak, we go to doctors in town. There are no doctors around here, only one in Dubhagga." Another woman worker in Fatima's family said that middlemen were preferred because it saved the women the trouble of stepping out of their homes and dealing with traders. "They are our men," she said. "We know them for long."

Hamida (47), robust and stocky, at first mistook us for a couple of entrepreneurs. "They're interested in starting some business in Chikan clothes. That's why they're asking us questions," she thundered, intervening in a hushed discussion among some women on the purpose of our visit. She knew the market value of Chikan clothes very well. Later, she yielded to our questioning: "These traders make quite a sum on these clothes, and look what we get. For a ladies' *kurta* we get 20 annas, and it takes us two to three days to finish one. But the men's *kurta* comes in different types and qualities. For high quality work we charge more. It varies from 25 paise to 50 paise. The *dalal* (middleman) pays us all right: if not in a week, at least every 15 days. Sometimes he gives us the thread, sometimes we have to buy it." Has her eyesight weakened? "Of course, our eyes are affected. *Aur kya? Aankhen phorna hai, haddiya phoro...* (What else? Our eyes are blinded, our bones are broken). She seemed bitter at the mention of how the work affected their health. Hamida said she and her two elder daughters worked throughout the year on Chikan embroidery, even though her family was better off than the others in the village. "We work in all seasons, there is constant demand for the work. There are 50 houses in this village, and all have Chikan workers."

The ordinary Chikan worker is homebound and shy, so the middleman is a vital link in the trade. Today, according to an estimate, not more than ten per cent of workers deal with traders directly, particularly because the traders are too shrewd and calculating. The middlemen, many of whom are related to the workers, are in a better position to tackle traders because they deal with a number of them simultaneously. "If one of us disappoints them," said a trader in Chowk, "they can always go to another." On an average, depending on the type of work done on it, a middleman charges the trader Rs 15 on each saree he gets embroidered



Middleman Hakimuddin outside a Chowk shop

by 'his workers.'

Before giving the clothes to the middleman, the trader has to get them tailored and printed and after receiving the embroidered clothes, gets them washed, and netted (with *jaalis*), a kind of work normally assigned to Chikan specialists in the city. It costs one rupee to print each saree, another two rupees to wash it, Rs 15 to get it embroidered, and, finally, another rupee to get each netted. Total costs for the trader come to Rs 50. And yet, the price of an ordinary Chikan saree is never less than Rs 65, which yields a neat profit of Rs 15 on each sale for the wholesaler; for the retailer, of course, the price is a matter of hard bargaining. As one buyer in Chowk said, "The sky is the limit" for the unscrupulous.

Hakimuddin (40), a middleman who has been in business for 20 years, uses a motorcycle to carry stitched plain *kurtas* and sarees from shops in Chowk bazar to Chikan workers in villages in Barabanki and alongside Kursi road, on the outskirts of Lucknow. He keeps an account of how many pieces he has given to each family, and after the workers have embroidered them, brings them back to the wholesaler for sale. "All I get is a small cut. Believe me, there is nothing for me in all this," he lamented. Hakimuddin has to buy the thread for the embroidery at Rs 26 to Rs 28 a kilo. A kilo of thread suffices for 400 kurtas or five or six sarees. He said that he usually brought back bundles of *kurtas* from the workers in eight days, and larger ladies'*kurtas* in 15 days. Sarees could take more than a month to embroider, he said. In addition to expenses on thread and 'fees' at octroi checkposts, he has to spend at least Rs 20 a day on petrol while on tour. "In the end, all I get is a cut of 60 paise on each large *kurta*, 10-15 paise on each small *kurta* and about a rupee on each saree. I buy each saree for Rs 30 a piece from the wholesaler, and give it back to him, embroidered, for Rs 45. Of the Rs 15 that I get from the wholesaler, I hand over ten rupees to the worker, two rupees to cover the price of thread, and another two rupees cover the overheads. This leaves a profit of about one rupee."

Hakimuddin has a wife and five children to look after, besides an aging father. "All the children go to school. The eldest goes to Shia College, here in Lucknow. He is the only one in the family who helps me out, besides my father, with his advice. After all, he was the one who led me into all this." Hakimuddin is unhappy that he has no bank account, although he has to get a daughter married. "When we have enough money," he said, "my son Shakeeluddin and I hope to give up this line and start a new business."

The wholesalers, he said, were helpful in general, but worked subtly to exploit them. "They give us loans whenever we need money, for mar-

riage or if someone in the family falls ill. But at 24 per cent interest." Hakimuddin does all his business transactions in the name of his father Amruddin Beg. "I'm just carrying on his work. I go to the same traders he visited."

He agreed that workers in faraway villages were easily exploited. "But we middlemen are not to blame but the traders who make a fortune out of Chikan. They put their own prices on the stuff when they sell them on wholesale markets and when they export them and give us nothing for our work. *Isme majdoori bahut hai* (A lot of effort goes into this). But the people are so poor, they are happy with just a rupee or 75 paise on each piece. You should see them queuing up in front of my door; such long queues even for so little money." But in spite of the exploitation, he said, the personal nature of relationships between workers and middlemen (often part of an extended family) and middlemen and traders made things more humane: "I help the workers when they are in need. And the traders help me when I'm in need. Once a trader I was doing business with landed up in my house when I fell ill, although he is a *lakhpati*."

An almost exclusively Muslim trait, Lucknow Chikan was first popularised in the heyday of the last ruler of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah, who is known to have rewarded women who excelled in the art. Many in Lucknow believe it to be 'an inherited art,' which probably explains why a Muslim girl develops an aptitude for the work while most Hindu girls do not. But the Chikan that now sells in the market is a mere shadow of its past. In its original form, the embroidery is an intricate combination of a variety of patterns and stitches that do not involve 'tearing up' the fabric. Some of these are *jaali* (network), *murri* (surface work), *ulta bakhia* (shadow work), and designs like *taka, bijli* and *phanda*. A number of these are specialised jobs; the *jaali*, for example, is something only workers in chosen areas can be trusted with. The skills are highly individualised, too. Some famous craftswomen are Miss Badar Anjuman, Miss Shamim Jahan, Miss Akhtar (whose father is a famous craftsman also) and Mrs Humaira Khatoon, who have won national awards for their work.

But the handicraft is on the decline. Said Jagesh Tandon, an exporter, "Chikan work comes in two types, one for the discerning elite, the other for the masses. The city is the place where you get all the delicate work done; for mass production, you have to go to the rural areas where the majority of workers live. But the village Chikan worker does not care much for finesse. She is not trained in that art. She can only work through large quantities of cloth quickly to meet the commercial need. And her labour is very cheap. So it is to her that most of the work is assigned these days. And this is what has caused the decline of the handicraft."

Mr Tandon, who seemed more concerned about the intricacy of the craft than the condition in which most rural workers live and toil, said poor quality Chikan accounted for a reduced demand from connoisseurs, and growing demand from the ordinary public: The demand for the embroidery abroad, he said, existed partly because of humanitarian reasons—because it involves great labour, and the workers are poor—and partly because, as a unique handicraft of Lucknow, it is intricate and beautiful. "But the mass production of Chikan *kurtas* and sarees has commercialised the handicraft. People abroad also are beginning to realise that what they are getting is of poor quality. Exporters and wholesalers, in their attempts to undercut each other, end up selling bad stuff. In Chikan, price varies directly with the quality of work."

Mr Tandon also complained that a large number of Chikan exporters were based in Delhi and knew nothing about the embroidery and its intricacies. "They cannot make out the difference between various kinds of work, they export cheap clothes." Even in India, Chikan clothes are the cheapest alternative to formal wear, Mr Tandon said. "You can never buy a shirt for the price you pay for a Chikan *kurta*." Hence the mass production.

More important than the decline of the handicraft, however, is the problem of poverty among the lakhs of workers in Lucknow and its suburbs. Most of the families live in congested houses, amid filth and squalor, and work to supplement their menfolk's meagre earnings. Bina Duggal, a Congress(I) MLC who is president of the Chikan Karigar Union and the Chikan Vikas Parishad, two bodies set up for the welfare of Chikan workers in 1974, believes that education is the best way to rehabilitate the women because ignorance is always their worst foe. "They need money for marriages and to pay for their sick, so they borrow from the wholesalers and end up in slavery." She claimed that a Chikan production unit opened in Lucknow by the Uttar Pradesh government which runs under her supervision attracts about 700 regulars from surrounding villages. "But this number is still not enough, considering there are so many of them. However, we try to teach these 700 how to conduct themselves in society. They take their money directly from us."

Was the experiment any help? Far from it. "Government schemes and projects have been miserable flops," said Jagesh Tandon, "All that the government does is set up units, appoint teachers, and these people walk off with their salaries. There is no work done."

Although he regretted that traders like him were destroying a beautiful craft, Mr Tandon denied exploiting workers: "You've got to see that all our cloth is blocked up with the middlemen. If we give them 100 pieces, they return 90, and say the rest are torn. In the workers' houses, you will find them using the *kurtas* as bedclothes and curtains. The workers take up quite a bit of the garments themselves. And who among us doesn't have health problems?"

Though Mr Tandon, sitting in his palatial house in a labyrinthine Chowk bylane (luxury strikes you out of the blue in Chowk) thought otherwise, the workers' health problems are real, weak eyesight, spondylitis and TB being major complaints. Said Dr Ram Kapoor, an ophthalmologist who has held a number of eye camps and treated Chikan workers, "The women have eye trouble first because they work in very dim light, and second because the nature of their work is very minute. Thus they come up with complaints which are quite natural in anyone with normal eyesight. Then they go to quacks, saying that they are having difficulty threading the needles, although their eyes are normal. The quacks, eager to sell off their stocks of spectacles, give the workers plus lenses which are only magnifying glasses, even though the workers are young. Many of them start using plus lenses at 25. Normally, plus one lenses are given to people aged 35, and plus two to people aged 50. The workers' eyes grow weak, and when they age, have to start using minus lenses, which should never happen." TB among workers was common, Dr Kapoor said, because of their living conditions and also on account of the fact that they sit close to each other, often coughing on one another, spreading bacterial infection.

Bogged down by the pressure of an exploitative trade on the one hand, and large families on the other, the Chikan workers of Lucknow continue to live like wretches, desperate to survive. Will the government ever help?

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

GUJARAT

Violent Protests

Agitation over the state government's reservation policy

An uproar against the increased reservations in jobs and education for the backward classes in Gujarat in the second half of February, has began another round of caste conflict in the state where Gandhi was born. The Solanki ministry, trying to keep everybody happy before the 5 March state Assembly polls, has failed to take effective steps to defuse the explosive situation. The current controversy dates back to January when the state government announced its decision to increase reservation of seats for the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC) from ten to 28 per cent. This was in addition to the 21 per cent statutory reservations for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and took the total reservations in government jobs and courses like medicine and enginering to 49 per cent.

The government's decision was partly based on the findings of a commission of inquiry, headed by a retired High Court Judge, Mr C.V. Rane, set up in 1981 to explore which new groups and communities should be added to the list of 82 communities belonging to the SEBC. These are communities deemed as backward as the scheduled castes and tribes but are not beneficiaries of the statutory reservations.

There was not much reaction to the decision till 19 February when preliminary examinations were due to begin in colleges in Ahmedabad. Complaining of injustice, a students' committee called the All Gujarat Education Reform Committee (AGERC) was formed and classes were boycotted. College examinations had to be postponed and the government reacted swiftly by persuading schools and universities in Ahmedabad to close down immediately to prevent the anti-reservation stir from gaining momentum.

The gambit was only partly successful because trouble broke out, buses were burnt and classes boycotted by students from Baroda, Rajkot, Godhra, and other cities. By the end of February nearly 20 vehicles, of the Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service and the State Transport Corporation had been damaged. The protests included an Ahmedabad *bandh* called on 25 February and *bandhs* in other towns. But none of them were successful and the agitation seemed to be petering out. However fears of an escalation in violence increased in late February when an irate mob of anti-reservationists set a bus on fire on Nadiad city in central Gujarat and a passenger on board was burnt alive.

The state government has asked the CID to investigate the incidents. Once the elections are over, the stir is likely to spread even further. Although the students have formed a committee, and similar committees have been formed in different cities of Gujarat, the stir does not seem to be very organised.

While the Solanki ministry had taken a firm stand four years ago against the stir, it seems to be hedging on the issue this time. With the elections very close, it wanted to woo the poor, but at the same time did not want to alienate the upper castes too much. The wavering led to serious problems for the administration. The government had to explain its stand to the people but no political leader would do so. Eventually, the task fell upon Mr Niranjan Singh, an IAS official and secretary to the social welfare department. This happened on 1 March, nearly ten days, after the agitation began.

Mr Singh's explanation led to confusion. In 1972, the Gujarat government had set up the Baxi Commission to identify socially and educationally backward communities (SEBC) under Article 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution. This was done with effect from 1, April 1978

However, there were complaints that the list of SEBC groups mentioned by the Baxi Commission was not exhaustive and that many deserving groups had been left out. As a result, the Rane Commission was set up in 1981. The decision to raise the quota of SEBC from ten to 28 per cent (raising reservations to 49 per cent) was criticised because, the Rane Commission had given its 215-page report in October 1983, and the government accepted it only 16 months later, on 11 January 1985 just before the Assembly elections.

The second reason for the uproar was the government's curious decision in determining the new reservation policy. It has accepted the Rane panel's recommendation to increase reservations to 28 per cent but it did not accept the commission's recommendation to determine educational and social backwardness on an income-cum-occupation criterion. The Rane Commission had serious doubts about the efficacy of identifying social and educational backwardness on the basis of caste. It said there were "inherent defects" in this method. The object of the Articles 15(4) and 16(4), said the commission, was to achieve equality by removing inequality. Using the caste factor for identifying socially and educationally backward people would perpetuate the evils of the caste system. Another point against the use of the caste factor was that it is a method applicable to Hindu communities only.

Political expediency could be chief reason for the manner in which the decision was announced. But, more curiously, although the decision was made public on 11, January, it remained only on paper till the end of February. The social welfare department secretary, Mr Singh, explained that government decisions taken at the cabinet level took time to implement because of procedures. In the second half of February the Gujarat High Court granted a stay on the implementation of the increased quota till a petition before it was disposed of.

The delay in implementation was in sharp contrast with the announcement in January when it was stated that the increased quota in jobs in government would come into force immediately and in education from June with the new academic year. Mr Singh complicated matters more by declaring that the Rane Commission's suggestion to determine backwardness on the basis of income and occupation rather than caste "will not be legally justified" and the government was sticking to the Baxi Commission criteria that included some ten tests including caste, economic status and income to determine the backwardness of any group.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

Policemen guarding shuttered shops



Shyamdev Bhatkar

TAMIL NADU

A Happy Reunion

Jayalalitha gets back her former position

When a state has a filmstar-turned politician for a chief minister, political developments often run along the same lines as the plots of a typical formula film-boy meets girl and love blossoms. Unfortunately, a nasty misunderstanding crops up. But towards the last few reels, the problems are sorted out and then there is a happy reunion It appears to be the same for MGR and Jayalalitha and their political relationship.

Soon after being divested of her post as deputy leader of the AIADMK Parliamentary group, Jayalalitha had fumed that the coterie responsible for her ouster would ensure that she was expelled from the party soon after MGR's return to Madras. But MGR took both the coterie and Jayalalitha for a ride—neither was Jayalalitha expelled nor was she reinstated. It was a state of suspended animation for all concerned While MGR met even the unimportant AIADMK MLAs, he did not meet Jayalalitha for a full fortnight after his return. In despair, Jayalalitha felt she would not get justice from her mentor, MGR. Her chances of being reinstated to the exalted position she enjoyed seemed slim as MGR went about accommodating the coterie, instead of punishing them for taking decisions without his knowledge and sanction. Jayalalitha also had no idea when MGR would meet her. But SUNDAY's report 17-23 February that there would be a happy reconciliation between MGR and Jayalalitha was vindicated when on 19 February she took the initiative and met MGR at the secretariat.

What transpired between MGR and Jayalalitha is not known, but it must have been an emotional reunion—MGR is moved easily. At the end of the close door session, both came out beaming, which was proof that their differences had been patched up.

The drama over, the first sign that Jayalalitha had been reinstated to her former prominent status in the party came a few days later with a statement issued by MGR. He stated that he wanted the AIADMK to remain cohesive and homogenous and forbade anyone from criticising Jayalalitha. The *diktat* has effectively stemmed bickering in the party about Jayalalitha. As long as MGR holds the party's reins, one is not likely to hear any criticism about Jayalalitha from her detractors within the AIADMK. In his statement MGR went a step further and stated that Jayalalitha would be campaigning for the Congress(I)-AIADMK combine in Pondicherry and Andhra Pradesh (she is campaigning in Andhra Pradesh for Congress(I) on Rajiv Gandhi's instructions) with MGR's blessings. Jayalalitha is emerging as a star campaigner and MGR has even directed his partymen to help her make arrangements for her election tour. The AIADMK party machine is once again at Jayalalitha's disposal.

Jayalalitha had been strongly criticised for meeting Congress(I) leaders at the centre including Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in early January, immediately after she was thrown out of Tamil Nadu House in New Delhi. The AIADMK general secretary Mr P.U. Shunmugam had even warned that such actions would be construed as anti-party activities. At that time Jayalalitha had claimed that it was only a courtesy call and that she had not discussed politics.

MGR is obviously enjoying himself playing a political see-saw game. He appointed Shunmugam as the protem speaker, (a blow for Jayalalitha) and soon brought him back to earth by bestowing a rare honour on Jayalalitha: When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi stopped over in the middle of the night at Madras during his whirlwind election tour, the only other person from the AIADMK to meet the PM, besides MGR, was Jayalalitha. It was as if MGR wished to prove that he did hold against her the earlier meeting with the PM, but in fact encouraged it. But this seemed only for public consumption.

MGR communicated his sincere gratitude to Mr Gandhi and his mother for their help regarding his medical treatment by going to the airport to receive him at 3.05 am. It was an emotional meeting, with the PM wiping off the tears rolling down MGR's cheeks. Later at the Raj Bhavan in the course of their 40-minute talk, MGR thanked Rajiv Gandhi again and focussed upon the problems generated by the inflow of refugees from Sri Lanka. Normally Mr S Ramachandran acts as MGR's ambassador as the former is fluent in English. But MGR made Jayalalitha and not S. Ramachandran meet the PM. One needs no further proof of Jayalalitha's reinstatement to the exalted, prominent position in the AIADMK. In ensuring such a status quo, MGR has turned the clock back to his pre-illness days. But no one in the AIADMK, not even Jayalalitha can be free from worries—their fate after all depends on MGR's whims. And MGR is a very whimsical man.



M.G. Ramachandran



Jayalalitha

Anita Pratap, Madras

SMUGGLING

Through the Diplomatic Channel

Somali envoy caught by the Customs

A Somali diplomat, Mohammed Ali Abdi, has landed himself in the Customs net. Though his involvement is being investigated, it is certain that he was being used as a conduit by smugglers. On 6 February, suspicious of the unusually heavy consignments booked in the diplomat's name, the Customs authorities at the Central Warehousing Corporation opened his unaccompanied baggage, booked from Hong Kong and seized contraband worth Rs 50 lakhs. The cooking range imported by this second secretary in the Embassy of Somalia contained 200 gold biscuits, weighing 100 grams each.

Though officials at the Indian foreign office claim that the presence of the diplomat on the spot was a coincidence and that he had been called there to provide the Customs with serial numbers of the goods, customs officials said that the consignment was inspected because they suspected it contained contraband. According to A.S. Ahluwalia, superintendent of Customs in charge of unaccompanied baggage, who was present at the time of seizure, they had taken a calculated risk in asking for the baggage to be inspected. A protest would have been lodged by the embassy of Somalia if the baggage was found "clean". Fortunately, the risk paid off and 2,000 tolas of gold was discovered hidden inside the outer layers of the cooking range and flower vases. It was one of the largest seizures of gold made in the capital. Investigating officers present on the spot succeeded in recording a written statement of the diplomat in which he alleged the involvement of his mail-order agent, Vijay Kumar Gujral and denied any knowledge of the contraband in the articles imported under his name. Vijay Gujral is a nephew of former union minister and envoy I.K. Gujral and has six Customs cases pending against him. There have been a number of cases in the past three years when diplomats have been implicated for carrying contraband in their personal or unaccompanied baggage. Some of the diplomats who have been involved in Customs cases are:

- Leon Wright, senior diplomat in the American Embassy, from whom wrist-watches, medicinal powder and other articles worth Rs 13 lakhs were recovered on 3 December 1984. Wright gave a confessional statement to the Customs officials which ran into 113 pages.
- Mehamood Moshari, counsellor in the Embassy of Iran was recalled to his country when on 3 April 1983, nine video cassettes worth Rs 1,98,000 were recovered from his baggage.
- Bong Yong Wan, first secretary of the North Korean Embassy in India is registered for being in possession of 7,500 US dollars, 13 diamond stones and wrist-watches, valued at Rs 1,15,000. A diary written in code was also confiscated from him.
- Beatrice Eboh, a Nigerian diplomat was in possession of 2,200 wrist watches worth Rs 1,29,925 on 27 July 1983. The case is listed in File No. viii (AP) 10/62/p and 1/83.
- Andre Jost, an attache at the French Embassy was found to be carrying three video cassette recorders and four video cameras worth Rs 1,20,000 on 11 September 1983.
- Dr Jean Luc Lethency, another diplomat of the French Embassy was found to be in possession of three portable video cassette recorders and three video cameras on 13 October 1983, valued at Rs 3,75,000. The case is listed in File No. viii (AP)10/135/p and 1/83.
- Petko Dillic, a Yugoslav diplomat on 24 June 1983 handed over contraband items worth Rs 16 lakhs to Customs officials. The goods included several hundred wrist-watches, computers and high speed cassettee printers.

According to Customs authorities, a large number of Indian agents pay the diplomats for their services and later dispose of the contraband. There is also a larger network of foreign agents who duly pack the consignments to New Delhi or Bombay and probably are the financers of the entire network. In the present

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case of Mohammed Abdi, the involvement of V.K. Gujral, who had ordered the goods from Hong Kong is certain. Owner of the Capital Refrigeration Company with showrooms in Jor Bagh Market and Khan Market, Gujral runs a flourishing mail-order business and is believed to have imported and supplied electronic goods and household equipment to hundreds of diplomats.

After the recovery of 6 February, Gujral has been eluding the investigating agencies. By the time the gold biscuits were recovered and Abdi had named him as the person who had arranged for the goods to be imported, Gujral had gone underground. The team of Directorate of Internal Revenue (DRI) and Customs officials who reached with a search warrant against him and searched his house in Kailash Colony and shops in Jor Bagh and Khan Market, failed to recover any incriminating evidence. His wife Shiela Gujral, who has worked at the Kuwait Embassy and is believed to be well-connected in diplomatic circles told the officers that her husband was "out of the country on business." Though Gujral is said to be in London, workers at his shop claim he is away to Romania and is likely to be away "for some time."

With Gujral absconding, investigations in the case have come to a dead end. Customs officials complain that not being able to search and interrogate the diplomat has put them at a great disadvantage. If Mohammmed Abdi had been interrogated, he might have disclosed whether he was an innocent carrier or part of a large network in which he was used as a conduit because he enjoyed diplomatic immunity. The Somali Embassy has openly denied his involvement in the case in a statement made to the national press. The announcement said, "The involvement of Somali Embassy and a diplomat in the smuggling activities are baseless, untrue and highly unfounded." After this, the Customs officials, again reiterated their stand publicly and called the denial made by the Somali Embassy nothing more than a "face-saving device."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi.

DELHI WAKF BOARD

Deeper into the Morass

The chairman of the board resigns in protest

The Delhi Wakf Board, which has been facing administrative problems and financial bankruptcy for the past two decades is at the crossroads again. On 6 February, the board's chairman, Imtiaz Ahmed Khan, sent his resignation to Lt. Governor, M.M.K. Wali. The board's working had been criticised at the recent three-day session of the metropolitan council where Janata councillor, Mirza Siddiqui Ali and Congress(I) councillor, Anwar Dehelvi severely criticised the functioning of the board and demanded the ouster of the chairman.

The Delhi Wakf Board, set up after independence is one of the most important Wakfs (meaning endowment) in the country. With land prices in the capital shooting up, the board responsible for maintaining all Muslim properties in New Delhi, is said to be the richest board in the country. It now maintains 765 *masjids* 160 *datgahs*, 465 *quabristans* and 151 *makbaras* of the capital. In accordance with the Wakf Board Act, the board is run by a chairman and 11 members, who are considered spokesmen for all matters concerning Wakf property and are largely responsible for the welfare of the ten lakh Muslims living in Delhi.

Several eminent Muslims have held the honorary post of chairman, Delhi Wakf Board. The late President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and the present Governor of Haryana, H.M. Burney had held the post. Imtiaz Khan, a senior IAS officer was nominated chairman on 19 November, 1983 by the then Lt. Governor, Jagmohan. When Khan took over the board's chairmanship from Mirza Iqbal Shah, expectations from him were high. Khan was a brilliant bureaucrat responsible for pulling the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation (DSIDC), of which he is the managing director, out of the red. With him at the helm of affairs of the Delhi Wakf Board, there was hope of improvement of the Board's affairs.

To those unfamiliar with the controversies surrounding the board, the resignation of Khan came as a surprise. But for others, aware of the constant bickering within the organisation, it was something which was quite expected. This is not the first time that the chairman has resigned. In fact, Burney who is Khan's father-in-law had also resigned before he could complete his five-year tenure as chairman. Others are also known to have resigned after bitter quarrels with board members, and one chairman was physically assaulted before he submitted his resignation.

Khan, who resigned because of "large scale corruption in the board," is believed to have informed the Lt. Governor about the malpractices that exist in the board's functioning. Though the resignation has still not been accepted by the Lt. Governor, the Delhi administration is worried about finding a new successor. It is believed that several prominent Muslim Members of Parliament are vying for the post. Mr Tajdar Babbar, president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, is also a possible candidate.

The members of the board, however, feel they should be allowed to choose a chairman themselves. After the move by Khan they held an emergency meeting and passed a resolution requesting the Lt. Governor to accept the resignation of the chairman and permit them to elect their new leader. Said Maulana Jameel Ahmed Illiazi, member of the board and president of the All Indian Imams' Organisation: "We will elect a chairman and fulfil all the wishes of the Muslim community which we were not permitted to do because of the autocratic behaviour of the chairman."

After the recent happenings within the board, Muslims of Delhi have suggested to the Delhi Administration to abolish the system of running the board through a chairman and members. Various representations have been received by the Lt Governor's office to appoint an administrative officer in charge of the Wakf Board as in Haryana and Punjab or set up a Wakf Development Board as in Uttar Pradesh. This is, according to some, the only way the board can be saved from further disintegration.

The Delhi Administration was changing the set-up of the board when matters came to a head with the resignation of the chairman. An amended Wakf Board Bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament last year and only a few weeks ago received the consent of the President. The amended Wakf Act has some pertinent suggestions. First, that a tribunal be set up to expedite litigation in all cases in which the board is involved. (At present, there are over 1,400 civil cases pending with District Courts concerning Wakf property.) Second, five MPs be nominated as members of the board and that a

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senior judicial officer be appointed as Wakf commissioner, with powers to go against the decisions of the board members, who will replace the Wakf board secretary, the present chief executive officer.

In fact, relations between the board chairman and the board secretary have always been a matter of dispute. The present case which began with murmurs of resentment by board members against the chairman, snowballed into a major crisis when in November last year, the chairman sent orders of repatriation to the board secretary, Mašud Raza and sealed all documents and papers of the board at its office in Darya Ganj.

It was this action by the chairman that brought the internal wranglings between the members of the board into the open. Masud Raza, once private secretary to Tajdar Babbar, was appointed secretary to the Wakf Board on 1 July, 1983 and was posted there from the health department of the Delhi administration. Though there were enquiries about how a junior official could be given such a responsible post, nobody questioned the authority of the secretary till the chairman demanded his withdrawal. Khan later explained that he was forced to issue the order because he was convinced of the secretary's involvement in the sale of a plot of land at the Allahu Masjid measuring 25,000 sq. metres which was let out at a nominal rent of Rs 200 per month.

After receiving his marching orders, Masud Raza pressed his case before the court claiming that the chairman was incompetent to serve him such notices and any action such as the sealing of the board's office should have had the consent of the Lt. Governor. He later received an order from the court and resumed charge of his duties. At that time the Lt. Governor, P.G. Gavai, had ordered a probe into the Allahu Masjid case, the findings of which have not yet been disclosed.

The Allahu Masjid case, which became crucial for the functioning of the board, is one of the hundreds of such disputes involving Wakf property before the courts. A list of 204 such cases was placed before the government in the Burney Commission report of 1976, but a majority of these cases are yet to be decided. Only recently a stay order was received by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad after the government had announced that they would give ownership of 123 properties to the Wakf for 99 years. One of the properties in the list is Jama Masjid which is Wakf property but not owned by the board. There are hundreds of graveyard plots in Delhi which have been allegedly encroached upon by the public and some by the Delhi Development Authority. While such a situation exists board members complain that though the monthly income of the board is Rs 27,000, more than Rs 20,000 from this is spent by it on litigation.

Khan had proposed to change the whole scenario and instil a sense of confidence among Muslims in the Wakf Board. He had announced last year that a task force would be set up to look into charges of graft and corruption and had declared that welfare measures would be adopted to improve the lot of the community. He now says that he faced resistance every time he wanted to take action. One case cited by a member was the proposed construction of a market on two plots of land of the Wakf in Darya Ganj, but other members sabotaged the scheme and spread word that a mosque was being constructed and immediately obtained a stay order for any construction there. According to the chairman, it was a battle between honesty and corruption. "I was helpless in the face of inefficiency and corruption. A chairman alone cannot redeem the affairs of the Wakf Board, under pressure from politicians and corrupt members."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

MRS GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

A Controversial Confession

Satwant was "drugged" during his confession says lawyer

Satwant Singh's confessional statement fits comfortably in two typed sheets. Towards the end of it, he admits his guilt. "Around 9 or 9.15 am, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, R.K. Dhawan, Fotedar, two others and Narain Singh who was holding an umbrella, emerged from 1, Safdarjang Road and were coming towards 1, Akbar Road. The Prime Minister was about seven or eight steps away from us when Beant Singh took two steps forward and fired four or five times at the Prime Minister. I had an S.A.F. sten gun. I cocked the sten (gun) and fired on the left part of the Prime Minister's body. I had loaded 20 bullets in the sten gun, I emptied all of them on the Prime Minister. Some hit the Prime Minister, others hit the road. The Prime Minister fell after the first bullet hit her..." These lines will perhaps form the core of the argument against Satwant Singh, in some measure because the very worth of the confession is now becoming a matter of some debate.

The judicial authorities seem to have handled the formalities before and after Satwant Singh's confession with clinical care. Their eagerness to preserve its legal validity is evident from the "memorandum of the record of the confessional statement" made by Satwant Singh under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code inside Ward number one of Delhi's Tihar Central Jail on 1 December 1984. The memorandum is as long as the confession itself. Bharat Bhushan,the additional chief metropolitan magistrate (ACMM) of Delhi and the link magistrate in this case (ACMM S.L. Khanna is the main magistrate) who recorded the confession, has put down every formality in the attested memorandum. About 45 minutes before Satwant Singh began confessing, Bharat Bhushan had him examined by Dr Vijay Kumar, the medical officer of the Tihar Jail. He certified that "the accused in Ward Number one is in my opinion fit to make his statement." Dr Vijay Kumar was then asked to leave the ward, only Bharat Bhushan and Satwant Singh remained. According to what is written in the memorandum, Bharat Bhushan again explained to Satwant that he was not bound to make any statement and that if he did so, it could be used as evidence against him. Another 35 minutes were given to Satwant to "think over" the matter after the lapse of

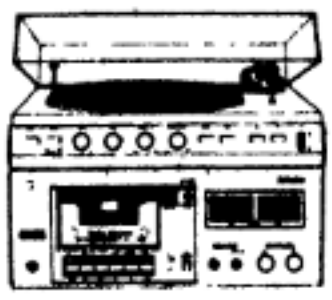


Beant Singh

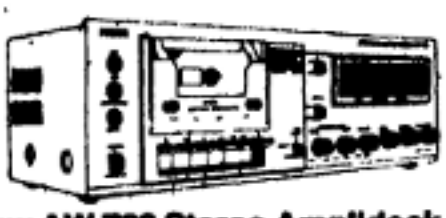
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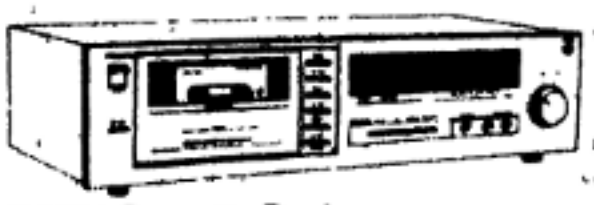
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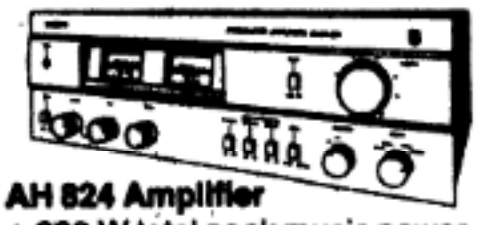
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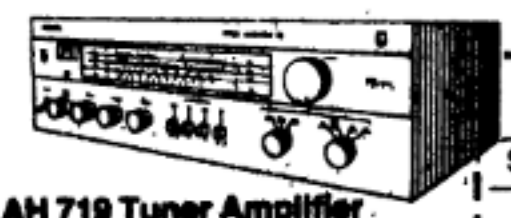
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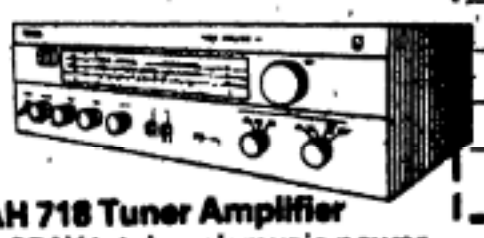
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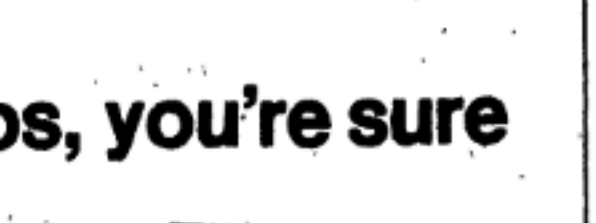
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which Bharat Bhushan asked him four questions "in order to ascertain the fact as to whether he (Satwant) is actually under coercion or pressure or otherwise." A verbatim reproduction of the question-answer session between Bharat Bhushan and Satwant follows:

Q: Since when are you in jail?
A: I am in jail for the last two days.
Q: Has any police officer come to meet you during this time? Has there been any pressure on you to admit your crime?
A: No. Nobody has told me. I want to tell the truth on my own. Nobody has put pressure on me, neither has any police officer come to meet me in jail.
Q: Where did you work?
A: I was a *sepoy* in the Delhi Police.
Q: Do you understand that the statement you are going to give me can become the basis of your punishment?
A: Yes, I have been told beforehand that you are a magistrate and I know well that my statement in front of you will bring me punishment but nevertheless I want to give my statement. It may be recorded.

Legal procedures for a confession of this kind were taken care of according to ACMM Bharat Bhushan. The counsels for Satwant Singh, however, have their own doubts. R.S. Sodhi, a Supreme Court lawyer now handling Satwant's brief under Pran Nath Lekhi, a senior advocate of the Delhi High Court, says that his client was "drugged and delirious" at the time of his confession. The counsels also contend that pressure was applied on Satwant to name R.K. Dhawan in the statement and they have already lodged an application in the court on this matter. Satwant Singh himself has added to the confusion by giving contradictory statements to people he has met of late, including his family members and lawyers. In such circumstances a retraction, based on the plan of the argument being prepared by the defence counsels, cannot be ruled out.

It is believed that I.U. Khan, the lawyer who dropped Satwant's case after being assigned his defence by the government, had made two statements about Satwant Singh's confession which seem incorrect. He had said that the confession ran into 15 pages while actually it is confined to two pages. Further, he reportedly claimed to have been present while the confession was being recorded on 1 December 1984. But ACMM Bharat Bhushan has clearly mentioned in his memorandum that "There is none else except the accused and myself" in Ward number one of Tihar Jail where the confession was recorded.

A large portion of Satwant Singh's statement is about Beant Singh, and his efforts to persuade Satwant to join the plot to kill Mrs Gandhi. It speaks of their initial meetings while on duty at the Prime Minister's residence, the sealing of their friendship on 29 September 1984 and the repeated invitations by Beant to Satwant for a visit to his house. Satwant Singh has named four people as being involved in the conspiracy. It was initially hatched, he says, by Beant Singh and Balbir Singh, another sub-inspector at the Prime Minister's residence. He also named Amarjeet Singh, an SIO posted at Mrs Gandhi's house, and Harbans Singh, a "battery-wala" from Mori gate in Delhi and a relative of Beant's from Faridabad who was "stout, dark and about 45 years of age." In the confession Satwant names Makhan Lal Fotedar as one of the several persons accompanying Mrs Gandhi on her way from 1, Safdarjang Road to 1, Akbar Road on that fateful morning. Curiously enough, neither the FIR (No. 241/84, Dated 31.10.84 u/s 302/307/120B IPC and 25,27/54/59 Arms Act) lodged at the Tughlaq Road police station, nor the statement given by M.L. Fotedar himself says that he was present with Mrs Gandhi at the time of the incident.

SPY SCANDAL

Maneklal's Misfortunes

The spy scandal is taking its toll on the fortunes of the firm, SLM Maneklal. Ever since the arrest of the firm's Delhi representative, Coomar Narain, and ultimately the managing director, Yogesh Maneklal, the firm's shares have been dwindling at the stock market. Apart from shareholders, the firm's depositors too are panicky.

At the end of February, a hundred rupee share of SLM Maneklal was quoted at Rs 77 on Dalal Street. In 1983, the shares were quoted at Rs 170. Last year was a bad year for the firm due to the slump in the textile industry. SLM Maneklal, which is primarily a textile machinery manufacturer, did not declare dividends in 1984. Last year, the shares had dipped to Rs 99, but slowly moved up to Rs 131.25. With Yogesh Maneklal having become the principal accused in the spy case, SLM Maneklal's future looks bleak.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, Bombay

Another intriguing aspect of the confession is the reference to R.K. Dhawan, the special assistant to Mrs Gandhi. Satwant Singh quotes Beant as saying that Dhawan was his "good friend." In his own statement, Dhawan has indirectly confirmed that he knew Beant Singh. When Dhawan first named Satwant Singh in his statement he clearly stated in parenthesis that he came to know his name later, something that he does not say about Beant Singh. Political observers in the capital however, do not attach much importance to the "Dhawan-angle."

From the attitude of Satwant's counsels it seems that the case could have more political overtones than expected. Lekhi openly says: "This is not an ordinary murder trial." He goes on to complain that the charge-sheet levelled against his client stinks of political prejudice; it says that all the four accused "are Sikh by faith."

For Satwant's counsels, his confession does not seem to be very important. They have been concentrating on gathering material on the political background to the assassination and plan to "review" the entire Punjab problem during the course of the arguments. According to people close to them, they are already in possession of "explosive" documentary evidence by which they propose to show that the assassination was the result of the Punjab policy of the ruling party itself.

Meanwhile, the additional chief metropolitan magistrate of Delhi, S.L. Khanna has already extended the judicial remand of Satwant Singh and the two other accused, Balbir Singh and Kehar Singh to 11 March on the plea that they needed time to go through the 270 pages of case documents handed over to them at the Tihar Jail on 25 February. In this exercise Satwant will no doubt be assisted by his lawyers who have been seeing him regularly. During these meetings, they do not converse, but only exchange notes because one of Satwant's lawyers claims he saw a "bug" (a listening device) in the cell.

The trial will begin in late-March and will be held, in all probability, inside Tihar Jail. It is believed that the authorities may try and hold the trial "in camera." If that happens, Lekhi and the other lawyers will almost certainly challenge it. Sources close to the defence counsels of Satwant Singh say that they are not prepared to compromise on this issue. The trial, they insist, must be public, even if they have to construct a new entry-gate to the Tihar Jail.

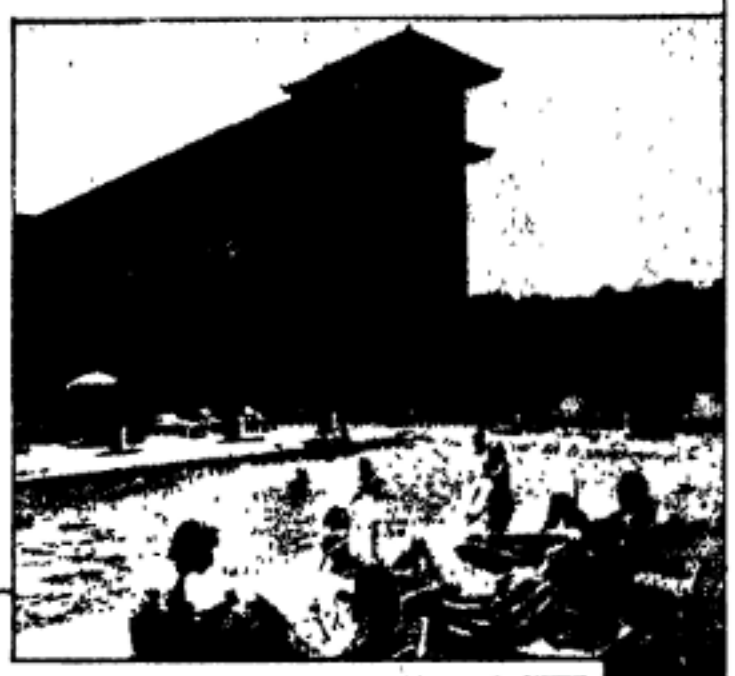
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NEW DELHI

The PM's New House

Six architects vie for the contract

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, still living in 1, Safdarjang Road, is soon to shift to a new house and is in the process of approving plans for his permanent residence. Though there were indications that the Prime Minister would shift to his temporary accommodation at 5 and 7 Race Course Road by the first week of February, and later, the first week of March, a visit to the site has made it clear that there may be further delay. Renovation is complete but the finishing touches and the interior decoration of the Prime Minister's house and office began only in late February.

Security personnel at 1, Safdarjang Road till then had not received any instructions about the Prime Minister's change of residence and weresurprised at the announcement by Congress(I) general secretary, Srikant Verma, that he would do so by 5 March. The Prime Minister himself was away on election tour and was scheduled to return to Delhi only on 6 March. Besides, the house had to be handed over to the family at least a week before for interior decoration.

Since 1, Safdarjang Road is going to be converted into a memorial for Mrs Gandhi, most of the furniture and fittings there will be left intact. According to indications, new furniture for the PM's residence will be provided by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and the wall hangings, paintings and *objets d'art* will be chosen by Mrs Sonia Gandhi who is taking a keen interest in the new house.

The renovation of the two bungalows has been done without much expenditure since the Prime Minister is expected to stay here only till 1987. At present, outside both the bungalows, now painted white, barricades have been erected and searchlights fixed on the roof. Armed guards equipped with walkie-talkie sets have already taken position all around the bungalows. The horticulture department of the CPWD has transported hundreds of flower pots and arranged them in the bungalow's lawns. Even in the selection of flowers and plants, the choice of the Prime Minister and his wife, both of whom are fond of gardening, was kept in mind. There is also a proposal to put up swings in the lawns for the Prime Minister's children. With most of the masonry and carpentry work over, there is an air of expectancy among the workers who have toiled round the clock for ten weeks.

Once the renovation and decoration of the PM's temporary house is finished, the CPWD and the works and housing ministry will begin work on the second phase of their operation. For the first time, a new house is to be constructed for an Indian Prime Minister. The site selected for the PM's permanent residence is close to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The polo ground of the President's Body Guard, at Willingdon Crescent is being cleared to construct an impressive residence and office complex. A reception area, VIP guest rooms, a board room and a servants wing will also be constructed.

An eagerly awaited announcement was the name of the architect who will design the PM's new house. It was rumoured that a national competition would be organised and architects all over India would be requested to contribute designs for the house, as in other important projects. However, contrary to expectations, a select few architects of the capital were contacted by the Prime Minister's office last month and were asked to submit proposals for the residence by 1 March. The architects were briefed by the Prime Minister himself about the logistical requirements and security constraints to be kept in mind.

The six architects who had been chosen for the important project are Satish Gujral, Sharad Das, Raj Sharma, Kanvinde and Associates, Raj Rewal and Associates, and Kothari and Associates, considered among the country's best architectural talents. Nevertheless, after the news that six architects had been asked to furnish the Prime Minister's office with models and designs of the new residence became known, other architects demanded why the competition was restricted to private architects of the capital. Prominent among those whose names were missing was Charles Correa, the only Indian to be recipient of the gold medal of the British Institute of Architects. Said one architect: "The selection of names has been done at random. No professional criterion has been considered. That is the reason why the name of Satish Gujral, who is a painter and has no qualification as an architect has been included."

The six architects in the mean time, are working overtime to submit their plans and models before the deadline. Each is keeping his design a closely-guarded secret and hoping to be the one to win the prestigious contract. The final decision will be taken by the Prime Minister himself, but the design will have to be cleared from the department of environment, urban arts commission, the intelligence Wing and city planning before the go-ahead can be given to the CPWD to commence construction on the house. For the next two years, all eyes will be on the now vacant plot of land at the polo ground which will house the Indian Prime Minister for several decades and will, like the Rashtrapati Bhavan, become a historic landmark.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi



The entrance to Rajiv Gandhi's new house on Race Course Road

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MEDIA

Independent Ventures

Will privately made TV films reflect political sympathies?

The surgeon who created history a few years ago by buying Menaka Gandhi's magazine *Surya*, is now starting a studio for producing television programmes. Dr J.K. Jain, a supporter of Rajmata Vijayraje Scindia of Gwalior and Sardar Angre, the former prime minister of Gwalior state, is by his own admission associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). By purchasing *Surya* from the then Prime Minister's daughter-in-law (Menaka Gandhi's troubles began with the *Surya* sale), Dr Jain, a successful medical practitioner, branched out into journalism. Now, he is on the threshold of entering the audiovisual media as well.

Dr Jain, and his wife, Dr Ragini Jain, run a successful nursing home in the capital's posh South Extension area. When N.T. Ramarao rushed to Delhi soon after his open heart surgery to protest against his unconstitutional dismissal, he stayed in Dr. Jain's nursing home and drove to the Rashtrapati Bhavan in an ambulance of the Jain Medical Centre. Any new venture by Dr J.K. Jain, therefore, arouses interest.

Doordarshan's decision to allow 100 private parties to produce TV programmes has prompted Dr Jain to jump into the fray. His studio is located in the Scindia villa—a sprawling 50-acre complex off Chanakyapuri. The owner of the premises is the Rajmata of Gwalior, a vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

What are Dr Jain's reasons for setting up such a studio? He explained that he wanted to introduce audio-visual technology in the field of medicine. In the studio, now nearing completion, he will produce TV and video films on education and medicine, to be telecast over Doordarshan and later sold abroad. "After some time, we can shift our attention to making entertainment films," Dr Jain added.

The construction of Dr Jain's studio has been kept a secret and visitors, even on request, are not allowed in. In fact, even Madhavrao Scindia, the minister of state for railways and the estranged son of the Rajmata was unaware that a studio was being set up in the Scindia Villa. "I though the place was being used for making pottery and ceramics," he said expressing surprise. (The Gwalior Potteries are located in the Scindia Villa).

The studio, which will produce films for the "Medical Television Company" (the name was suggested by Dr Jain) has, according to Dr Jain, been set up at a cost of Rs 50 lakhs. Though the studio was to be inaugurated on 26 January this year, he now hopes to commence production in early March. "Depending upon the success of the films and the usefulness of such films in India and abroad, I will decide on the future utility of the studio," he said.



J.K. Jain

The decision to allow the private sector into an area which has always been considered the preserve of the government has created a great deal of controversy. The first person who was granted permission to set up a sophisticated television studio was Dhirendra Brahmachari. Though Brahmachari had received a go-ahead to produce TV and video films on yogic research, it is widely known that the popular serial *Hum Log* telecast thrice every week on prime time, is being produced at Brahmachari studios at Silokera near Gurgaon.

It appears that the Doordarshan authorities have no control over the kind of programmes being produced by private companies. There is thus a grave threat of a misuse of the facilities being set up in the private sector. When Dhirendra Brahmachari and Dr Jain are among the private producers, the political links of the studio-owners may play an important part.

Both the studio projects of Brahmachari and Dr Jain have been shrouded in secrecy. Brahmachari himself is extremely sensitive about his studio, which he has set up at an enormous cost, after acquiring about 90 acres of agricultural land. The studio of Dr Jain is also the subject of speculation and curiosity. Workers at the studio claim that N.T. Ramarao is involved with the project and will be helping Dr Jain establish a first-class studio like the one he owns in Hyderabad. Dr Jain, however, strongly denied the rumour: "He (the chief minister) has nothing to do with the studio and perhaps does not even know such a project is being financed by me."

Another company which is producing TV programmes is the Independent Television Company (ITV). This private studio is owned by industrialist Sanjay Dalmia. The ITV had its first taste of success with a series of programmes on the recent general elections. The programme by the ITV on election night is estimated to have been watched by 40 million viewers. *Time* magazine, hailing the achievement of ITV in a recently-published story quoted journalist Rashid Talib: "I think ITV has started a revolution." However, according to Ashok Raina, chief executive of the ITV and another journalist turned-broadcaster, the revolution has yet to take off.

Raina explained that out of the 100 private parties approached by the government, only 25 came forward to actually set up video programme producing units like his own. According to him, both Brahmachari and now Jain are going ahead with their plans against the guidelines issued by the government. This is because all 25 companies were restricted to purchase equipment from the Gujarat Communication Electronics Limited (GCEL), which in collaboration with Sony, manufactures video equipment. Orders for importing sophisticated machinery from abroad are awaited. Complained Raina, "Brahmachari obtained the licence to import duty-free equipment under the garb of producing films on yoga, which have still not been aired. I wonder under what guise Jain has imported the equipment, for which we will be required to pay 200 per cent import duty."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

THE DAWOODI BOHRAS

A Struggle for Change

The crusade against the Syedna continues

Without any musical accompaniment, the voice sang softly in Gujarati, "*Ame Chalte Rahyan* (We marched on and on)" as the audience in the auditorium at Ahmedabad's Premabhai Hall listened in hushed silence. There was no anger, no menace in the words of the welcome song and yet it expressed and summed up the quiet Gandhian determination of the reformist movement in the Bohra community. The occasion was the first session of the fifth All World Dawoodi Bohra Conference where a record number of 800 delegates came to show their determination to fight against the authoritarianism of the clergy in the Bohra community.



A discussion during a seminar on "Women and Youth" Shukdev Bhachech

When the three-day conference was over, Asghar Ali Engineer, honorary general secretary of the conference, told SUNDAY, "The Ahmedabad conference will go down in our reformist movement history as a landmark." For the first time, the reformists' biennial gathering passed off very peacefully "We had feared violence but there was not even a demonstration masterminded against the reformists by the priesthood." Among the delegates who came to Ahmedabad were participants from various centres of the Bohra community in India who had come for the first time. Also present were people who had journeyed from far-off places in the UK, Sweden, Kuwait and Thailand. And what was more remarkable was that more than 300 of the delegates were women, the worst sufferers of the oppression of the priesthood.

If the Bohras came in large numbers there were also prominent non-Bohra citizens from all over the country to lend support. The former Gujarat chief minister, Babubhai Patel, summed up their attitude: "How can there be any question of not associating with the reformist Bohra movement because what they are fighting for is a fight not related to any religious demands? They are fighting for human dignity, social justice, rational approach and against exploitation, authoritarianism, terrorism and communalism." The oppression perpetrated by the clergy on the Bohras was not an oppression of a section of any sect but an oppression of a section of our Indian society, for authoritarianism either of the state or the clergy can never be tolerated in our nation." Supporters of the high priests in the Bohra community had earlier tried persuading Patel and other delegates like Mrs Hemlata Hegisthe, a noted social worker, from going to the reformist meet. Also attending the conference were Jinabhai Darji, the dissident Congress(I) leader, noted poet Uma Shankar Joshi, former judges V M. Tarkunde and Narendra Nathwani, former Tamil Nadu Governor Prabhudas Patwari and N. G Goray.

The conference is held once every two years to highlight the crusade of the reformist Bohras against the stranglehold of the clergy on their community. Their fight is now more than half-a-century old. It basically aims at securing freedom of opinion and conscience of the individual in a society where the words of the clergical establishment headed by Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin are more powerful than law. The reformists have been complaining of coercion by the priesthood culminating often in social boycott of the reformists; in 1979, a commission headed by Mr Narendra Nathwani, then a MP, had effectively brought out the woes of the Bohras. But thus far no protection has been given to reformists against the pernicious weapon of social sanctions.

"Social boycott is even worse than untouchability," said Engineer. Nobody is barred from talking to an untouchable but among our people a person victimised with *baraat* (social boycott) would be barred even from talking to his near and dear ones," he added.

The fifth conference called upon newly elected members of Parliament and legislatures in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal to unanimously adopt a legislation against the inhuman practice of social boycott still being freely practised by the orthodox clergy to persecute the reformists The reformists also wanted an account of all Bohra properties and incomes. It said that in addition to extracting crores of rupees from the community every year through levies, the priesthood was also busy bringing all charitable property belonging to the community under its absolute control Recently, a number of such charitable properties in Bombay were either disposed of or converted into commercial projects to line the pockets of a few. The conference quoted the Daut Bagh property and Safi high school building as two such instances.

Mr Engineer said that the struggle of the reformist Bohras was a struggle for change and not one against religion. Our correspondent, who spoke to a cross-section of the delegates, found that these were not mere empty words but formed the cornerstone of the reformist movement. Said a young delegate from Madhya Pradesh, Asghar Ali, "We should intensify our efforts against the orthodox clergy even by undertaking sacrifices. If entry to a place of prayer is denied or any other injustice perpetrated we should be prepared to enter these places and fight injustice at all costs." Said Imran Ali, an advocate who is more than a hundred years old, "The reformists should take recourse to legal action to expose the misappropriations and other deeds of the clergy." Ali, who is known as Vakil Saheb of Nagpur among the Bohras, has been fighting the oppression of the clergy since 1934. He had even presented



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CLARION C-ADCOM-1

his case in the privy council (before independence) in the cause of reformists. Mrs Zainax Poonawala, a woman delegate, asserted that the reformists were on the right path in opposing the oppressive tactics of the priesthood. Rashidah, yet another woman delegate, said that all those who took part in reformist activities faced harassment from the orthodox elements but that would not deter her or her family.

The conference adopted a five-point programme of action to intensify its agitation. The programme envisages peaceful *satyagraha* near Badri Mahal in Bombay and near the places of the Syedna's representatives, the *Amils* in other towns. The reformists will also organise a peaceful march in Delhi during a parliamentary session and organise boycott of payment of *zakat*, levies and other taxes imposed on the community by the clergy.



Asghar Ali Engineer — Shukdev Bhachech

What was the impact of the fifth conference on the Bohras themselves? Replied Engineer, "That the conference took place without any incidents of violence or even a demonstration indicates that the power of intimidation of the clergy was decreasing. We have always had the latent support of more than 80 per cent of the one million-strong Bohra community in the world. The Ahmedabad conference has come as a morale-booster because it would encourage many dormant supporters to come out in the open against oppression. Fear has been the key in the hands of the priests in maintaining their hold on the community. This fear has kept many people from speaking out. We hope in the next conference many more would come and speak up against the clergy establishment."

No one seems to know when they will finally succeed against the oppression but the crusade appears to be getting stronger with each passing year. One day it will become a whirlwind and uproot the strongholds of religious authoritarianism. With this hope, the reformists march on and on.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

ENERGY

Power From The Sun

Aircraft firm plans to sell non-conventional energy devices

A group of high-powered executives of McDonnell Douglas, the top aircraft manufacturing firm, have arrived in India. Their mission not to persuade the Indian Airlines or Vayudoot to buy passenger aircraft, but to sell, interestingly, in a totally unrelated field, some non-conventional energy devices.

More specifically, the McDonnell Douglas team met officials of the newly set-up Department of Non-conventional Energy Sources (DNES), the Rural Electrification Corporation and other public and private sector agencies trying to sell the "mini-grid" power generation concept using the solar dish panel mounted Stirling engines developed after nearly 12 years of research. The research alone cost 50 million dollars (Rs 48 crores) in research funds.

According to the McDonnell Douglas officials who were in Madras to participate in a workshop on new technologies and strategies for the power sector, organised by the Association of Indian Engineering Industry AIEI (southern region), it costs 25 million dollars (Rs 23 crores) to set up a complete facility to generate power equivalent of twelve-and-a-half megawatts (MW). This does not include the land cost necessary to set up the 500-odd dish shaped solar panels with their Stirling engines mounted at the centre of each.

The cost compares favourably with the cost of setting up a thermal power plant within the country. According to the state electricity boards, it costs anything between Rs 150 to Rs 190 crores for provision of 100 MW of power using the conventional thermal power plants. This compares well with the McDonnell system which costs a little over Rs 200 crores for the same amount of power "The overriding advantage is that the expense for the 'Stirling' type of power plant is that there are no recurrent costs except for maintenance purposes," said Mr Robert Powell, a member of the McDonnell team.

"A seven feet by seven feet surface of solar array could replace as much as 60 barrels of oil in terms of fuel use to generate the same amount of electricity, with no pollution effect," Mr Robert Powell said. This is one of the reasons why there is so much of interest in this type of technology. While the nuclear and the thermal power systems are state-owned, the non-conventional energy systems are entirely left with the private sector in the United States with the result that as much as 4,000 MW—equivalent to double the annual consumption of power in Tamil Nadu state is being generated in California alone by over 120 non-conventional energy systems, Mr Powell informed.

McDonnell Douglas had formed a joint venture with United Stirling of Sweden in 1983 to market Stirling engines and thermal electric systems. The company plans to tap India's domestic market and establish India as the base for the company's international marketing strategies to penetrate the South-East Asian markets. "Right now, there is enough demand for us to produce equipment capable of generating five MW of power It costs as much as Rs 40,000 for one kilowatt (KW) of power for the user which is definitely on the high side. However, once commercial production on a large scale gets established, the costs could be brought down to as little as Rs 20,000," Mr Powell added.

Even at this level, the energy could be costing four times the conventional form of energy for the Indian user. "This type of comparison could at best be a misnomer. We have to see the long-term benefits of such an energy programme rather than evaluate the economies at the initial stage itself. It is the question of availability of power," says K. Balagangadharan, a member of AIEI. According to him, in Tamil Nadu alone, as much as 30 per cent of the total power supply is absorbed by a million small pumpsets of five horse power and less. "It is this source that could be supplied with such a non-conventional form of energy. The conventional power supply to this sector is replete with huge transmission losses and high uncertainties," he added.

T. Raman, Madras

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RAJASTHAN

Caste War?

What made DSP Bhatti shoot Man Singh?

Was the Deeg incident an outcome of caste rivalry? The general feeling is that Kahn Singh Bhatti, the Rajput deputy superintendent of police (DSP) of Deeg killed Raja Man Singh since he was a Jat. But, in fact, it has little to do with the Jat-Rajput conflict. People relate this incident with the one which took place in Ajmer a couple of years back. Mr Bhatti was DSP, Ajmer, at that time. After a feud between two groups of college students, some Jat students complained to the police that their lives were in danger.

The day this complaint was lodged, Pradeep Chaudhary, a Jat student, was murdered. The Jat students launched an agitation in various parts of the state, especially in Ajmer district, demanding the arrest of KahnSingh Bhati. They alleged that Bhatti was responsible for the murder since he took no steps to protect Pradeep Chaudhary in spite of being aware of the danger to his life and a formal complaint. Subsequently, the DSP was recalled from the district and sent to the police lines.

A senior police official told SUNDAY that KahnSingh Bhatti is an officer who is easily drawn into controversies. While he was posted at Jaipur, a Sindhi died of a heart



Rioting in Deeg after the DSP shot Man Singh

attack when the police were trying to arrest him. It is alleged that the Sindhi died because of Bhatti's negligence. Similarly a few years ago, it was alleged that he was responsible for the burning of the Guru Granth Sahib in Raisingh Nagar. He was then suspended and kept away from active service for over a year.

In April last year, a woman was raped by two police constables in Kotputli which led to tremendous resentment in Jaipur and Alwar districts. When the district administration in Alwar sent an SOS for more police forces to contain the agitation, the services of KahnSingh Bhatti were also placed at its disposal. Bhatti was made incharge of the Khairthal area where he created more problems by resorting to uncalled for firings.

In Deeg too, he used more force than what was required. A police officer rightly said that for 24 hours after the state helicopter was damaged by Raja Man Singh, Bhatti sat in the Kotwali like a coward. At present, Kan Singh is under suspension and a CBI inquiry has been instituted to find out the truth. The state government has also ordered a judicial inquiry headed by Justice V.B. Giani of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

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without even a fan to come to your aid

Or you're a shop owner who has come face to
face with the unpleasant fact that no power
can mean no business, at peak festival time .

It's a lot worse in an operating theatre
where the cost of power failure is as dear
as life itself

Well, now things are going to be different.
Thanks to Birla-Yamaha

Enter the Little Genie

Birla-Yamaha generators will certainly help
bring some of the magic back to life
Appropriately, we've called our generator
the Little Genie At the turn of a switch it
puts power at your command When you
want it.. where you want it.

These generator sets with outputs ranging
from 0 5 to 4 KVA are ideal for homes,
clinics, shops, petrol pumps, banks, offices,
video parlours, outdoor film/video shooting units,
defence camps, mobile vans , almost anywhere

Putting quality and service together

With the Little Genie, compact, fuel-efficient
generators will be available for the first time
in India
Little Genie generator sets will be made to
the same standards that have set Yamaha
generators apart on the international scene

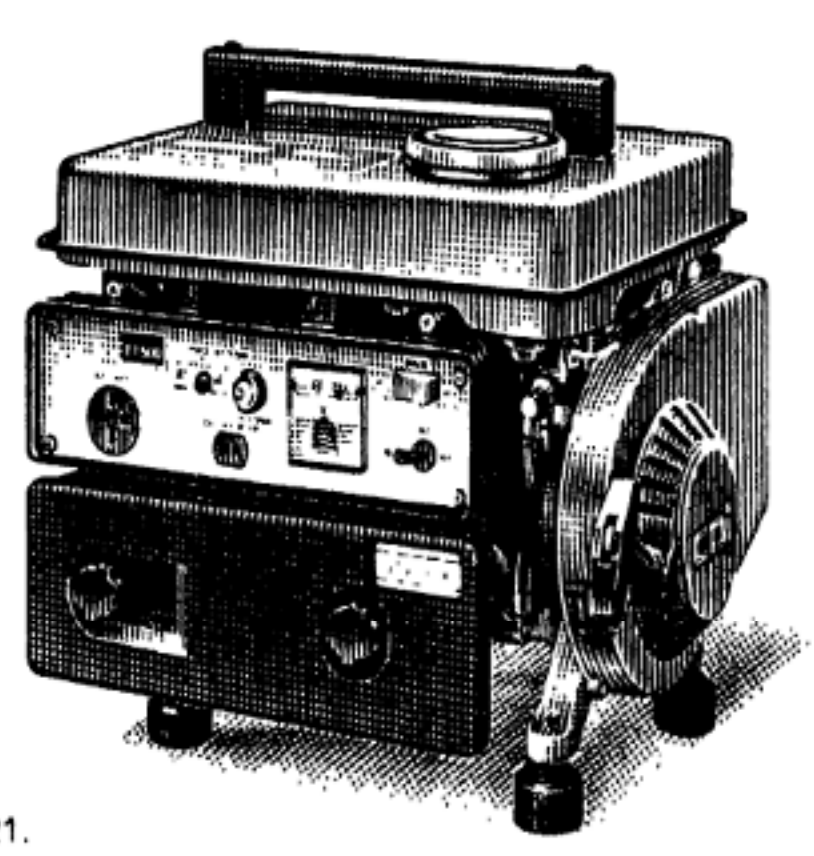
Now you can get Yamaha quality right here
at home Actually, you get a lot more than
international quality You get the confidence
of spares being available at any time
You get the advantage of efficient service
that's always on hand when you need it

Leave it to Birla-Yamaha

Yes, Birla-Yamaha is here to tackle one of
the larger problems that you are faced with today
Because while electricity is one of the biggest
boons of modern life, it has also spoilt us
a little We find it difficult to live without it
Even for a few hours
Well, now there is a standby From the
manufacturers who stand by their product

Birla-Yamaha

It's going to be a bright future ahead for all of us



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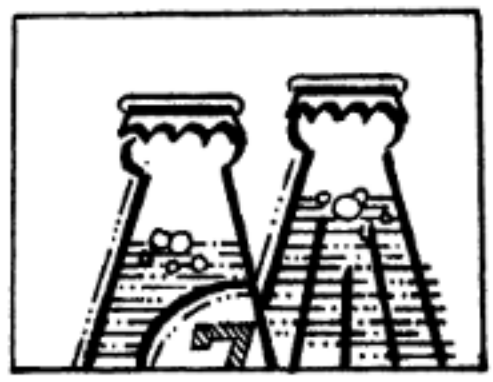
From the makers of

VITREOUS HINDUSTAN SANITARYWARE

2 Red Cross Place, Calcutta 700 001, India

SAA/SPF/7A 2

The French Love Soft Drinks



Chronic alcoholics in our country should take a cue from the French: their consumption of liquor is on the wane. Instead, more and more people in France are resorting to soft drinks like lemonade, cola and bitters. In a country where wine holds a pride of place, this piece of news is rather startling. Those between the ages of 15 and 25 years make up the main part of soft-drink buyers. For instance, consumption of fruit juice went up by 31.5 per cent between 1980 and 1981 and is continuing to grow. Sugar is the main ingredient of these drinks. Contrary to what one notices in different countries, particularly in the United States, in France, the only permitted sweetener is sugar (saccharose).

Spraying Pests with Virus

For the first time, scientists in Britain have developed a safe and effective way of controlling pests by spraying affected sites with a commercially produced virus agent. Its advantage is that it is an effective alternative to chemical agents and is also pollution-free. According to Prof. Glen Schaefer of the Cranfield Institute of Technology in eastern England, where much of the research has been carried out, the secret of the new method is to see that the virus agent is used against a particular pest in its larval form. Successful trials have been carried out in Scotland for a three-year period against the Pine Beauty moth whose larvae eat the new buds of the trees.

Sharks: Slow, Clumsy Fish



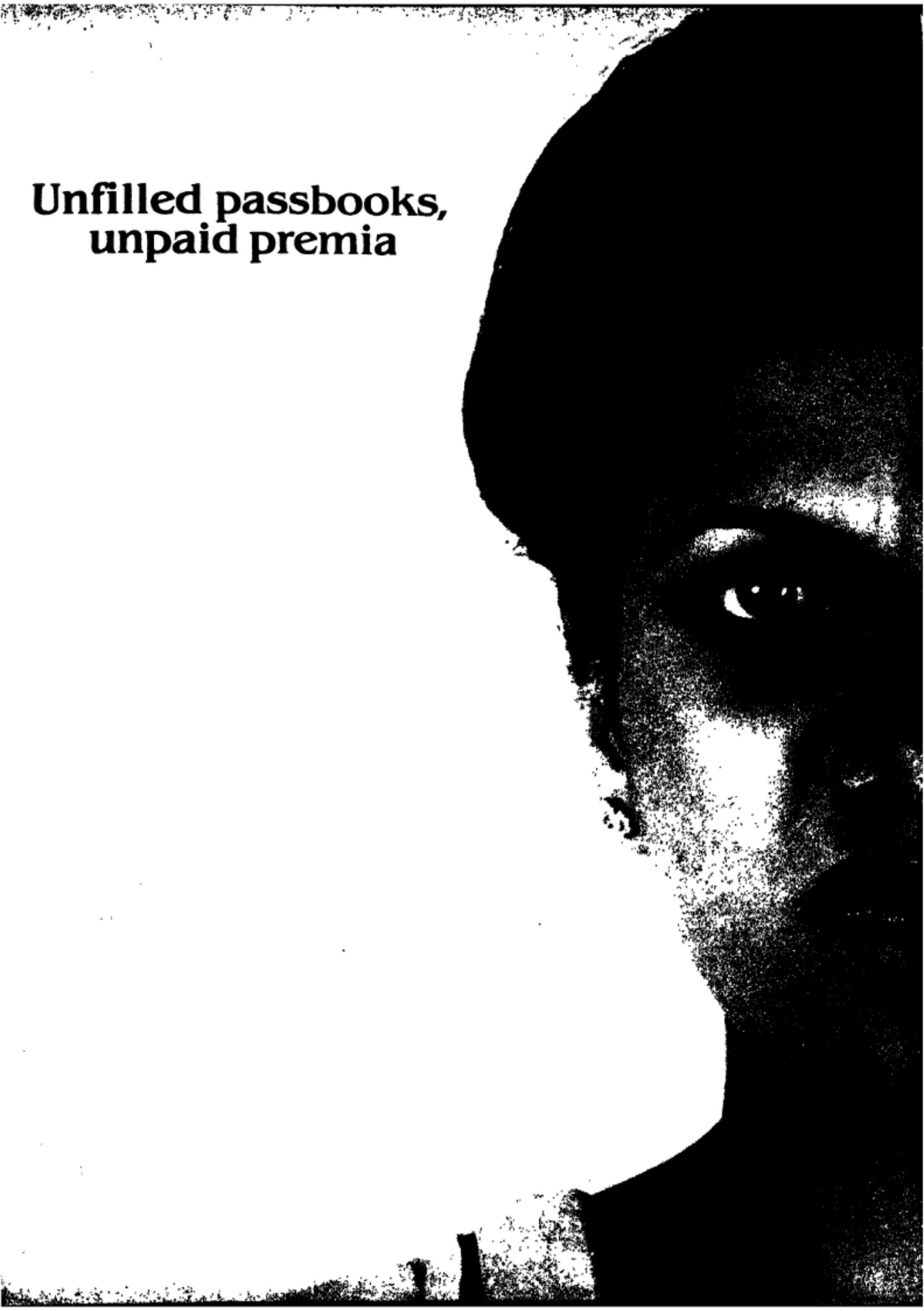
For those of you who have seen films like *Jaws* or the like, the image of the shark must be quite repelling: big, swift, dangerous killers. But the actual picture is different: they are big, slow, clumsy fishes. This is the view put forward by John McCosker, director of the Steinhart Aquarium at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, who recently studied sharks off Australia. McCosker also found out that the speed of sharks was less than three miles an hour.

Codeine Can Prove Addictive

Codeine, a drug used in compounds to treat coughs, can prove addictive. According to Prof. Hermann Roth of Tubingen, West Germany, codéine could be converted into morphium in the body by a process known as biotransformation; hence, an increasing number of teenagers are resorting to the drug. Up to 40 per cent of codeine, he said, could he transformed into morphium in the body.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

Unfilled passbooks, unpaid premia



VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debashis Deb

PUNE: On 15 February the Peshwa park here witnessed a unique spectacle: the "wedding" of three pairs of tigers. A pandit chanted *mantras* to signal the ceremony of the tigers and tigresses christened Amar, Akbar and Anthony and Ganga, Laxmi and Rukmini respectively. The four-and-a-half-year-old tigers and the two-and-a-half-year-old tigresses lolled in their "bridal" chambers oblivious of the scene outside. The host of the function—the municipal commissioner Mr Arun Bongirwar—was unwittingly prevented from reaching the spot by the milling crowds. The "wedding" was organised by the municipal corporation on its anniversary to create an awareness among the people about the necessity to preserve wildlife. A remarkable visitor to the function was an elephant with a mahout atop. It stood majestically at the entrance of the park, greeting the people—*The Times of India* (S. Kamneikhup, Bombay)

MADURAI: Television viewers in Madurai have gone back to the days of silent movies with the failure in the audio system since 14 February. The television programmes seen here are those telecast by the Delhi Doordarshan on the national hook-up and relayed by the Kodaikanal Relay Centre. The audio failure was caused by a minor repair in the relay equipment at Kodaikanal—*The Hindu* (Waheed Khan Bawadiwale, Hubli)

BOMBAY: Bus conductors, by the very nature of their job, have to deal with very tricky situations sometimes. Like the one in a 6 Ltd bus to Colaba recently. Six women who settled into the front seats of the bus at V. T. told the conductor in no uncertain terms that they did not intend paying their fare to Hutatma Chowk. They were joining a *morcha* at the chowk for more wages and could not afford tickets, they told him. The conductor did not lose his cool. He explained to them patiently that they would probably not mind spending time arguing with him or his superiors if he diverted the bus to a depot, but other commuters would be inconvenienced. Besides, if a ticket inspector caught them without tickets, his job would be in jeopardy. "If you have enough money among you to buy tickets, please buy them. After that I will donate Rs 10 for your cause from my wallet," he told them, offering them a ten-rupee note. That did the trick. The chastened group bought tickets and declined to accept the donation, despite the conductor's insistence—*The Times of India* (Urmila Dongre, Bombay)

BASTI: Candidates in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh are not asking for votes alone but also for a kilogram of flour. In the Khalilabad reserved constituency, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate, Mr Shiram Chauhan, goes from door to door not requesting for votes alone but also for a kilogram of flour. He returns with the entire collection to his office from new localities every day. Mr Chauhan said that he collects flour to provide meals to his party workers engaged in his election campaign—*Indian Express* (R. C. Goyal, Solan)

MADRAS: Ever heard of a public telephone from where you can make free calls? Such a phone exists in the city and that too at the GPO, thanks to the laxity on the part of the telephones department. The department personnel have not bothered to collect the 50 paise coins from the phone's coin chamber for days together. The result: it is so full of coins that the direct line has been kept open. All one now has to do is lift the receiver, dial the number and start the conversation. Don't bother to insert any 50 P coin; you just can't anyway—*Indian Express* (Ali Akbar Teherally, Madras)

WARANGAL: Fools rush in where angels fear to tread: this was rightly proved by a drunken rickshawpuller who had resorted to the foolhardy act of grabbing a crawling snake and eating it bit by bit when many stepped back in fear on seeing it near a toddy shop. Benumbed by an overdose of toddy, he began swallowing the snake which was writhing in his hand and followed it up with more ale. No sooner had he finished eating than he turned blue and swooned—*Indian Express* (G. Pradosh, Bangalore)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Pride and self-respect will be there when one stands on one's own legs and not when one runs after overdrafts—Rajiv Gandhi, ridiculing the talk of self-respect, the main plank on which NTR won in 1983

A Rajiv Gandhi can only be challenged by another Rajiv Gandhi. If there is none such at present, he will have to be created—M.V. Kamath in *Surya India*

If you support Rajiv Gandhi then you must vote for Janata and Ramakrishna Hegde—Vinod Mehta in *The Sunday Observer*

Since when have Congress ministers started owning "moral responsibility" for the sins of their subordinates?—L.K. Advani, on Shiv Charan Mathur's resignation, in *The Times of India*



I was providing escapism to the masses, and now I have to fight against the very reasons for which I was providing the escapism—Amitabh Bachchan in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

We are not usurpers—Gen Zia-ul Haq, quoted in *The Telegraph*

We will fight for the competence of Indians. They've demonstrated competence. They're in the space age. They're in the nuclear age. They're very capable people—Warren Anderson, Union Carbide chairman, quoted in *The Telegraph*

When the public votes a Rajiv Gandhi to power you accept it. But when the same population supports Hema Malini or Amitabh Bachchan, you look down upon their choice—Mahesh Bhatt in *Filmfare*

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ULKA-HKB-CU-2

BEGINNING 10 MARCH 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a week of mixed fortunes On the financial front you might suffer reverses. The domestic front will add to your worries One of your close relatives may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden. However, things look bright on the professional front This is also a favourable period for those in love and intending to get married Watch your health.
Good dates: 10, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: South



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is an extremely lucky phase for lovers. you can go ahead with marriage plans. Financially this is a bright period and some of you may even gain money or property through an unexpected source. Friends and relatives will prove very helpful Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway Those above the age of 45 should keep a vigilant eye on their health and diet
Good dates: 11, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Financially, this is a bleak period and you may have to draw upon your savings to see you through this phase. However, this is an excellent week for those in love. The period is equally favourable for those in service: you are likely to receive a transfer order. This is also a good time for singers and performing artists. Your health will show signs of improvement.
Good dates: 11, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: South



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) The stars foretell a bleak period for all of you Enemies will be active during this phase and one of your close friends will be working to embarrass you The economic front is equally disheartening and you may have to borrow money to tide over this period Your health will steadily deteriorate Lovers are advised to avoid adventurous plans. Take care of your diet.
Good dates: 14, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North-east



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This week domestic problems will keep you occupied but do not neglect your work Do not take hasty decisions regarding your career Businessmen should be wary of deception However, the period is favourable for love and matrimonial negotiations The financial prospects are also bright but do not be extravagant Your health will improve markedly during this phase.
Good dates: 12, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Prospects are bright for businessmen this week do not hesitate to undertake risky ventures. Lovers will find their parents in a compromising mood Friends and relatives will keep you busy during the week-end. However, professionals will find the going rough. Students are advised to avail of the opportunities that come their way Watch your health closely
Good dates: 10, 12 and 13
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This week you will get an opportunity to change your career do not take hasty decisions and consult your elders before finalising plans. Your financial prospects look bright. The domestic front will also remain inspiring This is the opportune time to carry out marriage negotiations A letter will bring good tidings. However, do not overstrain yourself
Good dates: 12, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) A week of mixed fortunes lies ahead of you The domestic front will continue to bother you Friends and relatives will be working to embarrass you On the professional front you may come in for severe criticism from your employers Businessmen too will pass through difficult times. However, this is an ideal time to get married.
Good dates: 10, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) There is good news for those of you who are unemployed: a job is in the offing. Students intending to go abroad for higher studies will also benefit from this lucky period The domestic front will remain calm Your financial status will improve some of you may even win a lottery But this is not a favourable period for lovers.
Good dates: 13, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: South-west



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Professionals are advised to be tactful while dealing with their superiors Businessmen too should be cautious in their dealings with customers Financially this is not a good week and you may have to borrow money to tide over this period The domestic front will add to your worries However, the period is favourable for courtship and marriage negotiations
Good dates: 10, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: East



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Success in all your activities is a surety for most of you this week Businessmen will bag lucrative contracts while a promotion cannot be ruled out for those in government service The domestic front will be a source of inspiration The stars shine brightly on the economic front But do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 13, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers: 3, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is a lucky week for professionals: chances of going abroad are bright. Businessmen can materialise expansion plans If you have legal problems relating to property, this is the right time to settle it. The domestic front will remain inspiring This is also a favourable phase for courtship. Those above the age of 45 should be careful about their health.
Good dates: 10, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: East

For those born on the 11th, 12th or 13th of many month:

Most of you are short-tempered by nature If you can curb your temper you will do well in life. You have a commanding personality and can easily influence people. Friends and relatives look upon you for advice. Most of you are also ambitious and you will do well if you join politics or the administrative services. Women born during this period are sociable by nature and they make good housewives.

VARIETY

CHESS

Game of the month

The term 'grandmaster draw', which alludes to the outcome of the meeting of two minds commonly indisposed towards combat, should be distinguished from a draw between grandmasters. Indeed if one ever has the opportunity to examine the games from a tournament bulletin in depth, it will quickly become clear that some of the most interesting and illuminating ideas are buried in these all too quickly forgotten peace treaties. I give a typical example of such a game, rich in ideas and only lacking a positive result.

White: Andersson. Black: Adorjan. Wijk aan Zee 1984. Queen's Indian Defence.

1 N–KB3 P–QB4 2 P–QB4 P–QN3
3 N–B3 B–N2 4 P–K3 N–KB3
5 P–Q4 PxP 6 PxP P–K3
7 P–QR3

This move is held to give White an edge, threatening as it does P–Q5 without allowing the counter . . . B–N5. Black must commit himself prematurely.

7 . . . P–Q4 8 B–N5 B–K2

Adorjan (Black) to move



Andersson (White)

9 BxN BxB 10 PxP DIAGRAM

Posing problems. If 10 . . . PxP 11 B–N5+ or 10 . . . BxP 11 NxB QxN 12 Q–R4+ with discomfort in either case. Adorjan finds a dynamic and wholly unexpected solution to his difficulties.

10 . . . 0–0! 11 PxP PxP
12 B–B4 N–B3! 13 BxP+ K–R1

Suddenly White is in a quandary with two extra pawns and a tottering position. To risk 14 P–Q5 N–K2 15 P–Q6 BxN+ 16 PxB N–N3 followed by . . . N–B5 would be insane, so material must be returned.

14 0–0 NxP 15 NxN BxN
16 B–Q5

A sensible decision forcing a draw. Against two such bishops White's remaining extra pawn offers no real prospects of success while obliteration might lurk round any corner.

16 . . . BxN 17 BxB BxP
18 BxR BxR 19 B–K4 QxQ
20 RxQ B–B3 21 P–QR4 R–Q1
22 RxR+ Draw agreed.

An enterprising and instructive miniature.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

If it is not too early in the morning, see how you would have fared with this hand:

Dealer South Game all

♠ J 10 8 6
♥ 6 3
♦ K 10 7
♣ A K Q 4

♥ 7 led

♠ A K Q 9 3
♥ A Q 4
♦ J 9 6 4
♣ 3

A fairly optimistic auction might go:

South	*North*
1♠	2♣(1)
2NT	4♠
6♦(2)	No

(1) A trifle under strength for a force, according to modern ideas, North plans a delayed game raise.

(2) Sensible enough!

West leads a heart and you win with the ace. Trumps fall in two rounds. You cash the queen of hearts and ruff a heart, on which East discards a diamond. On the fourth round of clubs East again shows out. You ruff and now have to take a view in diamonds, holding J 9 opposite K 10 7.

Well, it won't be a good view! The point is that East has turned up with precisely two spades, two hearts and three clubs. So he must hold *all* the diamonds. The full hand was:



♠ J 10 8 6
♥ 6 3
♦ K 10 7
♣ A K Q 4

♠ 5 4 — ♥ J 9 8 7 5 2 — ♦ — — ♣ J 9 7 6 2 — ♠ 7 2 — ♥ K 10 — ♦ A Q 8 5 3 2 — ♣ 10 8 5

(N / W E / S)

♠ A K Q 9 3
♥ A Q 4
♦ J 9 6 4
♣ 3

All you had to do – if you were counting – was discard another diamond on the fourth club, knowing that West would then be forced to give you a ruff-and-discard.

My book **The Expert Game**, a strong runner for 30 years, is published for the first time in paperback (Robert Hale, £2.95).

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. How is poly (cellulose nitrate) more commonly knows as?
2. The work on the Qutb Minar in Delhi was begun during the reign of Qutbuddin Aibak. Who finally completed the monument?
3. Name the Latin American novelist who won the Nobel Prize for literature for his book *A Hundred Years of Solitude?*
4. When did All India Radio begin the Vividh Bharati service?
5. What is Stygiophobia the fear of?
6. What do the following have in common: Farmer, Fishbed, Flogger, Foxbat, and Fulcrum?
7. What is the name given to the single continent wich existed on earth around 200 million B.C., before it broke up to form the present continents?
8. *Reach for the Sky* is a biography written by Paul Brickhill about a famous legless pilot who fought in the Battle of Britain during World War II. Name him.
9. *Steamboat Willie* is the most well-known film of which famous film-star?
10. *Running Commentary* is the autobiography of which top British athlete?
11. Where in Norse mythology, do the gods live?
12. What is acarology?
13. Which Indian cricketer is nicknamed Jimmy?

ANSWERS

1. Celluloid
2. His successor Iltutmish.
3. Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
4. 3 October 1957.
5. The fear of hell.
6. They are all code names of Russian fighter aircraft. Farmer is MiG-19, Fishbed is MiG-21, Flogger is MiG-23, Foxbat is MiG-25, and Fulcrum is MiG-29.
7. Pangaea.
8. Douglas Bader.
9. Mickey Mouse.
10. David Moorcroft.
11. Asgaard.
12. The study of lice or tics.
13. Mohinder Amarnath.

"The utmost economy has to be exercised in the use of petrol, petroleum and diesel products.

Energy Audit should become an annual feature of the activities of all major industrial enterprises."

Conservation. Is it time to legislate?



ULKA D PCRA-058 1

We were warned that several species of wildlife would soon become extinct But civilization did not listen We were warned about deforestation but we still cut trees We were warned of the dangers of air and water pollution But civilization didn't listen

The Panda and a drop of oil

The illustration in this advertisement presents a Giant Panda cupping a drop of oil An animal almost extinct saved because mankind came to its senses almost too late, reminding us about something else that is on its way to extinction

Legislation was the only way mankind could safeguard wildlife and prevent deforestation and pollution

Is the same necessary for petroleum? Is it too early? Or is it already too late?

A champion for conservation

You're probably wondering who made the statement in inverted commas, on the left It was made by our late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi on October 11th, 1980 when she handed over India's first two indigenous offshore oil platforms She was a great believer in conservation and she never lost a moment to remind us that it is a cornerstone in any energy programme

What is "Energy Audit"

Energy Audit is sane and necessary It is not a step back but a logical step forward What it implies is that we should use fuel efficiently And to make sure we do this we have to inform our consumer, our country and the world how much energy was used to make something or to carry out a process

In Japan, for instance, Energy Audit has been in practise for years You can turn over a cup and saucer in Japan and find out how many units of energy were used to produce them

Time is running out for petroleum

Every year Rs 800 crores are lost because of carelessness or "taken-for-granted" wastage in the use of petroleum . petrol, diesel, kerosene, cooking gas and fuel oils

Is it time to legislate against this wastage? Or should we wait? Just like we waited with the Giant Panda or our lush green forests Give it a thought

Let's give our scientists a fighting chance

All over the world work is on to find new sources of energy and to make renewable sources of energy viable on a mass scale. This kind of effort, however, takes time If we work at conservation and allow petroleum to last 30 years longer the transition to a new source could be smooth. If we don't we may not have an energy source in between

"Thank You"

PCRA wants to thank you for the efforts you have made to help petroleum last longer Today we are proud of the fact that together we are saving Rs 100 crores per annum for India by following a few simple 'tips" and guidelines for the efficient utilisation of petroleum It was only possible through team work.

If you are not part of the team get in touch with us today

P C R A

Petroleum Conservation Research Association

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New Delhi-110 008

PCRA is a Government sponsored organisation and a representative of India's petroleum companies in areas related to conservation

PCRA's four major conservation targets are the Industrial, Agricultural, Domestic and Transport sectors

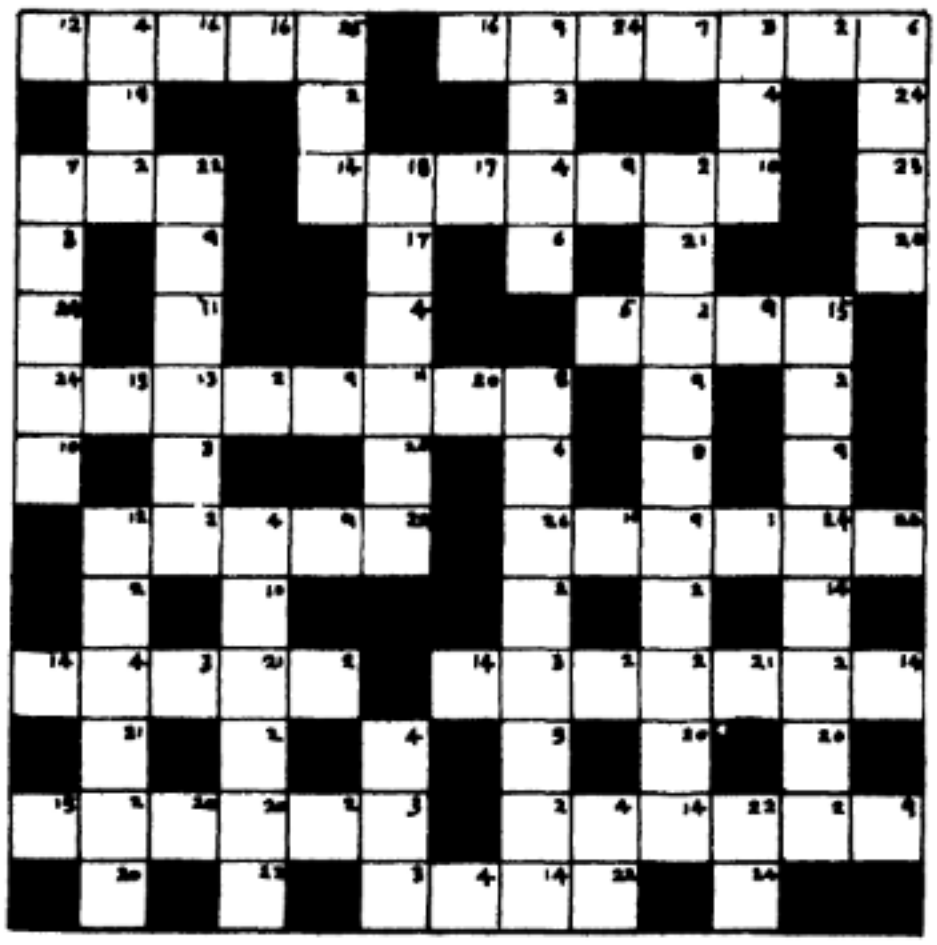
PCRA's services are free Savings achieved by PCRA through conservation exceed Rs 100 crores per annum

Oil isn't going to last much longer. Use it with wisdom.

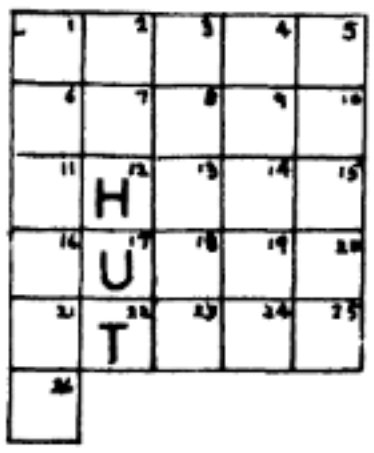
TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



REFERENCE GRID



Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start, three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Word Power



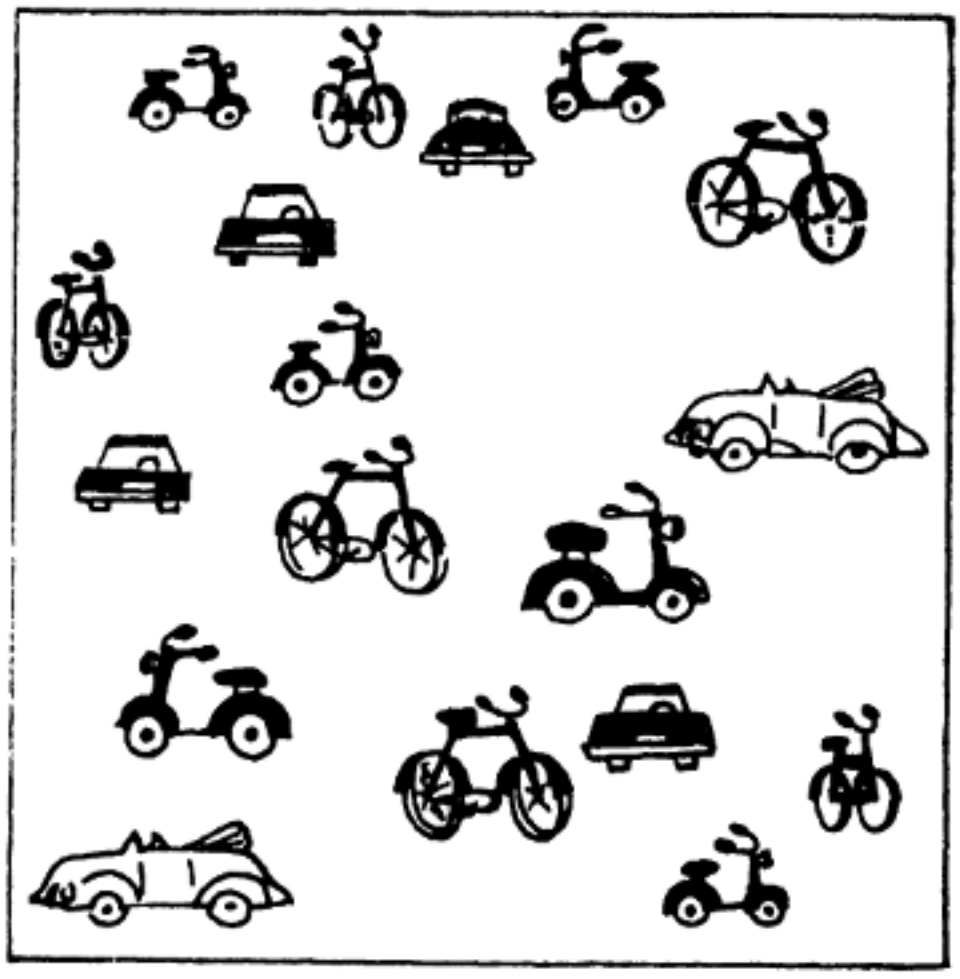
Can you boomerang right back in 6 steps? What you have to do is to take the last three letters of each word and start a new word with them. For example, if the first word had been PESTER, it could have been followed by TERMINAL. To make the path easier, we have given you the number of letters in each word to get you back from BOOMERANG to BOOMERANG. However, you are welcome to ignore these blanks and use different words.

Blankagrams

There is AN explanation for the man's behaviour, insisted his friend. He saw the crowd and-----to join it. When he came-----he was suddenly surrounded by a group of people who as good as caught him in a-----. Though he struggled he could not escape, and finally the police picked him up. But he is innocent. Idle curiosity was the------for his being near the site of the crime, not------.

This is a progressive anagram. Add one letter to the initial word (all capitals) and rearrange these letters to fill the first blank. Then add another letter to this word and rearrange to fill the second set of blanks. And so on.

Figure it Out



Here is an assortment of motorbikes, bicycles and scooters. Can you draw 3 straight lines to divide the area up into six sections each containing a motorbike, a bicycle and a scooter?

Blockbuster

Fill in the ten letters given below to form eight four-letter words reading downwards. To help you out we have already placed two of these letters in the blank pyramid.

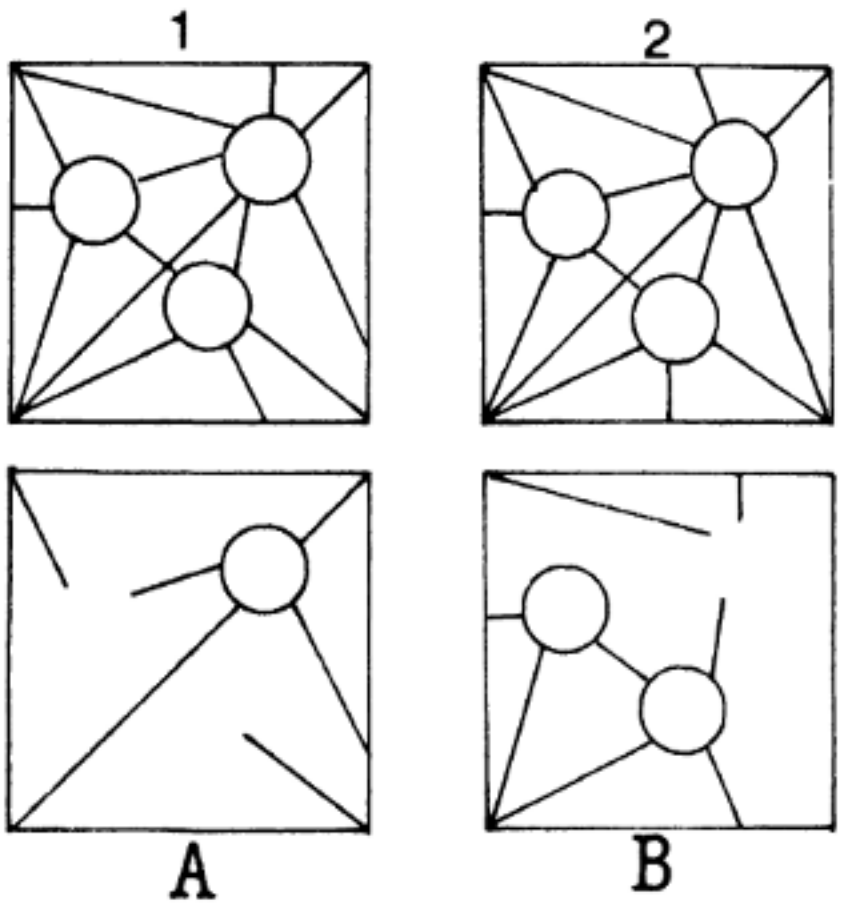


R,E,T,E,A,L,D,C,O,N

What's in a Word

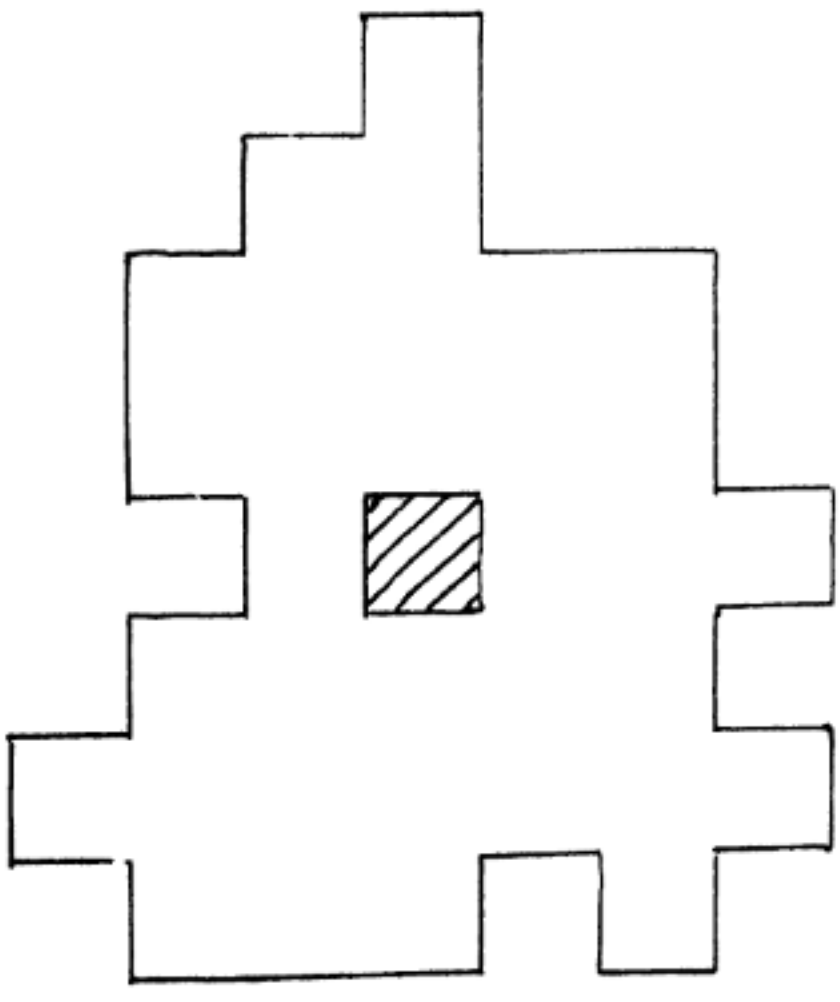
Can you say what these are?
a) a Chinese can
b) a can that covers you
c) a can in Panama
d) a musical can
e) a card playing can
f) a deep, deep can.

Quick Think



If A is superimposed on B, will it produce 1 or 2?

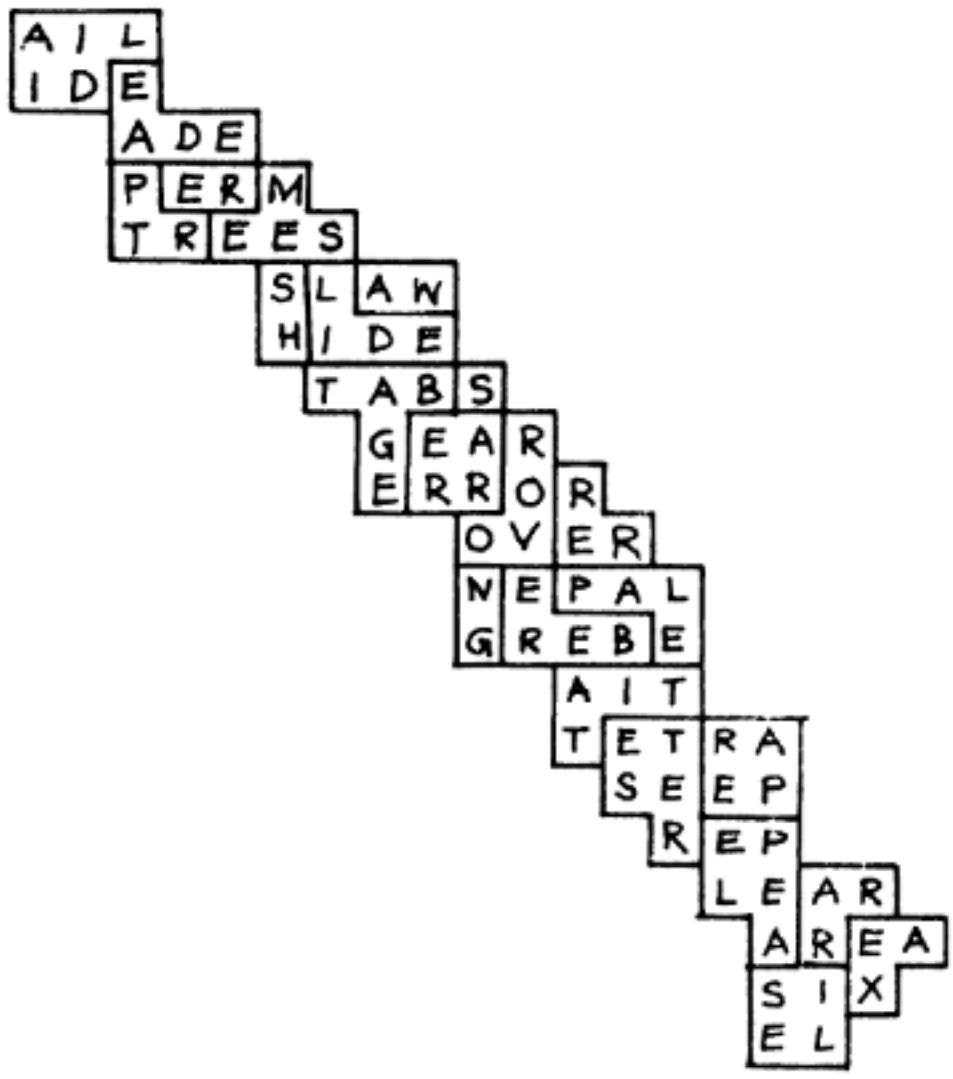
Shape Sleuth



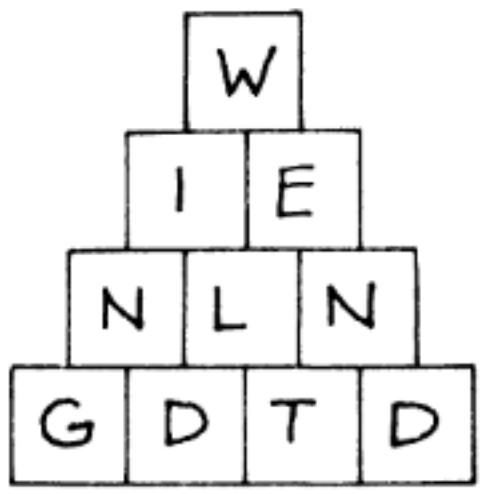
This odd shaped floor needs to be covered completely with tiles. It will need 11 tiles of exactly the same shape and size. Can you work this out and cover the area?

Solution to last week's Teasers:

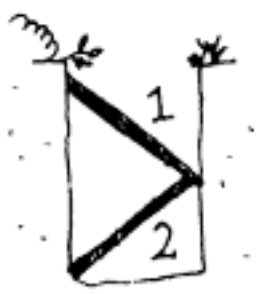
Figure it out:



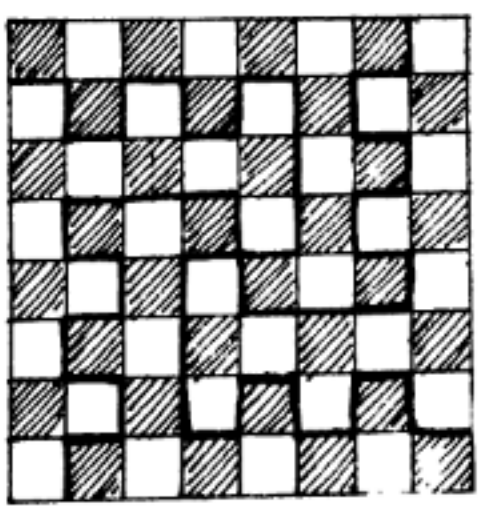
Blockbuster:



Quick Think:



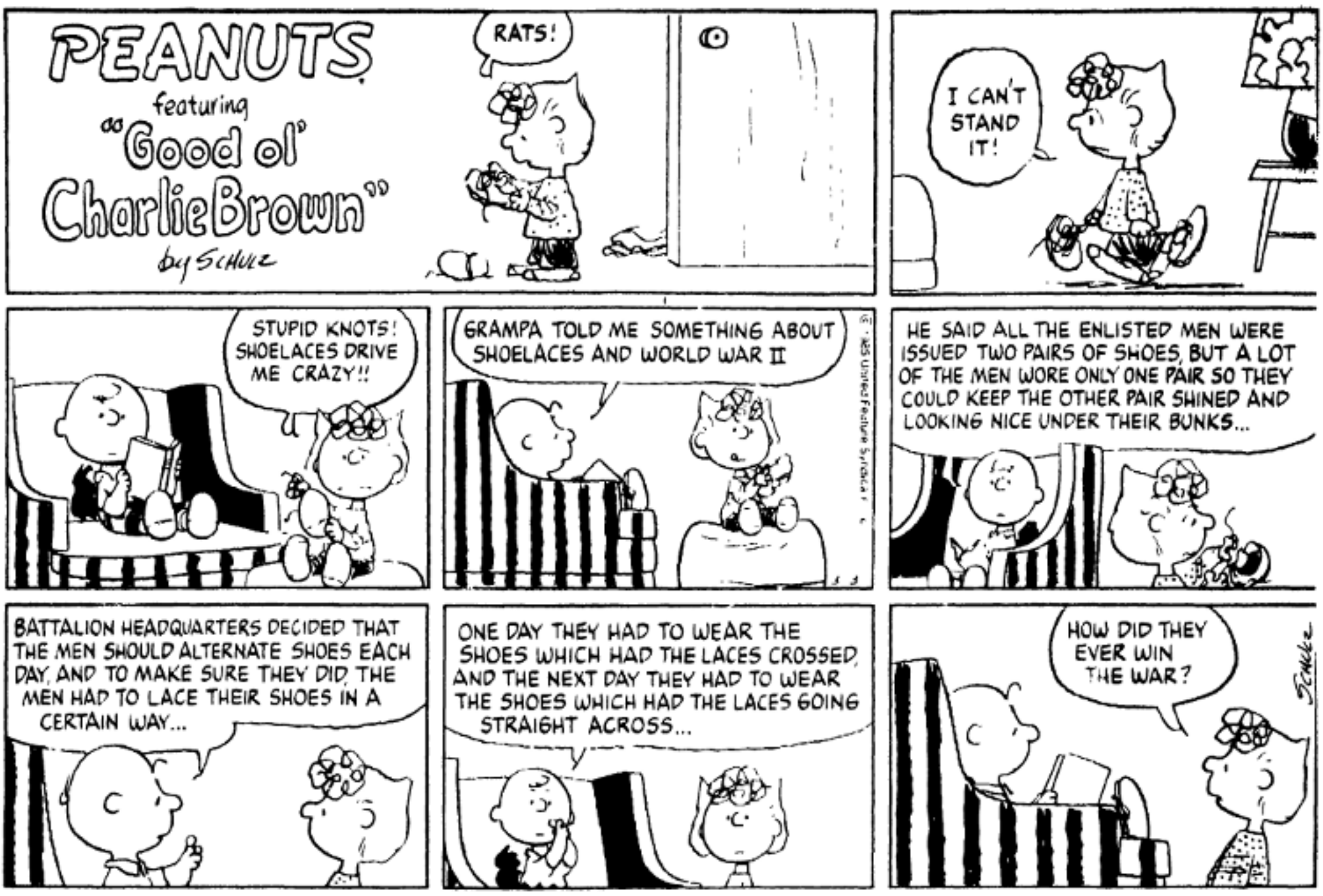
Shape Sleuth:



Word Power: The ten pairs are: Black bile, chilly hot, dry ice, entirely broken, holy war, inside boundary, jumbo prawns, truly false, war games, white chocolate.

Model Mix-up: DI and LIV can both be read as roman numbers, as also MIX.

Wit Sharpener: Meenie Wadhwa dealt in object d'arts and lived in the cottage by the sea; Eenie Uptown, worked with stained glass and lived in a flat and Mynah Osman embroidered and lived in a bungalow.



SCIENCE

Wanted: A Potassium-rich Diet

The latest recommendations for a healthy diet: orange and grapefruit juice, bananas, melons, mushrooms, skimmed milk, potatoes and nearly all vegetables. These foods are rich in potassium. Dr Louis Tobian of the University of Minnesota thinks that a lack of potassium damages the arteries and is responsible for the prevalence of heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

Prehistoric peoples got most of their food from roots, nuts and fruits, supplemented by the occasional kill of game or fish. Their bodies became extremely efficient both at conserving sodium and getting rid of potassium. With the start of crop growing about 10,000 years ago, diets became rich in sodium and low in potassium.

As evidence that hunter-gatherer societies subsisted on sodium-low, potassium-rich diets Dr Tobian points to the high vegetable content of petrified human faecal matter discovered at prehistoric sites and to the diets of remaining pockets of Stone Age man—such as Amazonian Indians, Kung bushmen of the Kalahari desert, African pygmies and Solomon Islanders.

A relationship is also claimed between specially low potassium diets and susceptibility to hypertensive kidney failure and stroke. These diseases take a disproportionate toll on poor blacks in the south-east United States, who consume only about a sixth as much potassium as most Americans.

Coincidence? Experiments on strains of rats, which become hypertensive or stroke-prone when fed amounts of salt comparable to those consumed by humans, suggest not. Dr Tobian and his colleagues did not find that potassium reduces blood pressure, but that the ability of blood vessels to handle a given pressure seems to be enhanced.

In one experiment, some hypertensive rats were given extra potassium and some were not. After ten weeks, 55 per cent of the non-supplemented rats were dead but only four per cent of the others. When survivors of both groups were killed, autopsies produced further evidence of the protective effect of potassium. Extreme thickening of the artery walls—a response to high blood pressure and a contributor to strokes and kidney failure—was apparent only in the rats that had not received extra potassium.

Dr Tobian told the American Heart Association's meeting in Monterey that prehistoric man typically got ten grams or one-third of an ounce of potassium supplements in his daily diet. Short of potassium supplements in pill or liquid form, which he does not advocate for the healthy, modern people cannot expect to do so well.

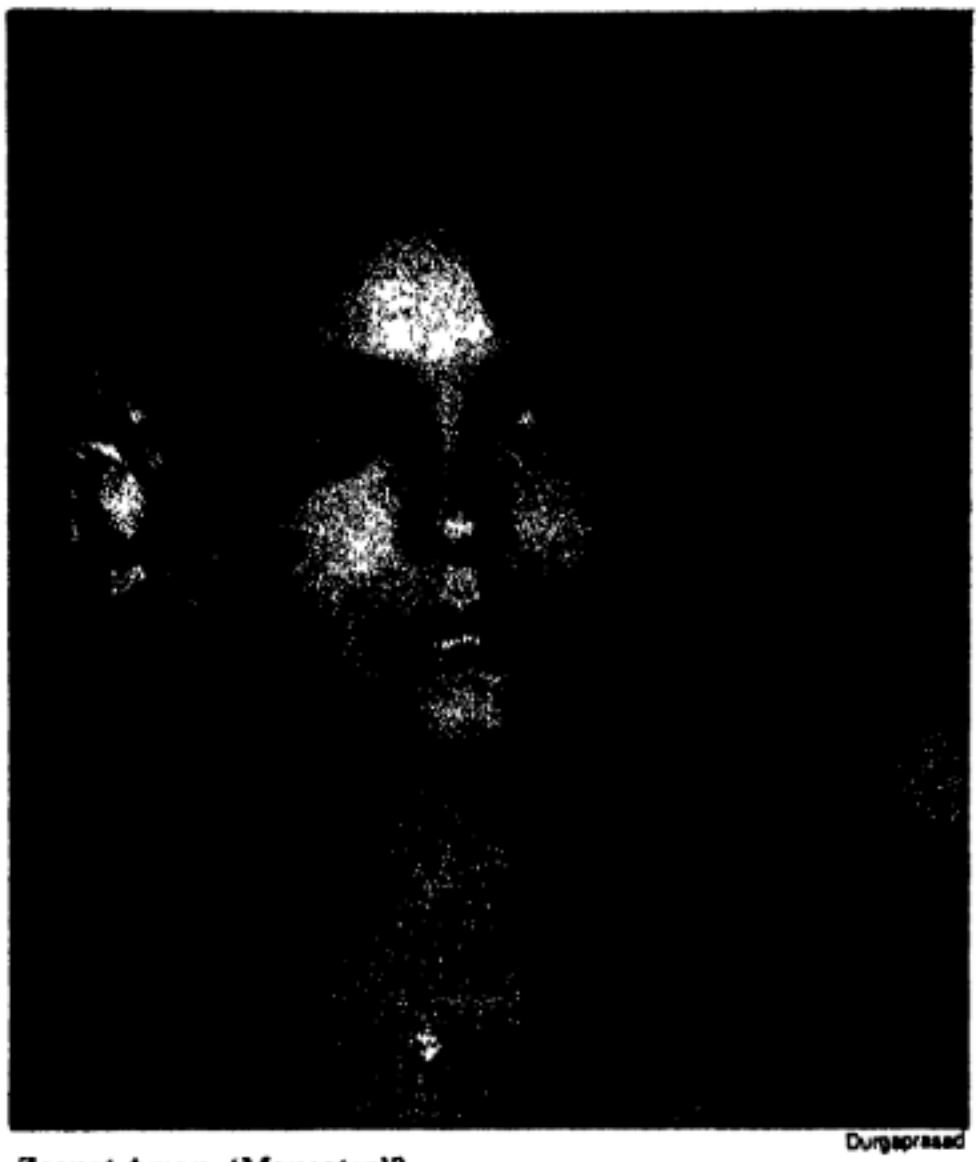
Nonetheless, he believes that a worthwhile five grams a day can just be attained by prudent eating. Two notes of caution. Processed tomato juice, while rich in potassium, is too heavily salted to be a good bet. And potatoes should be baked. Their potassium leaches out into the water if they are boiled.

By arrangement with The Economist

Producers are vying with each other to get *Anooradha Patel* to sign up for their films. But she is not willing to please them. It all started with *Love in Goa*, her first film, where the producers wanted her to reveal her curves. But Anooradha would have nothing of it. They wanted her to take off most of her clothes in *Phir Ayee Barsaat* but she refused again. However, the wily director found a way out. He made her dress in white and drenched her to the skin. In the next film, *Shashi Kapoor* and *Girish Karnad* made Anooradha take off her blouse. "If an actress like Rekha can do it, why can't you?" they argued. In *Patthar*, she did some provocative scenes with *Om Puri* and the film was banned. Poor Anooradha, her body is the cause of all her problems.

The two MPs, *Sunil Dutt* and *Amitabh Bachchan*, are busy fighting on two fronts. On one flank they have to keep off the producers who want both of them to complete the films they have in their hands and on the other they have to attend to their electorates. The voters of Bombay and Allahabad want their MPs to do what has not been done for the last 37 years. "It is going to be difficult. They want water and electricity and houses overnight. They want us to work miracles. We are also human beings. We can't perform miracles. We can only work very hard for the people who have put all their faith in us," said Amitabh Bachchan.

Parveen Babi has been located somewhere in New York. She lives in an apartment with some good friends and she is trying hard to forget her past. Parveen is determined not to come back to Bombay or the filmworld again.



Durgaprasad

Zeenat Aman: 'Maneater'?

It is difficult to keep track of the men who walk in and out of *Zeenat Aman's* life. While gossip magazines have a field day reporting Zeenat's off-screen activities, there are people in the industry who constantly refer to her as a "maneater": a term which means many things to many people. First, there was *Dev Anand*, the man who discovered her. She became involved with many people thereafter but her affair with the handsome Pakistani cricketer *Imran Khan* hit the headlines. There were talks of the two getting married but everything fizzled out almost as soon as it had started. Just when scribes were resting their pens, Zeenat went and married *Sanjay Khan*, a man who was not only married but a father of four children. The torrid affair lasted for a brief season. Soon she met *Frank Norino* in America, while shooting for *Hrishikesh Mukherjee's Namumkeen*, and even dreamt of getting married to him. But even that affair came to an end.

However, according to very reliable sources, Zeenat has not been pining over her broken love affairs. She is now being courted by an Arab multi-millionaire. What next, Zeenat?



Ashok Bose

Parveen Babi: forgetting the past

Kumar Gaurav has just returned from his month-long honeymoon abroad and is only too willing to concentrate on his career again. Accordingly, he has decided to start all over again and has sent feelers to filmmakers. And what is surprising is that Kumar is now willing to work under any conditions. "Only the role should be good," he is believed to have said. That is surely a comedown for the star-son who was demanding anything between Rs 20 and Rs 22 lakhs for a film after *Love Story*. For just Rs one lakh, Kumar signed up for *Aaj* directed by Mahesh Bhatt. *Rajendra Kumar*, Kumar's father, is certain that it is only Mahesh Bhatt who can boost the sagging career of his son. And if rumours in this tinsel city are true, then the senior Kumar has done a worthy job by pressurising his son to get off his high horse.

DELHI DIARY

A Ministry for Women?


Sandeep Sharma

Mohsina Kidwai


Sandeep Sharma

Yogendra Makwana

The new government's desire to promote women has not only resulted in the creation of a new ministry for women but another ministry has now become woman-dominated. The health and family welfare minister is Mohsina Kidwai and the reshuffle of secretaries has brought Sarla Grewal as the new secretary. This leaves the minister of state, Yogendra Makwana, cornered. He is in a ministry which is dominated by women

Bulldozer for Ram Lall?

Ram Lall, the former Andhra Pradesh Governor, who demolished all democratic principles last year while dismissing the government of N.T. Ramarao and installing defector Bhaskara Rao (with Congress-I support) is facing the bulldozer now. The Shimla municipality has served him a notice, declaring certain portions of his house as being "unauthorised construction." The notice was served recently and the former chief minister of Himachal Pradesh and the ex-Governor has taken the plea that as he will be away in Delhi for a while, the notice be kept pending. It is unusual for a person of influence like Ram Lall to receive such municipal warnings. But the clean image of the government, which has become a creed in New Delhi only recently, had affected Shimla earlier when Veer Bhadra Singh was made the chief minister replacing Ram Lall. The unauthorised constructions in the state capital alarmed V.B. Singh and he looked around for an honest officer who could clean up the mess. The choice fell on D.S. Minhas, a police officer who had investigated the forest scandal which had roped in relatives of Ram Lall while he was the chief minister. Minhas found to his dismay that houses of VIPs violated the rules. He went to V.B. Singh for clearance, which was granted immediately. Thus the demolition threat has been held out to Ram Lall.

Welcome Reversal

Finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh has spelt doom for many vested interests who had thrived during the regime of his predecessor. Recently, he streamlined the customs duty structure on the import of polyester yarn and thus busted the monopoly of some big industrialists, who had been benefitting from the policies brought in during Mr Mukherjee's time. The small crimpers, who had been hard hit by the duty structure, came to Delhi with a petition for V.P. Singh in the middle of February. They went back to Bombay somewhat disappointed when the minister did not meet them. What they did not appreciate was that the finance minister's office had politely accepted the petition, while refusing an appointment. Within four days, the policy changes sought by the aggrieved parties were announced. The reputation of the union finance minister in the trade circles has shot up now. Many grievances of the past are now being referred to him and many decisions of Pranab Mukherjee are being reversed.

Oily Palms

The Andaman and Nicobar islands are no longer taboo. In the British *raj*, transportation to the Andamans, then referred to as *Kalapani*, was the maximum punishment, short of death, which the rulers used to mete out. Now, going to Andamans is becoming a boon. Dhirubhai Ambani's Reliance Textile Industries have now set sail for *Kalapani*. No, an industry is not being set up in those islands. Ambani intends entering into mechanised farming and palm oil will be the end product of his efforts. With Ambani entering the Andamans, palm oil will be easily available in the country.

Heart Problems

Abdur Rehman Antulay, the former Maharashtra CM now facing prosecution, may be going abroad soon. He is said to be suffering from a heart ailment and the famous Dr Denton Cooley has asked him to go to the USA for treatment. The Antulay case will be affected not only by the departure of the principal accused, but by the prosecution lawyer as well. Ram Jethmalani, the eminent lawyer and BJP leader, who is leading the prosecution team, too is heading for the USA for the treatment of his heart. Earlier, as both Antulay and Jethmalani were contesting the Lok Sabha elections, the case had been delayed.


Muneesh (Daily)

A.R. Antulay

D.E. Nizamuddin

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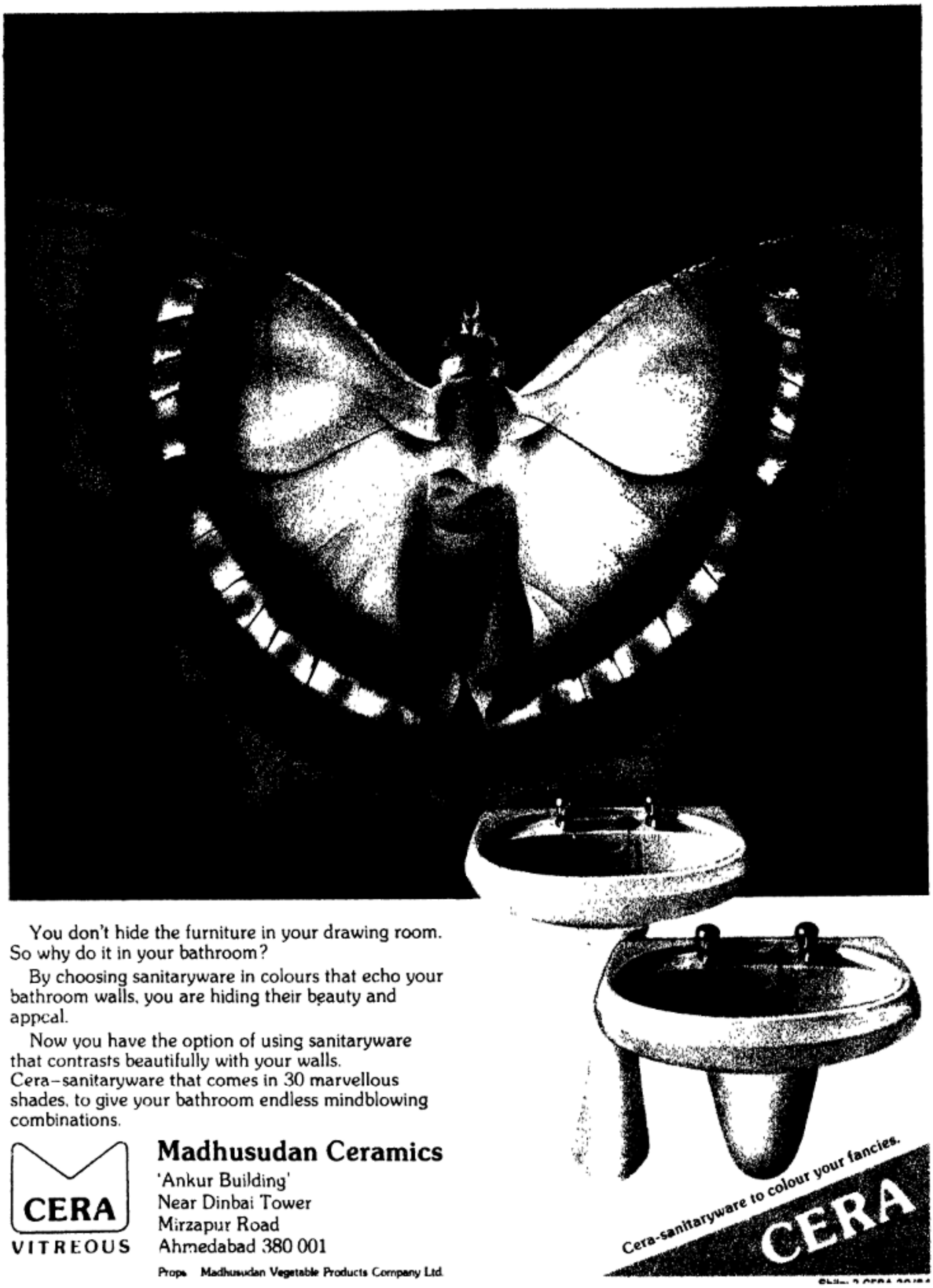
Rajendra Sethia: A Playboy's Plunder

SUNDAY



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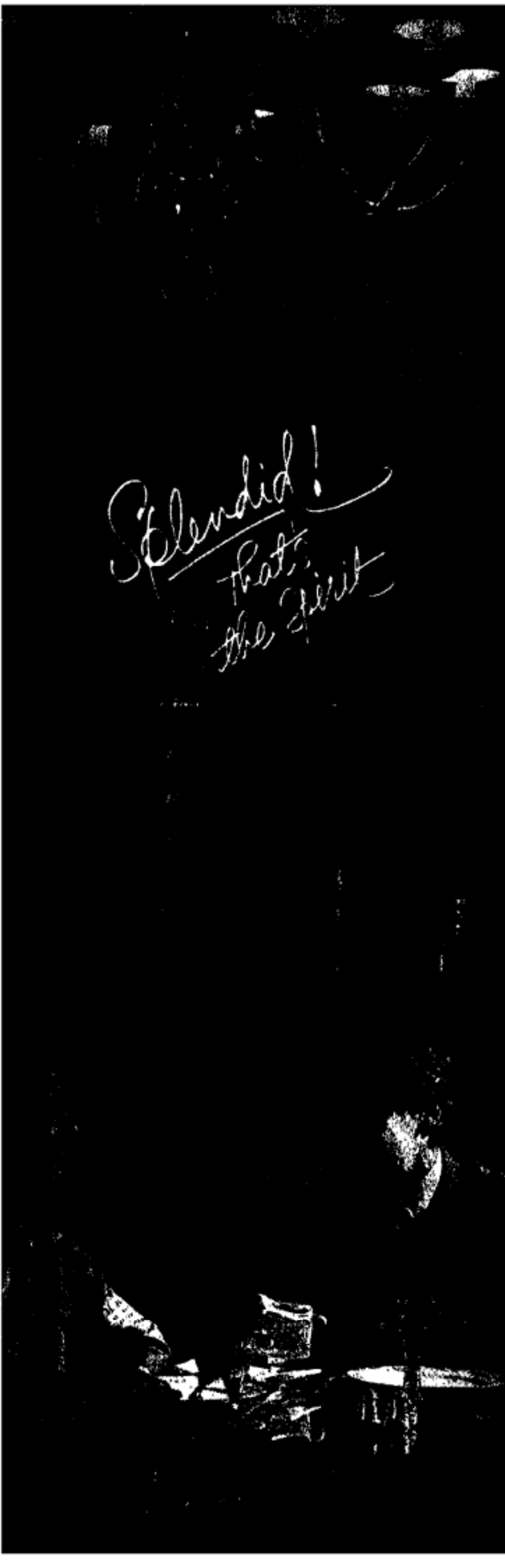
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SUNDAY

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Star of the Future
Ramakrishna Hegde's massive victory in Karnataka has rocketed him to the frontlines of the next major electoral battle: the bid for power in 1990. Though there are many 'ifs' along the way, he may perhaps emerge as the only leader who can offer a credible alternative to the Congress(I). Chidanand Rajghatta reports how Ramakrishna Hegde is riding the crest of a wave. Plus: An interview with Mr Hegde.

How the States Voted
SUNDAY correspondents report from the states and union territory where Assembly elections were held and analyse the results.

Rigging: A Way of Life in Bihar
Booth-capturing, false voting and impersonation are common in any election in Bihar. An exclusive photo feature by Krishna Murari Kishan.



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INVESTIGATION 34

Rajendra Sethia: A Playboy's Plunder
Indian-born London-based business tycoon Rajendra Sethia who has been declared bankrupt by the London High Court was recently arrested by CBI sleuths in Delhi for fraud. An investigation by Ritu Sarin, Ashis Ray and Sankarshan Thakur.

SUNDAY SPECIAL 42

Can Black Money be Really Wiped Out?
Black money has been in existence in this country for a long time. Ashok Lahiri argues the need to change taxation laws.

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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Calcutta: There is the air of a twinkling, restless god about him; a presence which is formidable without being intimidating. Maqbool Fida Husain carries his fame lightly. His conversation is interspersed with self-deprecating wit, and there is no better way to burst the bubbles of praise-genuine or praise-sycophantic than by the sharp spike of laughter. He likes praise of course (who doesn't?) but can do without too much of it, particularly if he feels it is touched by insincerity. However, there was sufficient cause for genuine praise when his exhibition on assassinations opened on the seventeenth floor of the Tata Centre. The images of Mahatma Gandhi (falling away from his stick, a slight but growing stain on his heart; or prostrate, the head away from the rest of the body but the total bound by the powerful current which only a truly great artist can infuse in a human shape) and Mrs Indira Gandhi (the body falling after being shot, in midair, the hand asking the question of the heavens: why?) were outstanding. But there was a wide and international choice of leaders who had died from the bullet or knife of mercenary or madman (and who is to say which of the two is more dangerous, which of the two a more representative product of the twentieth century?). Patrice Lumumba, symbol of African hope and freedom. Leon Trotsky, the power of whose intellect could only be silenced by a pickaxe. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, eaten by a revolution he had fathered. Martin Luther King, marked out for daring to be the conscience of a nation. John Kennedy, hope shot down when taking wing. Lorca and Lennon, who sang too many songs of freedom. And the victims of massacres everywhere, from riots to the death which seeped across the night in Bhopal. It was an exhibition of the power of an artist's commitment as much as a display of line, colour, form and imagination.

Highlights of a portrait of Husain: Flowing graceful, fully grey hair and beard; bright eyes which smile alone since the mouth is lost in the mane; long arms, long fingers, tall body, bare feet. The irresistible question of course is about those bare feet. So much mythology has now been created around them, so many questioned. Is he barefoot all the time? Yes. Even when he goes abroad to a cold country? No. Then, he says with a smile, he makes up for the bare times by wearing extra large boots. Then why the insistence in India? Just a fad? The answer, according to Husain: He was very close to the poet Muktibodh, whose revolutionary poetry in Hindi inspired a generation. Muktibodh died after a long illness during which Husain came very near to him. It was a hot day in Delhi when Muktibodh's body was being taken for its cremation. As a mark of respect Husain decided to walk barefoot with the body. He discovered, he says, a great sense of freedom in being rid of shoes. And he also realised that if he could walk on that hot tarmac road in Delhi at the height of summer without shoes, then he could absorb the physical discomfort.

Shoes are an image Husain has used in his cinema very effectively. They also form a part of his childhood memories. He was a sickly infant, and his mother would be constantly unwell too, particularly after Husain was born. Both were often near death's door, but the mother was desperate that her son should survive. She would often hold him up and make him stand in his father's man-sized shoes and pray that he grew up and lived to fill an adult's shoes. One night when Husain was very ill, she prayed all night and then, in that classic rite of sacrifice she walked seven times around her ill son praying to God that he take her life and save her son's. The prayer was heard. The son recovered and the mother died.

Maqbool Fida Husain grew up to fill an adult's shoes, and then he grew beyond them.

There is an air of a twinkling, restless god about him; a presence which is formidable without being intimidating. Maqbool Fida Husain carries his fame lightly. His conversation is interspersed with self-deprecating wit, and there is no better way to burst the bubbles of praise-genuine or praise-sycophantic than by the sharp spike of laughter...



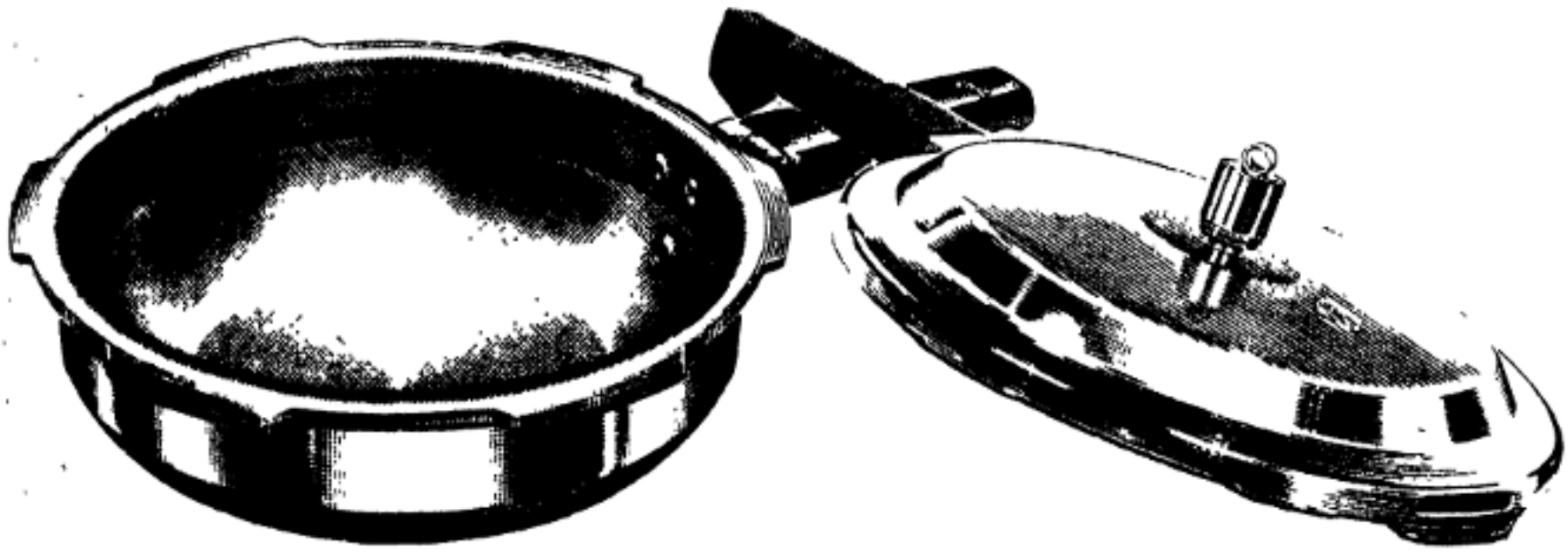
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M.F. Husain

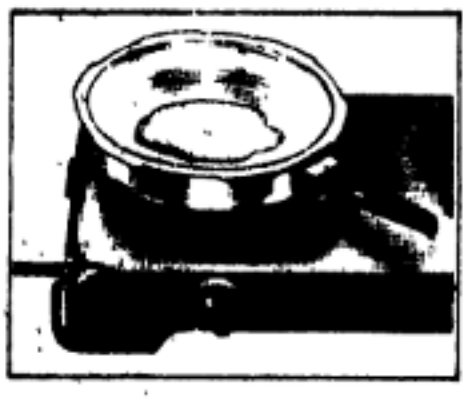
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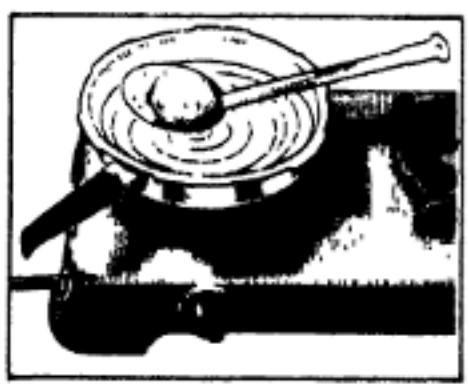
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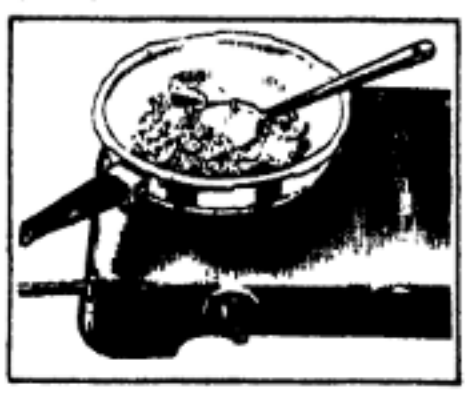
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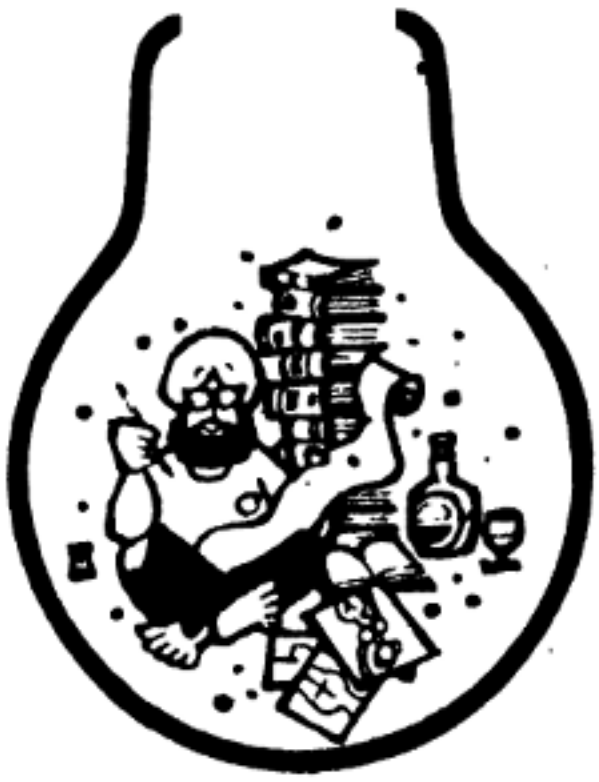
MAA(D) PP 1d 84

The Language of Love

Suddenly one morning I noticed the dry branches of *Kachnar* (Bauhenia) trees flanking Subramaniam Bharati Marg flecked with ivory-white blossoms. Further down the road the massive *Semal* (Silk Cotton) was shedding its scarlet waxen flowers. And I knew the short winter had given way to a shorter spring and the long summer months will soon be on us.

Cock sparrows fluff out their wings and strut around their all too eager hens awaiting to be mounted. Green barbets call incessantly and the *koel* clears its throat to proclaim the advent of summer in full-throated cries. It is the same year after year. Birds' language of love has as limited a repertoire of scream, song and twitter as that of humans.

On February 14th was St. Valentine's Day so named after the 3rd century holy man, Valentinus, patron Saint of lovers. On this day lovers proclaim their passions usually in no more than three words: "I love you." The emotion is so strong that thereafter they collapse into inanities and words which have no meaning except to their sweethearts. All over the English-speaking world, daily papers devote as many pages printing love-messages as ours do on Sundays to matrimonial ads. Blandishments fall into a dull pattern; young men can think of little else besides comparing their girl friends to animals or edibles. Young girls show less interest in delicacies and prefer to compare their beloved males to bigger and furrier denizens of the forest. To wit, male to female in animal terms: my pussy-cat, Squirrel, Dilly Duck, Bunny, Chicky-wicky, Jenny Wren, Piglet, Fit Bitch. Female to male: my Grizzly Bear, Panda, Mountain Lion, Crocodile, Alligator, Hedgehog, Possum. Next to animals in popularity with males are edibles: my Cherry-pie, Honeybun, Lollipop. The third in line of preferences are nakedly suggestive: my Sexy Spiderlegs, Sexpot, Bare Muscle, my Bellybutton wants to say hello to yours today. It is odd that traditional love similes and metaphors are out. No roses, no lilies, nor jasmines. Nor nature's countless things of beauty like the moon, or the stars on a moonless night. There are quite a few Indian entries. One I spot every year is in Gujarati to Rashmee: "*akhi donya ma too bahu pyari che.*" Another desi bhai offers the Taj



Mahal to his *goree chokree*. A Sri Chandi lifts a love-song from a Hindi movie to his gold-complexioned *Chaheti* and signs himself Moochies and Coochies.

It is a pity that we do not have the equivalent of St. Valentine's Day. How our poets would have gone to town describing their loved ones! I forget the name of the poet who I would have quoted on Valentine's Day if I had a sweetheart.

Dil ko terey tabassum kee yaad yoon aiyee
Keh jag magaa utthen jis tarah mandiron mein chiraagh.

(The memory of your smile is my heart's delight
As brighter twinkle temple lamps at night.)

Minority Complex

The problem of ventilating grievances in a country where the media is either wholly controlled by the government or, if minimally free is afraid to take an anti-government line, is present in many countries of the world. And where the aggrieved form a miniscule minority with no means of publicising their plight, their lamentations become truly like crying in the wilderness. Stark examples of injustices which remain unknown and unheard are the fate of Ahmediyas in Pakistan, Bahais in Iran, Jews in the Soviet Union, Muslims in the Philippines, Kurds, Armenians and Gypsies wherever they are.

There are several world organisations like the Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International to which they can and do appeal for help. Unfortunately this only brings more wrath upon the heads of people who do so. It is promptly assumed that an appeal to anyone outside the country is an act of betrayal of one's own country only a little short of treason. For many years Amnesty has adopted people in jails without trial as "Prisoners of Conscience" and exhorted everyone to write letters of protest to the authorities. I have no idea how effective such appeals to conscience can be with rulers who are not known to have any. However, the good work goes on. One such association of do-gooders is the Minority Rights Group (MRG) set up in Britain with branches in other countries including India. Amongst its sponsors was the late Jayaprakash Narayan. Others included the Yugaslav writer-politician Milovan Djilas (jailed many times in his country), Gunnar Myrdal, Sean McBride and Dr Joseph Needham. Amongst MRG's publications is an excellent compilation of articles on *Minorities: A Question of Human Rights?* by eminent men like Sadruddin Aga Khan, Shridath Ramphal and Sir Edmund Leach. Its latest publication is on *The Sikhs* written by Dr Christopher Shackle of the London School of Oriental Studies. In ten closely printed pages Dr Shackle has condensed the history of the Sikhs from their inception to "Operation Bluestar." He has taken no sides, criticised no one in particular except Bhindranwale and yet succeeded in producing a most informative and readable brochure.

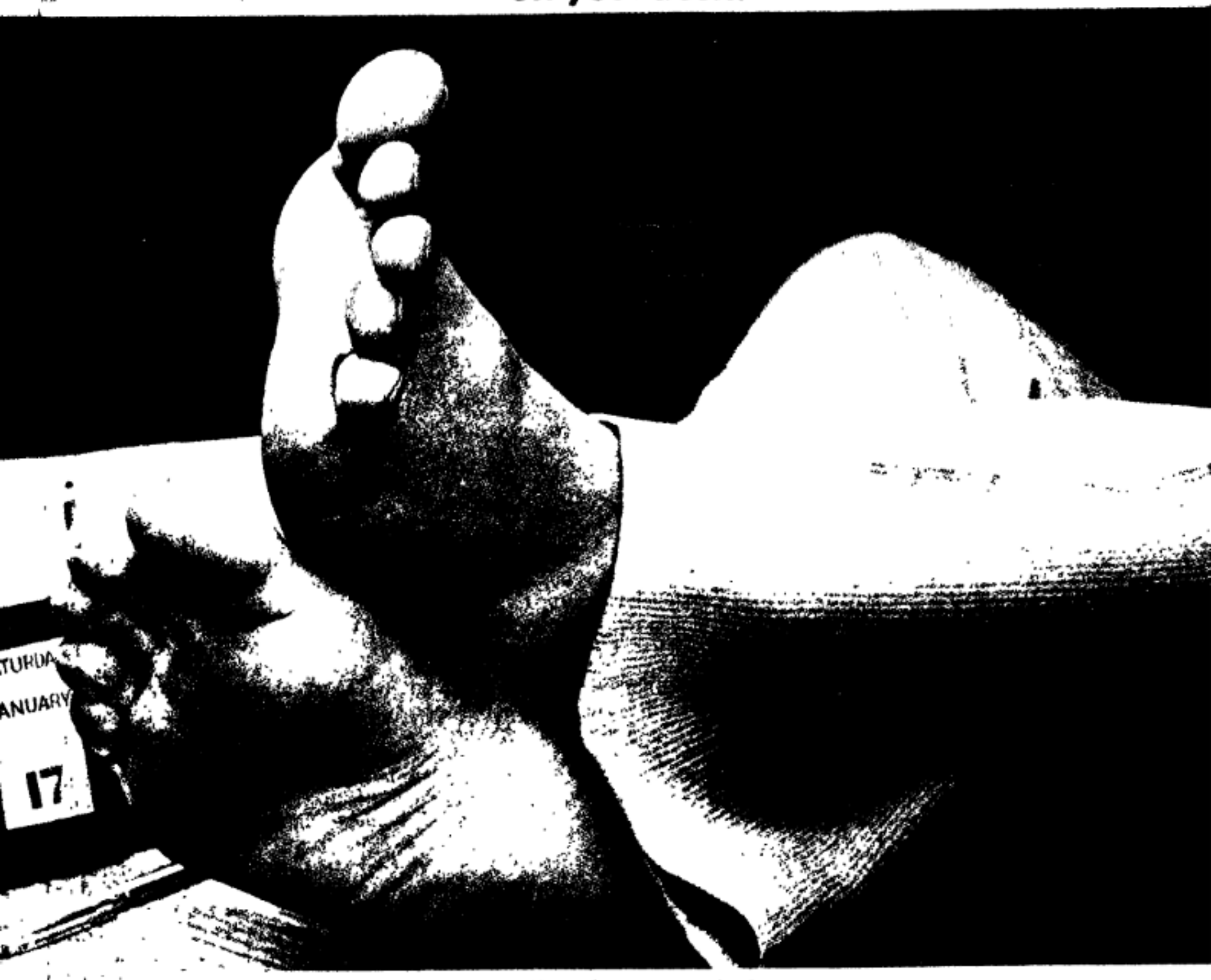
I have often heard Indian Muslims and Sikhs complain against the unsympathetic attitude of the government media and the press towards them. They make desperate efforts to launch newspapers and journals to air their community's point of view, but none of them succeeds in achieving viable circulations and get very little advertising support. Instead of blowing up vast sums of money in this futile endeavour, they would do better if they get people like Christopher Shackle to write about their problems.

Punjab's Latest Achievement

"Why is one Punjabi equal to two Bengalis? asks O.P. Bajaj, a Punjabi living in Jabalpur. He answers his own question with irrefutable Punjabi logic. "Nag is a Bengali. Pal is another Bengali. Put Nag and Pal together and you get one Punjabi, Nagpal."

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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Does Rajiv Gandhi Really Mean Business?

It may sound churlish but I do not find any reason to rejoice over Rajiv Gandhi's performance. True, he means well and at times appears to be departing from his mother's path of confrontation and chicanery; there is less tension in the country and there is hope among the people that he might undo many wrongs. The Anti-Defection Act, which Rajiv Gandhi has repeatedly cited as an example of a measure to clean up politics is no doubt welcome. But there has not been much else.

To many, the Anti-Defection Act has raised suspicions that it was meant more to thwart the ambitions of the PM's own partymen than those of unprincipled politicians in general. There is clear evidence that after the formation of the council of ministers at the centre, some of them felt angry at being left out. There was even a meeting of some Congress(I) MPs at the residence of an important ruling party politician. The PM's step nipped the mischief in the bud, and that, perhaps, could have been the main intent rather than pure altruism.

Another step which is being cited is Rajiv Gandhi's selection of candidates for the Lok Sabha polls and for the Assembly elections. True, Antulay and Gundu Rao were dropped but there are scores of others at the centre and state levels who, even if they are not as well known, are in no way less guilty of malpractice. Strange logic has worked in the selection; while a candidate was dropped because of his bad image, his son or wife was declared fit enough to be chosen.

Going through the list of elected Congress(I) members in the states, I find that Rajiv Gandhi has given his favourite leaders, whatever their personal reputation, a free hand, and they have been able to weed out all the dissidents. Perhaps the PM's policy is to rule the country through state *satraps* after ensuring that they face no challenge or dissent. Apart from perpetuating lesser men, this may further strengthen the practice of imposing individuals from above, and weaken the process of leaders growing up from the grassroots.

A lot has been said about curbing black money. The Congress(I) spent at least Rs 200 crores in the Lok Sabha elections and it could not have spent less in the Assembly polls. Where did this money come from? It could only have come from blackmarketeers. And the time to pay back the benefactors is yet to come.

A lot has been said about curbing black money. The Congress(I) spent at least Rs 200 crores in the Lok Sabha elections and it could not have spent less in the Assembly polls. Where did this money come from? It could only have come from blackmarketeers. And the time to pay back the benefactors is yet to come. It is no secret that the grant of licences for imports and exports worth more than a particular amount automatically means kickbacks. Sometimes I wonder whether the spy scandal which has rocked the country does not have something to do with this system. It could be that what is classed as commercial espionage really means only a method of telling competing foreign firms what the kickback to get a particular deal through should be. The PM himself has said in private that "we have overreacted to the whole thing."

Much has been made of the changes which have been made at the level of governors, secretaries and ambassadors in New Delhi. Some dead wood has been removed but some of the officials who have taken up the positions of those who have been sent out are no better. A change in the personnel is no guarantee of any real change in the administration. Such changes do not offer much hope of better work because efficiency in administration is the means to an end, not the end in itself. Where is the policy which the "dynamic" officers are supposed to enforce? I have vainly looked for economic steps to ameliorate the condition of the people; Rajiv Gandhi is yet to spell out the measures to benefit the 52 per cent of the population living below the poverty line.

Progress towards removal of poverty is the touchstone with which to evaluate the performance of an elected government. I do not think there is any proposal to lessen disparities. There is not even talk of an egalitarian society. My colleagues in the media, liberals in the academic field and professionals, who represent the elite and create public opinion, are on the PM's side because they are the true beneficiaries of the system. They are pro-*status quo* and feel at home in the class they belong to. They are only interested in their security and any leader who can give them such security is their saviour.

I believe that Rajiv Gandhi has the opportunity to do good to this country. It is not only the massive majority with which he won the polls that gives me this hope but his ability to stand apart from all the others. That he has sacrificed some of the sacred cows is a point in his favour. So is his desire for cleanliness in politics and administration. What may prove to be his undoing is the bureaucratic approach to the country's problems. The steps the Prime Minister has taken so far indicate that he is willing to bring about changes, but only up to a point. What India needs is drastic change, and unless he can still persuade himself to bring this about, there is nothing much that the country can look forward to.

OPINION

Revealing Rekha

Like the *Queen Bee* (24 February—2 March) Rekha reigns supreme on the Indian silver screen and it was natural that SUNDAY spared a cover for her. However, I was disappointed to go through Girija Rajendran's *Who Will Replace the Angry Young Man?* The author had explored all the talents to find a replacement for Amitabh Bachchan who has joined politics. A glaring ommission was Mithun Chakraborty and I am sure that this well-built lad from Bengal will emerge as a worthy successor to Amitabh. I request SUNDAY to devote a cover on him.
B. Y. Roy, Bhubaneswar

• My congratulations to Akshay Upadhyaya for revealing the private life of India's most talented actress, Rekha. The interview, "*I Am a Rare Person,*" helped her fans to know a lot of hitherto undisclosed facts. However, I expected some more on the 'Shiva' she worshipped.
Subrata Mazoomdar, Barakar (WB)

• The cover feature on Rekha was a treat. She arrived on the Indian screen two decades back as a plump, unattractive novice but with time and age she has matured into one of the most promising actresses. No wonder directors like Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Jabbar Patel prefer her to the other glamour queens of the Hindi filmdom: Sri Devi or Jayapradha. It is time Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen focussed their cameras on Rekha.
C. V Aravind, Madras

• The cover story on Rekha was a refreshing departure from politics. The interview was illuminating.
M A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

• Rekha has a rare blend of authentic beauty and histrionic talent and films like *Khubsoorat, Umrao Jaan, Ghar* and *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* illustrates her acting prowess. She has the potential to eclipse the Shabanas and the Smitas of the so-called art films if she is given the chance.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• During the early part of her career, Rekha was a victim of infatuation. But after a couple of bitter experiences, she gradually matured into one of the finest actresses on the Indian screen.
Md. Anwar Alam Qumaispuri, Patna

• Rekha was not candid enough in her interview to SUNDAY. I am still in the dark about the man in her life. Does Amitabh Bachchan symbolise.



her concept of the 'complete man'?
Sangram Mishra, Cuttack

• I agree with Girija Rajendran that despite the talent available in Hindi filmdom, Amitabh Bachchan is irreplaceable. However, I would rate the chances of Raj Babbar and Raj Kiran better than those of the rest. But the author surprisingly ignored them.
B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur

• Rekha is no longer the queen bee. She has been clearly outclassed by the southern belles like Sri Devi and Jayapradha. No matter how high she is rated in the north, the film industry in the south has rejected her.
K. Kumar Sekhar, Eluru (AP)

• Is SUNDAY turning into a film magazine? Devoting so many precious pages on Rekha was a waste. In the course of the article Akshay Upadhyaya writes: "With him (Amitabh) she (Rekha) explored the compassionate side of life." The statement sounds ridiculous since Rekha tried her level best to break the happy family life of Amitabh. She may be a good actress but she is a person without any scruples.
T. Rahmat, Calcutta

• Last time it was Azharuddin and now it is Rekha. Is SUNDAY short of serious matter?
Prabhudutt Mishra, Cuttack

• There are scores of film magazines to publicise the services rendered by Rekha for two long decades. SUNDAY should concentrate on more serious problems confronting the nation.
N. Ellango, Tirunelvelli

Lonely Leftists

All the articles pertaining to *The Decline of the Leftists* (24 February—2 March) were thought-provoking. In West Bengal, the erosion of their power is due to their failure on practically all fronts. The labour and the peasantry have been alienated because of certain policies followed by the Left Front government. The urban elite is also disillusioned with the government's performance. The youth have been frustrated since the government failed to keep its promise to create new job opportunities. The same is the case wherever the communists rule in India. I wonder how E.M.S. Namboodiripad claimed that their "performance was not miserable" when the electorate rejected them in their strongholds like Kerala and West Bengal.
Nirjhar Das Gupta, Calcutta

Clean Image

M. J. Akbar had rightly indicated in his conversation with finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh ('*This Generation has to Pay for its Future*,' 10—16 February) that the finance minister has a quality rare among politicians: a clean image.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• The interview with the finance minister made absorbing reading. Very little comes out from most of our ambitious Five Year Plans. I hope V. P. Singh takes the initiative to see that the targets set are achieved.
Dilip Sharma, Lanka (Assam)

Hapless Children

I was moved by Nirmal Mitra's vivid portrayal of the pitiful condition of children who leave their homes due to poverty and work in the numerous eating houses throughout the country (*Children of Despair*, 24 February—2 March). On paper there are numerous laws to check child labour, but the government has never been serious enough to implement them.
Murari Lal Sen, Calcutta

• Honest efforts should be made to alleviate the sufferings of these hapless children. If the government, the philanthropic organisations and the citizens join hands to eradicate child labour, these unfortunate children will one day prove to be assets of the country.
Hema Sahadevan, Calcutta

Gavaskar is Proud of Azharuddin

Sunday paid a fitting tribute to Mohammed Azharuddin (*When Dreams Come True*, 17—23 February). The new star on India's cricket horizon is shining brightly and will continue to do so for a long time.
Deepak Acharya, Phulbani (Orissa)

• Many more records will be rewritten in the years to come and it is only a matter of time before Azharuddin surpasses Gavaskar's record of 30 Test centuries. Gavaskar seems visibly worried about this and he is trying his tricks to foil Azhar's honest efforts. But one cannot supress talent and Azhar will emerge victorious at the end.
V. N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

• The issue on cricket was timely and it made absorbing reading. There is no dearth of talent in the Indian team; what is lacking is team spirit. The present Indian side can be compared to the state of the opposition: many leaders but no desire to work together to achieve a goal. The latest sensation is Azharuddin but unless rivalry within the team is rooted out, his talent will go to waste.
M. H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

• SUNDAY rightly devoted a cover for Azharuddin. This 22-year-old cricketer from Hyderabad has started his career with a bang and and I hope he keeps up the standard he has set. The blow-up of Azhar on the cover as well as the action photographs inside were superb.
Hasina Bashiruddin, Hyderabad

• Mohammed Azharuddin is not only a hero at home, he is also a hero abroad. In the opening match against Pakistan in the Benson and Hedges World Cup series, Azhar scored a sizzling 93 not out. The vaccuum created by the exit of Gundappa Vishwanath has at last been filled.
G. Rama Mishra, Jharsuguda (Orissa)

• Azharuddin has emerged as a worthy successor to Sunil Gavaskar who is at the fag end of his career. He deserves all the adulations being showered on him.
A.N. Veeraraghavan, Bombay

• The interview with Azharuddin (*It was Pray and Play*) made interesting reading. Azhar's style reminds me of Gundappa Vishwanath at his prime
Hareshkumar Pandya, Rajkot

• Srinjoy Chowdhury has unnecessarily raised the dispute whether *Gavaskar is Jealous of Azharuddin*. Sunil Gavaskar is a legend by himself and I see no reason why he should prevent Azhar from reaching the pinnacle I think Gavaskar is proud and a relieved man to have a batsman of Azhar's calibre on his side.
Sharad Mohan, Dhanbad

• S. Chowdhury had wrongly assumed that Gavaskar declared the second innings at Kanpur where Azhar was on his way to his fourth consecutive hundred since his debut, to deprive him of his century. The game was petering out into a tame draw and Gavaskar took the decision to infuse life into the game. In the course of the article, the author conveniently ignores the spectator point of view. All those present to watch the proceedings on that day welcomed Sunil Gavaskar's decision.
Subhas Dutta, Ranchi



Mohammed Azharuddin

• The vitriolic attack on Sunil Gavaskar was unwarranted. Srinjoy Chowdhury's reasoning that Gavaskar promoted Azhar to bring about his downfall sounded ridiculous. It is a well-known fact that the world's best batsmen bat higher up in the order and Azharuddin who had shown fine form and temperament was only expected to strengthen India's batting by weathering the initial attack of the opponent.
Rajiv Ghai, Hyderabad

Money is the Cause

The cover story, *Bureaucrat, Diplomat, Industrialist, Spy* (3—9 February) made absorbing reading The vivid narration at the beginning of the article of an industrialist bribing his way through the VIP entrance to pay his homage to Indira Gandhi read like a thriller but the author seemed to pin all the blame for this act on the industrialist alone. In my opinion the industrialist and the security guard should share the responsibilities of the offence. In India today corruption is a way of life and senior officers openly accept bribe. Patriotism is a forgotten word and one is willing to do anything for the sake of money
O. Varghese, Dammam (Saudi Arabia)

• Shubhabrata Bhattacharya rightly pointed out that the pay and allowances of government officials are such that corruption has been inbuilt in the system I don't think that it is possible to root out corruption without improving the economic condition of the common man.
Subhas Mohanty, Ranchi

• In *Admirable Bureaucrats*, Madhu Jain profiles a number of bureaucrats of yester years who had placed the interests of the country above everything else. Thereafter the bureaucracy has gradually deteriorated and today moneybags wield immense power in Delhi The new Prime Minister has taken the right step by cleansing the bureaucracy.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan

Inconvenient Facts

The inconvenient facts about *St Stephen's Male Chauvinists* (17-23 February) are that no undergarments were hung on the college tower; the incident was condemned by the college community as a whole, not by a group of "irate girls" only; in fact, the principal had convened a special assembly and unequivocally condemned the incident; the agitation has the support of not more than 15 students—out of a total strength of 960 students, of whom about 250 are girls; the protests outside St Stephen's organised by the SFI/PUDR attracted only six Stephenians; 'stud charts' naming the ten most attractive boys have also appeared; and finally, the picture showing "St Stephen's students protesting outside their college gate" is not of students from St Stephen's.
Aseem Prakash, Delhi

The Star of the Future

Ramakrishna Hegde's stunning mandate has rocketed him to the frontlines of the next major electoral battle—the bid for power, in 1990. The growing consensus among opposition leaders of different hues is that Hegde is perhaps the only leader who can offer a credible alternative to the Congress(I). Of course, there are big 'ifs' along the way, and the opposition has shown a marked tendency to slip up on the 'ifs.' But for the moment, reports Chidanand Rajghatta from Bangalore, it is Hegde who is atop the crest of a wave.

By 10 am on Wednesday 6 March, Ramakrishna Hegde knew he was winning the gambit of recommending dissolution of the Karnataka Assembly and seeking a fresh mandate. After only two hours of counting it was known that the Janata candidates were leading in most places. By noon, the local Doordarshan crew were on their way to Krishna, where the chief minister lounged, wreathed in victory smiles. The Hegde wave had arrived. Mr Hegde had said that the Assembly elections in Karnataka would be a referendum on the performance of his government. In the end it turned out to be a watershed. Once again, India's teeming electorate demonstrated its unerring capacity to reward and punish. What happened in Karnataka on 6 March is unparalleled in Indian electoral history.

Hardly nine weeks earlier, the people of Karnataka had been called upon to exercise their franchise for the Lok Sabha elections, and they had given the Congress(I) a big victory: 24 out of the 28 Lok Sabha seats from the state. It was a terrible moral defeat for Mr Hegde who had campaigned for the Janata Party on the basis of his government's performance. Yet, in spite of the fact that the Janata and its allies trailed behind the Congress(I) in 177 of the 224 Assembly segments in Karnataka in December, Mr Hegde went to the people in March to prove that their December vote had not been cast against his two-year-old government. The electorate vindicated his faith. On 5 March, the same electorate rejected the Congress(I) candidates in 158 Assembly constituencies. It was the most demonstrative of the Indian electorate's use of discretion.

It is now clear that the electorate knows quite precisely the difference between the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha elections. The vote in December was not against the Janata Party in Karnataka, but against the national opposition: not for the Congress(I) in Karnataka, but for Rajiv Gandhi's Congress(I) at the centre. Freed of the opposition albatross in the more localised Assembly election, Mr Hegde led the Janata Party to a memorable victory: 139 seats in



Hegde campaigning from his Jayavahini

a house of 224. It is the first time a party other than the Congress has secured an absolute majority in Karnataka.

Ramakrishna Hegde won because he provided a credible alternative to the Congress(I) in the state. He was closer to the hearts and minds of the people of Karnataka than Rajiv Gandhi or his partymen for whom they had voted in December, responding to the appeal for "unity and integrity of the nation." Having done that, they now voted for "Karnataka shall be ruled from Karnataka, not from New Delhi," which was the Janata slogan. The biggest flaw in the Congress(I) campaign was that there was no single leader to match Mr Hegde's charisma or wit. No single Congress(I) leader was projected as a potential chief minister. In fact, no single leader had credibility and the electorate knew that even if they voted for



Hegde's Campaign Speeches

Ramakrishna Hegde is no Cicero. His oratorial skills have always been limited and his dull, monologous drawl has never set an audience on fire. But yet, last February, Hegde took on himself the entire burden of the Janata Party campaign. For three weeks, Chandra Shekhar, Morarji Desai, Madhu Dandavate and even his local colleagues were irrelevant, as Hegde raced across the state in his "Jayavahini" (on the lines of NTR's Chaitanya Ratham) asking the people to vote him back to power.

What did Hegde tell the people? What caused the electorate, who only two months ago voted solidly for the Congress(I) and Rajiv Gandhi, to swing back to the Janata Party?

There were three Hegde speeches during the campaign. One, for the small rural audience where he spoke mainly of the achievements of the Janata government and where he refrained from attacking Rajiv Gandhi. Two, a slightly longer speech for the semi-urban audience, where he touched upon subjects like overdraft and toppling and three, the full length speech for the urban audience (above 25,000 crowd) where he attacked Congress(I) policies and ideas (like one-party rule) and spoke of the Janata philosophy (like accent on value-based politics).

Two things stood out during Hegde's campaign. First, he made a number of two-minute "nutshell speeches" to roadside audiences of around 500 to 1,000 people from atop his Jayavahini. For the poor audience whose only encounter with a chief minister was a condescending wave (if the shaded glass of the car he was travelling in was rolled down), this must have been quite an experience. Second, a greater part of Ramakrishna Hegde's speech was directed at women. In fact, he invariably began his addresses with "My dear sisters, mothers and friends." There was nothing subtle about it: he did this quite blatantly, asking the women why they always voted for the Congress(I) though that party had done little for them in 35 years. He had adopted the same line in the December Lok Sabha elections and it failed to fetch results. This time it did. That possibly swung the electorate to vote for the Janata.

This is the standard Hegde speech culled from tapes of the speeches he made during the campaigning.

"My dear sisters, mothers and friends,

Two years ago you voted us to power. Today, we have returned the power to you. In December, you were called upon to exercise your vote in the Lok Sabha elections. You voted the Congress(I) and rejected the Janata Party. Your mandate confused us. Is it that you did not like the performance of my government? Or, did you not like the way we functioned? So, to get a clear answer from you, we have sought a fresh mandate, although



Hegde: victorious

we were not obliged to do so. The power you gave us, we have returned to you and you have to exercise your judgement.

I understand what happened in December. The women in this audience voted overwhelmingly for the Congress(I) and Rajiv Gandhi. You probably thought, here is a poor child, a 40-year-old orphan, who deserves our love and affection. It was your motherly instincts at work and it is only natural. But you know we are having an election for the state Assembly. Even if you vote for Rajiv Gandhi, he is not going to come here as the chief minister. The chief minister will be from among the Moilys, Patils and Bangarappas—whose faces you have seen and rejected. Do you want them back? They are the same men who tried to bring down the government you elected in 1983 by bribing and inducing defections. One of their leaders was caught while bribing our legislator with two lakh of rupees. Do you want them back?

The Janata Party has in two years, introduced value-based politics. We abide by your will and decisions. You are our masters, not New Delhi. The Congress(I) leaders, you know very well, run to Delhi for every small matter. We don't do that. We go by your dictates. Ours is a people's government.

I will not say that in two years we have accomplished everything. But we have done a lot. Our biggest achievement has been to provide drinking water to each and every village in Karnataka. This is something the Congress did not do in 35 years, we have done in two years. The central government's planning commission itself has praised and rewarded us for this, but yet the Congress(I) does not want to give us credit.

For the women, the Janata Party has done so much. We give maternity allowance of Rs 100 a month for three months during and after pregnancy. We give widow pension of Rs 50 a month. Why did the Congress(I) not do this? Did not Indira Gandhi bear children? Or, did she not experience widowhood? Why did they not understand your plight?

Today, we have reserved 20 per cent of seats in municipal bodies and corporations for women. Why did not the Congress do all this even though you voted for them again and again? Today, the Congress(I) is saying that all that we have done is by the centre's grace. It is all under the 20-point programme, they say. If that is so, I ask you, why are these schemes not there in other states?

You must consider all this carefully. The question before you is: Do you want the present government or the past government? Do you want Karnataka to be ruled from Karnataka or from New Delhi? Think carefully. If you think that we are fit to rule, if you are happy with our performance in television, then give it your vote. Jai Hind. Jai Karnataka.



Ramakrishna Hegde filing his nomination papers for the Basavanagudi constituency in Bangalore

the Congress(I), Rajiv Gandhi would not become the chief minister of Karnataka.

On the other hand, Rajiv Gandhi's promise to provide a clean government misfired. The denial of a ticket to Gundu Rao was just an eyewash in "operation cleanup." For inexplicable reasons (electoral pragmatism, perhaps) Veerappa Moily and K.H. Patil with reputations worse than Gundu Rao's were provided tickets. So were their "not-so-clean" nominees. Much later, commiserating over the debacle, a Congressman was to say: "If only Rajivji had sacked all other shady Congress(I) leaders along with Gundu Rao, we would have won every urban seat in Karnataka."

It was not merely the lack of local leadership or bad choice of candidates. The Congress(I) did not even have a campaign theme for the elections. Rajiv Gandhi's contention that a Congress(I) government would be beneficial to the state was rejected outright as the people settled for the existing pluralism: the Janata Party in the state and the Congress(I) in the centre. If anything, the people placed faith on Hegde's slogan that Karnataka should be ruled from Karnataka, not from New Delhi, an obvious reference to Congressmen's frequent trips to New Delhi for consultation and orders on every matter, as well as the increasing centralisation of power.

None of Rajiv Gandhi's allegations made any impact on the voters. What the voters of Karnataka elected was a party which according to the Prime Minister, aided and abetted terrorists in Punjab. What they voted for was a government, which according to the Prime Minister was guilty of financial mismanagement. It was a classic demonstration of the fact that no amount of propaganda can deceive the people. In the one-room tenement of a Janata Party worker, a small change was made on a popular poster to read: "The voter is always right."

The man singularly responsible for the Janata victory was without doubt 59-year-old Ramakrishna Hegde. It was a personal triumph for the man who had placed so much faith and trust on an electorate which had, only two months ago, spurned him. He proved once more that all the superlatives used by the media to describe his political acumen were not misplaced. It was a crowning moment in his political career. To begin with, however, not even Hegde had anticipated the bounty. He had publicly said that the Janata would get about 120 seats. Asked about this after the results had come in, Hegde told SUNDAY, "It is not a crime to be modest." But the modesty had more to do with caution than optimism. Three days before the polls, the Janata Party found it necessary to announce a "supplementary manifesto," to add to the first one. This one promised rice at Rs two a kg and clothes at subsidised rates, both schemes in effect in the Telugu Desam-led Andhra Pradesh. A close Hegde aide said a day before polling that he "personally expected the party to get 95 seats," while a party office-bearer confessed, "I won't be surprised if we end up with 60 seats." Hegde himself carried around with him a confidential report, frequently updated, in which the figure hovered between 100 and 125 seats.

The Hegde wave cut across all barriers. The CM had approached the Lok Sabha election with trepidation that the women would vote for Rajiv Gandhi in large numbers and he was proved right. This time, much to his surprise and obvious delight, women voted for him. All the soppy lines, all the blatant wooing of women's votes finally yielded results. Ramakrishna Hegde's secret

The Power of the Spoiler

Ramakrishna Rao Gundu Rao is a non-smoker. But on Wednesday, 6 March, a polite offer of a cigarette from a journalist was quickly accepted. "What brand?" Gundu Rao queried in his own peculiar brand of English. On being told it was a Marlboro, he quickly lit up and dragged deeply. "I need something strong like this today," the former chief minister of Karnataka quipped.

He was sitting in the living room of his house on Palace Road. With him were his supporters and a few journalists who had dropped into his house to see how the man who was disregarded by the Congress(I) high command was reacting to his party's defeat in the Assembly election. Every few minutes Gundu Rao's personal secretary brought in yet another result: yet another Janata triumph and a Congress(I) loss. Gundu Rao listened in silence with his head bowed. "It was a bad campaign," he remarked. At one stage the frustration was so great that he growled: "If I had got the ticket from Somwarpet (his home constituency), I would have won by 22,000 (votes)."

A little later, a friend remarked that the results of the Assembly election (as far as the Congress-I was concerned) were like the results the Reddy Congress (led by K.H. Patil) faced in 1978: a stunning defeat. Gundu Rao guffawed and there followed a lengthy tirade against K.H. Patil and Veerappa Moily, his arch rivals within the Congress(I).

As the results trickled in, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Congress(I) high command had miscalculated badly. The people were not fooled by the pretentious clean-up. Gundu Rao may have been dropped but tickets to Veerappa Moily and K.H. Patil meant that the party high command had been unable to see who the real leader was. During the December Lok Sabha poll, Gundu Rao had toured 26 of the 28 constituencies, drawn (and entertained) large crowds and "helped" the Congress(I) win 24 of the 28 seats. And yet, Moily and Patil had dared to tell the high command that Gundu Rao had not campaigned in the nine marginal Congress(I)



Gundu Rao: out in the cold

candidates would have been more than what it was. They had even asked the high command to bar Gundu Rao from campaigning in the Lok Sabha election. Now they havelearnt their lesson.

Barely 24 hours after the results of the Assembly elections came in, signalling the rout of the Congress(I) in Karnataka, Gundu Rao dictated a brusque telegram to his secretary. It was addressed to Rajiv

[illegible] and Patil had dreamt of coming back to power. They had tried every trick that was not in the book to bring down the Janata government. And, when the December Lok Sabha election [illegible] people [illegible] Now the [illegible] mer; for the people that the Janata Party would without fear for five years. And the Anti-Defection Act [illegible] dhi has so enthusiastically [illegible] in, has made sure that there will not be any more contretemps.

For once, the Congress(I) was graceful in defeat. Each of the party's leaders accepted defeat, offered to cooperate with Hegde and promised to function as a constructive opposition. Moily, in fact, went as far as saying that they would do their best to rectify their mistakes, while Patil resigned as the PCC president owning responsibility for the party's defeat. It was a great lesson which only the electorate could teach; something that can sober the most greedy, most power-hungry politician.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

joy in this hour of triumph is that he has finally broken the monopoly of the Congress(I) on women's votes. There was sufficient evidence that Muslims—the other traditional Congress vote bank—had also voted for the Janata in large numbers. This was also due to the fact that the Muslim League ditched the Congress(I) and where they did not set up candidates, they asked their supporters to work for the Janata candidates.

It was not a debacle for the Congress(I) alone. The BJP, never a great force in Karnataka, also received a thrashing at the polls. The party which had 18 MLAs in the dissolved House, returned with just two. The Janata's break with the BJP is also believed to have encouraged Muslims to support the former. But the BJP rout proved some of the Janata hardliners' contention that the Janata Party was now "grown up enough" to contest elections alone. For two years, the BJP, which lent crucial support to the Hegde government, proved to be a thorn in the Janata flesh ("grumbling wife" being the charming sobriquet it earned). With an absolute majority now, the Janata Party can look forward to a trouble-free five years. For the Congress(I), it is going to be a long hard road. All the dreams of Patil and Moily of coming back to power are smashed and the party is demoralised. Even as the results came in, Congressmen were busy blaming each other for the debacle.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

"The Janata Victory is a Morale Booster for the Opposition"

Ramakrishna Hegde told SUNDAY

Q: What is the impact of your victory in Karnataka on the national opposition parties?

A: I think it is a morale booster, a shot in the arm for the opposition. Now, in addition to West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh we have an opposition government here. It gives us scope to prove that we can run a government much better than the Congress(I).

Q: There is a feeling in some quarters that your victory here reinforces the suspicion that the Janata is fast becoming a regional party.

A: No, you cannot come to that conclusion just because we won in only one state. In fact, among all opposition parties the Janata is the only one that has won some seats—may be one, two, five, six or 140—across the country. This shows that the Janata Party has an all-India appeal and it is not confined to a state. You see, soon after the 1978 Assembly elections, the Congress(I) was wiped out in most states. It was in power only in one or two states. Did that make it a regional party?

Q: What about you? You have said that you prefer national level politics and you took up the chief ministership quite reluctantly. Does not this victory bind you to Karnataka?

A: Yes. But even then I hope I will be able to (*long pause*) get myself relieved of this responsibility even before the end of this term.

Q: Does that mean you are planning to relinquish your chief ministership soon?

A: It depends. What I said was only a possibility.

Q: It is now being said that this victory makes you prime ministerial material for the 1990 poll.

A: I am not one of those who suffer from such illusions. It is the people who give the opportunity and assignment. What ever they give, we have to accept.

Q: Do you still believe in the necessity of a combined opposition? Or do you think this victory in Karnataka signals a Janata resurgence?

A: At the moment, no party in the opposition is in a position to boast: "We can do it alone." But this election has more or less tested the popular base of the various opposition parties. The BJP in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, the Janata in Karnataka, Orissa and Gujarat, the DMKP in UP and Bihar and the Congress(S) in Maharashtra. This should open the eyes of the opposition leaders and this should be the barometer for all future seat adjustments.

Q: No, the question is: Are you still going to chase the mirage of opposition unity?

A: No. I have said I won't and I see no reason now to change my mind. Trying for opposition unity is futile and we have wasted enough time and energy in chasing it. But for the future, this election can be taken as the indicator of the relative strengths of the opposition parties.

Rajiv Gandhi made a lot of mistakes during his campaign which we exploited very well...He lost a lot of credibility when he went on saying that the performance of my government was zero...The people thought Rajiv Gandhi was telling lies...



Ashok Vishe

Q: One constant criticism by the opposition was that the Congress(I) was an individualistic party, with only one supreme leader. Today we see the same thing being repeated in Karnataka.

A: Well, if it has happened here today, it is because of the political culture practised and propagated by the Congress for the last 15 years. What the Congress has done in this regard has influenced not only the other parties, but also the people.

Q: But you need not have allowed it. Your partymen released advertisements in newspapers with your photo and the captions said, "Vote Hegde."

A: No, actually I was against it, but they were insistent. They said the people would like to know who the leader of the Janata Party is.

Q: But you still did not have to toe the Congress(I) line which you have criticised so often.

A: Yes, that is true. I don't like any single person being projected as the sole leader. But in this case... (*shrugs*)

Q: Does this reinforce the belief that people vote more for personalities than parties?

A: I don't completely agree with that. You know, this personality business was there even during Panditji's time. Only then it was natural—Panditji earned our love and affection. Mrs Indira Gandhi believed in the personality cult: but she cultivated and perfected it. This has affected all other parties. I am certainly not for it.

Q: Coming to the Prime Minister, don't you think his election campaign was over-aggressive? And in sharp contrast the opposition took it lying down.

A: Not really. Rajiv Gandhi made a lot of mistakes during his campaign which we exploited very well. Here he lost a lot of credibility when he went on saying that the performance of my government was zero. He was misguided by the local Congress(I) leaders. The people thought Rajiv Gandhi was telling lies because they had seen my government perform. Similarly, he went on harping about the one-party rule. I demolished the argu-

ment with just one line: for 15 years Karnataka had a Congress government. What is the wonderful development that has taken place? In both these cases his credibility suffered and I did not have to find any other issues.

Q: Would you agree that there was some amount of sympathy for you that helped you win?

A: Not really. Only when people like Karunakaran came here and made statements like "the people are waiting to throw out this government" there was some sympathy. It had nothing to do with my resignation. It was a positive vote on our performance.

Q: How long do you think Rajiv Gandhi will last? Will he complete his five year term?

A: I don't think the question is very relevant.

Q: Why are you people so fond of this "relevance business?"

A: *(Laughs).*

Q: Well, don't you think this election has proved that the other opposition leaders are irrelevant?

A: Why? They did come here...

Q: But they hardly campaigned...

A: Why should we trouble them when we can manage things ourselves?

Q: How much did the campaigning by the filmstars Anant Nag and Shankar Nag help?

A: Oh, they did a wonderful job.

Q: It looks as though you are increasingly imitating the Congress(I)—the personality cult, filmstars, computers...

A: Well, some techniques which are modern have to be used *(laughs)*. (There is) nothing wrong in that. Anant and Shankar came to us and said they would campaign. We did not go out of our way and call them. Every citizen is free to come and campaign for us.

Q: When are you going to advise the older opposition leaders to retire, now that your relevance and their irrelevance have been proved?

A: (*Laughs*) Why should I? I have my hands full here. I have to mind my own business.

Q: Are you going to discuss with them the fact that state level leadership is proving more effective in combating the Congress(I)? Is it not better that their aspirations are confined to their states first?

A: I quite agree. If we had only concentrated on the grassroots over the last seven years—after the Janata split—we would have done much better. Instead we wasted time at the national level trying to take a shortcut to power. I am referring only to the Janata Party. We simply took in people like Devi Lal and Karpoori Thakur who have made a name for themselves splitting parties.

Q: You hinted that you would like to relinquish your chief ministership and go back to national level politics. Who is going to take over here? Do you have a second rung leadership?

A: Why, I have senior colleagues. Not just one, many...

Q: That is the problem. You have too many...

A: Well, one of them will emerge as the most acceptable person.

Q: You now seem quite emphatic that you would like to re-enter national politics.

A: I don't know how to explain it without being misunderstood. You see, in the first place I did not want to come here. I should not stick here permanently. There should be a change after every three years, four years. People get tired of seeing the same face.

Interviewed by Chidanand Rajghatta

Dispassionate objectivity of approach and deliberate application of data are the two eyes of a decision-maker. Steadiness of advocacy and thoroughness to details are of the outfit of a leader. Personal prejudice should not stain nor self-interest warp the decision Straight-forwardness in dealing, strength of will, tenacity of purpose and capacity for action are the hall-mark of a manager on whom devolves the onus of decision-making. Clear-headed and confident but conscious of risks, he combines enterprise with caution. Resourceful and resilient, he accommodates in his decision the imponderable and the ineluctable. Like automobiles rolling out of the assembly line, decisions emerge from conference and contemplation, from discussion and deliberation.

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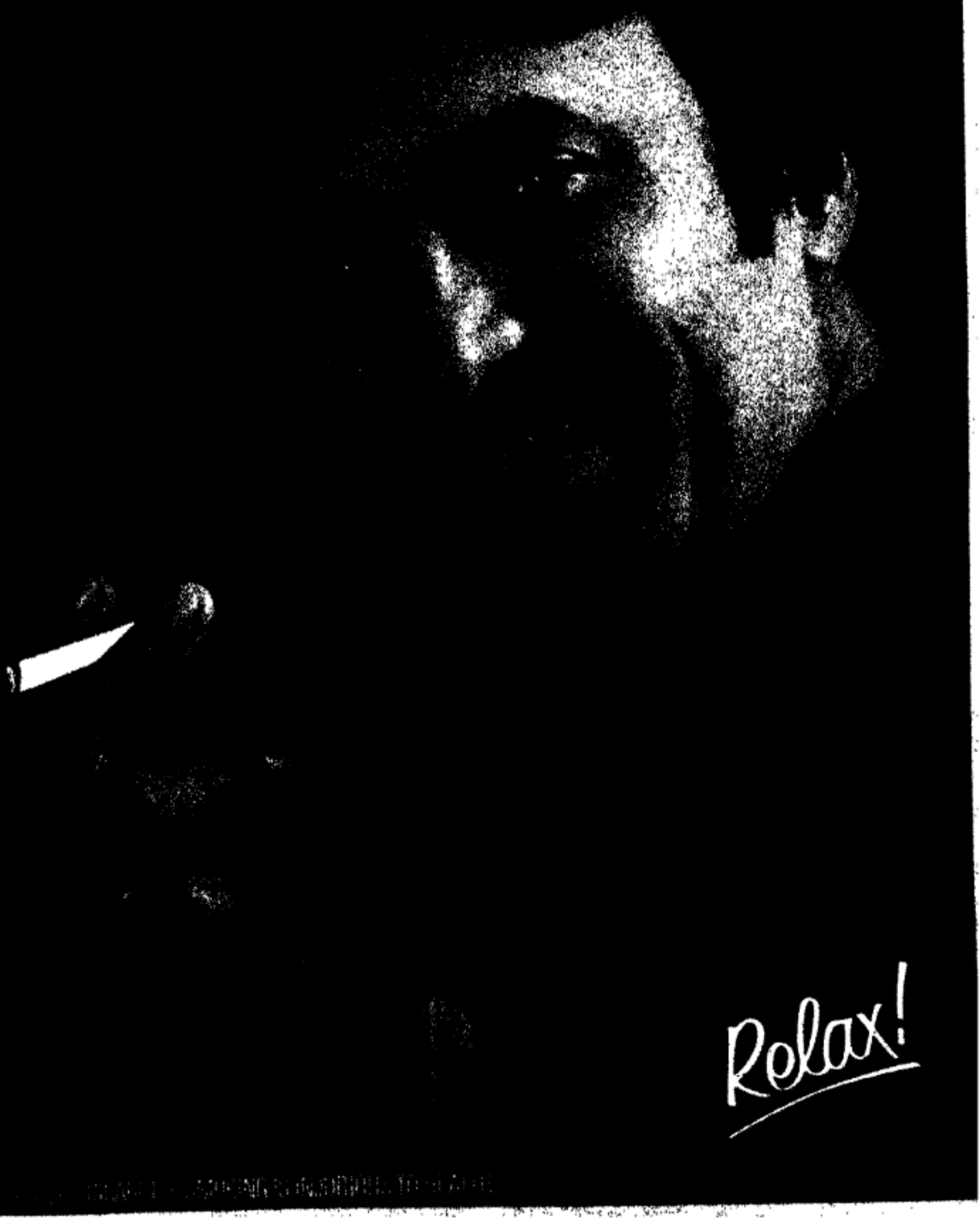
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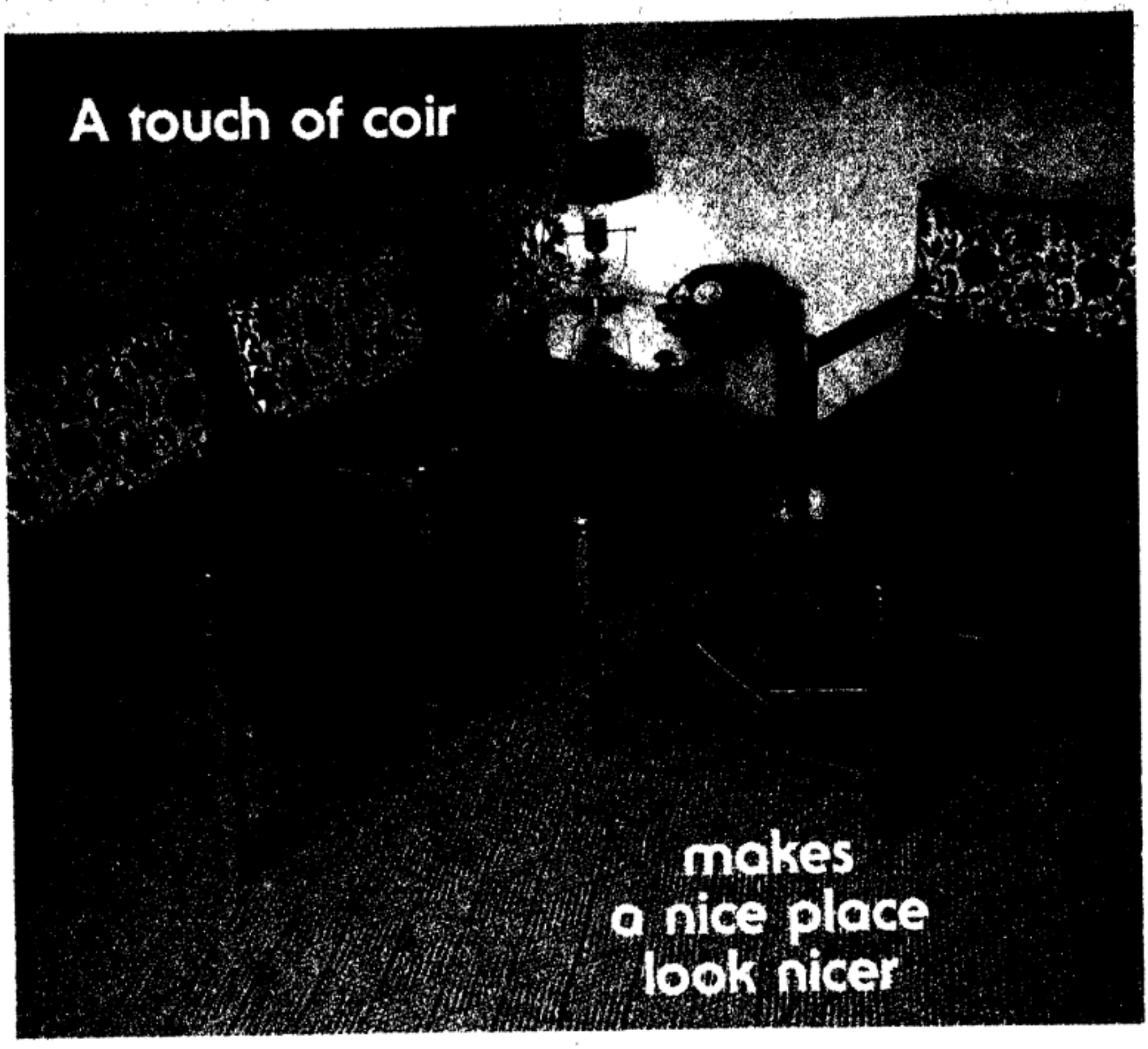
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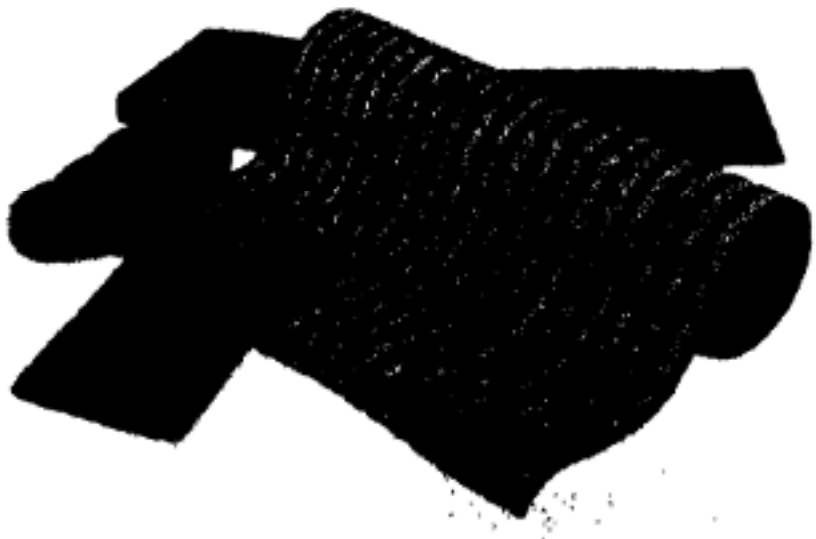
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ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

A Mature Electorate

Rajiv Gandhi's call for one-party rule is rebuffed

The Indian electorate has shown its maturity once again. Within ten weeks of the Lok Sabha results, in which the splintered opposition was given a drubbing by the electorate, the monopoly of the Congress(I) was curtailed. N. T. Rama Rao retained his hold over Andhra Pradesh. The Janata Party, led in Karnataka by the opposition's most astute leader, Ramakrishna Hegde, has been given a mandate bigger than what it received in 1983. In Sikkim Narbahadur Bhandari, who had suffered in the days when the ruling party at the centre had not pledged itself to "clean" politics and toppled his government through defections in May last year, has received an overwhelming mandate. In Maharashtra, the Congress (I) has barely retained power winning 148 of the 288 seats: the Progressive Democratic Front led by the Congress (Socialist) president, Sharad Pawar, having proved that by putting up common opposition candidates, the Congress (I) can be checked. Pawar could have done better had he not insisted on aligning with the Bharatiya Janata Party. The Congressmen in the Congress(S) resented the BJP tie-up and the BJP's showing in the rest of the country, as in Maharashtra, has not been impressive. Apart from these states, in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, the showing of the ruling party has been less than spectacular. In Bihar and Gujarat the Congress(I) had done well. Only in Himachal Pradesh, under the leadership of Veerbhadra Singh, can the Congress (I) performance be described as remarkable: the party won 58 of the 65 seats. In the last elections, when Ram Lal led the Congress(I) in Himachal, to gain absolute majority some independents had to be wooed. This time, despite denying tickets to many ruling party stalwarts, V. B. Singh has been able to repeat the performance of the Congress in the days of the late Dr Y. S. Parmar, the founder of the Himachal state.

The Janata Party has emerged as the prominent opposition party on the national level. In the Lok Sabha polls too, the Janata, by being the only non-Communist national opposition party to receive double digit results (it won ten seats), became the main opposition party after the Telugu Desam and the CPI(M). This time, apart from comfortably retaining power in Karnataka, the party has won seats in all the states where elections were held, except Himachal and Sikkim. The Janata Party has won 239 seats all over the country this time, as compared to the 179 it had in the outgoing Assemblies. In Gujarat, the party has not done as well as it did earlier. By winning 14 seats, it has lost ground in seven seats in Gujarat. Apart from being the ruling party in Karnataka, the Janata Party has emerged as the main opposition in Orissa and Gujarat.

The role of the main opposition in the biggest state Assembly, Uttar Pradesh, has gone to the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party (DMKP), which represents the former parties of Charan Singh (Lok Dal) and H. N. Bahuguna (Democratic Socialist Party), and which has won 86 of the 425 seats in UP. It has also emerged as the principal opposition in the second largest Assembly, Bihar, by winning 44 of the 324 seats. The leader of the Bihar unit of the DMKP, Karpoori Thakur, has won his own seat by an overwhelming margin. In Rajasthan, though the biggest opposition party is the BJP, by winning 27 seats, the DMKP too is a recognised opposition party in a House of 250 (ten per cent of the total seats entitle a party to be recognised as a "party" in a Legislature. A party securing less than that number is called a "group"). The DMKP has failed to retain its presence in the Orissa, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh Assemblies, but has won a single seat in Himachal. (In Orissa, with Biju Patnaik having moved back to the Janata, the DMKP was wiped out. In Madhya Pradesh, on the eve of the election, the party's lone MLA and state president, Ramashankar Singh, defected to the Congress-I, thus becoming the last



Sraps India

NTR addressing a meeting from his *Chaitanya Ratham*

defector before the Anti-Defection Act was passed. The entire DMKP unit in MP joined the Congress -I on the eve of the polls.) The DMKP has emerged as a major party in the Hindi belt.

While the DMKP has picked up 152 seats in four states, the BJP has suffered major reverses all over, to slip down from its tally of 197 in the dissolved Assemblies to the present 166. In Madhya Pradesh, with 58 seats, the BJP has won two less than it did earlier to emerge as the main opposition. In Rajasthan, the party has gained six seats and with its present strength of 38 seats will be the main opposition party. The DMKP's poorest showing has been in Himachal, where even the state party leader Shanta Kumar has been defeated. It has won seven as compared to 29 in the last House. In Bihar too, the BJP has lost ground, winning only 12 against 21 in the last Assembly. In Karnataka, where the BJP had played dirty tricks with the Janata government of R.K. Hegde, the people have given a rebuff to the BJP: only two of the 18 seats have been retained. (The Hegde government was formed with BJP support in 1983.) In Maharashtra, the BJP has won 13, one less than before. In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP has gained by five seats by winning 16 seats. In Gujarat too, the BJP has improved its position, winning two more seats, to gain 11. In Andhra Pradesh, with the support of NTR, the BJP has moved up from three to eight seats and in Orissa, where the party drew a blank last time, a token presence of one BJP member will be seen this time.

The Congress (Socialist), which is primarily a party of old Congress stalwarts of Maharashtra, Kerala and Assam, is the only national opposition party which has not fared well on a countrywide scale. With 44 seats, Sharad Pawar as the leader of PDF will be an effective opposition leader in Maharashtra. In Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, the party has won a seat each. In Bihar, after defections to the Congress(I) took place on a mass scale last year, the Congress(S) had been left with only a skeleton number, with former union minister Dharam Bir Sinha as the state unit president. The token victory will at least justify the existence of Sinha's party in the state.

Of the two Communist parties, the CPI(M) has gained ground in UP while losing badly in Bihar. It had no seats in the outgoing UP Assembly, now it has three. In Bihar, the party has one MLA, earlier it had six



Biju Patnaik (second from left) with Sharad Pawar (right) at a meeting

members in the Assembly. In Andhra Pradesh, it has more than doubled its presence: from five to 11. In Karnataka, it has two, one seat less than before. In Maharashtra, the status quo has been maintained with two seats and in Rajasthan the token presence of one has been retained. Altogether, the CPI(M) had 17 seats in these states before, now it has 20. In the case of the CPI, however, the results have not been heartening. From a total of 43 from seven of the states where polls were held, the party has 34 now. In Rajasthan, the party's token presence has been wiped out. It has improved its status in Karnataka marginally. In Bihar and Andhra, it has 11 seats each while in Maharashtra and Orissa the party has one member each and in UP it has won five seats.

One party which had won many byelections in the last few years was Menaka Gandhi's Rashtriya Sanjay Manch (RSM). The party has been almost wiped out in these elections. The victory of Virendra Pratap Shahi in Gorakhpur district's Lakshmipur seat may put the RSM into the UP Assembly, but what cannot be ignored is that Shahi is a known mafia leader of his area and could have won the seat even as an independent. Menaka Gandhi's close lieutenant, Akbar Ahmed, who was a firebrand opposition personality in the UP Assembly after he left the Congress(I) when the RSM was formed, did not contest the elections this time. Menaka Gandhi has been totally eclipsed.

The major fallout of the elections has been that the poor showing of the ruling party, when compared to the Lok Sabha elections, has made the old guard in the Congress(I) optimistic. The induction of Harideo Joshi as the chief minister of Rajasthan is an indication of the revival of the old guard, which has moved on to the backbenches since the days of Sanjay Gandhi. The retention of the chief ministers in Orissa, MP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Himachal, and UP shows that the party high command is not in a mood for major reshuffling in the states. The Karnataka debacle has emboldened the former chief minister and Congress(I) Working Committee member, R. Gundu Rao, to seek an emergent meeting of the CWC to discuss the results. There is talk about requisitioning a meeting of the AICC as well. The old guard, which had been slighted during the distribution of tickets in the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, is now feeling emboldened. The Anti-Defection Act can hold together the legislators, but it will not affect the working of the organisational committees. These bodies, the PCCs and the AICC were not constituted by the present ruling elite. In the very first session of the eighth Lok Sabha, there was an occasion when 15 of the 18 speakers in a Parliamentary Party Meeting (on the Anti-Defection Bill) spoke critically of the official line. Inner-party democracy seems to be reviving in the Congress(I). The Assembly results have restored inner-party democracy in the Congress(I). Can there be a better proof of the maturity of the Indian electorate than the Sikkim, Andhra and Karnataka verdicts, which have shown the people's annoyance at the politics of defection and toppling? (In the Lok Sabha polls, in Jammu and Kashmir also the toppling game was rebuffed and Farooq Abdullah's party won.) Rajiv Gandhi's call for one-party rule in the centre and the states too has been rejected. The Indian electorate, apparently, cannot be taken for granted.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

ANDHRA PRADESH

A jubilant chief minister N. T Rama Rao termed his Telugu Desam Party's victorious return to power as "a people's victory" and it was indeed a resounding vote from the Telugu electorate to NTR against the defectors who had "stabbed him in the back" last year. The Telugu Desam Party won 202 seats in a House of 294 (elections for two constituencies were countermanded). The party had won the same number of seats in the 1983 Assembly elections when it first swept the polls to form the government in the state. The four opposition parties which had an electoral adjustment with the Telugu Desam improved their standing considerably.

For the Congress(I), the state Assembly elections proved even more disastrous than the 1983 elections, with its number falling to 49 seats in the Legislative Assembly from the 60 it had retained two years ago. Despite all indications to the contrary, the state party leadership persisted in pinning its hopes on the nine per cent increase in the votes during the Lok Sabha elections and the 75 Assembly segments where the party had got a higher margin of votes. There were pointers aplenty for the Congress(I) including the utter demoralisation among the party workers; 22 candidates refused to even file their nomination papers but the state leaders continued to advocate the point of view to the party high command that the Congress(I) had good chances of marginally increasing the number of seats it had in the dissolved Legislative Assembly. The party tried to project a fresh clean image by fielding new candidates for a majority of the seats it contested but failed to convince the electorate which rejected most of the new faces. For, it was the Congress stalwarts who won. The APCC(I) chief, Dr Y. S. Rajasekhar Reddy, retained his Pulivendla constituency with an impressive margin of over 30,000 votes but tendered his resignation from the APCC(I) yet another time, accepting the responsibility for his party's miserable showing at the polls.

The presence of the 222 candidates of the Democratic Telugu Desam Party (DTDP) led by Nadendla Bhaskara Rao had the effect of reminding the public of the dubious manner in which Mr Rama Rao's government had been ousted and Mr Bhaskara Rao installed as the chief minister with the help of the Congress(I). All the DTDP candidates with the sole exception of Bhaskara Rao lost their deposits, polling on an average less than 400 votes in each constituency. Mr Bhaskara Rao himself, while managing to retain his security deposit, lost to the sitting BJP MLA, Indrasena Reddy, by over 17,000 votes at Malakpet constituency in Hyderabad which he had chosen with great care. His hopes were based on the anticipated support of the minority community to be mobilised by the support of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Musalmeen (MIM) and the large segment of state government employees. Of the 55 MLAs who had opted to support Bhaskara Rao in forming the ministry in August 1983, only one, V. Ram Bhupal Chowdhury, was elected at Kurnool constituency on the Congress(I) ticket; the rest lost at the polls.

The MIM, a poll ally of Bhaskara Rao's DTDP which had held five



Sriens India

N.T. Rama Rao

seats in the dissolved Legislative Assembly, lost one seat in Karwan constituency to the BJP candidate, who was supported by the Telugu Desam Party. Even the Rayalaseema Vimochana Samithi which had raised the highly emotional and sensitive issue of "justice for Rayalaseema region," could not make a dent in the unyielding support to the Telugu Desam Party. Dr Ramanna Reddy, the Samithi leader who had been elected from Proddatur constituency in 1983 on a Telugu Desam ticket, could not make any headway.

The non-Congress(I) vote was consolidated in favour of the Telugu Desam and its allies which increased its percentage of votes by 2.2 per cent. The consolidation resulted in the sharp reduction in the election of independent and rebel candidates. The CPI, CPI(M), the BJP and the Janata doubled the seats in the House having entered into a poll adjustment with the Telugu Desam. The BJP won eight of the ten seats it contested, the CPI won 11 seats out of 15, the CPI(M) 11 of the 12 constituencies it contested and the Janata Party raised its strength to two seats having fielded four candidates.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

ORISSA

The Congress(I) succeeded in repeating its 1980 performance of securing three-fourths majority in the 147 member Orissa Assembly, thanks to the half-hearted approach of the Janata Party to the elections Biju Patnaik depended more on a sympathy vote for his leadership than on any serious effort to strengthen the Janata machinery. After taking a lead in the campaigning over the Congress(I) at the initial stage, Biju Patnaik gave up the offensive and talked in terms of evoking sympathy, reminding the people of his past contributions to the state and his wish to devote "my last life to the service of the state." He did not move beyond his own Bhubaneswar constituency and a few other constituencies in Puri and Cuttack districts to campaign. Rather than his apparent overconfidence, he seemed to suffer from a sense of demoralisation born out of a few days of illness during the campaigning and a pitiable lack of resources compared to the unlimited money power of the ruling party. That Biju Patnaik had surrendered the battle before the polls was evident from his expression of surprise at the big margin of over 28,000 votes by which he won the Bhubaneswar seat.

The poll results have made Nandini Satpathy's political future still more uncertain since her Jagrat Orissa bagged only her own Dhenkanal seat and that of an independent backed by it as against the 85 seats the party contested. The CPI has been drubbed having won only one seat against its earlier strength of four. The CPI(M) and some other minor parties have again fared miserably. The BJP and the SUCI have won one seat each. The strength of the independents has fallen from ten to five but significantly includes two Congress(I) rebels. Despite the Congress(I)'s return to power with 117 seats and the maintenance of the status quo about the state's leadership under J.B. Patnaik, the CM's camp was haunted by uncertainty amidst reports that he would be changed in preference to some one more acceptable by the party high command.

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

UTTAR PRADESH

If for the ruling party the results of the Assembly polls mean the end of the sympathy wave, for the opposition they could also mean the opening of a new chapter. The combined strength of the opposition in the new 425-member UP Assembly (127 minus independents) is large enough to shatter the myth that there is no alternative to Congress rule even if the people want it. Ironically, after sweeping the Parliament polls, the Congress(I) lost its two-thirds majority in the previous Assembly where it had 309 out of 425 seats, getting merely 266 seats. All major opposition parties recovered from the disastrous slump in December 1984. The DMKP which had won only two parliamentary seats even managed to improve on its strength of 60 in the last Assembly to 86 now. The Janata got 19. the BJP 16 and the CPI six seats and all this with hardly any seat adjustments among them. Among the major Congress(I) reverses were the defeat of four ministers, one of them being K.P. Tiwari from Karchana (Allahabad) who had earlier been denied the party ticket for the parliamentary election to accommodate matinee idol Amitabh Bachchan. Mr Tiwari later blamed his defeat on his fellow-Congressman, Ashok Bajpai, son of UPCC(I) office-bearer, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai. He said that the SSP Allahabad, Uma Shankar Bajpai, had given free licence to his opponents to use stronghold tactics against him at the instance of Ashok Bajpai. From the pattern of victories and defeats, it is clear that the Congress(I)'s losses were not so much due to the ebb in the sympathy wave as its keenness to infuse new blood into its list of MLAs. Wherever a large number of sitting MLAs were denied tickets, the party lost on account of rebel activity. Even if the rebels had not openly contested against party candidates in many constituencies, they did work against the official nominees, notably the two Gorakhpur mafia dons Harishankar Tiwari (independent) and Veerendra Shahi (Rashtriya Sanjay Manch) who won.

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

MADHYA PRADESH

In the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections, the Congress(I) got two-third majority after winning 250 seats, four more than what it did in 1980. But the victory has not been considered a remarkable feat on the part of the Congress(I). In comparison, the BJP has done fairly well after winning 58 seats, one less than it had in the last Assembly in 1980.

A new trend that has emerged in the recent Assembly elections is that the BJP and the Congress(I) have both made inroads in each others' stronghold. The Madhya Bharat region was once a bastion of the BJP and in 1980 the party won 34 seats from the region. But this time, however, it could win only 14 seats. The BJP's base in Indore, Ujjain, Mandsaur and Ratlam has been completely eroded. The BJP leader and leader of the opposition in the state Assembly, S.L. Patwa contested from two seats. Manasa and Bhojpur but he lost in Manasa. Three other prominent leaders of the BJP, Sheetala Sahai (East Lashker),



Arjun Singh

Satya Narain Jatia (Ujjain) and Vikram Verma (Dhar) also lost from the region. The only notable win for the BJP was the victory of the party's state president, Kailash Joshi who won from Bagli. The former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, V.K. Saklecha, who left the BJP in November 1984, was defeated from Jawad (Mandsaur).

The Congress(I) received a setback in Indore where rebel candidate Suresh Seth defeated the Congress(I) nominee. Another rebel Congress(I) candidate, Kumar Mukhraj Singh won from Saraipalli. Mrs Saja Bhedia, wife of senior Congress(I) minister, J.L. Bhedia lost to an independent candidate supported by the labour leader of Chhatishgarh Shankar Guha Niyogi from Dandilohara in Durg district. The DMKP state unit president Ramashanker Singh, who joined the Congress(I) only in the last week of January, won from Ron constituency in Bhind district. The DMKP could not win a single seat, but the Janata Party did win five.

Jagmeet Uppal, Bhopal

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Bhajan Lal's formula that Himachal Pradesh should be merged with Punjab was opposed by the BJP to exploit the sentiments of the people of Himachal Pradesh for the elections. This was the main issue on which the BJP campaigned against the Congress(I). But when the campaign was in its peak, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi rejected the Bhajan Lal formula in an election meeting in Himachal Pradesh. The BJP's strategy soon started crumbling. The election results show the humiliating defeat for the BJP which was dreaming to form a government in the state.

The BJP was the main opponent of the Congress(I) and naturally it put in its efforts and energy for the Assembly elections. However, the BJP could win only seven seats: a comedown for the party which had 27 MLAs in the 68-member House. Barring three snow-bound constituencies—Lahul Spiti, Kinnar and Bhurmaour—where elections will take place on 25 May, out of 65 seats contested, the Congress(I) won 55 seats, 18 seats more than its strength in the last Assembly. The BJP won seven, the DMKP one and two seats were won by independent candidates.

BJP stalwarts like former chief minister and state unit president Shanta Kumar lost to the Congress(I) nominee from Sullah, his traditional seat since 1972. The BJP state unit vice-president Kishori Lal and former speaker Swaran Kumar also lost to the Congress(I) candidates. Janata Party leaders like Ranjit Singh and Shyama Sharma also lost.

Though the Congress(I) received a two-thirds majority, it suffered a setback in Jogindernagar constituency from where the former minister of state Gulab Singh was defeated by rebel candidate Ratan Lal.

Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh, popularly known as "Raja Sahab," won from his traditional seat Jubbal Kotkhai with a margin of more than 17,000 votes. Other prominent Congress(I) winners were HPCC(I) president Gian Chand Totu, transport minister Sat Mahajan, education minister Sant Ram, acting speaker Vijay Joshi, minister of state for health Vijayendra Singh and minister of state for law Rangila Ram Rao.

Jagmeet Uppal, Shimla

RAJASTHAN

The BJP, DMKP and Janata alliance has lost a golden chance to rule the state of Rajasthan. The opposition front in the state missed the opportunity of forming the government by a narrow margin. Unity and a little more effort on their part would have forced the Congress(I) to once again sit in the opposition as it did in 1977.

In sharp contrast to the Lok Sabha polls only two months ago, the Vidhan Sabha elections proved to be a nightmare for the ruling party in Rajasthan. It had captured all the 25 Lok Sabha seats with comfortable margins in 187 Assembly segments. Only in 13 segments could the opposition establish a lead over Congress(I) candidates. This time in the Assembly elections, the ruling party conceded defeat at the hands of the joint opposition in 85 Vidhan Sabha constituencies. In many others it escaped defeat by a slender margin. In all, it could capture only 113 seats. In two constituencies elections were countermanded due to the death of the candidates who were contesting. In the outgoing Vidhan Sabha, the Congress(I) had 150 seats and the opposition 50 seats.

The results of the Vidhan Sabha elections in the state have been baffling. Neither had the Congress(I) ever imagined such humiliation at the hands of the electorate only two months after a complete sweep by its candidates, nor had the opposition ever expecteu such a windfall. The former chief minister, Shiv Charan Mathur, had claimed he would capture at least 170 seats though his successor, Heera Lal Deopura, was not that optimistic. He had hoped to at least maintain the status quo by regaining 150 seats. The opposition, on the other hand, was completely demoralised.

Till 20 February 1985, the opposition seemed as if it was fighting an already lost battle. Man Singh's killing by the police in a fake encounter on 21 February in Deeg proved to be a shot in the arm for the opposition. As a result of the incident, the morale of the alliance suddenly shot up and the campaign, which had been hitherto defensive, turned offensive. But an analysis of the election results clearly shows that the Man Singh episode had little impact on the electorate.

The opposition leaders had declared before newsmen that in case they could get a majority in the Vidhan Sabha, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat would be their leader. Mr Shekhawat is the only opposition leader the ruling party is afraid of. He had been chief minister of the state for about three years during the Janata regime He has no charges of corruption against him. It is no secret that some overzealous opposition leaders do not like Mr Shekhawat as they know that his personality overshadows them. He thus proved to be a thorn in the eyes not only of the ruling party but some opposition leaders as well. Shekhawat took no chance and in a bid to not allow the ruling party to concentrate against him at one place, he contested from two constituencies: Amber in Jaipur district and Nimbahera in Chittorgarh district. He won from both the constituencies with big margins.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

GUJARAT

The Congress(I) chalked up a spectacular victory in the Gujarat Assembly elections, capturing an unprecedented 149 of the 182 seats in the House. However, the opposition cut a sorry figure: none of them could claim the status of a recognised opposition in the House, for which a party needs at least 17 seats. The Janata Party won 14 seats, the BJP romped home on 11 and the DMKP did not contest any seat on its symbol. The parties that drew a blank were the regional Doordarshi Party and the two Communist parties. Eight independents were also elected to the Assembly.

The victory was in a way an improvement on the performance of the Congress(I) in the December polls when it won 24 of the 26 Lok Sabha seats from Gujarat. At that time, the party was trailing in as many as 42 Assembly segments. Had the trend continued, the opposition should have bagged 42 seats at least Together, the anti-Congress forces won only 33 seats. The results showed that the ruling party still held its sway over the KHAM (Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims) vote banks, although the Congress(I) had not adhered to its 1980 strategy of selecting candidates mainly from these classes. All the reserved seats for the tribals and harijans went to the ruling party. Even the anti-reservation stir launched by students during the election campaign did not hold much water.



Madhavsinh Solanki

In 1980, the Congress(I) won 140 of the 182 seats in the Gujarat Assembly, setting an all-time record which has been shattered now The chief minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, attained the distinction of becoming the first man at the helm of the state since it came into being in 1960 to have completed an uninterrupted tenure. He capped it with his seventh consecutive victory in Bhadran constituency in Kaira district: the margin of victory over his Janata rival, Himatsinh Jadav, was more than 41,000 votes. Five of his cabinet colleagues also cruised to an easy victory. Also victorious were some of his closest allies in the fray, including Mahant Vijaydasji, president of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress(I) and Prof. Hasmukh Patel, general secretary of the party. The only major setback for the Congress(I) was in Morvi, where the BJP candidate, Amrut Aghara, trounced the vice-president of the GPCC(I), Jivraj Thoban, by a margin of 7,000 votes.

The ruling party swept the polls in south Gujarat, bagging all the 29 seats in the region. It lost 12 of the 52 seats in Saurashtra, one of the six seats in Kutch, 12 of the 52 seats in north Gujarat and eight of the 43 seats in central Gujarat. The speaker of the Gujarat Assembly and one of the few Congress(I) dissidents in the fray, Natwarlal Shah, also retained his Dhandhuka seat by a margin of more than 15,000 votes. But the deputy speaker and a Janata leader, Ramniklal Dhami, lost his Dhoraji seat to the Congress(I). Of the 23 Congress(I) rebels, including eight MLAs who were denied tickets by the party, only four managed to get elected. They were Karamsinh Makwana from Chotila, Ramsinh Solanki from Bayad, Laadhar Vaghela from Deesa and Shankerji Thakore from Kheralu. A number of prominent heads in the opposition have rolled. They include Makarand Desai, president of the BJP's Gujarat unit and a sitting MLA, Dalsukhbhai Godhani, leader of the Janata in the dissolved House, and Jaspal Singh, former

police commissioner of Baroda, who contested as an independent, having been expelled from the BJP

Women played a key role in the elections: there were as many as 33 women candidates among the 1,137 contestants in the field. Ten of them, including nine belonging to the Congress(I), have won. They are: Kumudini Pancholi (Bhuj), Tameez Kureshi (Kalupur), Dr Gita Dakshini (Naroda), Kusum Khambhoja (Umreth), Shanta Makwana (Sojitra), Bharati Patel (Chikhli) and Savita Patel (Pardi). The lone opposition woman candidate to win was Champa Parmar of the Janata

A notable win by the opposition was that of former chief minister and now Janata leader, Chimanbhai Patel, from Unjha in north Gujarat. Pitted against two other candidates, Mr Patel romped home by a margin of 26,825 votes over his nearest Congress(I) rival, Mangaldas Patel. Mr Patel, who was returned to the House from Jamjodhpur in Saurashtra in 1980, shifted his constituency to Unjha this time, obviously in search of a safe seat

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

MAHARASHTRA

The re-election of Vasantdada Patil for a fourth term was possible only because of the Congress(I)'s slender majority of 162 seats in a house of 288. The results, for the first time, threw up the phenomenon of zero seat districts for the Congress(I). The party got none of the seven seats in Raigad, none of the 14 seats in Nasik and none of the three in Gadchiroli. While it has been wiped out of the three districts, the opposition, for the first time had seats in all districts, except one, Akola. In fact, not since the stormy days of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement has the opposition been returned in such large numbers in the Assembly. It may be recalled that when the state was formed in 1960 the then chief minister, Y.B. Chavan, had to induct members from the Peasants and Workers Party to get a majority because the Gujarat MLAs had gone to Gujarat

In the ruling party's traditional stronghold of western Maharashtra which is also the territory of Vasantdada Patil, the party was literally trounced: winning only 50 of the 111 seats. It is here that Rajiv Gandhi's policy of trying to break the stranglehold of cooperative capitalists or the sugar barons over the administration backfired on the Congress's electoral fortunes.

A confident Sharad Pawar and his lieutenants claim that it was a "Pawar wave" in rural Maharashtra together with the influence of the Shetkari Sanghatana, particularly in Nasik district, that gave the opposition PDF group its 103 seats. More significant is the fact that Sharad Pawar benefited from the Congress(I) discontent in direct proportion to the degree that the Congress lost. As he himself said, Rajiv Gandhi toured 18 districts and the Congress(I) lost in ten of them.

The chief minister allegedly got Premila Chavan's candidate. Vilas Patil, defeated in Karad South and also got several of the rebels who were close to him elected, like Dr Patangrao Kadam of Bilodi-Wangi, his close friend, Mr Balasaheb Throat, son of his friend Ramchandra Naikwadi of Walva and Sanjay Singh Gaekwad, nephew of Udaysing Gaekwad, his ardent follower in Shahuwadi. Party sources say that there was no charismatic state leader who could campaign for the ruling party candidates and counter the charges levelled by Sharad Pawar. The most common explanation for the party's poor showing in comparison with its counterpart in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, is that the chief minister wanted a slender majority so that he could continue as chief minister. He saw to it that most of his men were elected (110) and for the rest he saw to it that those who could be a nuisance would be defeated. Earlier, he managed to see that potential rivals for the chief ministership (Hiray, Pratibha Patil and Niglankar Patil) were denied tickets. That speaker after speaker at the Congress Legislature Party mentioned the slender majority as a reason for dada's re-election reflects poorly on the confidence of a party that routed the opposition just two months ago in the Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress, which mopped up 51.55 per cent of votes in the Lok Sabha elections, saw its percentage plummet to 42 per cent while that of the opposition went up from 30 per cent to 37 per cent. The opposition, which secured a majority in only 66 Assembly segments in December, scored over the ruling party in 126 Assembly segments this time. The Shetkari Sanghatana, according to Congress(S) leader Anil Mehta, "was more effective this time as their activists were fielded on our tickets in one or two constituencies. This had a multiplier effect in Kalwan, Baglan, Nihpad and parts of Deolali in Nasik district."

Olga Tellis, Bombay

PONDICHERRY

Pondicherry was the exception to the rule as far as the voting pattern in the south went. While Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh drove out the Congress(I), Pondicherry welcomed the party after a lapse of 15 years. The AIADMK-Congress(I) alliance secured an absolute majority in the 30-member Assembly with the Congress(I) winning 15 of the 20 seats it contested and the AIADMK six of the ten it contested. The DMK has once again suffered a defeat by winning only five seats against the 22 it contested. Two seats were won by the Janata Party which contested the elections on its own and two seats went to independents: S. Ramaswamy, a former chief minister, and A. Soundararengan, an AIADMK rebel who defeated the official AIADMK candidate. The CPI which contested four seats and the CPI(M) which contested three seats have both been wiped out.

The combine was far ahead of the opposition parties at the time of the campaign. There was a bevy of crowd-attracting luminaries like Jayalalitha, Sivaji Ganesan and, of course, Rajiv Gandhi himself who brought in the votes for the AIADMK-Congress(I) alliance. The depleted opposition had only a tired Karunanidhi who spared no efforts to make a comeback in the union territory. The inevitable skirmishes between the DMK and the Janata and the final snapping of ties turned the voters against the opposition as topping the list of their priorities this time was a "stable government." What stood the Congress(I) in good stead were the impression that it would provide a strong, stable government, the good impression the PM has already made on the electorate and the choice of "right" candidates, respected persons with clean reputations. The affairs of the AIADMK were, however, mismanaged from the very start of the campaigning. The talks regarding the seat adjustments dragged on for days and at the end it was clear that the AIADMK had got a raw deal. The party bosses could certainly have bargained for a larger share of the seats. Compounding this, a number of wrong candidates were chosen, helping the DMK to defeat them in a few constituencies: the most notable example is, of course, the victory of the rebel AIADMK candidate A. Soundararengan.

Anita Pratap, Madras

SIKKIM

What the 1.55 lakh voters of the Himalayan state of Sikkim voted for is strident regionalism advocated by the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) rejecting the Congress(I)'s appeal to nationalism. In the process chief minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari romped home bagging 30 out of the 32 seats. He has formed an 11-member ministry with the promise of administration "with malice towards none," though the wound caused by the peremptory dismissal in May last year has made him a more wary man. He has kept his option of rejoining the Congress(I) open, a move welcomed by Delhi, though he would like the offer to come from the Congress(I). As he said in his post-victory press conference, he was in a position to consider whether the proposed terms would be beneficial for the people of Sikkim since the national parties often tried to suppress local aspirations.

Indeed Mr Bhandari's campaign plank was based on this "Congress(I) stigma." He projected himself as the protector of the identity of Sikkim and the Sikkimese people and a relentless crusader for their well-being. The electorate responded with so much zeal that the results were beyond his expectations. The Congress(I)'s efforts to counter this hills versus plains thrust by inducting party leaders from the North-eastern Coordination Committee made it even worse. The people had never seen these personalities and their speeches, mostly in Hindi, only reinforced their apprehension, prodded on unceasingly by Bhandari, that the whole charade bore ominous tidings. The only constituency where Bhandari's message was ignored was the capital town of Gangtok, the state's sole cosmopolitan centre where his wife, Dilkumari Bhandari, lost to the only plains candidate, Balchand Sarda. The responsibility of keeping the Congress(I) flag flying fell on a Bhutiya leader, Kaizang Gyatsho, who won the Kabi Tingda seat in north Sikkim. Among the notable Congress(I) leaders who were defeated were the two former chief ministers, Kazi Lhendup Dorji and Bhim Bahadur Gurung, and the newly inducted SPCC(I) president, Ram Chandra Poudyal, who resigned from this post after accepting moral responsibility for the party's debacle. The Janata Party had fielded 20 candidates, the CPI(M) two and the CPI one, most of whom lost their security deposits.

The Congress(I) leaders sought to explain the defeat by alleging that "in this illegal and unconstitutional election some 32,000 to 35,000 bogus voters and foreigners" had exercised their franchise and that they managed to include their names during intensive revision of electoral rolls. However, the party did not object to this earlier even though comparative analysis showed that in all the constituencies the strength of the electorate had gone up by about 1,000 votes. The North-eastern Coordination Committee is stated to have submitted a report to the high command seeking measures to get the election declared null and void by legal methods. Meanwhile, the SPCC(I) has settled down to the fate of starting from scratch. The Congress(I) is barely three months old in Sikkim, though it has always managed to rule the state through conversion of the winning regional parties as its unit.

Tapas Mukherjee, Gangtok



Narbahadur Bhandari



Bindeswari Dubey: new CM

BIHAR

The Congress(I) in Bihar has secured yet another mandate to continue in power for another term. However, the victory was nowhere as impressive as the one in December when the party had won 48 of the 54 Lok Sabha seats with a lead in 276 out of the 324 Assembly segments. In the Assembly elections, the Congress(I) barely managed to win 200 seats, conceding the rest to the opposition. But the opposition parties, individually, failed to gain much ground. In fact, the DMKP was the only party to have marginally improved its position compared to the 1980 Assembly elections (Chaudhury Charan Singh's party had then fought the elections as the Lok Dal). While the Janata Party managed to maintain its strength in the House, the CPI, CPI(M) and the BJP were the main losers.

The CPI's strength was reduced to 14 seats from the 23 seats it occupied in the previous House; the CPI(M)'s presence in the House will now be only symbolic with only one of the party's candidates, Ajit Sarkar, winning the elections; the BJP lost seven of the 21 seats it had held. The Janata Party won 12 seats: one more than its strength in the outgoing Assembly.

The Congress(I) would have fared much better in the elections had it not been for the fissures within the party. First, the supporters of the three people who vied for the chief ministership—Chandra Shekhar Singh, Bindeswari Dubey and Jagannath Mishra— harmed the interests of the party. As a member of the Congress(I) admitted, had the Anti-Defection Act not been there this government would have had a very fragile existence. Besides, a number of "rebel" candidates fought against the official Congress(I) candidates in the elections. Even though very few of them won the elections, they managed to cause an erosion of the Congress(I) votes which in turn helped the opposition parties. Congress leaders readily admit that left to itself the party may not have been able to form a government; it was Rajiv Gandhi's two trips to the state to campaign for his party that drew the votes. The "sympathy factor" seems to have worked again and women voted for the Congress(I) in large numbers. It remains to be seen whether the majority the Congress(I) has got is put to good use in administering the state and not frittered away by prolonging the tussle on the floor of the House.

Yuvaraj Ghimire, Patna

Rigging: A Way of Life in Bihar



In Bihar, polling time is also rigging time. It is not unusual to find children queueing up to cast false votes or armed musclemen arriving in jeeps to "capture" polling booths. Or, for that matter, Harijans cowering in fear, while the more powerful stamp the ballot papers on their behalf. Our photographer, K.M. Kishan, toured some constituencies to find out how the recent Assembly polls were conducted.



(Clockwise from bottom left) Voters, including children, displaying ballot papers outside a polling booth in Baktiyarpur; minor girls in saris waiting to cast their votes in Mokama; children voting in Baktiyarpur, Barh and Mokama Assembly constituencies,respectively; and children among eligible voters waiting to cast their votes in a Barh Assembly constituency booth









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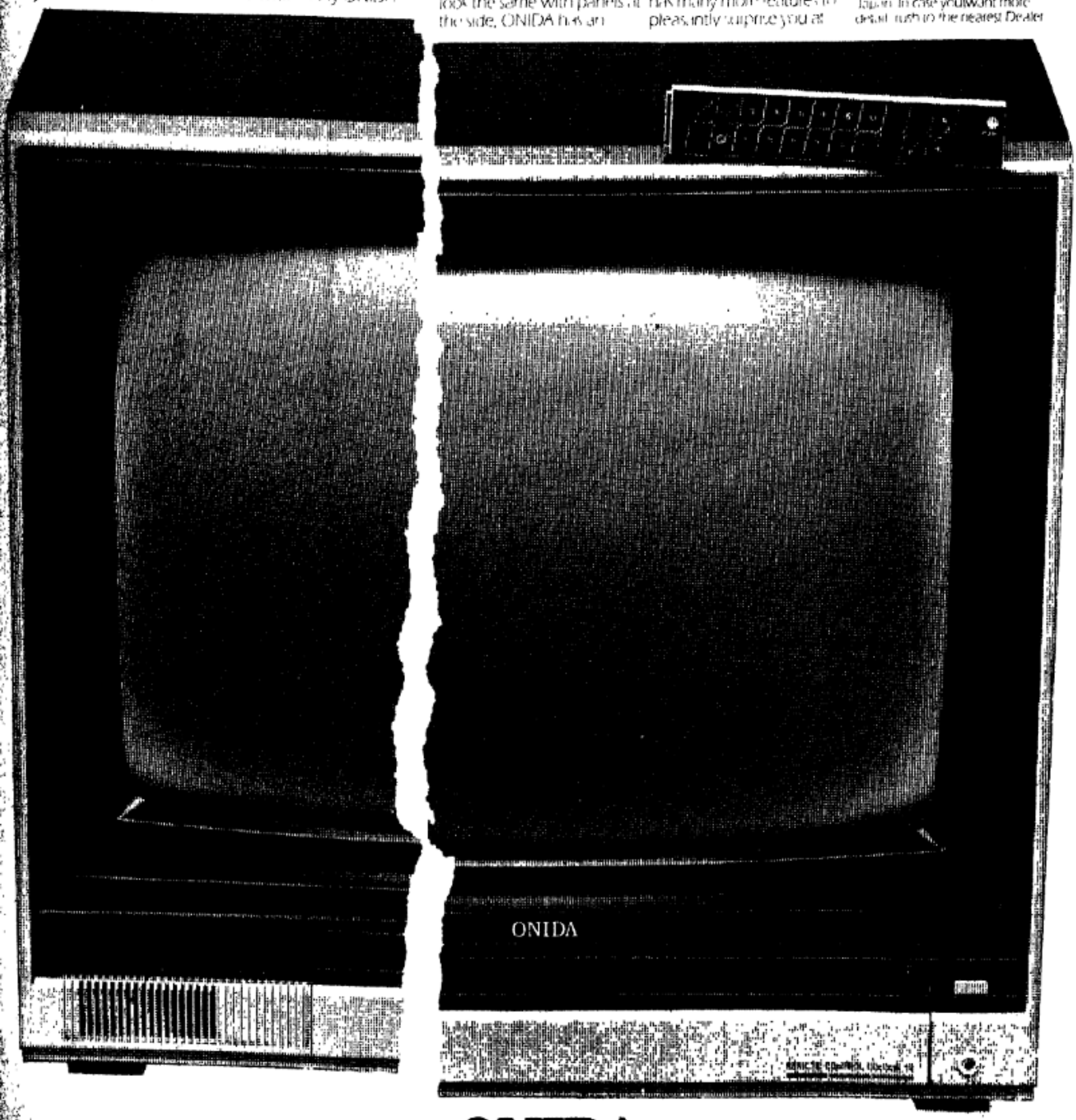
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(Above) Children were among those who queued up to cast their votes at a booth in the Baktiyarpur Assembly constituency and (below) a ten-year-old boy prepares to cast his vote in the Barh Assembly constituency

Can Black Money Really be Wiped Out?

Ashok Lahiri of Delhi School of Economics examines the question

No Prime Minister of India has placed greater emphasis on cleanliness in administration, public life and economic activity than Mr Rajiv Gandhi. Ever since he assumed office, the media has carried reports of spies caught, the Anti-Defection Bill, bank chairmen dismissed and the proclamations by him and his party about the promise of clean set-upsin the states as well as the centre and of rigorous measures against black money. All this has led to the evolution of his nick name, "Mr Clean."

The question is: Can Mr Clean do it? Why the Indian voter swung the way he did in the eighth Lok Sabha elections still remains a debatable issue. However, even if the voter did not associate a cleaner set-up in the future with Mr Rajiv Gandhi's party while voting for it, there is no doubt about the fact that expectations have been raised about greater cleanliness in the near future. Will this expectation be fulfilled? The Prime Minister has even told the people: "You won't find me here next time if we fail to keep our promises."

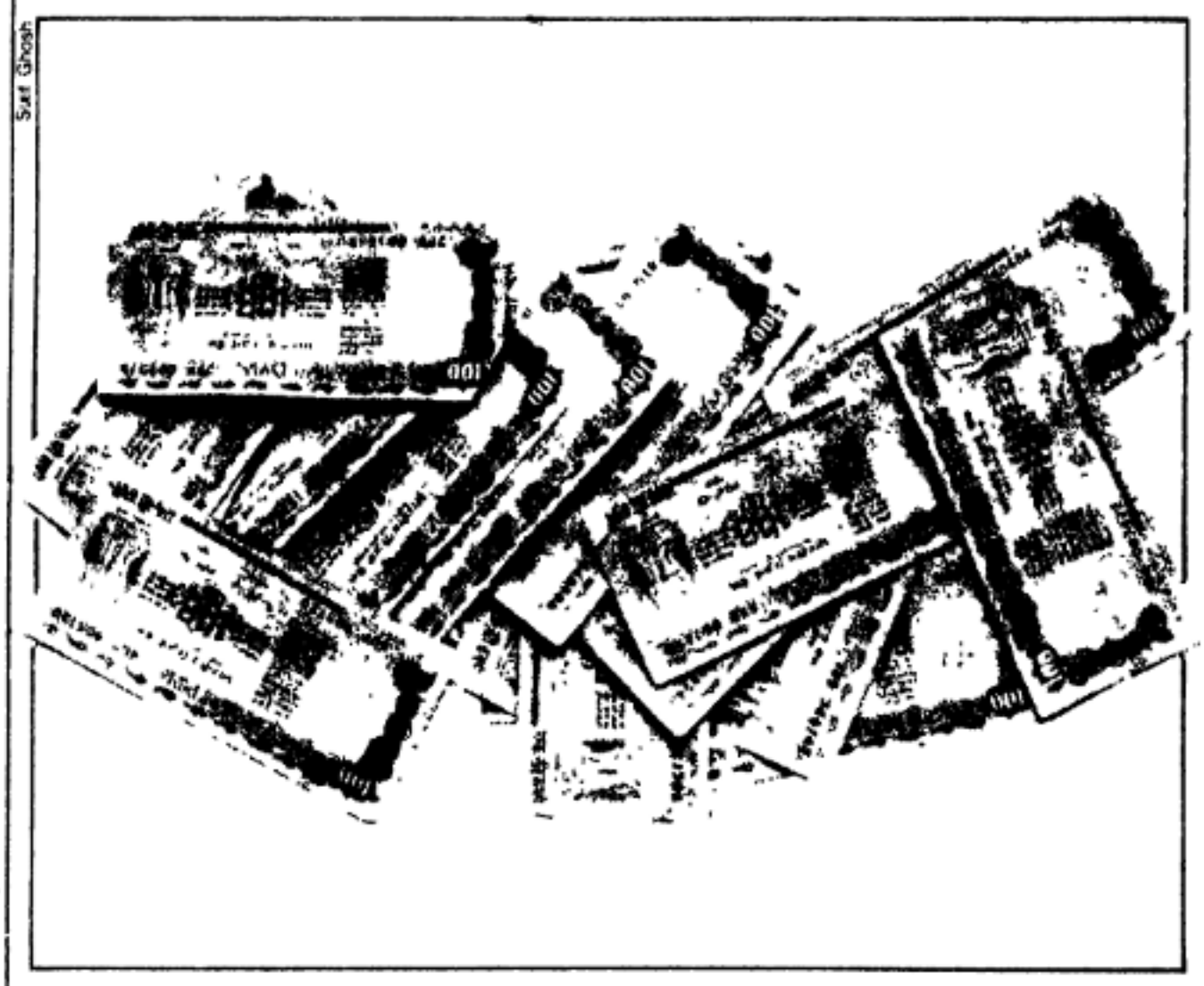
There is no reason to doubt the earnestness of the Prime Minister and his supporting Members of Parliament. It is not difficult to catch spies, dismiss irresponsible bureaucrats at the top and prevent horse-trading in elected representatives of the people: problems of this sort can be solved by an earnest government and we expect that many of them will disappear. It is important to remember that the culprits in such cases are just a handful of people. However, the problem of black money involves a lot more people and is of a different magnitude altogether.

We have been aware of the existence of black money in this country for quite a long time; as early as 1936, the Ayers Committee recommended steps to stop the fraudulent evasion and legal avoidance of tax. However, it is only recently that we have started measuring how much of black money there is in the system, documenting the various ways in which it gets generated and analysing ways in which it can be controlled.

A question often raised is: How much of it is there? Black money by its very nature is something that is unreported and hidden. Consequently, estimating the size of the unaccounted economy is a hazardous task and it is difficult to come up with estimates which everyone would find acceptable. There have been more than half-a-dozen studies by economists in the past which have thrown up estimates varying between as low as roughly five per cent to as high as almost 50 per cent of the national income—one of the lowest so far being the one provided by the government-appointed Wanchoo Committee. The government has asked the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy to look into the problem of black money. The report is not yet available and we do expect to know a lot more about the parallel economy.

A necessary condition for generation of black money is the existence of taxation laws and controls. There are income taxes, excise duties, wealth tax, gift tax, import duties, etc: non-payment of such government levies lead to black income. Exchange control exists to preserve and use scarce foreign exchange for importing essentials such as petroleum and violation of such regulations by smuggling and invoice manipulations lead to black money. Price controls exist and have existed on commodities such as steel, cement and paper and violation of such controls and their sale in the black market compound the problem. The licensing system in the industrial sector leads to bribes, donations and speed money and generates black incomes. There cannot be any black money if there are no taxes, no controls, no regulatory interventions by the government.

The problem of black money exists almost in every organised society including even the Communist


Sunil Ghosh

countries. For example, the problem of workers taking up activities in an unauthorised way has become quite acute in a country like Italy: the official labour force participation rate is going down whereas unofficial surveys suggest that it should be going up. The table is reproduced to give the reader an idea about the intensity of the problem. Though the problem of black money is a universal one, the degree or intensity of this problem differs from country to country. It depends on social and individual values, taxation and other laws, administrative efficiency and the political will to implement proclaimed government policies.

If there is conformity between individual and social perspectives, the problem of formulating laws and implementing them is minimal. The greater the divergence between the two, the more acute the problem of law enforcement. This truth has started to manifest itself in India in an increasingly apparent form in the sphere of economic laws. Aspirations have grown in a phenomenal way in post-independent India. Social norms regarding adequate compensations to bureaucrats, professionals and business managers, formulated by law-givers, such as the department of company affairs, pay commissions and such other authorities—which rule out coloured televisions, video cassette players, medical facilities at 'satisfactory' private nursing homes and accommodation in posh enclaves of metropolitan cities—are at loggerheads with the individual aspirations of a majority of the concerned persons. This is equally true for the entrepreneurial class as well: the returns considered to be just and satisfactory by the legal framework of society is far too low in the eyes of the entrepreneurs.

The divergence between the individual and social perspectives is perhaps partly due to the slow decay in the sense of involvement in national and social causes. That was perhaps inevitable given the height it achieved immediately prior to and after independence. Even in neighbouring People's Republic of China, the emphasis is more on individual incentives rather than commitment to the national cause. In India what strikes me most when I talk to a cross-section of bureaucrats, professionals, businessmen and managers is their emphasis and concern about the need for incentives and rationalisation. However, the proclaimed social perspective has not changed very much in the last three-and-a-half decades. We have, at the social level, kept on emphasising the role of commitment and socialistic values. How is it possible that the change in individual perspective has not been reflected in the social perspective? After all, the political elite, who are supposed to give leadership, has a close link with the bureaucrats, professionals, and business people and cannot think very differently from them. There are two reasons for this apparent anomaly. First, the Indian politician has believed it to be expedient not to change his proclaimed objective for catching votes and second, the system's reconciliation of the diverging trend between individual and social perspectives with the help of black money has been found to be quite a convenient solution for the politician himself as well as the bureaucrats, professionals and business people.

Survey of Extra-Mural Activities of Italian Civil Servants, 1980

	Per cent of total
Those with second job	54
Those often absent from duty because of few checks made	45
Those selling goods within ministries during working time	33
Those taking early or late holidays (and thus a larger holiday because of superior's absence at main holiday time)	30
Those available for small jobs outside in official working time	27
Those who hardly ever report for work because no checks made	19

(Reproduced from *The Informal Economy* by Adrian Smith in *Lloyds Bank Review*, July 1981.)

Black money by its very nature is something that is unreported and hidden. Consequently, estimating the size of the unaccounted money is a hazardous task and it is difficult to come up with estimates which everyone would find acceptable... A necessary condition for generation of black money is the existence of taxation laws and controls.

Though we do not know very much about what determines election outcomes in this country we do know a few things that perhaps do not have much of a bearing on the electoral fortunes of political parties. One of them is the manifesto brought out by a particular political party. This correspondent has started to doubt whether these manifestos are ever looked at after the election by the party when it is voted to power. Irrespective of that I continue to be a person who still takes the manifesto of a political party, brought out on the eve of the election, seriously. They do give you an inkling about the shape of things to come.

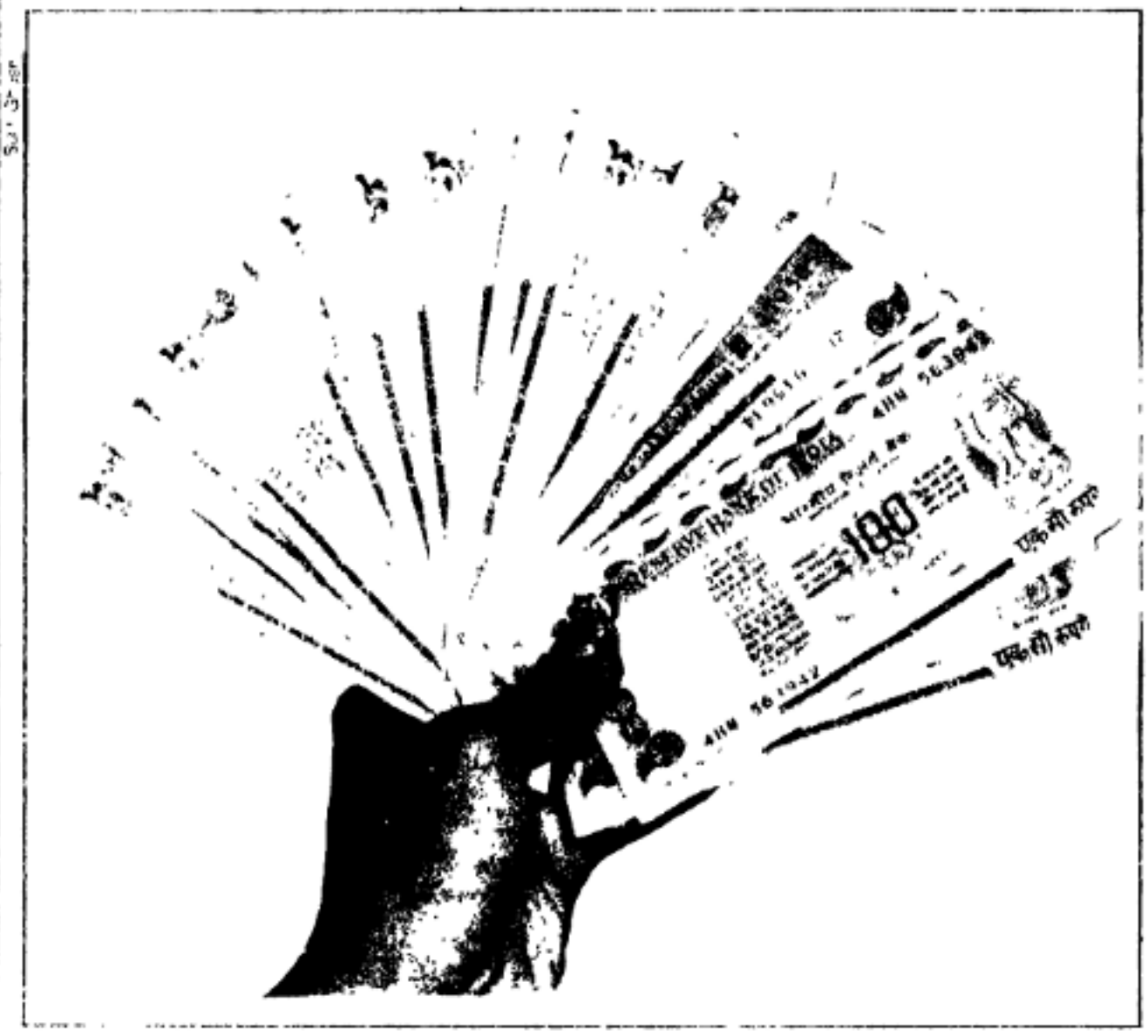
What struck this correspondent as the most spectacular thing in the Congress manifesto this time was the infrequent use of the term "'socialism." It was mentioned only twice: once in reminding us that Pandit Nehru, the builder of modern India, gave us the guiding principle of democracy, secularism, socialism and non-alignment and another time to claim, in the context of centre-state relations, that a strong centre is needed for directing the nation's endeavour for a social and economic order based on socialism. The manifesto, like those of the Janata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party, does talk a lot more about removal of corruption and rationalisation of both direct and indirect taxes.

Have the political parties realised that the time has come to transform the proclaimed social perspective and bring it in line with individual perspective? Have they got the courage to admit that the public image that we would like to project and like everyone to have, cannot be sustained by the social institutions and administrative and legal machinery that we currently have? Are they bold enough to accept the fact that the very credibility of the system is getting eroded because of non-compliance by the people of the very many economic laws of the land? We do not know the answers to these questions.

We have to accept that there is a growing acceptance as well as encouragement of an attitude of indifference towards public obligation and responsibility. The black economy is becoming more visible and

acceptable as increasing use is made of it. This is a dangerous trend. Let us set public goals and targets which are attainable. A great cleavage between proclaimed objectives and achievements undermines the credibility of the system. Let us examine our taxation laws, regulatory policies in the light of enforcability and the administrative and legal framework and whittle down our policies to bridge the gap between proclaimed targets and actual achievements.

This correspondent is aware of the dangers inherent in this recommendation How can we progress, if we set targets which are too easy to achieve? This danger is a real one



and is faced by everyone of us in every walk of life. Good judgment is essential to ward this devil off. Nevertheless there is no point in setting targets which everyone believes will never be achieved and hence it is not achieved. The credibility of the government has got eroded to a considerable extent: let us try to restore it by setting targets which we are confident of achieving.

Let us have a look at the income-tax and laws and their working in this country. There are penal rates of 100-200 per cent applicable if concealment of income is proved by the income-tax authorities. There is provision for imprisonment also for being guilty of such a crime. How many cases are there where such penal rates have been applied or guilty people have been imprisoned? The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act 1972, provides for acquisition of immovable property if the difference between the apparent price of a transaction and the fair market value is more than 15 per cent. How many cases are there of property which has actually been vested with the government? Does all this mean that there is no concealment of income or no transactions in real estate in terms of black money? We all know the answer to this question.

Economic theory tells us how tax evasion depends on the tax rate, exemption limit, the likelihood of detection, penal rates and other punishments applicable if tax evasion is detected. Elaborate models have been built taking all this as well as factors such as the adverse effect on one's reputation if proof of concealment is found. In framing our fiscal policy let us adjust these parameters to bring evasion down to a tolerable limit. Marginal adjustments will not suffice: given the administrative legal framework and the divergence between the individual and social perspectives we need major and drastic changes to bring the menace of black money down by any significant amount. This applies in an analogous way to the controls, regulatory measures and indirect taxes levied by the government. No discussion of fiscal policy can be carried out without reference to efficiency and incentives, revenue generation and distributive justice.

The black economy is regarded by some people as a natural reaction to events: a result of market forces. Nobel laureate Milton Friedman regards the black economy as an important safety net. Anyone with a profound faith in the efficacy of the invisible hand would do well to look at the black economy as an important corrective reaction to the subversion of market forces brought about by government intervention. This correspondent is not a great admirer of the invisible hand: he believes it has its strengths and it has its obvious limitations. An intervention can be very fruitful and productive at times. However, in the current social milieu many interventions and policies exist only in their proclamations and not in reality. A lot of resources is wasted away in rent-seeking activity. We voice our concern about brain-drain to developed countries of North America and Western Europe. It would be interesting to try to estimate the brain-drain to the profession of liaison officers and tax-consultants.

A policy which is not implemented and is ultimately circumvented by the system through speed money, corruption and bribery cannot be anything but inefficient. If taxes are brought down, will there be incentive to produce more? What will happen to tax revenues? In this context what has become extremely popular is the "Laffer curve." Professor Art Laffer of USA had pointed out several years ago that tax revenue would be zero if tax rate was 100 per cent and the same would be true if the rate is zero. Thus maximum revenue is achieved somewhere between zero and 100 per cent. One can study the relationship between the average tax rate and total tax revenue. However, economists unlike journalists are somewhat wary of the Laffer curve. According to them: "The Laffer curve is thought by some to have made its debut in a Washington restaurant and it should be taken in a similar after-dinner spirit." The question of what will happen to total output and tax-revenue depends on many considerations including the incentive effect—lower tax rate means greater returns for same amount of work—and the disincentive effect which is: lower amount of total taxes to pay thus lower amount of work is necessary. Which effect will dominate is not known apriori. Survey work by economists, in the UK and USA, has shown that a rise in the net wage via a cut in income-tax reduces hours of work at the bottom but leads to an increase higher up. A reduction in taxes in India is likely to bring about

higher output because of the dominance of the incentive effect in so far as the tax payers are relatively better off, high income people.

The effect of a tax cut on tax revenue may also be salutary. This is because though the rate is lower, there will be better compliance, less evasion and perhaps a higher level of output. This undoubtedly would depend upon the exent of the tax cut. A judicious decrease in the tax rate may not necessarily lead to a decrease in the tax revenue of the government.

Many a suggestion on tax reform and decontrol flounders on the question of distributive justice. However, it is important to bear in mind the problem of evasion when analysing the merits and demerits of any reform measure. Theoretical analysis of the effect of a tax cut on income distribution clearly reveals that distributive justice in a society may actually improve because of a cut if compliance improves substantially. Let us not compare distributions which result from two different tax rates or control regimes on the assumption that all taxes are paid or all controls are observed, but the distributions which result after due adjustments have been made for evasions and non-compliance.

Is there anything in the political process in the country which has allowed the problem of black money to grow? A decentralised democratic process is perhaps the best check for such evils. What has perhaps vitiated the political process the most is the absence of inner party democracy. The political party bosses in our country wield a tremendous amount of power. They preselect most of our Members of Parliament and Assemblies. The non-compliance of laws and control measures and the consequent emergence of black money have benefited them in two ways: first, a profession which does not promise any ostensible source of good income has become a potential source of lucrative rewards and, second, the black money can be used to control the party machinery, rank and file and to some extent even the electorate. Though we do enjoy the right to form associations and political parties, it is not easy to safeguard the democratic process with all its checks and balances when the existing, entrenched parties with their vote banks are not in good health by forming new political parties. It is extremely important to restore inner party democracy within our major political parties. We are basically not dishonest or have an inherent preference for illegal transactions—let us grant to the rank and file of political

A decentralised democratic process is perhaps the best check on the evil of black money. What has perhaps vitiated the political process the most is the absence of inner party democracy. The political party bosses in our country wield a tremendous amount of power. The non-compliance of laws and control measures and the consequent emergence of black money have benefited them

parties the right to elect their leaders and hence the preselected MPs and MLAs, just as we have granted our electorate the right to choose their ministers and parliamentarians. This in my opinion is the best safeguard for the non-recurrence of an evil such as black money in the future.

In the Congress election manifesto the term "socialism" was mentioned only twice: once in reminding us that Pandit Nehru, the builder of modern India, gave us the guiding principle of democracy, secularism, socialism and another time to claim, in the context of centre-state relations, that a strong centre is needed for directing the nation's endeavour for a social and economic order based on socialism.

What is the upshot of all this? This correspondent believes that we shall have to continue with our development planning and active government intervention for quite some time to come. As a result of growing divergence between individual and social perspectives, inadequate administrative and legal institutions, many public policy interventions in the fiscal, monetary and other fields are not getting implemented. This is eroding the credibility of the system and encouraging the growing apathy towards our responsibility to be honest law-abiding citizens. We cannot afford to let this process of erosion continue any more. Let us have laws, taxes and controls which we can effectively implement and do away with the others which we cannot.

Marginal adjustments here and there will not help very much. It has to be a drastic change from the existing set of policies to make everyone believe that we mean business. Announcement of concessional schemes such as Special Bearer Bonds or eradication measures such as demonetisation of currency notes of the denomination of Rs 1,000 has not achieved very much in the long run as it has not been accompanied by other measures which try to reduce the gap between individual and social perspectives to a level which can be handled by the existing legal-administrative machinery.

This correspondent has not talked about numbers such as the optimal tax rate or specific decontrol measures. He has only indicated the direction in which we should move. It is not very hard to do the necessary econometric exercises to obtain the relevant indicators. He believes that it is possible to whittle down taxes and controls—taxes which are not paid and controls that are not observed—without affecting government revenue, distributive justice and allocative efficiency adversely. Abolition of laws which are not complied with cannot harm anybody. On the other hand it will release resources which can be fruitfully utilised elsewhere.

The real problem with such proposals is that it will not be popular. Questions are bound to be raised about distributive justice and the lack of political will to implement the existing laws. Leaders often find it convenient to voice their determination about stricter implementation rather than telling people that certain laws cannot be implemented given the social attitude and the administrative and legal set-up. We shall have to wait and watch what the government proposes to do about the evil of black money.

Rajendra Sethia: A

It was a meteoric rise for Indian-born business tycoon Rajendra In a short span of a few years, Sethia placed his company in t empire crumbled and in February this year the High Court in pound sterling. Soon after a warrant of arrest was issued picked up by CBI sleuths on 1 March 1985 on charges of che he had borrowed astronomical sums of money. Why did th involved? Who were the top bank functionaries who were correspondents from Delhi and London piece

1 980: Rajendra Sethia is a shooting star in the business world of London. In the space of a couple of years the young managing director of Esal Commodities has placed his company's name in the top bracket of British export houses. His empire is spread over four continents. Esal and its subsidiaries are registered in England, the USA and Hong Kong; his commodity-trade has huge markets in Nigeria, Sudan, Zambia and other African countries. He himself lives in a plush two million sterling mansion in Hendon, North London, like a jet-setting baron. His future, they say, is very bright.

1985: The High Court in London declares Rajendra Sethia a bankrupt, in debt of 170 million pound sterling. Esal Commodities goes into liquidation. The flourishing empire suddenly crumbles, its owner becomes a fugitive from law. Rajendra Sethia's future takes a plunge.

18 February, 1985 was an important date for Rajendra Sethia. Things were going wrong for him almost in all respects. In London, the High Court declared him a bankrupt, a directive from the finance ministry in New Delhi axed S.L. Baluja and S.V. Sonalkar, chairmen of the Punjab National Bank and the Central Bank of India, respectively, with whom Sethia transacted a major part of his deals, and *The Telegraph* of Calcutta, SUNDAY's sister publication, published a report saying Sethia was hiding in the city. It was this report that eventually resulted in his sensational arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on 1 March.

Since the beginning of the year, Sethia had made several trips to India and he is said to have met senior finance ministry officials in an effort to evolve a scheme for the payment of his dues. In late January he had spent time in the capital with legal and bank experts and later visited Calcutta and the holy town of Tirupati. Though his arrivals and departures in India were known to the CBI, the arrest took place only after the suspicions of the CBI were confirmed and after they were informed that the head offices of the three banks with whom Sethia had transactions had commenced internal enquiries against him

Sethia was arrested at 10.15 pm by the CBI outside the Maurya Sheraton Hotel, where he was occupying suite number 1589 with his mother. (By some strange coincidence, 1589 is numerologically the same as 1985 the year of Sethia's misfortunes. 1589 and 1985 are just different permutations of the same numerals.) He had booked into the hotel two days earlier and on 27 February had asked for an adjoining suite for two relatives, one of whom was his brother-in-law. The same day, the management of the hotel had been informed by the CBI that one of their guests would be picked up by them, and his movements should be regularly conveyed to them. CBI sleuths were posted outside the hotel gates and inside the foyer. The swoop on Sethia was set for the evening of 1 March.

On the fateful day, CBI detectives maintained a long vigil for Sethia. Till late in the evening Sethia was out of the hotel and the suspense continued. Sharp at 10.15 pm the target walked into the brightly lit hotel lobby unaware of the sleuths and was immediately arrested by the CBI. After examining the warrant of arrest in his name, Sethia quietly allowed himself to be escorted into a waiting Ambassador car and be taken to an undisclosed destination. A few minutes later the general manager of the hotel received a telephone call from the CBI informing him that the "job had been done." They also requested the hotel to convey to Sethia's mother in the suite that her son had been taken to a bungalow on Akbar Road for interrogation, which houses an intelligence outfit.

The following day, Rajendra Sethia was accused of being a "420." At 4.15 pm he was produced before the court of metropolitan magistrate K.C. Lohia and an FIR filed against him by the Central Investigation Unit II of the CBI. He was charged for offences under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 420 (cheating by impersonation), 467 (making false documents), 468 (forgery for the purpose of cheating) and section 471 (using of a forged document) of the Indian Penal Code. The FIR against



Rajendra Sethia

Sethia was filed by Yashwant Malhotra, SP, CIU II and A.K Malhotra, investigating officer in the case. The FIR read: "It has been reliably learnt that Shri Rajendra Sethia, an Indian national, now based at UK (London) is the managing director of the group of Esal Commodities, comprising various foreign firms. He, sometime during the year 1982-84 conspired with certain employees, namely Ashish Banerjee, now based at Calcutta and certain officials of the branches of Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, Central Bank of India and other institutions based at UK and some other countries to defraud those banks/institutions to the tune of millions of pounds sterling. In pursuance of the said criminal conspiracy, the aforesaid banks and certain institutions were dishonestly in-

Playboy's Plunder

Sethia.based in London,and his company,Esal Commodities. e top bracket of British export houses. But just as quickly, his ondon declared Sethia a bankrupt, in debt of 170 million y the British police but Sethia escaped to India only to be ing the London branches of three Indian banks from where banks lend Sethia the money? What were the irregularities and-in-glove with Sethia in his dubious dealings? SUNDAY *ogether the intriguing story of Rajendra Sethia.*



duced by Rajendra Sethia and his said associates to extend loans to the group of Esal Commodities to the extent aforesaid in respect of the alleged contracts with the Nigerian National Supply Corporation and other African bodies which did not have the sufficient foreign exchange reserve required prior to the grant of such loans. Such loans are reported to have been obtained on the strength of false representations regarding the value assets held by Rajendra Sethia to meet the amounts of the loans..."

Rajendra Sethia first began approaching Indian banks in London for loans towards the end of the Seventies when he had already branched off from his family business and launched his Esal Commodities Ltd.---quite a routine thing to do for the managing director of a company that was consistently multiplying its turnover and expanding its area of trade. But what happened in the subsequent years was to culminate in the exposure of one of the biggest banking scandals in recent times. Sethia's misadventures with banking finances led not only to his bankruptcy and arrest but also shook the Indian banking establishment. Between 1979 and 1983, the London branches of three Indian banks—the Punjab National Bank, the Central Bank of India and the Union Bank of India—lent as much as 170 million pounds sterling to Rajendra Sethia's Esal Commodities. The number of irregularities in these huge transactions is yet to be laid out in full. The twisting of Indian banking regulations, sidelining directives of the Bank of England which regulates the conduct of all banks in that country, misrepresentation of assets, illegal bills of lading—the Sethia affair has blown the lid off a stinking financial fraud.

Sethia's charm and powers of persuasion were not the only things that helped hatch the fraud and kept it floating for so long. Active collusion by bank officials both in England and in India supported the irregularities all through. What is more, the possibility of protection from top circles in the government of India cannot be ruled out. The Punjab National Bank, whose chairman S.L. Baluja has recently been sacked, was Rajendra Sethia's biggest lender, having given him approximately 100 million pounds. The scope for such a loan being clearly above the table never existed. For one thing, a loan of such magnitude is in contravention to the regulations laid down by the Bank of England itself. According to it, no bank should advance more than one per cent of its total capital and reserves. In the case of Punjab National Bank (as in the case of the other two banks), the loans amount to nearly four per cent of the total capital reserves.

Besides, Amarjit Singh, the London branch manager of the Punjab National Bank, who conducted most of the deals with Rajendra Sethia, has the distinction of having cleared at least a couple of Sethia's bills knowing full well that Esal Commodities' bonafides were not on sound ground. In one instance the Punjab National Bank discounted a bill from Esal to be paid in Nigeria, where Sethia had his major transactions. A telegram confirming the payment was also sent to London but the payment was never actually made. The telegram too was a fake. Even after this, Amarjit Singh went on discounting bills for Sethia.

Indeed, in a majority of the cases when bills were discounted for shipment of goods to Nigeria and other African countries, the goods were never actually sent. In a suit filed against Rajendra Sethia, the three Indian banks concerned and eight others on 31 January 1984, the solicitors of the Allied Arab Bank Ltd—the suitors—have complained: "Scarcely any cargo was loaded before 16 December 1983, the date of the bills of lading presented." Other bank officials were also involved: Vijay Kumar, a former assistant manager of the London branch of the Punjab National Bank and Jinendra Jain, a manager. Both were picked up by the fraud squad of the Scotland Yard on 19 December last year. The case of Vijay Kumar is intriguing. He is a man who, when in charge of the London branch of the Punjab National Bank in the absence of Amarjit Singh, gave the go-ahead to the last loan to Esal on 27 January 1984. Some months later, he resigned from the bank but just a couple of days before that, received two heavy drafts for US dollars 1,43,155 which he is supposed to have encashed himself in Switzerland. Only sometime later, he went on to join the firm of Mahendra Pujara as consultant. Pujara, a former waiter in one of London's Indian restaurants is, incidentally, also one of the major loanees of Indian banks in London.

The case of the Central Bank of India (although the extent of its loans to Sethia's Esal Commodities is much less) seems more interesting. Between 1980 and 1983 the Central Bank of India gave £ 34.5 million to the Esal group, most of which is said to have been cleared without proper securities and in violation of banking rules. The repayment of these dues was scheduled to have begun in June

1983. Till today the repayment has not begun. In February 1984 the Reserve Bank of India wrote a letter of complaint to the bank authorities as a result of which N.M. Valecha, the London manager of the bank was suspended. But instead of shelving the deals with Sethia and taking him to task, the Central Bank of India sought the cooperation of The Punjab National Bank and the Union Bank of India to raise Rs 15 crores to bail Sethia out of the financial mess he was in after the 1983 coup in Nigeria. It was a move that the Reserve Bank of India promptly aborted.

The Central Bank of India has been consistent in its irregular deals with Sethia. Year after year audit and inspection reports highlighted the irregular deals, and they were as often ignored till matters became too obvious to conceal. Touch and Ross and Company, the London auditors of the Central Bank had said in their 1980 report that about half the loans extended to Esal Commodities were irregular. "Of a total group loan of 2.8 million sterling only one million pounds appear to have legally enforceable security." This report, it is said, never reached the board of directors of the Central Bank of India. Again, in 1981-82, Touch and Ross made it clear that the loans being given to Esal were not in keeping with bank regulations. A year later the auditing firm put down its suspicions clearly on paper: "The total outstanding advances to the Esal group stood at pound sterling 34,543,756 and the total security was valued at 1,63,13,539 pounds." Immediately after this the Reserve Bank of India again wrote to the Central Bank saying that while the loans to Esal had leaped from 9.5 million pounds to 34.54 million pounds, the total securities offered by the company had declined from 16.31 million pounds to just 6.03 million pounds. Satisfacrory explanations to these queries were perhaps never given. How could they be given when top officials of the Central Bank of India were themselves giving out loans to Sethia without ascertaining the securities?

On 31 March 1982, the chairman of the Central Bank of India, S.V. Sonalkar, sanctioned a loan of approximately US dollars 15 million to Esal Commodities against guarantees of the Bank of Sudan. The repayment should have come in July 1983. It did not and the matter was not pursued further. Around the same time, B.R. Patankar, the deputy general manager of the London branch of the Central Bank of India sanctioned a loan of Rs eight crores to Rajendra Sethia. This was done just six weeks prior to his retirement on 31 May 1983 violating bank rules which clearly say that no officer can sanction loans less than six months before he is due to retire. What is more, the sanction limit of the London office is said to be Rs 7.5 lakhs. In case the amount of a loan exceeds that, prior permission of head office in Bombay has to be obtained. Yet this deal was made without it. Why did Sonalkar allow such irregularities to go unchecked?

All this, incidentally, was happening even after two investigating teams—one from the Reserve Bank of India and the other from the Central Bank of India—had visited London and filed their reports. Both teams found that there were irregularities in the Central Bank of India's London branch. In several cases of granting loans, top officials had depended on personal assessments and personal guarantees rather than on the proven assets of the loanees. The most glaring evidence of the Central Bank's collusion with Rajendra Sethia was, of course, the citation they accorded to the Esal group on 26 August 1982, which reads: "A private company dealing with us for about five years. Our experience of the dealings has always been satisfactory. The directors are respectable and satisfactory. The principal en-

The King of Fraud

Rajendra Sethia was a millionaire before he was thirty. Before he was 37, he became the world's youngest personal bankrupt—and the biggest. He beat the Hungarian-born London property tycoon, Willy Stern (who had gone bankrupt with debts of 104.4 million pound sterling in 1978). Sethia beat him by 68 million pounds and might soon replace Stern in the pages of the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Sethia likes to describe himself as a businessman. True. Only, he was too ambitious, too audacious. In the end he was simply duping and defrauding. If that is what "just another businessman" does, Sethia can definitely call himself one. He was born in a flourishing family of businessmen from Calcutta. His father Sohan Lal Sethia and uncle K.C. Sethia traded in jute in 1947. When Rajendra Sethia was 13 years old he went to the United Kingdom where the Sethias had already begun their business in 1940. The young Sethia was schooled in England after which he went to the London School of Economics for his graduation. All along he kept in touch with the family business.

Rajendra is the youngest of four brothers. The others are Umrao Singh Sethia, Ranjit Sethia and Nirmal Sethia. While the eldest still runs a business in Calcutta, the other three were looking after the family concern in London till the business split up in the late Seventies. Ranjit Sethia retained the family business, Nirmal Sethia opened an allied company called Sethia London Limited and Rajendra Sethia, always different from his other brothers, went his own way setting up Esal Commodities Limited which incidentally was named after the initials of his father Sohan Lal Sethia. ("S. L." became "Esal"). Esal was soon one of the many successful business enterprises in England, much ahead of the set-ups Rajendra Sethia's brothers were running. There is something about Rajendra Sethia: he is a man of irresistible charms and is only too ready to use them. People who have dealt with him speak of him as "a dynamic and aggressive man with a power of convincing people that few possess." Moreover, he was always prepared to lavish his riches on businessmen and officials alike. If they obliged him, he returned their favours. He hosted Indian bank officials in London, sent them on holidays to the United States, threw parties on the Boeing 707 that he bought for three-and-a-half million dollars and decorated at almost double the cost. Among the several luxuries that the aircraft possesses are a boardroom, several bedrooms, baths with golden taps, a sauna and a jacuzzi.

Sethia likes to live. He owns a two million pound mansion in Hendon, North London, which he calls the "White House" (he, in fact, had plans to buy more expensive accommodation despite being in such financial duress), and owns no less than 70 race-horses in stud farms all over the world. He is a passionate, compulsive gambler who frequents the West End casinos of London when he is not jetting across the world in his aircraft.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

trepreneur, Mr Raj Sethia is a man of high integrity and substantial means. He commands respect and creditworthiness in the local market and abroad... In our opinion they may be considered good for all their normal business."

Soon after the Central Bank scandal had become well-known in banking circles, certain sections in the profession as well as in the government launched a campaign to have Sonalkar ousted after his three-year term expired in December 1983. However, Sonalkar continued to be the chairman, having first got a one-month extension and then a complete second term. His case was fully supported by none other than the then finance minister, Pranab Mukherjee. Today, when two chairmen have been unceremoniously removed, banking circles are beginning to question the role played by the top officials in the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India in the Sethia affair. "No doubt the two chairmen and some officials acted wrongly but what were the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India doing all this while?" asked one senior bank official in Delhi. He further pointed out that officers from both the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India were present in the board meetings of the concerned banks and they should have known what was happening. The Reserve Bank of India, on its part at least seems to have done something about the murky goings-on by conducting enquiries and seeking explanations from bank officials. But what was the finance ministry doing all this while? Why did Pranab Mukherjee, the then finance minister, not take any action in the matter. Why did not his ministry act upon the report that the Reserve Bank enquiry team had submitted after its visit to London in early 1983? Even as recently as 22 January 1985, the government seemed hesitant about disclosing the full facts of the Sethia case. In a reply to an unstarred question (number 187) raised in the Rajya Sabha by Suresh Kalmadi of the Congress(S) and two others, asking for details of the shady Sethia affair, the minister of state for finance, Janardhan Poojari, attempted to play down the name of Rajendra Sethia by saying that "no loans had been allowed in the personal name of Shri Rajendra Sethia." He, however, had to admit that the loans had been given to Esal Commodities but stressed again that "a major portion of the advances is covered by securities." The minister then went on to say that no further information could be disclosed on the matter. Why?

These are among the various questions which will remain unanswered till investigations into the case are complete. Only then will the ramifications and repurcussions of the Sethia scandal be known and the names of the various persons directly or indirectly involved in the irregularities of the Sethia case become public. At present, the investigations into the case have just begun and the CBI is confronted with solving one of the most important cases concerning



Sethia (with beard) being led to the court

an Indian living abroad. Not only this, investigations in the case have become more complicated with charges against Rajendra Sethia and his accomplices being filed in British courts.

By sheer coincidence, the arrest of Rajendra Sethia in New Delhi took place at a time when Interpol was looking for Sethia for similar charges against him in London. Only a few hours before his eventual arrest, the Interpol headquarters had received an urgent telex message from London demanding his arrest. The telex message of the Interpol (number P/50/24731/Roy 3751/85) informed the Interpol in India that a warrant of arrest numbered 2644 had been issued at the Malbrough police station against an Indian by the name of Rajendra Sethia holding passport number U 553384 on 8 February 1984. Interpol also informed the New Delhi headquarters that Rajendra Sethia was occupying rooms 158 and 159 at the Maurya Sheraton Hotel in New Delhi and was likely to leave for the United States of America the same night. According to the message, which demanded that immediate action be taken on the case, Sethia was wanted for nine criminal charges registered in the UK, one of them with the Allied Arab Bank Limited. Though the Interpol authorities claim that the CBI arrested Sethia on receiving instructions from them, the CBI officials dealing with the case disclaim any connection between the charges against Sethia in India and those listed in the telex message of the Interpol. They explain that for CBI the only relevance of the case in India was the involvement of Indian bank officials in illegal transactions and the establishment of a *prima facie* case against Sethia which would be dealt with under Indian laws.

Once arrested and under police remand, a request was made by the British High Commission to deport Sethia to UK so that he could be tried there. As soon as the news of his detention was conveyed to Scotland Yard in London, they requested the Indian government for permission to extradite Sethia. On 5 March the British High Commissioner made a formal request for the same to the ministry of external affairs. Said a spokesman of the High Commission about the request made by them for deporting Sethia: "The British High Commissioner presented to the ministry of external affairs the request for the return to the UK of Mr Rajendra Sethia as a person who is accused of conspiracy to obtain pecuniary advantage for Esal Commodities Ltd by deception. A warrant had already been issued for his arrest in the UK and the text of that warrant together with the statement of facts has been conveyed to the Indian authorities." The spokesman said that the British High Commission had conveyed to the Indian government substantial proof of the nine charges faced by Sethia in the UK, which were satisfactory grounds for his extradition to that country. According to the spokesman, most of the nine charges against the accused amounted to "conspiracy to obtain pecuniary advantage by deception" and the offences will be charged under Section 16(1) of the Theft Act of 1968.

Chasing a Crooked Shadow

The Sethias of London, formerly of Calcutta, and of course Marwar, seemed to have developed a liaison with Scotland Yard, Britain's metropolitan police headquarters. Only last month two detectives of this department visited St. Lucia in the West Indies, to "interview" Narendra Sethia, an erstwhile British navy officer suspected of having stolen the logbook belonging to HMS Conqueror, the battleship that sank the Argentine vessel, General Belgrano, in rather controversial circumstances during the Falklands conflict. The bearded, young sailor denied the charge and the officers returned empty-handed. However, it appears that the fraud squad of the Yard have finally tracked down the long elusive, if not bigger fish, Narendra's first cousin Rajendra, who was arrested by the CBI in Delhi on 1 March following a request for this measure by the British authorities on 28 February.

For over a year now, a fraud charge has been hanging over Rajendra Sethia's head as a result of an accusation levelled against him by Allied Arab Bank in relation to a loan of 1.6 million US dollars obtained by his firm, Esal Commodities. Mr Sethia, in fact, reportedly escaped through a window when the fraud squad swooped down on his residence, and quit the country He has not returned to the United Kingdom since, and is known to have resumed his commodities trade in Spain, while continuing to look after his interests in the United States of America, where hotels are among his investments.

Meanwhile, two of Esal's directors were arrested (now released), and the company's operations out of the UK came to a standstill on grounds of bankruptcy and pending the successful passage of a rescue package of 45 million US dollars mooted by bankers-cum-creditors headed by the most heavily burdened Punjab National Bank (PNB). For the greater part of 1984, PNB fought a seemingly fruitful battle. Its proposals were carried with an overwhelming majority by the creditors, secured and unsecured, but the move failed to gain ratification in court. The few who opposed the granting of a new lease of life did so vehemently, and it was their voice that ultimately carried the day. The package was thus ruled unviable.

It is alleged by Esal executives that the most important point throughout the saga was PNB's refusal to secure Allied Arab Bank for the 1.6 million US dollar sum extracted from the latter, according to AAB, on false pretexts. But one also got the impression that an influential lobby was at work to destroy Rajendra Sethia. Technically the fraud charge was not a factor in deciding the outcome of the package, but at the same time it could well have weighed heavily on the mind of the judge concerned.


Mid-photo

Rajendra Sethia

Thus Esal went into liquidation and Mr Sethia started life anew with the knowledge that he had nothing to look forward to in Britain. In any case, he was a wanted man in this country—despite the fact that till date the investigators have been unable to formulate a formal charge against him in court, not to mention the release of his two directors. The United Kingdom does not have an extradition treaty with Spain, so it was understandable that no attempts were made to deport him from there. But Mr Sethia was frequently in the United States and his presence there could well have been taken advantage of. Indeed, if Scotland Yard was unaware of his trips to the USA, they could not have been taking his case too seriously.

But the Yard eventually caught up with him, and a presumably unsuspecting Rajendra Sethia was apprehended by the CBI. An extradition request has been sent to Delhi since, and it was also rumoured that detective inspector Brian Cooper, in-charge of the Sethia case, would soon be flying out to the Indian capital to facilitate the formalities. But a spokesman for Scotland Yard firmly denied that this was in the offing. Mr Sethia, unlike the majority of non-resident Indian businessmen in the UK, is an Indian citizen. He may have been based abroad for the greater part of his life, but that in no way dilutes his rights as an Indian national in the eyes of the Indian government.

Of course, even insiders in his old establishment in Britain admit that he may have been "technically guilty of forgery." But the fact that Scotland Yard has not made much headway in their pursuit to prosecute him cannot be ignored by the Indian authorities. Besides, none of the Indian banks have ever accused him of fraud, and indeed, have tried their level best to save him with the approval of the Reserve Bank of India, and probably also the union finance ministry. Thus, it has somewhat surprised Britain's business community that the Indian government, despite its goodwill for Britain and its commitment to Interpol, should have bent over backwards to please Whitehall. Is there a trade-off in this? And if so, is Sethia the scapegoat? But one circle is unabashedly pleased: Britain's sugar lobby, which once ruled this area of world trade, but which, due to the aggressive methods of Rajendra Sethia, had been reduced to picking the crumbs.

Rajendra Sethia's troubles began in the latter half of 1983, when Nigeria and Sudan, which had been supplied enormous quantities of sugar by Esal Commodities, pleaded inability to pay for the consignments because of the tight foreign exchange situation in the two countries. Mr Sethia's plight was further aggravated by the military coup in Nigeria, although it was later gathered that he had succeeded in coaxing both governments concerned to honour their debts, albeit not immediately. A large proportion of the business carried out with Sudan was, however, insured with Lloyds of London.

Ashis Ray, London

The request for the extradition of Sethia added a new dimension to the case. Since Sethia was a wanted person in another country, he could not be detained in India unless substantive charges against him could be filed here. In any event, in the six days following his arrest and preceding the renewal of the police remand, the CBI officials attempted to collect as much evidence against Sethia as possible so that they could try him in Indian courts. In the six days which the CBI investigating officers had to interrogate Sethia, they are believed to have collected ample evidence against him by which they can appeal to the courts to permit him to be tried in Indian courts under Indian laws. According to CBI sources, the officials dealing with the case had before them five trunkloads of documents concerning the various bank transactions entered into by Sethia and Esal Commodities. From their contacts in London and various bank officials in India, the CBI has now before it the monumental task of scrutinising and examining thousands of papers relevant to the case, before they can formulate their evidence against Sethia.

Sethia himself has been under constant watch and has faced hours of interrogation by Yashwant Malhotra and A. K. Malhotra at the office of the CBI situated at Lok Nayak Bhavan in south Delhi. Contrary to reports that Sethia has been subjected to third degree torture at a high-security interrogation room, CBI officials disclosed that the interrogation of the accused had been conducted through informal questioning and conversation at the CBI office itself. Sethia was occupying a room on the seventh floor of the Lok Nayak Bhavan office, near Khan Market, meant for interviewing those in police custody.

The plea that has been made by Sethia during the course of his interrogation is that he should be given an opportunity to pay back his creditors. He has pleaded that he was in fact in the country to meet various government officials in an attempt to pay back his loans. The same plea was made by the counsels of Sethia, Gurdial Singh and R. K. Khanna, in the court of the metropolitan magistrate on 8 March when Sethia appeared before the court for the second time. Moving an application for their client's bail, the lawyers explained that in February 1984, several meetings were held between Esal and the London branches of the three Indian banks to evolve a scheme for full payment to all creditors within a period of two years. A steering committee had also been formed, headed by high officials of the three banks, in an attempt to pay back the enormous sums of money owed by Sethia.

On the second day of hearing at the court, Sethia himself guided his lawyers at several points during the course of the argument. Nevertheless, his application for release on bail was rejected by the magistrate and he was further remanded to police custody for five days. When the second part of Sethia's remand is complete, the CBI will be under compulsion to issue a chargesheet of offences against him, or else release him on bail. Said one of the CBI officials investigating the case: "There is no question of him (Sethia) being released on bail. As his prosecutors, we will see to it that we have substantial charges against him in India, before we can allow him to be tried elsewhere." He also pointed out that since the charges filed against Sethia in the FIR are for cheating, forgery and using of false documents, in case of Sethia even paying back all his loans to the various institutions, he would still be liable to imprisonment for at least five years. Under Section 4 of the India Penal Code, any Indian who is charged with an offence committed outside the country can be tried in Indian courts.

The most incriminating piece of evidence recovered by the CBI team against Sethia is the fact that he was in possession of a false passport and air ticket issued on a false name, both of which were recovered within hours of his arrest. The passport was discovered by the CBI when they searched suite number 1589 of Maurya Sheraton which Sethia had been occupying. The passport (number W 900509) which had the photograph and signatures of Rajendra Sethia, alias "Raj Kumar Dugar" are now the most damaging evidence against Sethia. Seized along with the passport were letters of introduction given by Dugar for an air ticket and visiting cards in the same name. Once these documents were in the hands of the CBI, they were quick to locate an air ticket from the travel agency of the Maurya Hotel, Travel House Private Limited. The Swissair ticket was valid for a passage from either Calcutta Delhi-Bombay to Cairo-Geneva-New York and back. "Dugar" was, according to the ticket, scheduled to leave the country the next day, only a few hours before he was arrested. Had Sethia boarded the Swissair flight as "R. K. Dugar," he would probably have been out of the country for a long, long time as his visa was valid for the USA, Egypt, Switzerland and France. Had the CBI decided to swoop down a little later, Sethia could have flown. Now Sethia is facing trial in the Indian courts. The British want him extradited. The credibility of the Indian banking institutions is at its lowest ebb. Surprisingly, till 22 January 1985 ministers were trying to mislead the Parliament on the Sethia issue. Only a probe revealing the extent of the fraud can resurrect the image of Indian banks abroad.

Ritu Sarin and Sankarshan Thakur, Delhi

Protection From a Politician?

Did Pranab Mukherjee, former union finance minister, know about the irregular deals of the three Indian banks in London with expatriate Indian businessmen? Did he bless their murky transactions with Rajendra Sethia? While these questions are being asked in New Delhi by people including some top officials and bank union leaders, business and press circles in London already seem sure about Pranab Mukherjee's role in the entire affair. From comments in the British press it would seem that the "protection of Pranab Mukherjee to Sethia" was common knowledge there. Commenting on Sethia's flight to India after he was declared bankrupt by the London High Court, Robert Tyerman wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* of London: "Ever the optimist even today, Sethia has lately been to try his luck with the new Indian government of Rajiv Gandhi...but his chances do not look all that good. Rajiv Gandhi removed his previous finance minister Pranab Mukherjee after his sweeping election victory. It is far from clear now many friends at court Sethia now has." Another London newspaper echoed similar thoughts: "...Indian business circles are dubious about his chances (of making up with the Indian government) more so after the fall from power of Pranab Mukherjee. As finance minister Mr Mukherjee was in overall charge of the banks when the large loans were made." It said

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

A Period of Fear and Uncertainty

During the third week of January, when the air was thick with the news of arrests of a number of personal assistants in Delhi in the now-famous spy case, there was an inter-ministerial meeting called by the secretary of a ministry in his capacity as the chairman of the Indo-Polish Trade Coordination Committee. Though a big conference room with comfortable upholstered chairs was available, the secretary was unwilling to leave his own room and hold the meeting there. In his room, around an oval-shaped table, about 30 officers from various ministries sat for discussions The only reason for all this was soon clear. The telephones, including the Rashtrapati Bhawan exchange (RAX) phone, were in that room and the secretary was afraid of receiving a sudden call from "high up" to move over to some other department, or worse, go back to the state. In the ministry of commerce, industrial development, department of mines—you name it—the discussions frequently centred round who was about to leave, who had already handed over charge pending posting and so on. Even taking leave for a day or two became a risky affair, since the rumour mills started spinning out stories about the person on leave.

This was the beginning of a period of uncertainty and fear in the minds of the bureaucrats in Delhi. The situation persists even today. There is no one, neither the secretary to the Prime Minister, nor the cabinet secretary, nor the minister in charge of the department of personnel who can, either formally, or at least informally, say what it is all about. There has always been a procedure and a period of time in the year, for postings, transfers and replacements to and from Delhi, keeping in view the personal convenience of the officers concerned, the budget session of Parliament and so on. Nobody felt a creeping fear about that. But the secrecy, the sudden announcement, the slant of the news and the serving of the official order indicating posting—all these have truly ushered in the Orwellian era in the top echelons of administration in the capital of the country.

Soon after the personal assistant was taken into custody, M. C. Sarin, secretary, defence production, met the cabinet secretary and wished to proceed on leave preparatory to retirement, accepting moral responsibility like Dr Alexander. He was to retire on 31 May next. He was told not to get unduly worked up over the matter and carry on as usual. Yet, within a fortnight, he was sent for by the same cabinet secretary and told to proceed on leave at once. This received due publicity in the media. J. S. Baijal, additional secretary, economic affairs, was talking to a friend one evening before going home. Belonging to the 1954 IAS batch from Orissa he hoped to be secretary in a ministry soon. He came to Delhi in December 1981 on a normal tenure of five years. He got a call from the minister in charge of personnel. Hoping to hear the good news, he went to see the minister with a beaming face but returned soon after, looking crushed. Like Sarin, he was also told to take leave at once and then get back to the state. Again, there was instant publicity in the media. Everyone knows that the Orwellian eye is watching everyone in Delhi. Added to that, such decisions as in the case of Sarin and Baijal have really shaken the little confidence the top bureaucrats had in themselves, their colleagues and their subordinates. Today, there is an air of total mistrust amongst the officials and others in Delhi.

Everyone knows that the Orwellian eye is watching everyone in Delhi. Added to that, such decisions as in the case of M.C. Sarin and J.S. Baijal have really shaken the little confidence the top bureaucrats had in themselves, their colleagues and subordinates. Today, there is an air of total mistrust amongst the officials in Delhi.

In classical economic theory, it was Adam Smith who talked about a hidden hand, balancing the demand and supply position in a perfect market in free competition. But there is no mention of a hidden hand in the classical theories of political science even by Prof. Sabine, balancing the functions of the executive in administration of the government. By now it is quite clear that there is a sledge hammer approach in ordering the shifting of the top bureaucrats—and the accompanying wide publicity in the media—in Delhi. There is a hidden hand which is guiding the course of events in the government with near perfection by generating fear. It is unique that the same hidden hand is also determining the selection of top people according to its own analysis and judgment. How else do we explain finding out B. B. Bhora, retired five years ago as secretary, environment, to be appointed as the chairman of the advisory board on energy, in the vacancy caused by the resignation of K. C. Pant? Bhora is not an expert on energy, whatever might be his other excellent credentials. There are quite a few internationally famous Indian experts on energy who have served in various government committees with distinction. More curious was the way the incumbent for the post of chairman, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) was found. It was known that Dr Sahare would leave his post on 16 February, as the UPSC charter does not permit any second term for the chairman. One sitting member of the UPSC approached a friend through a friend to talk to Mohammad Yunus, chairman, Trade Fair Authority of India (TFAI) to recommend him to

the Prime Minister for the post. Mohammad Yunus could not say 'no' to that friend, although he did not know the UPSC member. Neither did he meet the prospective candidate for chairman. Meanwhile, another member of the UPSC started pulling strings, on the basis of his past (and unpleasant experience) at the state public service commission. At one point of time, one denounced the other in the bargain. B. G. Mathur, who retired as secretary, department of rehabilitation, in April 1984 but was still living in his official residence, tried his luck through common friends. In the mean time, U. C. Agarwal, secretary, personnel (recently transferred as OSD in the cabinet secretariat), who was to prepare the proposal well in time, listing out the probable incumbents, for seeking approval of the appointment committee of the cabinet, thought it appropriate to put his own name for

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the post of the UPSC chairman. He is to retire in November and this post is for a period of six years. So, instead of making any proposals, Agarwal started doing the rounds recommending himself to the cabinet secretary, the minister in charge of personnel and so on. When P. K. Kaul's appointment as cabinet secretary was approved, Agarwal post-haste carried the official order personally to Kaul and gently reminded him of his own candidature. But admirable were the ways of the hidden hand, which picked up H. K. L. Capoor, who had retired as the chief secretary, Gujarat, more than a decade ago. He became the all-powerful establishment officer in Delhi, to become the chairman, UPSC. just in time.

When radio and TV announced in the evening news that a large number of secretaries had been moved around, none of the top bureaucrats in Delhi had any clue as to who was going where. The earlier practice of informing both the outgoing and the new incumbent of the change came through a telephone call from the cabinet secretary. Perhaps, because P. K. Kaul was new to his job, he could not follow tradition. A day after the announcement, all the newspapers carried the names of the secretaries along with the ministries mentioned against each. Four secretaries found themselves reverted to the states. The government orders came after two days. Obviously, detailed copies of the transfers and postings had been prepared first to be released to the press and for the information of the public. It was a reassuring message to the countrymen that in one sweep 32 top bureaucrats could be shuffled as in a pack of cards. The era of red tape was over

According to the Civil List of IAS officers as on 1 January 1984, of the four secretaries reverted to their respective states, S. P. Mukherjee, secretary, agriculture, came to Delhi in September 1973; C. R. Vaidyanathan came from Bihar on 15 December 1982 as secretary, health and family planning; R. K. Sastry came from Rajasthan on 9 November 1982 as secretary, department of official languages, after a stint as the director, Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, and K. N. Singh came from IA and AS on 29 October 1982 as secretary, department of revenue. Though Mr Mukherjee had stayed long, others did not even complete their stay for five years. Further, after becoming the secretary to the government of India, no one has reverted to the state, except during the rule of the Janata government, when Ajit Majumdar, then secretary, expenditure and Dr P. C. Alexander, then secretary, commerce, were sent back to Bihar and Karnataka, respectively. Both promptly resigned and went away to Washington and Geneva on foreign assignments. If the reversion to the states is on the ground of inefficiency in performance, then a serious question comes up. The appointments committee of the cabinet is chaired by the Prime Minister, with the home minister and the minister in charge of personnel being the other two members. Besides, there is a complete procedure of review of at least five years' performance as reflected in the service record of the officers concerned before any appointment is cleared from the rank of joint secretary and above, in the government of India. This is specially so in the case of the appointment of a secretary to a ministry. His entire background is gone through before such a selection is made. Does it then mean that these four secretaries who were suddenly reverted to their states were not properly selected by the appointments committee of the cabinet or someone probably felt that they had become inefficient with the passage of time after becoming secretaries to the government of India?

Within a fortnight of the appointment of P. K. Kaul as the cabinet secretary and changing 32 secretaries in one sweep, the entire system of

There was a time young officers from the states looked forward to a posting in Delhi with a view to gaining experience in a wider area of administration...Not so anymore. To take up a post in Delhi leaving behind the familiar environment in the state, has become next to a nightmare for an officer.

seniority in service, cadre management, rules of tenure of appointment in the government of India and so on have come to an end. As Kaul superseded 17 officers, the same situation has arisen in the case of selection of secretaries also. A few out of 32 secretaries do not belong to the IAS. Among the IAS officers, the last incumbent, T. U. Vijayasekharan belongs to the Orissa cadre from the 1955 batch and occupies 175th position in the Combined Civil List. He has been in Delhi since December 1979. It is now anybody's guess as to how many have been bypassed while

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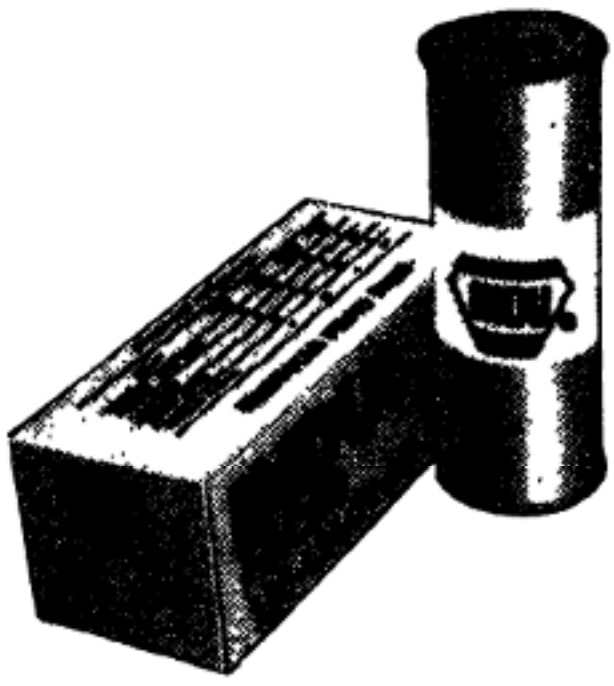
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making such a long list of promotions. Therefore, it does not seem necessary any longer to maintain with meticulous care a combined list of officers in order of seniority in service. A. S. Gill has already gone on leave while Mohinder Singh, suddenly shifted as OSD in the cabinet secretariat, must be finding it a little awkward to serve under Kaul, a few rungs junior in service, on the eve of his retirement in July. Another superseded officer, V. B. Eshwaran, till now member-secretary, advisory board on energy, has also quit, though he is to retire on 30 June next year.

The immediate fallout would be in the states, where quite a few new departments will be set up quickly to post such senior officers returning suddenly from Delhi. No wonder, a few state governments have already thought of such a situation perhaps because a few retired chief secretaries and the like, close to the political masters there, have been holding these posts for so long. There are already such distinguished posts as that of chairman of corporations like the oilseed growers' corporation, the fish seed growers' corporation, the milk producers' corporation, etc. These officers, who have been sent back to their states, are on the last legs of the careers and would not even raise a protest at whatever they are given on the eve of retirement.

There was a time young officers from the states looked forward to a posting in Delhi with a view to gaining experience in a wider area of administration. The beautiful city itself with excellent educational institutions was sufficient attraction for the family. It was also known as to how long the period of stay in Delhi would be, according to the nature of posting. Not so any more. To take up a post in Delhi leaving behind the familiar environment in the state, has become next to a nightmare for an officer. On arrival, even as a joint secretary, for at least a year, there is absolutely no possibility of getting a small transit apartment to stay with the family. So, after living in a three-bed-roomed house with a lawn, servant's quarters, garage, etc. in the state, the officer suddenly finds himself by force of circumstances to stay with the family of some relations, about 30 km away from office and travelling morning and evening by public bus. Those who are reluctant to stay with relations, take on rent a roof-top one-room accommodation as that is what he can afford with his modest pay. Neither in the normal course nor through any VIP recommendation is it possible to get the children admitted in any school. Throughout the year in every class in every school, it is full: at least this is the reply one gets on enquiry. The situation at the office too has become uncertain not only because of swift and sudden political directions but also suspicion amongst colleagues and subordinates as a result of inter-service rivalry.

An important question, therefore, arises as to how the tenure rules (of IAS officers) came into operation and what purpose they serve. Leaving aside the personal difficulties every officer faces, today if the central government does not like an officer he is just sent away to the state. What purpose does it serve except causing resentment among them ?

The total number of officers in the IAS now are a little over 3,000. The kind of situation experienced by the vagaries of tenure rules is faced by no more than 500 to 600 officers; others manage to stay in the state for the best part of their career. With the family life and the children's education practically shattered, these officers seem rootless. At least, under similar situations, the IFS officers, about one-third the number of IAS officers, are allowed to admit their children in a boarding school abroad with the government meeting the expenses. They have a sprawling transit hostel in Delhi where an officer can stay for many months till he gets regular accommodation.

An important question, therefore, arises as to how the tenure rules came into operation and what purpose do they serve. Leaving aside the personal difficulties every officer faces, while moving to and fro, today if the central government does not like an officer he is just sent away to the state. What purpose does it serve except causing resentment among them and eroding efficiency? For more than two decades, a full-fledged department of administrative reforms under the government of India has existed. It has done nothing to look into such real-life problems. From time to time it only examines on ways of cutting out paperwork by advising various ministries to standardise the size of the files, shorten the notings and take important decisions at lower levels of the government. At the same time, the assistants from the Central Secretariat Service, have continued throughout their career in Delhi only They remain undisturbed in their family lives, often forming an old boys' network in every ministry right up to the rank of joint secretaries. In the present situation, surcharged with suspicion and packing off a number of senior IAS officers, there is a subtle move to man all the secretariat posts up to the level of secretary, if possible, by the Central Secretariat Service alone. With the experience of working up the ladder from the ranks of assistants and PAs, this looks like the administrative structure the government will follow in the near future. At least, through the back door, administrative reform is going to take some shape after all, mercifully sparing the IAS officers to settle down at the state level.

There is a hidden hand which is guiding the course of events in the government with near perfection by generating fear. It is unique that the same hidden hand is also determining the selection of top people according to its own analysis and judgement.

A Special Correspondent

PUNJAB

Akali Leaders Released

Hope for negotiated settlement of Punjab problem

With the release on 11 March 1985 of the Akali Dal chief Harchand Singh Longowal and seven other Akali leaders held under detention for the last nine months under the National Security Act, the Punjab crisis enters a new phase, heralding perhaps a bitter struggle for the Akali leadership.

The fact that the government did not in its unilateral decision to release the Akali leaders—following two days of meetings of the cabinet sub committee headed by union minister, Mr S.B. Chavan—order the release of Gurcharan Singh Tohra, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and Mr Prakash Singh Badal, the "moderate" former chief minister of Punjab is of considerable significance. Either the government would not like to negotiate a settlement with these two leaders, particularly with Mr Badal, who was arrested for having burned Article 25 of the Constitution of India or the two Akali leaders themselves did not want to be released and they feel that the longer the stay in jail the more their reputations would be enhanced.

It will certainly be a difficult task for the released leaders who will have to steer a careful course between the angry masses in Punjab and the government. Many Sikhs do not want any settlement with the government unless all those arrested following the army action are released, the special courts withdrawn and an official inquiry into the riots after the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi initiated. Besides the Akali Dal chief, those released are Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Surjit Singh Barnala, a former union minister, Atma Singh, Randhir Singh Cheema, Ujjagar Singh Sekhawan, Dalip Singh Pandhi and Baldev Singh Brar. While the five high priests have welcomed the government's gesture, Major Singh Yuboke, former SGPC general secretary has reiterated that no solution was possible until the release of those arrested following the army action in the Golden Temple. The acting president of the SGPC, Prem Singh Lalpura, however, has refused to comment.

The home minister Mr S.B. Chavan in his hurriedly-called press conference on 11 March said that the decision had been taken without consulting any of the detained top Akali leaders. Mr Chavan expressed the hope that this "gesture" would help to create a better environment for a negotiated settlement of the Punjab problem. In his press conference he also announced the decision to introduce legislation in Parliament to enable the confiscation of property in India of non-resident persons of Indian origin who were indulging in terorrist and anti-national activities. The Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, who presided over the meeting on 11 March had in his campaign speeches consistently said that top



Harchand Singh Longowal

priority would be given to solving the Punjab problem within a constitutional framework after the Assembly elections.

The government's decision comes two days before the budget session of Parliament. What could also have precipitated the government's decision is the reported ultimatum given to the government by the Akali Dal and the SGPC in its resolution passed at Anandpur Sahib on 8 March. Mr R.V. Subramanian, senior adviser to the Punjab government who was on a tour of Gurdaspur was summoned to New Delhi by the ministry of home affairs on 10 March.

The move to release the Akali leaders has been welcomed by the opposition leadership. The Janata Party president Mr Chandra Shekhar said that the release of the Akali leaders was a "correct step" and hoped that the dialogue on the Punjab problem would be "without preconditions." He also asked for the early release of women and children arrested after Operation Bluestar as well as those against whom there are no specific charges. Mr H.N. Bahuguna, the DMKP leader said, "I hope that this will be the starting point for a rapprochement. It should not be impossible to find a solution to all the problems."

The decision was also hailed by the Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh group) and other opposition leaders. But most leaders appeared by bewildered by the government's decision of not releasing Badal and Tohra. According to Mr Harkishen Singh Surjeet, the CPI(M) leader, there was no reason why Mr Badal and Mr Tohra should not have been released because they stood for the unity of the country. There should be a clear demarcation between extremists who sought "Khalistan" and those leaders who were for unity, he said.

The cabinet sub committee headed by the home minister is comprised of union defence minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao and union minister for education, Mr K.C. Pant. Also present at the meeting were union home secretary Mr R.D. Pradhan, Punjab chief secretary, Mr S.S. Danoa and Mr Subramanian. The Prime Minister who consulted chief ministers of various states, both of the Congress(I) and the opposition on the Punjab issue, had asked the cabinet sub-committee to formulate proposals to solve the Punjab crisis before the budget session of Parliament. It is quite probable that the government had come to the conclusion that Akali leaders were not interested in a negotiated settlement nor were the moderates among the Sikh leadership able to make the Akali leaders change their mind. The government's gesture could also be a step to alienate terrorists from the Sikh masses.

Meanwhile the situation in Punjab continues to be tense with more and more Sikh youths wearing saffron turbans and the women, saffron *duppatas*, in protest against the government's handling of the Punjab situation. The Akali leadership has over the last few months become increasingly isolated from the Sikh youth.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

PUNJAB

More Fire-power for the Police

Policemen to be armed with sophisticated weapons

Morale-building, and an increase in fire-power and strength of the shattered police force in the state remains the most important task of the state government in post-Bhindranwale Punjab. The state administration has now decided to arm the state police with self-loading rifles, sten carbines, and high calibre revolvers and create commando units as strike forces for anti-terrorist activity. These strike force units will be located at each of the five dozen sub-divisional headquarters, under superintendents of police at the district headquarters and one each with every battalion of the Punjab Armed Police.

The directorate of the state police, headed by the director-general of police, K.S Dhillon now has six inspector generals and scores of DIGs. The new inspector generals of police under Dhillon are IG crime, H.S Randhawa, IG intelligence and security, M.C. Trikha, IG administration, D.S. Mangat, IG Punjab Armed Police and anti-terrorist activity, K.P.S. Sandhu. Two other IGs head the state home guards and computers and the wireless systems. A new post of DI counter-espionage has been created to keep a vigil on activities in Pakistan and the Indo-Pak border. The former DIG Jalandhar Range, Surjit Singh, who was involved in intelligence work both with the state police and Intelligence Bureau has joined as DIG counter-espionage in the intelligence and security wing at the state headquarters. Having been DIG Jalandhar Range, for over three years now, Surjit Singh is an expert on terrorists as the terrorist-infested areas in the Gurdaspur and Amritsar border belts fell under his immediate charge. Another young officer Sital Das who had also acquired a lot of experience in dealing with terrorists has been promoted and posted as police chief of Ferozepur district

Under the new measure, all the police stations would have telephones and a modernised wireless system. Police stations would also be equipped with motor cycles and other fast means of transportation. If the central government permits, which in all likelihood it is expected to do, the special task forces and commando units would also be equipped with self loading rifles and light machine guns to reduce reliance on para military forces like the Central Reserve Police and Border Security Force.

To make a particular officer answerable for the failure or success of their commando actions, they are being given special men so that the excuse of lack of forces or requisite materials do not come in the way of swift and result-oriented actions. These special units will be created from the Punjab Armed Police units and the fresh recruitments made recently would undergo intensive training in the use of weapons and commando tactics.

All these measures were initiated on the recommendations made by a committee of top central and state government experts which submitted its report soon after Operation Bluestar and the army action in Punjab. The committee was headed by I.V. Subramanian, a retired IAS officer. To see that the recommendations were correctly implemented, Mr Subramanian was then appointed as senior adviser to the government of Punjab under President's Rule in June last year. Mr Subramanian has been given a free hand to revamp the state administration, especially the law and order machinery.

Mr Subramanian has also recommended that the state police be screened at all levels and undesirable officers and other ranks be relieved of their jobs and offices. Accordingly, a top level committee headed by state chief secretary, S.S. Dhanoa was constituted to screen all officers of the state police cadres.

Rita Sharma, Chandigarh

SANTOSH KUMAR GHOSH

A Colossus Departs

At 10.45am on 26 February, Santosh Kumar Ghosh, litterateur and journalist, finally succumbed to the cancer that he had been battling for the past five months. The joint editor of *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, he had been associated with several newspapers and had written some of the most significant Bengali works of recent times. He was 64.



Santosh Kumar Ghosh.

Santosh Kumar Ghosh was born in Rajbari, now in Bangladesh, on 9 September 1920 and came to Calcutta to study at Ripon College, from where he graduated in 1940. Subsequently he joined *Jugantar* as sub-editor. Before joining *Hindusthan Standard* in 1951, he had worked with the *Morning News*, the *Nation* and *The Statesman*, and other smaller newspapers. He joined *Ananda Bazar Patrika* in 1958 as news editor and became associate editor of that paper as well as its sister publication the *Hindustan Standard*, in 1964

As associate editor, and later joint editor, he made a significant contribution towards giving Bengali journalism a new shape and form, and was instrumental in replacing the staid style of news reporting with a more colloquial idiom. His short and stocky appearance belied his nose for news and his pioneering prose, and he broke many stories on the basis of his tenacity and never-say-die spirit.

Apart from his achievements as a journalist, Santosh Ghosh was also among the literati of Bengal. His first short story was published in the Bengali magazine *Bharatvarsa* when he was only 16 years old. He came to be recognised as a writer of stature with his first novel, *Nana Ranger Din*, and his second novel, *Kinu Goaler Goli*, was published in the *Puja* number of *Ananda Bazar Patrika* when he was 19. His other significant works were *Jal Dao, Sesh Namaskar Sri Charaneshu Make*, for which he was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award in 1972. In all, he wrote more than 30 volumes of novels, short stories, plays and essays, some of which have been translated into Hindi as well as other Indian languages.

NEW DELHI

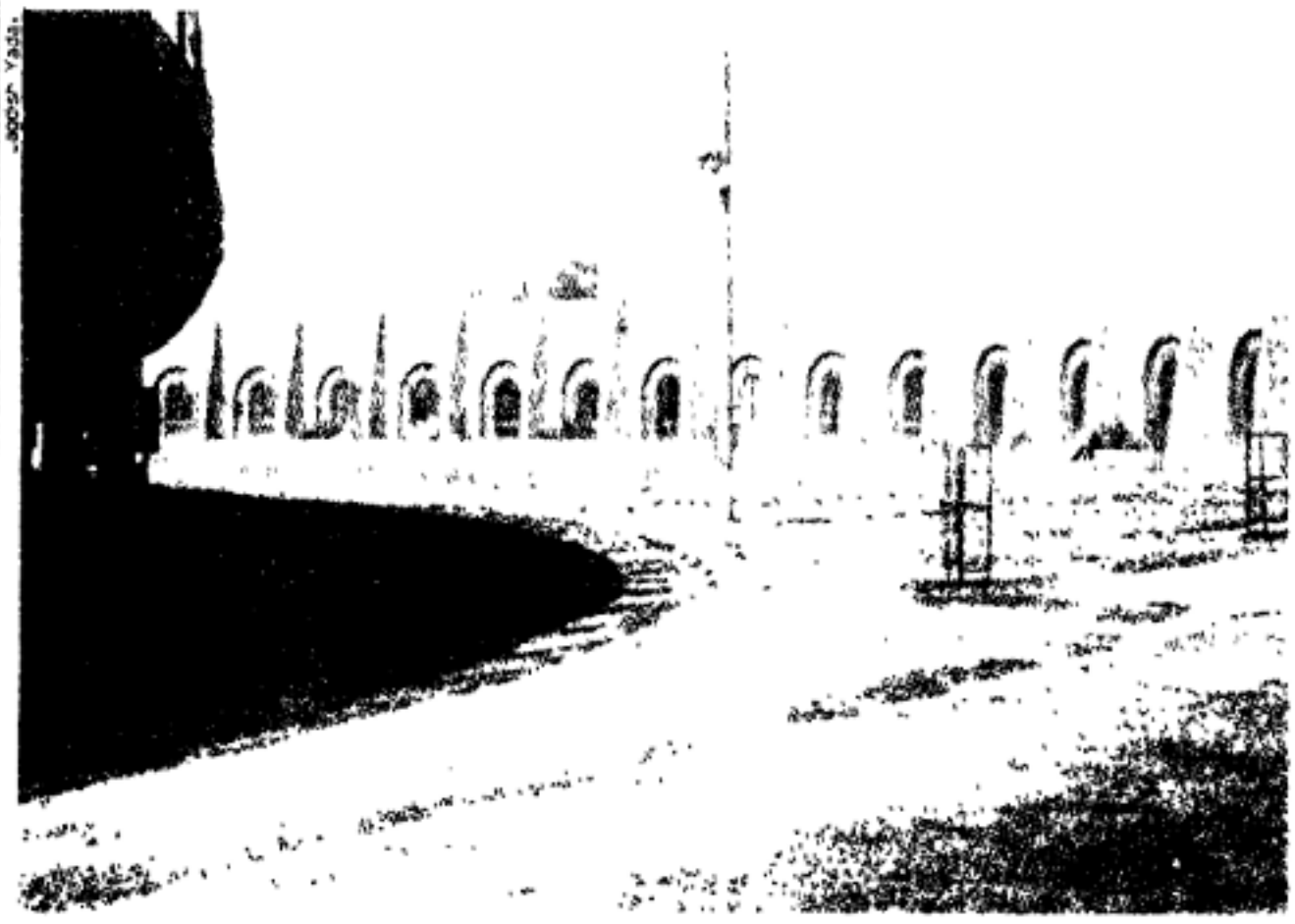
Sleuths Using Sports Stadium

The Velodrome is being used as an interrogation chamber

The Asiad velodrome, built on the west bank of the Yamuna for the cycle races, is now being used as an interrogation centre. In the past three months, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was entrusted with the task of interrogating an unprecedented number of people. A large number of arrests were made after the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi, followed by arrests in the spy scandal. With the interrogation chamber at the Red Fort unable to handle such a heavy load, the CBI finally selected the Yamuna velodrome.

The Anand Ram team, set up to investigate the conspiracy behind Mrs Gandhi's assassination chose the Yamuna velodrome. In the weeks following the assassination, dozens of suspects, including the prime accused in the case, Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh, Balbir Singh and their families were interrogated there. The velodrome, constructed for the Ninth Asian Games held in New Delhi in November 1982, was selected because of its ideal location and distance from the main city. Once the decision was taken by the team to conduct interrogations there, the authorities of the stadium were contacted and the keys to three rooms handed over to the CBI. Though most of the investigations in the assassination case are now over and the accused persons charged, it is believed that some others were brought to the stadium in the last days of February and the keys to the rooms are still with the investigators.

Officials in charge of the administration of the velodrome were hesitant to talk about the going-on there during the past few weeks. S.K. Chaturvedi, the supervisor of the velodrome simply stated that they had been asked to hand over the premises and that they are not allowed inside when questioning is in progress. Other junior officials talked about men and women being brought into the velodrome in cars late in the night and being whisked away stealthily. Nobody has seen the interrogation chambers or has been present when the CBI was occupying them.



The Yamuna velodrome in Delhi

They, however, complained that in the past two years, the velodrome had been misused by the Delhi Police. "Though the velodrome was constructed to encourage cycling, for many months we have not been able to hold any tournament here because the velodrome has been converted into a police station," said one official. The administrative officer explained that the velodrome had been taken over by police constables who had been using its dormitories (meant for housing players) as their residence. On 13 June 1983, the then Lt. Governor, Jagmohan had taken the decision to shift certain divisions of the police to the velodrome, for want of suitable accommodation.

The need to shift Delhi Armed Police constables into the velodrome arose in 1983, when a portion of the Kotwali police station in Chandni Chowk was handed over to the Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the displaced force had be transferred elsewhere. Divisions of the Delhi Armed Police, traffic police, crime branch and the missing persons squad, all of whom were earlier stationed at the Kotwali, were shifted to the velodrome. The decision was criticised by the stadium authorities who made several requests to the police headquarters for the early clearance of the velodrome. Since all the dormitories were occupied by constables, several tournaments had to be cancelled. Besides, they felt the constables were misusing the facilities available in the complex and living in insanitary conditions thereby damaging the building.

After repeated requests to the police commissioner, S.S. Jog, the velodrome authorities in February received the news that the velodrome would be vacated shortly and be made available for tournaments. The DAP personnel were to be shifted into a temporary police camp at the Nigambodh Ghat area and the members of the crime branch and missing persons squad to be transferred to the new Kotwali police station at Darya Ganj. Members of the traffic police, however, were still living at the velodrome since no stop gap arrangement could be made for them.

When the traffic team departs, the velodrome will once again be used for encouraging cycling. But before they can commence cycling tournaments and invite players to stay in the dormitories, the maintenance wing at the velodrome have a lot of work to complete. A visit to the once well-maintained stone and brick stadium shows how much damage has been done to it by the policemen. Window panes, electrical fittings and fans have been broken. Furniture in the dining hall has been smashed and the dormitories messed up. After two years of misuse, the Yamuna velodrome, among the finest in Asia and certainly the best in India, will be with the sports authorities again. They are now only hoping that the Anand Ram team and the CBI investigators will also vacate the premises quickly.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi.

MIZORAM

No Early Settlement

Talks between Laldenga and the government deadlocked

Prospects of an early settlement of the 18-year-old Mizo insurgency have once again receded with the failure of the talks between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Mizo National Front leader Laldenga to resolve the deadlock over the "special powers" of the Governor. Only last December, a confident Laldenga had told SUNDAY that by January, all the four outstanding problems would be settled. However, on 15 February, when Rajiv Gandhi and Laldenga met for the first time since the latter's return from London, the two leaders were unable to make much headway on the question of the role of the Governor during the "interim arrangement" before fresh Assembly elections could be held.

What was expected to have been the final round of talks now appears to be the prelude to another cycle of negotiations. The matter has once again been referred to P.V. Narasimha Rao, the defence minister. Apparently, it was felt that since Narasimha Rao had been associated from the very beginning with the "third round" of talks as the then home minister, his involvement would provide an element of continuity in the dialogue. It is no secret that Laldenga has been quite concerned at the dislocation of the talks due to the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The dialogue had after all been based upon a personal understanding between Mrs Gandhi and the MNF leader.

The main hurdle continues to be the question of the Governor's powers with respect to law and order and the management of finances. The centre and the MNF have agreed that Mizoram will be granted statehood similar to that of Nagaland under Article 371 A of the Constitution. The problem, however, is that while this Article provides for certain safeguards for maintaining the culture of the Mizo people, it also stipulates that "the Governor of Nagaland shall have a special responsibility with respect to the law and order in the state of Nagaland...and in the discharge of his functions in relation thereto the Governor shall after consulting with the council of ministers exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken..."

Again Clause(C) provides that "in making his recommendation with respect to any demand for a grant, the Governor of Nagaland shall ensure that the money provided by the government of India out of the Consolidated Fund of India for any specific purpose or service is included in the demand for grants relating to that service or purpose and not in any other demand."

Laldenga has objected to these provisions as they would virtually place the administration irrespective of the existence of an elected Assembly under central direction. Sources



Laldenga

close to the MNF leader say that such a provision is tantamount to saying that the centre does not trust the Mizo people. "The conditions in Nagaland are different. But once the underground Mizos lay down their arms, Mizoram will not be more disturbed than Uttar Pradesh," said a MNF leader.

Equally intractable have been the differences over the interim arrangement before Parliament is able to approve statehood for Mizoram and fresh elections are held. The MNF leader feels that it is likely to be a period of at least six months and it is vital that the administration be in the hands of those that the Mizo underground can trust. "How can they possibly come out and lay down their arms when the same administration, police and paramilitary forces against whom they have conducted raids are the very people who still have power over them? They want an assurance of safety and order," said a MNF leader. Such an assurance of safety and order can, according to MNF sources, be provided by dissolving the state Assembly, declaring President's rule and appointing a council of advisers to aid the Lt Governor. The head of the council would presumably be Laldenga himself. The formula was part of the proposals submitted to the government during the second round of talks in 1981-82. However, since then, Brig Sailo's ministry has been defeated and the new chief minister Lal Thanhwla has said to the press that he is prepared to resign in Laldenga's favour. The government has yet to submit its proposals on this matter.

Differences also exist over the withdrawal of the Sixth Schedule applicable over certain areas of Mizoram. The MNF leadership believes that the continuing application of this schedule in Mizoram will foster divisiveness. The schedule provides for the administration of tribal areas in the union territory of Mizoram through the creation of autonomous district councils and regional councils. Laldenga in an interview to this correspondent last December had explained that the Sixth Schedule had been applied to Mizoram when it was part of Assam but now that it was going to be a separate state the schedule could no longer be applicable.

Laldenga discussed with the Prime Minister the position of the MNF on these outstanding problems. The PM gave a patient, even sympathetic hearing but the political will to break the deadlock seems to be absent. While Rajiv Gandhi turned his attention to the Assembly elections, Laldenga is waiting his turn. He has to comfort himself with the satisfaction of having obtained acceptance of statehood for Mizoram, a blanket amnesty for all the underground Mizos, inclusion of Mizoram as a national language in the Eighth schedule and special provisions for ownership and transfer of land and resources and other safeguards under Article 371 A.

Rita Manchanda, New Delhi

MARUTI UDYOG

Full of Drive

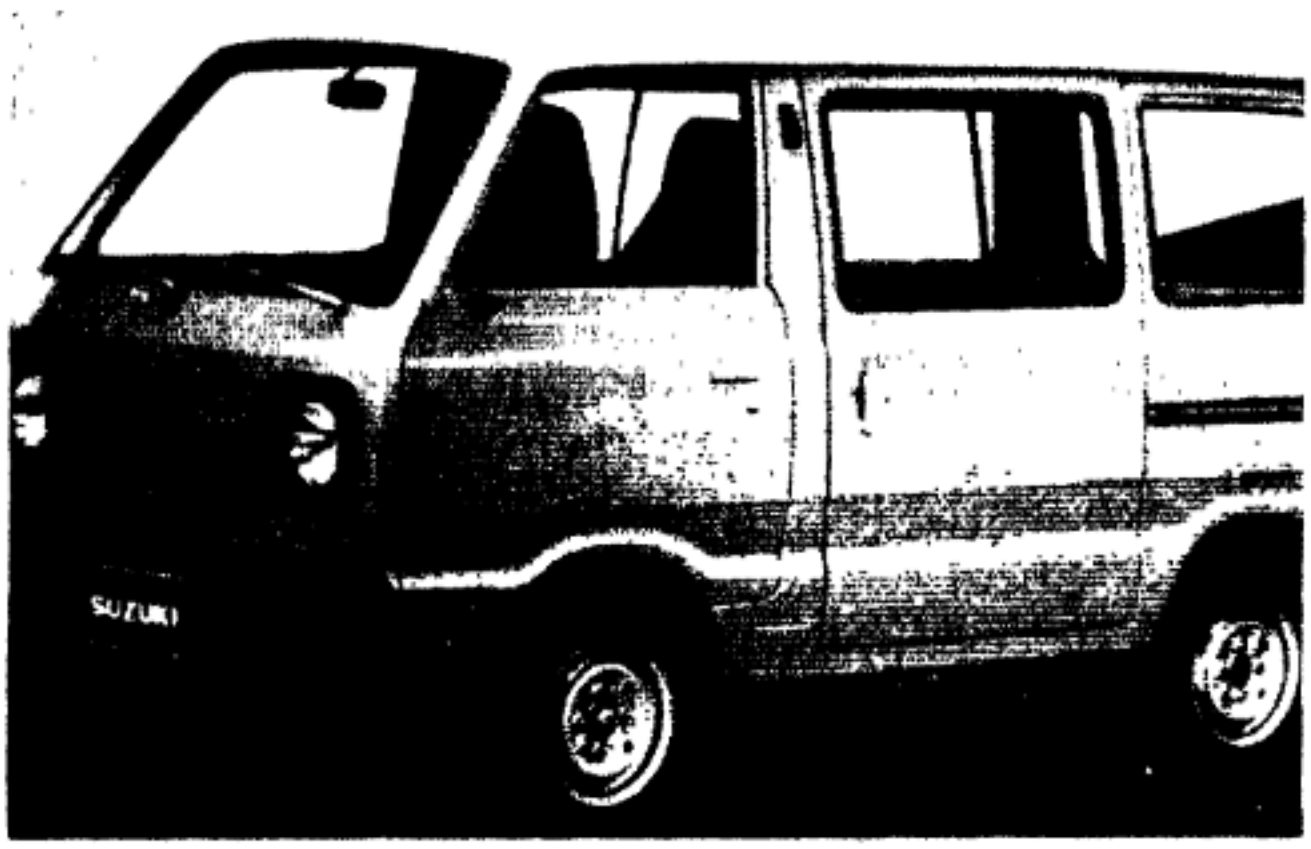
Production targets exceeded in first year of operation

In the first year of operations, Maruti Udyog has brought about a revolution on the Indian roads In spite of various controversies in which the company is involved, it cannot be denied that Maruti has ushered in a new era in the Indian automobile industry. The production achieved by Maruti since its plant became operative on 14 December 1983 is praiseworthy. In 15 months, Maruti has exceeded its production target by ten per cent By March this year 22,000 units had been manufactured instead of the projected figure of 20,000 units with 186 units rolling out every day By the time Maruti enters its second phase of production in March 1986, it would have produced 48,000 units.

behind its indigenisation schedule.

The joint managing director of Maruti Udyog, R C. Bhargava, explained that the problem of indigenous ancillary development faced by Maruti is something for which the ancillary industry in India is responsible Since the past 15 years, the ancillary industry has remained stagnant as the number of automobiles produced in the country remained static. From 1973 onwards, the combined sales of the Ambassador and Fiat was a poor 40,000 but after Maruti entered the market, the number of passenger cars sold shot up to 65,000, a 50 per cent increase.

The ancillary industry was clearly taken by surprise when Maruti hit the Indian roads and more so when



The Maruti van

The giant public sector company now employs 1,900 people and the production rate of the company is two cars per employee per year which compares favourably with previous production rates of the Indian automobile industry. However, the indigenisation of the Maruti vehicles is lagging behind schedule and this is causing concern to the company. The first 192 Maruti passenger cars were assembled from foreign components. By March 1985, the vehicles are expected to use only 26 per cent of indigenous components. By 1989, the vehicles will be 100 per cent indigenised. At present, according to company sources, Maruti is five per cent

they exceeded their production targets in the first year of production. The various companies which had begun manufacturing ancillaries for Maruti were under severe test as Maruti demanded spare parts of international standards and was determined to control the quality of its components. Because of stringent quality control, several consignments given to Maruti by Indian vendors were rejected. So keen has Maruti been on quality control that some defective spare parts imported from Japan have been rejected.

"Now," says Bhargava, "the ancillary industry has begun to take Maruti seriously and several big business houses are manufacturing spares for us. They have accepted the fact that Maruti has come to the Indian market to stay for good." He hopes Maruti's modern assembly line will be soon supplied with modern components as well. The target before Maruti is to achieve a 100 per cent indigenisation by 1989-1990, three years before the licence agreement of Maruti with its Japanese collaborator Suzuki expires on 2 October, 1992.

Maruti Udyog has paid the price for the vehicles' popularity and demand. The vehicles are being sold at a premium between Rs 60,000 to Rs 1,00,000 in the open market. After complaints of largescale blackmarketeering in Maruti vehicles were received by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and finance minister, V.P. Singh, the government ordered a probe into the sale and purchase of Maruti vehicles. According to Maruti officials, since no ban had been imposed by the government on resale, the company has no control over a vehicle changing hands.

Maruti Udyog is tabulating figures from its 16 distribution centres of how many cars and vans have been resold at a profit. According to one official, the figures reveal that not more than 15-20 per cent of the vehicles changed ownership. He also complained that not only were inflated reports of largescale blackmarketing being circulated, Maruti was in grave difficulty because of a Supreme Court order against the company. On account of the stay order granted by Justice V.D. Tulzapurkar and Justice A.P. Sen, they are unable to allot any vehicle under their discretionary quota of five per cent. The case will come up for hearing next month and only then will it be known whether the 165 cars allotted by Maruti in the quota have legal sanction or not.

In 1983, when bookings for the cars commenced, a total of 1,35,000 people had written to the company According to Bhargava, the name of each applicant was fed into a computer and each of them now has an allotment slip and an approximate date when his Maruti would be allotted to him. All bookings will be complete by 1987 when the company will commence fresh bookings. In the next few years, Maruti is expected to further accelerate its production capability and will contribute significantly to the projected demand of 1,00,000 passenger cars every year. Of this Maruti alone will produce 50,000 vehicles.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

Surging Ahead

Car manufacturers introduce new models

Until last year, it did seem that the much heralded automobile revolution in India would be restricted to just the Maruti. The new Contessa from Hindustan Motors was not a big success and the Dolphin has not risen above its modest beginnings. The promises made by all other manufacturers too, had seemed to be restricted to just newspaper reports. However, the engineering fair organised by the Association of Indian Engineering Industries (AIEI) in Delhi in February and the entry of three competitors in the Indian motor market have finally cast aside such doubts.

The Standard Motors' "prestige project," in collaboration with Austin Rover, UK—the Standard 2000—undoubtedly stole the show at what turned out to be more of an automobile fair for the common man. The "executive sedan" as the exhibitors called their latest vehicle has some features totally new to the Indian drivers like electronically operated windows, power steering, central door locking system, twin SU carburettors, a collapsible column, front caliper disc brakes and rear self-adjusting drum brakes.

The Standard 2000 is not a people's car and is priced at an exorbitant Rs 1,75,000, the highest priced Indian passenger car. The firm has finalised its tie-up with Nissan but faces problems from the government which is yet to give the green signal. The company officials, however, would not elaborate on the "hitch" being posed by the authorities but if all goes well, the manufacturers will introduce the model in another three years.

Another participant in the automobile revolution is the Fiat 118. It has a 1180 cc engine, a body similar to the Premier Padmini and will be priced at Rs 100,000. Unlike the Standard 2000, which will have an air conditioner, stereo and other luxuries, the Premier automobile will be luxuriously fitted out if the customer demands it. The Fiat 118, originally slated for a Diwali release will hit Indian roads sometime this year.

Also on display were a number of two-wheelers to be introduced to the market this year. Among the main attractions were the Ind-Suzuki AX 100 and the Hero Honda CD 100. The Rajdoot Yamaha 350 introduced by Escorts last year also caught the eye. But in keeping with the economy drive against high fuel consumption, the company has no intentions of any production on a mass scale. Production in the first year will be only 2,000 after which it would gradually be raised up to a maximum of 10,000. Although initially, Standard Motors had plans of producing only 5,000 cars annually, with the recent "broad band" licensing system introduced by the government, the company has now begun thinking in terms of doubling the Standard 200 production as against their light commercial vehicle. For the moment, the company will continue to import the body panels from their overseas collaborators, mainly because importing dyes for the body at such a low level of production would impose prohibitive costs.

Interestingly, the Standard 2000 to be introduced in July 1985, will be manufactured from mostly indigenously produced components. The entire "power train" in the engine, the tyres, battery, and axle components would have already been indigenised.

The Standard 2000 has been specially adjusted for Indian roads and driving conditions. The engine torque, for instance, has been adjusted to allow moving into the fourth gear at lower speeds and downgraded to be compatible with the 87 octane fuel grade available here as against the 97 octane used by the Austin Rover 2000. The maximum speed, however, has been retained at 160 km/hour. Premier Automobiles presented at the fair, the new hybrid Fiat 118 which brings together the Fiat 124 body from Italy with the Nissan 118 engine from Japan. The Nissan Sunny B 11 was also exhibited at the fair. An interesting exhibit was the Bajaj M 80, the "step through" motorcycle, which, for the convenience of ladies, does not have a fuel tank in front of the seat.

Both Ashok Leyland and Escorts had their commercial vehicles on display while the *Countryman*, a new 21-seater van introduced by Standard Motors made its appearance here. According to the company's general manager (corporate planning) Mr R Ravindran, the company has chosen the name *Countryman* to prove to the innumerable firms going in for foreign collaborations for light commercial vehicles, that the country has the expertise to make the vehicles without foreign help.

The "motor rally" flagged off by the entry of the Maruti and Contessa has obviously begun. It is expected that the race will witness its fair share of dropouts. The extravaganza began with the liberalisation of automobile licensing together with the Maruti project. The field was made more attractive with the "broad band" licensing which allows the manufacturers to go into the production of "any four-wheeled vehicle" or "any two-wheeled vehicle" depending upon the market demand. The stakes are of course high with investment running into hundreds of crores. What now remains to be seen is the response by the people.

Tania Midha, New Delhi



The Standard 2000

TAMIL NADU

MGR's Man on the Beat

MGR reinstates police chief K. Mohandas

The relationship between CM M. G. Ramachandran and K Mohandas, the intelligence chief of Tamil Nadu, has been a fascinating aspect of MGR's chief ministership Today, Mohandas, is perhaps the second most powerful person in the state, after MGR himself. He is not only the director general of police in charge of crime and intelligence but he has a close relationship with MGR that enables him to wield such clout. MGR who distrusts almost everyone including cabinet colleagues and senior partymen has implicit faith in this police officer.

Mohandas's proximity to MGR is the source of his controversial image. The DMK press has attacked him more frequently than they have attacked MGR himself. Very often, the DMK-affiliated newspapers like *Thiroli* and *Murasoli* carry reports of his corruption and inefficiency. He has been accused of being MGR's hatchetman, of being MGR's front man in shady deals, of keeping MGR's slush funds, of making foreign trips at MGR's expense and even of using the police force to browbeat the opposition parties. But, nothing has ever been proved. Ironically, the criticism has brought him closer to MGR. MGR, highly sensitive to the DMK allegation that he was encouraging a "Kerala Nadu" in the state, even bypassed a senior Malayali IAS officer, Mr Pannikkar for the post of chief secretary but has stuck to Mohandas, also a Malayali.



K. Mohandas

Mohandas remains unpopular with the bureaucrats in the state who accuse him of having converted Tamil Nadu into a "police state." A senior bureaucrat has called him "a policeman who blindly believes the *lathi* to be the panacea for all problems." Members of the Tamil Nadu judiciary also distrust him ever since it leaked out that he kept all of them under police surveillance

He has also not found favour with senior AIADMK partymen who, despite their seniority, firstly lack the accessibility or an easy relationship with MGR. Secondly, Mohandas has put them all under surveillance and has been reporting to MGR about their activities, enabling the CM to maintain a stranglehold on the party. Even Jayalalitha, at the height of her relationship with MGR, could not despite several attempts, drive a wedge between MGR and Mohandas Jayalalitha had turned against Mohandas when she learnt that he kept her under surveillance and had demanded that he be put down. But MGR quickly overruled her.

Mohandas's reaction to the allegations has been one of indifference He does not bother to react and has never denied anything or clarified or justified his actions Instead, he continues to maintain a low profile.

In January 1985, while MGR was convalescing in New York, Mohandas was suddenly transferred to a relatively unimportant post as commissioner and secretary in charge of administration (training). It had confirmed that the coterie (comprising mainly of Nedunchezhian and Veerappan) was taking decisions without MGR's knowledge. SUNDAY learns that the decision for the transfer was made by chief secretary K. Chockalingam and Nedunchezhian. They felt Mohandas was dangerous because he knew too much. Of course, the coterie acted in this manner only because they did not know the extent of MGR's recovery. Chockalingam and Nedunchezhian had returned from New York with the firm conviction that MGR had in effect become a 'nodding chief minister." But MGR literally bounced back to life. The day MGR returned, Mohandas met him and apprised him of all the developments. MGR was shocked. to learn of the transfer and after

HYDROFOIL BOATS

Swift and Safe

A new era in shipbuilding will begin in India with the manufacture of superfast hydrofoil boats with the help of Swiss technology. These superfoils will carry 90 passengers in a fully air-conditioned interior and will cost as little as Rs 2 lakh each. The boats are going to be built by a recently floated Tamil Nadu company--Venkatapathy Engineering Private Limited and the project being constructed on the Kadular coast on the Bay of Bengal is being promoted by the Supremer Company Switzerland. Total costs of the project will be Rs 2 crores.

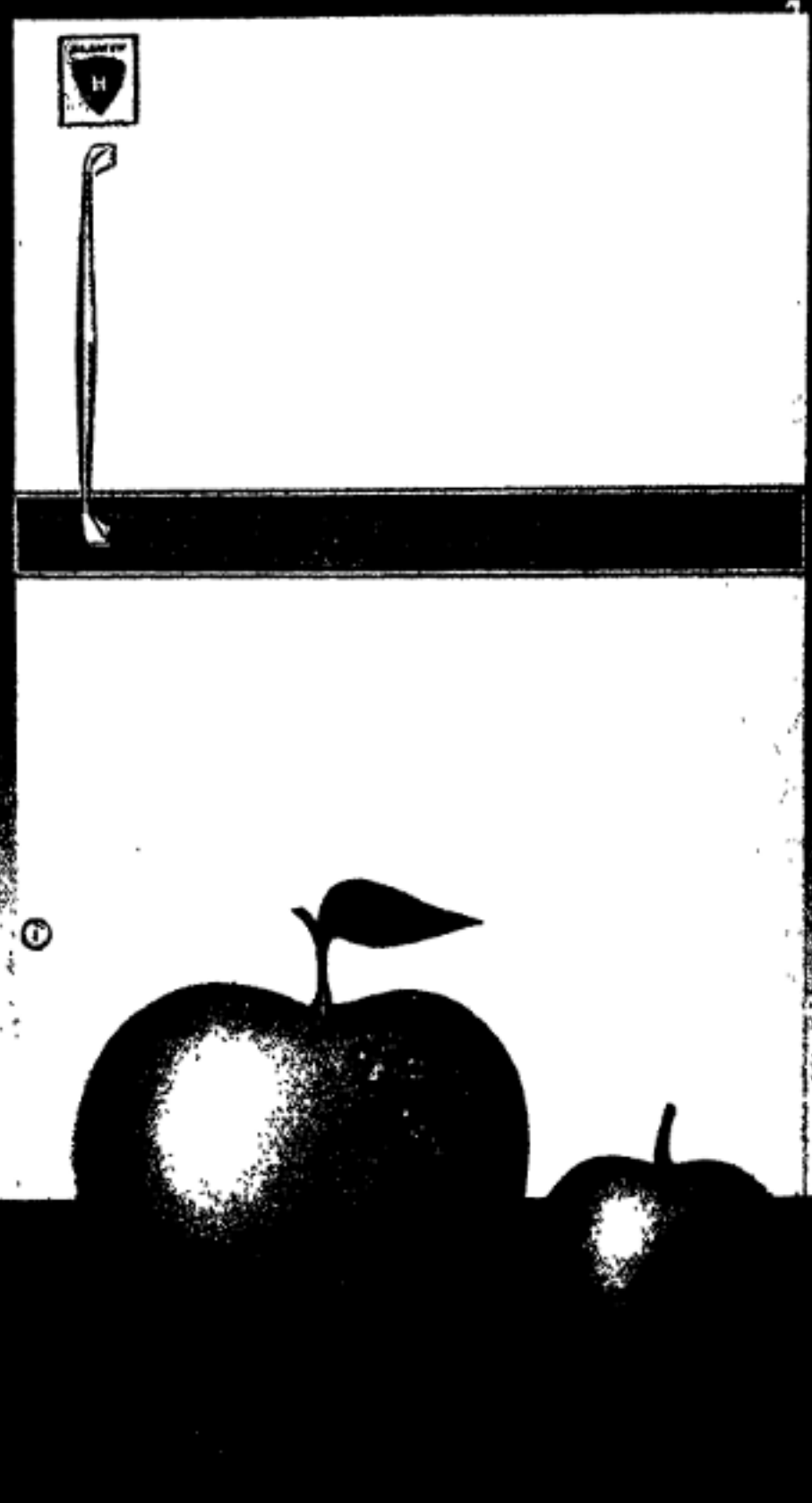
"The boats are known for speedy, comfortable and safe transportation with a fuel efficiency of as much as half of the conventional boats. They will have a longer range (of 200 nautical miles) than ordinary boats," says R. Srinivasan, one of the top executives connected with the project. The Indian company proposes to build four types of passenger vessels of varying capacities ranging from 100 to 400 seater hovercrafts. The bigger hovercrafts will cost about eight lakhs each. The boats, which will have a cruising speed of 33 knots will be useful for off-shore work by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission or as patrol boats used by the Coast Guard.

"When the boat attains a specified speed, the hulls rise above the water, and the boat travels with just the foils in the water enabling travel at a very high speed, about three times that of a conventional boat. Because of the foils, the boats are very stable and the pitch and roll experienced by passenger is negligible making travel by sea a pleasant exercise," said Mr Srinivasan. Even in a turbulent sea, the boats keep their balance.

The company is also planning to charter the vessels at the rate of Rs five lakhs per month which includes the charges for the crew, insurance and maintainence. Civil construction for the project is scheduled to start soon and maintenance has already acquired the necessary finances. "With the rapidly developing demand for passenger travel by sea, we expect to do good business," said Mr Srinivasan.

T. Raman, Madras

Not all refrigerators are made like this



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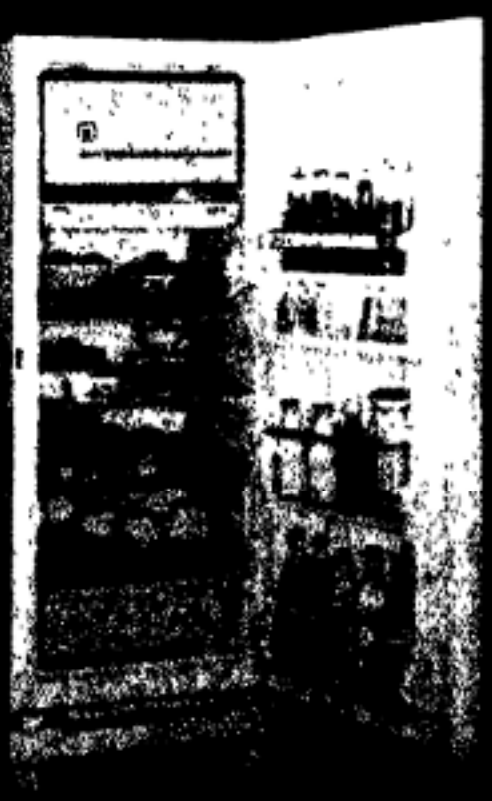
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being sworn in for the third term, immediately reinstated him.

Mohandas joined the IPS in 1956 and began his career as ASP of Tiruchy. He was then posted as the commandant of the Malabar Special Police in Assam. In 1970, he was drafted into the CBI at Delhi. In 1976, he was reverted to his home state, as DIG CID. In fact it is believed that he was involved in the toppling of the Karunanidhi government. When MGR assumed power for the first time in 1977, Mohandas was the DIG in charge of crime and intelligence. Whatever the allegations against Mohandas, it is clear that the Tamil Nadu crime branch which he heads is one of the best in the country. The rate of crimes solved is very high and Mohandas has proved that he is extremely good at investigation and intelligence-gathering. Whether it be in resolving the sensational Allen kidnap case of Sri Lanka, the Madras bomb blast, tracing stolen idols or retrieving Tamil bonded labourers from other states, the state's crime branch has carved a niche for itself.

MGR developed such confidence in him that he ensured that Mohandas continued to handle this department right through his chief ministership and got him promoted quickly. He was made the additional IG, then IG and then DGP. All the while he came nearer to MGR. When asked why he was MGR's favourite, Mohandas told SUNDAY "I think it's because I have always been objective in my assessment. Very often I know for a fact that the CM will disagree with what I have to say but that does not deter me from expressing frankly what I feel. Over the years the CM has developed confidence in me, particularly because all the others around him, out of fear and awe, say yes to whatever he says."

Anita Pratap, Madras

BRITAIN

Hauled Over the Coals

Miners' strike ends in failure



A miner being led away by the police

"The longest strike in history:" this is how Arthur Scargill, president of Britain's National Union of Mineworkers, described the coal strike which ended on 5 March almost a year after it started on 6 March, 1984. Mr. Scargill has obviously not heard of Bombay's textile strike, which also ran for almost a year. However, Britain's coal strike was certainly the longest in this country's industrial history which has been none too peaceful in recent years. It evoked memories of other previous memorable events such as the general strike of 1926 (which lasted for a week), the Tolpoodle Martyrsm, 1834, etc.

However, the latest miners' strike has left scars on the industrial and social ethos of Britain which will endure for a long time. People in Britain still talk of the general strike with horror and fear and the miners' strike will continue to evoke these sentiments for a long time to come for two reasons: the total involvement of the miners in it and their total defeat.

What is more, even though the strike has officially ended, there is plenty of trouble in store. For one thing, even if the special NUM delegate conference held on 3 March voted by a narrow majority to end the strike, the miners in Scotland and Kent have decided to continue their own strike in defiance of the NUM vote, and Mr. Scargill has publicly declared that although the strike has ended, the "guerilla" fight against the Tory government will continue. So Britain may be in for a long period of continued bickering and infighting between the NUM and the government on one hand, and the NUM and the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party leadership on the other.

This may well benefit the Conservatives, who could win the general election of 1988 as handsomely as they won the general election of 1983, so tired was the public of the industrial strifes in 1974 (when the Heath government was defeated by a miners' strike) and in 1979 when James Callaghan lost to Margaret Thatcher. One thing is quite clear. Although Mr. Scargill and his NUM colleagues declared from the beginning that the strike was in defence of the miners' jobs against the declared intention of the National Coal Board to close "uneconomic" mines, as Mr. Scargill himself declared at the NUM annual conference in September 1984, the basic issue behind the miners' strike was "Who is to have ultimate control over our industry and our way of life—the Tories or we, the workers?"

The Tory government, of course, was fully aware of this and that is why, it adopted a firm and consistent policy of "no surrender" and mobilised its entire resources to meet the Scargill challenge. Its gamble paid off to the regret of Mr. Scargill and the miners. What has now been revealed is that the Conservative Party decided to learn from the miners' strike in 1974 after which the Heath government prepared an elaborate plan to beat a similar strike, if it were to happen again. It did, and the Thatcher government last year applied the measures recommended in that secret plan masterfully and effectively by building up huge buffer stocks of coal through imports from European countries. Ironically, the bulk of the coal imports came from a communist country, Poland.

Other measures included the conversion of power stations from coal to gas, changes in the law so as to empower the courts to seize funds (as was done to NUM funds) and to empower the department of health and social security to cut unemployment benefit to striking miners, as was done ruthlessly and systematically so that the miners suffered acute financial hardship

All these measures worked and in spite of the heroic struggle which they put up, the workers were beaten by sheer economic necessity. They had accumulated far too many heavy debts in rent and mortgages, grocery bills, domestic gas and electricity bills, etc But behind all this is the Thatcher government's real strength - its 130 plus majority in the House of Commons. With such a majority it could do and did almost anything it pleased including enactment of the most draconian and unpopular Trade Union Acts.

The miners' strike also failed because of another important reason—the refusal of the rest of the trade union movement to back the strike by sympathetic strikes. In fact, Scargill urged the Trade Union Congress to give a call for a general strike as in 1926 but other unions refused to oblige. He then appealed to the Transport and General Workers' Union to prevent coal dug by "scab" labour or coal imported from abroad to reach power stations and industrial undertakings, but this ban of the T.G.W.U proved ineffective because the government made arrangements for the use of trucks for coal haulage, the trucks being driven by non-union drivers and for coaches to carry "scab" workers, These coaches were also driven by non-union members. These measures, of course, resulted in violent clashes between striking miners' pickets and massive contingents of police deployed to ensure the free passage for the trucks and coaches. Indeed, these clashes became so nasty and violent that relations between "the nice British police" and the working class community may never be cordial again.

The violent behaviour of the striking miners had resulted in over 700 of them being dismissed and prosecuted in many cases for causing bodily harm and it is for the reinstatement of these sacked miners ("amnesty") that the miners in Kent and Scotland are still on strike. Where does the leadership of the Trade Union Movement and the leadership of the Labour Party stand now? The miners' strike was another manifestation of the running struggle between the extremists and the moderates, so that the extremist leaders of the miners (Arthur Scargill or his communist deputy Michael Macgahey) are blaming the leaders of the Labour Party, especially Neil Kinnock for failing to give total support to the miners.

The TUC and the Labour Party leaders made it clear right from the beginning that, while they supported the strike in principle (notwithstanding the strike itself as illegal because it had not been declared on the strength of a nation wide secret ballot among the miners, Scargill having refused to have one), they could not condone illegal acts (involving contempt of court) or downright acts of violence (which in fact resulted in the murder of one innocent taxi driver), nor would they ever support demands of "amnesty" for sacked miners proved guilty of violence.

This stand, taken by Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC and by Neil Kinnock, has angered the extremist sections within the NUM and also within the Labour Party and there is already talk of challenging the leadership of Mr. Kinnock at the annual conference of the Labour Party in October. Thus, the failure of the miners' strike will continue to have its delayed effects on relations within the trade union movement and the Labour Party for the rest of the year.

What have been the physical effects of the miners' strike which lasted exactly a year? Their seriousness can be gauged from the following figures: criminal offences or cases involving criminal breach of peace 4,296: obstructing police—1,692. Obstructing highway—640, criminal damage—1,015, arson—15, assaults on police—315, actual bodily harm—424, grievous bodily harm—39, theft—349, murders—3, resisting arrest—19, bail breach—32, drunkenness—62, unlawful assembly—509, rioting—137, and handling stolen goods—1.

And what about the effects of the strike on the government in actual monetary terms? These have been estimated by stock brokers as follows (March 1984 to February 1985)—electricity industry—1,199 million pounds sterling, coal industry—1,091 million pounds, lost income-tax—290 million pounds, police costs—198 million pounds,British steel–198 million pounds, social security department, 49 million pounds, total 3,025 million pounds. These are unofficial estimates, and the government and the NUM have their own estimates which differ widely.

Whatever the costs may be, it is beyond doubt that British industry and British economy will take a long time to recover from these huge losses, not to mention the loss of foreign markets which is even more serious for a trading country like Britain. Is this the price of one man, who led the miners' strike which harassed Britain for one year? Whether it is or not,one can hardly dispute the verdict of *The Times* on the famous defeat of the miners "if victory has a thousand fathers, defeat is an Orphan."

Peter Pandsay, London



Arthur Scargill

NEPAL

A Policy of Drift

Political and economic changes urgently needed

Time is running out for the Lokendra Bahadur Chand government in Nepal. Its troubles include a faltering economy and a political situation which is drifting towards a crisis. What has however turned the mountain kingdom into a potential powder keg and placed PM Chand's position in danger is an increasingly restive populace dissatisfied with both the economic situation and political structure of the kingdom. Equally worrying have been the repressive measures taken by the police forces in dealing with the anti-government demonstrations.

Recently, a large number of people, including the *pradhan panch* (Mayor) of Kathmandu Municipality, Mr Kamal Chitrakar, a partyless *Panchayat* supporter, were taken into custody for organising a rally which did not pose any law and order problems. The riot police lathicharged the demonstators who were protesting against the regime's failure to fulfil its pledges to check "corruption in the administration." According to reports, police have been regularly lathicharging demonstrators after the Lokendra Bahadur Chand government came to power.

When Mr Chand took over as Prime Minister replacing Surya Bahadur Thapa, he had pledged to fight corruption and eradicate poverty in the kingdom which according to Mr Pashupati Shumsher, one of the leading members of the cabinet, had become "a way of life" in the kingdom. In fact, one of the Prime Minister's charges against his predecessor, also a *Panchayat* loyalist like him, was that he had "institutionalised corruption." Mr Chand had assured the people that things would never be the same again and promised a "clean government that worked." The Prime Minister's reputation of being "Mr Clean" is now a bad joke. Though his personal integrity is beyond doubt, many of his colleagues in the government are corrupt, nor has the government done much to arrest the drift in the country's affairs.

Not surprisingly, the government's performance or rather non-performance has been severely criticised. Even the most committed supporters of the controversial *Panchayat* model of government have cautioned the Prime Minister against taking things for granted. The normally reticent press has been strongly critical. *The Motherland*, an English daily, said in an editorial, "The *Panchas (Panchayat* members) have grossly misused their power and there is no mechanism which can control those who have been abusing the posts they hold...the *Panchas* need to be reminded that they have miserably failed to deliver the goods. "The performance of the *Panchas* has not been encouraging either. "They are all fighting not for bettering the lot of the people but for their own benefit," said *The Motherland*. The opposition parties, though legally banned under the Nepalese Constitution have been equally critical. But Prime Minister Chand's approach so far indicates that he would prefer to let matters run their own course.



Bhola Chatterjee

Krishna Prasad Bhattrai



Bhola Chatterjee

Ganesh Man Singh

According to knowlegeable sources, Mr Chand could face a mass upsurge if he continues to disregard the demands of the people for a meaningful economic and political reorientation of its policy. Some members of the outlawed Nepali Congress, the largest opposition party in the kingdom which had pioneered the 1950-51 armed revolution in an effort to introduce democracy in Nepal felt that he was there to serve the people and not the other way round.

Recently, a large number of Nepali Congress leaders including Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattrai and Girija Koirala were detained in different parts of the kingdom for holding party conventions, the first step towards a *satyagraha* movement in the coming months to restore "democratic rights." According to the *Nepali Chronicle*, the arrests were made because the government wanted to "see and measure the strength of the outlawed (Nepali) Congress and prepare a strategy to counter the so-called civil disobedience movement."

However, some sections of the Nepali Congress leadership would prefer a moderate line of approach despite the present intransigent attitude of the Chand government. They argue that the reforms introduced since the 1980 National Referendum show that a slow democratisation in Nepal is continuing, the credit for which should be given to the Palace.

The moderates suggest that instead of confrontational politics, the Nepali Congress should frame its political line in keeping with the late B.P. Koirala's policy of "national reconciliation." The King, according to the moderates, has an important role to play in the restructuring of the political system.

In the confused political atmosphere in the kingdom at present, the Nepali Congress will have a difficult task ahead. Without weakening its opposition to the Lokendra Bahadur government, the Nepali Congress will have to cooperate with the Palace in order in bring in an effective and more representive government in Nepal

Bhola Chatterjee, Calcutta

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Discovery of India

Americans are looking forward to the Festival of India

The Festival of India 1985-86, the largest cultural programme to ever tour the United States, will be the first one to present "India by Indians" according to Festival coordinator Niranjan Desai Desai who is also minister of culture at the Indian embassy in Washington, said the theme of the Festival is "continuity and change." He pointed out that the idea is to bring India to the United States "as it is." He said there is no propaganda; the message is India itself."

Interviewed in Austin, Texas, where he was attending a conference entitled "India 2000: The Next 15 Years," Desai said the Festival will "hopefully begin a process of reappraisal of India. It may change perceptions about it." "First of all," Desai explained, "we want to take the mystery out of India." He said he no longer wants to convey the exclusive image of being exotic, or being only the country of the Taj Mahal or the land of snake charmers and *fakirs*. "India is beyond that—India is much more than that." Desai also said his countrymen are trying to fight the image that "India is tired, poor, overcrowded..

By bringing certain Indian talents and skills to America, Desai said, "we will try to show that whatever we do now is rooted in old traditional skills like arts and crafts." Whatever traditions we have had, have been passed down from generation to generation and we have adapted to new changes, new ways, and yet (are) retaining some of the old traditions and this we will demonstrate."

One of the events of the Festival that Americans may find especially intriguing is the recreation of a *mela*, on the mall in Washington this summer. This will be part of the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of Folklore Some of the dance performances being planned, particularly those incorporating some of the lesser known Indian folk forms, will interest the Americans.

The American executive director of the Indo-US subcommission on education and culture, Ted Tanen, who is intimately involved in planning the Festival said that Americans will be very interested in the Indian science and technology exhibition. "Science and Technology: The Indian Tradition" will open in Chicago, Illinois, at the Museum of Science and Industry in June; will then move on to the California Museum of Science and Industry in Los Angeles, California; the Portland, Oregon, Museum of Science and Industry, the Pacific Centre in Seattle, Washington, and the Science Museum of Richmond in Virginia. The contributions India has made in the fields of mathematics, metallurgy, astronomy and medicine will also be highlighted by these exhibitions.

The Festival will inevitably have an impact on Indo-US cultural relations and Desai claims, will help to create a "better understanding about what India does and why India does it." He said he hopes it will lead to more exchanges of art, culture, science and technology, encourage more Americans to visit India, increase trade with the United States and remove some of the ignorance about India. "If we understand each other better, then we will have better relations."

On the subject of Indo-US cultural ties, Tanen said, the Indo-US subcommission suggested sometime ago that a multi-faceted festival might be an idea for further exploration. The idea for the Festival grew after President Reagan hosted a state visit by Indira Gandhi in 1982, and the two leaders decided to emphasise cultural exchanges between their countries. The Festival is being modelled after a smaller version held in London two years ago.

About 30 political, economic, and cultural seminars on India will be held throughout the United States before the Festival is completed next year. The seminar's opening lecture on "Living in A Revolution," will be presented by noted Indian sociologist Dr M. N. Srinivas in Austin on 7 February. Other highlights will include "The Sculpture of India: 3000 B.C.—1300 A.D." to be held at the National Gallery of Art in Washington and the Art Institute of Chicago: "India" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and "From Indian Earth: 4,000 years of Terracotta Art" at the Brooklyn Museum of New York. An exhibition, "Akbar's India: Mughal Art From the City of Victory," which will be opened at the Asia Society Gallery in New York



An antique medallion to be exhibited at the Festival of India in the United States of America

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is scheduled to visit the United States in June and will officially inaugurate the Festival.

Tanen said, "What we should be reaching for" is more exchange, more books and more programmes over the next 20 years. In particular, he is looking towards the exchange of dancers and music students in the future. There may also be future exchanges of computer technicians and hotel managers. He pointed out that "India has as much to teach us as we have to teach them."

Jacquelyn S. Porth, Austin (Texas)

Doctor After Our Hearts

There are 50,000 persons all over the world who owe their lives to one man: Dr Denton A. Cooley, the world famous heart-surgeon from the USA who has performed the largest number of heart operations in the world. Cooley was in India recently to participate in the four-day world conference on open heart surgery at Bombay. During his stay, he was conferred the prestigious Dhanvantari award for excellence in the field of medicine. Cooley became the second non-Indian after Dr Christiaan Barnard to receive the award which was constituted in 1971 and given to Dr Barnard in 1981.

The visit of Dr Cooley was useful as eminent Indian cardiologists discussed with him the advances made in the field of heart surgery. According to Dr Cooley, the greatest advance has already been made by scientists in his country when they devised the Jarvik-7: a machine which can sustain life without the human heart functioning. The only disappointment in the past



Dr Denton Cooley

was the failure of doctors to implant a baboon's heart in Baby Fae at the Loma Linda hospital in the United States.

Cooley's visit also helped to rekindle the old connections the doctor has with this country He has performed a number of open heart surgery operations on eminent Indians, the last on Satyajit Ray, renowned Indian filmmaker. Dr Cooley also promised cardiologists in India that he would train more Indians in open-heart surgery At present, there are ten Indian cardiologists who are working under him and training to be "Cooleys in the making."

Painted Tribute

A more moving tribute there could not have been. Art Heritage, Delhi, held a retrospective of Ram Kumar's paintings: over 70 tableaux in memory of Richard Bartholomew, the art-critic secretary of the Lalit Kala Akademi whose crew-cut figure loomed benevolently over the world of art until his tragic death in January this year following a cerebral stroke. The exhibition spans the works of Ram Kumar (60) from 1953 with figurative studies in loneliness and deprivation. Some of them are intimations of Picasso while others have the heavy black outlines of Fernand Leger (under whom Ram Kumar trained in Paris) There are his very personal landscape abstractions of 1984.. Richard Bartholomew's writings on Ram Kumar are placed below several of the canvases, in themselves prose poems. Ram Kumar, almost squirrel-like in his timidity, could easily have stepped out of the earlier paintings with his huge, soulful eyes and sharp face. Haunting are Ram Kumar's visions of Varanasi—and no one has said it better than him. Ram Kumar is, in fact, as good a writer of Hindi short stories as he is a painter. "Wandering along the *ghats*," he writes, "in a vast sea of humanity, I saw faces like masks bearing marks of suffering and pain, similar to black windows jutting out from dilapidated walls of worn-out old houses, places, temples, watching dead bodies lying in a line waiting for their turn at Manikarnika *ghat*, I almost felt the disappearing boundary line between life and death.. " Or "Varanasi has no colours, at least for me: only charred black and subdued white hold be tween them all the meanings and meaninglessness of life, and death "

Ram Kumar



Mission of Love

"At the risk of sounding like a hysterical movie star gushing, I have to say...he is the best thing that has happened to me," gushed she.

"It just happened. I met a beautiful person and I was determined she was going to be mine," asserted he.

The delirious ending of a Mills and Boon saga? This is real life and poetic injustice: the couple who tied the nuptial knot on 2 February under the boughs of the giant peepul tree in the compound of Bombay's oldest temple, Laxminarayan, is no other than the Bombay socialite editor with the ascerbic, often unkind, pen, Shobha Kilachand, and shipping magnate, "decisive" Dilip De of the Ranadip Group of Companies. The target of Ms Kilachand's (editor of *Stardust*, *Society* and now *Celebrity*) poisonous darts were often people who mouthed such dialogues. The Kilachand-De saga itself is ready script for a romantic who-dun-it: there was suspense aplenty. The day of her wedding nuptials was the day for Ms Kilachand's divorce by mutual consent from Sudhir Kilachand, her previous husband and the father of her two children. Would the husband turn up in court? Suspense in the movies often pivots around whether the groom will make it to the court on time. Meanwhile, waiting impatiently for Ms Kilachand across many oceans was Frenchman Guy de Chevalier in the United States: the *raison d' etre* of the divorce.

Dilip De weds Shobha Kilachand: wooing with paintings



Perhaps the romantic, former French consul in Bombay had said it with roses. De however, wooed la Kilachand with a painting a month: Bikas Bhattacharya, Krishan Khanna, etc. She might have just run out of wall space and decided to move into De's bigger residence.

A Game of Chicanery

By Dr Ashok Mitra

Farooq Abdullah was removed from his position as chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir by the state Governor, Mr Jagmohan, at 5.30 pm on 2 July 1984. Till that particular hour, Farooq Abdullah was the constitutionally elected chief minister of the state; he was the state's home minister too. Throughout the previous night, that is, the night of 1-2 July, battalions of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police (CRP) were being freshly deployed in and around Srinagar. In addition, two battalions of the Madhya Pradesh Special Armed Force, specially trained in anti-dacoity operations, were flown from Bhopal to Srinagar before daybreak. Dr Farooq Abdullah, who was the chief minister and home minister of the state till the evening of 2 July, was however not kept informed about this induction of outside forces in the state; these movements of the police and paramilitary elements took place without his knowledge and without his approval.

This was in clear breach of constitutional procedures; what took place was unconstitutional and, therefore, illegal. I was a member of the team which the opposition parties sent to Srinagar on 5 July to express our solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir against the outrage perpetrated on them by the union government in dismissing, through the Governor, the National Conference government of Dr Farooq Abdullah and installing instead a government of usurpers and defectors. The delegation met Mr Jagmohan, the Governor, in the afternoon of 6 July. I drew his attention towards this deployment of outside forces during 1-2 July without the approval and knowledge of the state chief minister, and enquired whether this action did not represent a grave departure from constitutional practices. The Governor's response was breathtaking in its candour. He did not deny that such movements of para-military and other forces had taken place without the knowledge and concurrence of the state chief minister; nonetheless, as Governor of a sensitive border state, he was in the know of things which he could not discuss or divulge. Such knowledge impelled him to take certain decisions which might not be in conformity with "constitutional niceties," but he could not bother about such "niceties."

This was an extraordinary statement on the part of a Governor who had been sworn in to maintain the dignity of the Constitution. But this was part of all that happened in Jammu and Kashmir during the several months preceding and following the atrocious dismissal of Farooq Abdullah's ministers. For whatever reason, perhaps because of the advice rendered by her immediate political entourage which included her offspring, or perhaps because of sheer pique at the drubbing she received at the hands of the National Conference in the June 1983 state Assembly election, Indira Gandhi had made up her mind to get rid of Farooq Abdullah. The ploys adopted, in close succession to one another and sometimes simultaneously, were crude as well as obvious. Immediately following the installation of the National Conference government, the Congress(I) raised a hue and cry over the state of law and order in Jammu and Kashmir. This was a ploy used in West Bengal for the past several years by Indira Gandhi to discredit the Left Front government in West Bengal. The cheekiness of the accusation apart—certainly compared to such eminently Congress(I)-ruled states as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana or, for that matter Delhi—none of the non-Congress(I) states could or can hold a candle when the issue of the prevalence of lawlessness is concerned. There is nothing surprising in the kind of pressure Farooq Abdullah was subjected to. Any political party, which tries to develop a base in any part of the country against the authoritarianism of the party Indira Gandhi built, would be at the receiving end of such pressure. B.K. Nehru, the incumbent Governor, decided to treat with contempt the plea of a breakdown of law and order. For the Congress*wallahs*, the next device was to raise the bogey of Pakistani infiltration and the supposed anti-national sentiments harboured by Farooq Abdullah. This was again a rerun of old, faded stories. In the kind of situation Kashmir is in, and given her history spanning over the past 37 years, it is inevitable that elements would exist who would nurture pro-Pakistani dreams. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Mohammad Sadiq and Syed Mir Qaseem had been successively installed as Congress chief ministers following the deposition of Sheikh Abdullah; none of them could con-

My Dismissal By Farooq Abdullah, as told to Sati Sahni. Vikas Publishing House, 1985. Rs 50.



Sondeep Shankar

Dr Farooq Abdullah: ousted by political foes

tain the spreading influence of the so-called pro-Plebiscite groups; they were there, and depending on the season, were either dormant or strident. Even after the re-installation of Sheikh Abdullah in 1975, these elements merely went underground and continued to function under various garbs. Everyone, including the rulers in Delhi, have been aware of this pervasive problem in Kashmir. This was, however, never an inter-party political issue: occasionally, after hours, even the Congress(I) had canvassed for the support of such pro-Pakistani elements, as, for instance, on the eve of the Assembly elections in 1983. There was a general assumption that once the state is allowed a reasonably stable spell of free and unhindered democratic experimentation, the pro-Pakistani groups would lose their relevance. Unfortunately, in the process of the odious game Indira Gandhi and her offspring decided to play following their electoral rebuff in 1983, these very elements have now received indirect encouragement; they have now become respectable, and their capability for mischief-creation has increased enormously. Give the dog a bad name, give the dog a Pakistani name, seems to be the crude, naive slogan the Congress Party chose exclusively to bank upon in Kashmir, and the slogan itself has threatened to emerge as the message.

Or, perhaps, all this is mere facade. Perhaps the root of the problem in Kashmir is more complex. India is their fiefdom and Kashmir is their home base: Indira Gandhi and her family had taken both statements as axioms. Any sign or more, which would disturb the foundation of this axiomatic notion, would have a disequilibrating effect on their minds. Indira Gandhi hated the guts of the opposition chief ministers and the opposition parties. Farooq Abdullah committed an unpardonable sin when, contrary to the role played by his departed father, he decided to join actively in the mainstream of national politics and started building bridges of understanding with the national opposition parties. His folly was to join the conclave of opposition parties and to follow it up by inviting the conclave to meet in Srinagar in October 1983. When Begum Abdullah in a final effort to repair the torn fabric of understanding between the Nehru-Gandhis and the Abdullahs, took Farooq for an audience with Madam Prime Minister in early 1984, Indira Gandhi remained altogether unmoved: her obsessive complaint to Begum Abdullah was that since Farooq had taken the wrong decision to team up with the opposition, he would receive no quarter fromher; nobody from Kashmir, howsoever eminent or supposedly indispensable, should be in a position to commit *lese majeste* and yet hope for the queen's pardon.

The rest of what followed falls into a pattern. If B.K. Nehru would not play the game, get rid of him; snub and harass Farooq on the flimsiest of pretext; make it clear to Farooq that he might be the state's chief minister, but he would not be allowed to receive the nation's Prime Minister even when she visited Kashmir on official mission; build up little incidents into big ones; allege that Farooq Abdullah is hand-in-glove with Bhindranwale, allege that the incident on the cricket ground, when the West Indies played in Srinagar, were the joint efforts of Farooq Abdullah's men and Pakistani conspirators.

This is a murky story, a dirty story, a story which puts to shame this nation's democratic pretensions. The role played by Jagmohan, the Governor, who was installed in place of B.K. Nehru, makes the story only murkier; his insinuation that, as Governor, he knew more things about the nefarious doings of Farooq Abdullah was beneath contempt the day it was made, and remains so till today: it belongs to the same genre as the kind of ridiculous stuff D.D. Thakur has purveyed in his "White Paper." Against this background, the present Prime Minister's tall claims built around the passage of the Constitutional Amendment Act prohibiting political defections not only sounds hollow, but also reeks of hypocrisy. Rajiv Gandhi and his cohorts induced legislators to defect in Kashmir barely nine months ago; political morality was ruthlessly pushed aside; the world was told that whatever the Congress Party does is right and nothing else is right. And the Kashmir business was sought to be re-enacted, act by act and blow by blow, the very next month in Andhra Pradesh.

In this slim volume, Farooq Abdullah analyses the entire story with objectivity and dispassion. Here is a man who has matured a great deal in these two years. He has chosen to throw his lot with Indian nationalism, with the movement to sustain democracy in this nation, currently under all-out attack by the remnants of what was once the great Congress Party. It is a challenge which he has assumed for himself and, by assuming the challenge, he has done the Indian national ethos proud. This book deserves to be read; it would help readers to separate the patriotic wheat from the pretending chaff.

STUDENTS AND FREEDOM MOVEMENT

NEW DELHI: The Chief Executive Councillor, Jag Parvesh Chandra has announced that Delhi Administration has instituted prizes worth Rs 4.50 lakhs for the best three manuscripts for a book on "History of the Freedom Movement" (1857 to 1947) for students of secondary and senior secondary schools Details of the prizes are listed below

1ST PRIZE -
RS. 1,50,000 (One for English and one for Hindi)
2ND PRIZE -
Rs. 50,000 (One for English and one for Hindi)
3RD PRIZE -
Rs. 25,000 (One for English and one for Hindi)

The prizes have been declared State Awards by the Finance Ministry As such they have assumed greater prestige besides rendering the award money exempt from income tax.

The basic purpose of writing such a book is to keep the younger generation of our people fully informed about the freedom movement. Accounts of the heroic role of freedom fighters in the various mass movements will instil a sense of love of country among the young citizens. This will promote secular outlook and strengthen national integration, which is the very condition of our national survival.

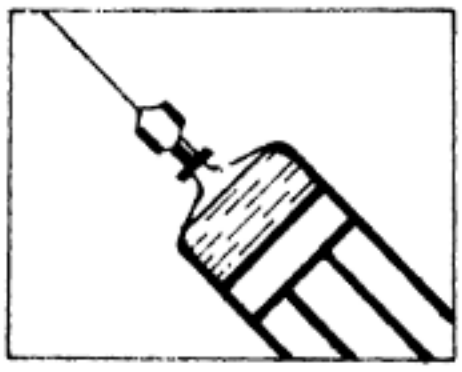
Manuscripts will be accepted either in English or Hindi and may contain about 40,000 words Authors should send three copies of their manuscripts typed in double space under registered acknowledgement due cover by 31st December, 1985, to Secretary to the Chief Executive Councillor, Delhi Administration, Old Secretariat, Delhi-110054

A panel of eminent writers and reputed historians will screen the manuscripts.

Delhi Administration will hold the copyright of the first-prize-winning manuscripts and the right to translate, print, publish and sell the book in any Indian language besides English and Hindi and incorporate such changes as it deems fit. The second and third prize winners and other authors may get their manuscripts printed by any private publisher.

For further clarifications please write to the Chief Executive Councillor, Delhi Administration, Old Secretariat, Delhi-110054.

New Light on Blood Tests



Normally, patients who have to undergo blood tests are generally asked not to eat any food before the blood sample is extracted: food can affect blood readings, they are told. But Prof. Claus-Dieter Bloedner of Bamberg, Coburg and Lichtenfels labour medicine centres in West Germany states that most blood ratings, such as the enzyme count and the uric acid and cholesterin level, remain largely constant after meals. Tests of over 1,000 patients showed that only the triglyceride, or neutral fat, account for the substantial increase after food intake (and by up to 50 per cent after alcohol consumption). In combination with overweight, lack of exercise and stress, a high triglyceride count often leads to blood vessel complaints and thus needs treatment. The trouble with taking blood samples from patients with empty stomachs is that ratings which may be considered normal may later in the day increase to critical levels.

Checking Wear and Tear



Nowadays people with plastics and metal hip joints live normal lives; they carry out their regular chores and even play games without the aid of crutches and sticks. But before these could be invented, each day passed was one of agony; they were often in great pain and unable to walk. Artificial joints, however can wear off, after a few years, especially if the patient is young and energetic.

The hip-joint is a ball-and-socket arrangement. The head of the thigh bone is a knob and this rotates inside a cup on the pelvis. Normally, the ball is made from a titanium alloy and the cup from an especially hard form of polyethylene. Even these wear out too: fine particles of metal rub off and get embedded in the polyethylene, making the joint movement rough and increasing the rate of wear. An alternative has now been found. It was recently announced that a medical team in England had developed a very hard form of aluminium oxide. It can be polished very smooth Furthermore, the surface oxygen atoms attract hydrogen from fluids and form a molecular layer of water, thus producing a lubricant.

Research at the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's research establishment at Harwell has shown that titanium alloy can be given a very hard surface which can greatly reduce wear. It is achieved by ion implantation, the ions being nitrogen. A special wear testing machine was devised to know the behaviour of titanium thus treated on polyethylene influenced by bovine serum, to simulate human body fluids. The wear was measured by using thin layer radioactivation of the titanium, and radioactivity in the wear debris indicated how much wear had taken place. The tests showed that the nitrided titanium alloy should last for around 30 years without pronounced wear.

Mothers, Beware of Alcohol



Mothers are advised to abstain from alcohol: there is every chance that their children will be born deformed if they do not do so. For instance, at least 2000 babies in West Germany are born deformed every year, on account of alcohol embryopathy, or alcohol damage in the womb. The statistics speak for themselves: two babies out of ten are born with defects; one in three has cardiac defects. Fifty per cent have abnormities in the outward appearance of the genitals, and one in ten has deformities in the urinary tract and bladder. Such children are noticeably small and underweight at birth. As they grow older their heads are seen to be much smaller than even their small bodies might lead one to expect.

There are several factors involved: the high blood count of acetaldehyde, the main toxic by-product of alcohol; the zinc folic acid count; and the b-group vitamin deficiency of pregnant alcoholics that causes anaemia. It is yet to be shown whether the embryo is affected if the father is a chronic alcoholic.

Where Are Columbus' Remains?



The whereabouts of the remains of Christopher Columbus, the explorer, remain a mystery. There are seven years to go before the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the Americas, but it still is to be ascertained whether the remains are in Spain, Italy, Cuba or the Dominican Republic. Jonathon Ericson, a professor of social ecology at the university of California at Irvine, hopes to solve the conundrum this summer using atomic tracing of bones and teeth believed to be those of Columbus.

Columbus died in 1506 in Valladolid, Spain, and was buried there. The body was removed a few years later, either to Triana, Spain or to Seville. In 1541 or 1542, the remains were shipped to what is now the Dominican Republic, where Columbus landed on his first voyage. During excavations at the cathedral of Santo Domingo in 1795, human bones and ashes, presumed by some to be those of Columbus, were found next to the high altar. Early in the 19th century, Spanish authorities shipped the remains to Havana. Prof. Ericson believes someone else's bones were removed from Santo Domingo to Havana. In 1877, he said, a small lead casket was found in the cathedral of Santo Domingo, marked with the initials CCA, possibly for "Christopher Columbus, Admiral" in Spanish.

The test will use strontium isotope characterisation. Strontium enters food in small but lasting amounts. Its isotopes vary according to where the element was at the time it entered the food. Ericson will go to Genoa to learn the composition of strontium where Columbus was born and grew up. He will then test the remains in Santo Domingo. If the isotopes are the same, he said, the proof will have been established.

Illustrations: Prabir Sen

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debashis Deb

NEW DELHI: Two employees of the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), who opened a water tap to quench their thirst, found to their horror a creepy little water snake making its way to their glass. The four-inch snake, brownish in colour, apparently made its way, from the overhead tank through the water pipe to the SCI premises located on the first floor of the Chandralok building. Mr Vinod Krishna, a chartering executive, who discovered the snake by accident, said officials of the New Delhi Municipal Corporation were summoned to the spot. The snake is being preserved in a water bottle—*Deccan Herald* (U. Sudhundra, Bangalore)

VINUKONDA: The people of Railway Donakonda area are scared by the experiences of a recent incident, where a well dressed man, claiming himself to be a reporter of a Telugu daily, made away with some 'gifts' from a politician of the village. The impostor gained the confidence of the politician, by saying that he had come to make a survey of the political situation in the area The publicity-minded politician, in his over-enthusiasm, provided him with all the comforts he needed. He was given a tape recorder to amuse himself and clothes worth Rs 500 too. Later that night, the 'reporter' found his way out under the cover of darkness with the 'gifts'—*Indian Express* (C. Vijay Kumar, Hyderabad)

NAVAPUR (MAHARASHTRA): A tribal in the Satpura ranges of north Maharashtra often has to "kidnap" his bride and then pay a "fine," before they are declared married. The tribal kidnaps the girl of his choice and takes her to his house, where the bride's parents stage a mock fight before negotiating with the groom's parents regarding the amount he has to pay his father-in-law as a fine for breaking tribal laws. They are then declared married. Most of these *zagada* marriages take place during the Bhangora festival, equivalent to the Holi festival, when the tribals drink and dance before selecting their brides and kidnapping them—*The Times* (K. V. Nerlikar, Ambikanagar)

KUNDAPURA: Necessity is the mother of invention. Election campaigning has proved costly to many contestants. But elections do bring new ideas and novel methods of campaigning. Mr Mani Gopal, a fisherman, is contesting as a Janata Party candidate from the Byndoor constituency, which, surrounded by rivers, is easily accessible by boat. Not surprisingly, he chose to meet his voters in his "Matsya Vahini," the new name given to his boat. Mr Gopal has even fitted a loudspeaker to his boat and covers his constituency by sailing in his canoe—*Deccan Herald* (Girish G. Acharya, Bangalore)

BANGALORE: The largest ever ballot paper with names on both sides has been devised by the Election Commission to accommodate the 301 candidates from the Belgaum constituency. The chief electoral officer, T. P. Issar, who showed a sample ballot paper to reporters here, pointed out that this was the first time that a ballot paper was being printed with names on both sides. The size of the ballot paper is 24 by 30 inches with the obverse containing 160 names and the reverse having 141 names and symbols—*Indian Express* (P. Suryanarayana Murthy, Gudivada)

TIRUPATI: A candidate for the Tirupati seat in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections has been making full use of the two cinema theatres he owns here in his campaign which is specially directed at women voters. For the past week, he has been running free shows for women and children. With the news spreading like wildfire, large crowds throng the theatres every day and there is keen competition especially to get seats in the higher classes—*The Times of India* (Mahboob Ahmad, Aligarh)

TIRUPATI: Seven Telugu novels, written by seven different writers, were found in the Srivari *hundi* at Venkateswara temple, Tirumala hills on 25 February. The publishers seem to have offered the first copies of the novels to the Lord—*Indian Express* (K. Prabhakar Raju, Samalkot)

WITHOUT COMMENT

By the grace of God, I shall live on, and fight on. I'm better placed than the opposition. I shall prove that I'm the cleanest politician to take on 'Mr Clean'—A.R. Antulay in *India Today*

A bullock cart will run smoothly if a pair of bullocks are yoked to it. What'll happen if the bullock is yoked to a camel or a donkey?—Rajiv Gandhi, asking the people to vote for the Congress(I), in *The Hindu*

Rajiv Gandhi is a congenital liar—George Fernandes in *The Sunday Observer*

We did not call for the elections but Hegde like Sita wanted to walk on the fire so what could we do—Srikant Verma, after the Assembly results were announced

The voters of Karnataka were for a Rajiv Gandhi rather than a Chandra Shekhar in Delhi; but in their own state they knew exactly who to choose between Ramakrishna Hegde and Veerappa Moily—Editorial comment on Hegde's victory in *The Telegraph*



If I say I miss her (Mrs Gandhi) it will reflect badly on Rajiv Gandhi's leadership. If I say I don't miss her, it would mean there was nothing I had in common with Mrs Gandhi. Our relationship was too deep for me to spell out in a few sentences—P. V. Narasimha Rao in *Society*

All ad agencies are dominated by English-speaking people who know nothing about the rest of India—S.P. Singh, resident-editor of *The Navbharat Times*, in *The Sunday Observer*

I was always an '80s person. I was just ahead of my time—Tina Turner, winner of three Grammy awards, in *Newsweek*

Towering all Bumpers

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RS. 1 LAKH EACH

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BEGINNING 17 MARCH 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The week ahead is extremely lucky for those in love and intending to get married Your financial prospects look bright. Professionals and businessmen will find the going smooth. Pleasant surprises are in store for students. However, the domestic front is likely to bother you: do not hesitate to shoulder responsibilities. Keep a vigilant eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 17, 19 and 21
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



LEO (15 August—14 September) Be wary of your close friends and relatives: someone is working to deceive you At office, you are likely to be misunderstood by your colleagues. The domestic front will not remain peaceful Professionals and businessmen are likely to face opposition from their competitors Your health will add to your worries this week
Good dates: 17, 19 and 21
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South-east



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a favourable period for students do not fritter away the opportunities that come your way. Businessmen will also find the time equally good this is the right phase to materialise expansion plans. Professionals will get the opportunity they were looking for However things are not all that bright on the home front: avoid unnecessary arguments.
Good dates: 17, 21 and 22
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) The stars shine brightly on the financial front and some of you are likely to gain money through an unexpected source. This is also a favourable week for courtship and matrimonial alliances A promotion cannot be ruled out for those in government service Businessmen should not hesitate to take risks. Those above 45 should be careful about their health and diet
Good dates: 18, 19 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) A journey which you were looking forward to is in the offing You will be able to solve most of your domestic problems this week Businessmen are likely to bag lucrative contracts while a promotion cannot be ruled out for professionals There is good news for those unemployed a job is in the offing. This is also a favourable time for courtship and marriage negotiations.
Good dates: 19, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is not a good period for businessmen check all documents before finalising deals Professionals are likely to be criticised by their employers Your health will add to your worries this week However, this in an extremely good phase for lovers you can materialise marriage plans. A letter towards the end of the week will bring pleasant surprise.
Good dates: 18, 19 and 20
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Businessmen and professionals should be wary of deception Social engagements will keep you busy throughout the week but do not neglect your work. You are likely to fall sick during this week consult a doctor at the slightest indication of illness. However, this is a favourable period to solve legal problems. This is also a good week for those in love
Good dates: 19, 20 and 23
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Success in all your ventures is a certainty for most of you Students will come out with flying colours in examinations Jobs are in the offing for those unemployed Lawyers and politicians will also find this phase favourable This is the opportune time for bachelors to get married A letter will bring good tidings. Your health will also improve markedly
Good dates: 19, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: North-east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Lovers are advised to avoid unnecessary tiffs misunderstandings may lead to estrangement Businessmen are advised not to undertake risky ventures. However, this is a favourable period for those employed a transfer to a place of your liking is in the offing Students will get opportunities to study abroad Your health will also improve during this phase
Good dates: 18, 21 and 22
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is a week of mixed fortunes Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress Creative artists will find this period favourable. If you intend to get married, this is the opportune time to do so However, your financial prospects look bleak The domestic front will also bother you. Do not neglect your health.
Good dates: 18, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: West



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Financially, this is not a bright phase: do not take unnecessary risks and avoid extravagance You may suddenly fall sick incurring a lot of expenditure The week is also disheartening for lovers an affair may come to an end. Professionals should deal with their superiors diplomatically A letter will bring good news
Good dates: 18, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Stellar influences make this a bleak period for all of you. Businessmen are advised to put off all major deals for some time. On the professional front you may face opposition from your colleagues: do not lose your temper and deal with them diplomatically Lovers are advised to postpone marriage plans Take care of your health and do not overstrain yourself
Good dates: 17, 18 and 19
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: East

For those born on the 18th, 19th or 20th of any month:

Most of you are ambitious: your desire to excel in life on all fronts makes you adventurous by nature. You do not hesitate to take decisions at crucial moments You have a commanding personality and friends and relatives look upon you for advice. Most of you are also gifted with robust health. Women born during this period are extremely fair and they make good housewives.

Give us an idea for a great cause and win Rs. 1 lac in prizes.



India is potentially a colossus. The citizen have great faith in the future of the Country, but past experiences have left us quite disillusioned. Many have bright and original ideas to solve the problems but there seems no way to get these across.

The new government has suddenly infused great hopes, but there are yet no signs of great happenings. Unless quick decisions are taken and implemented, much will remain a pious hope only.

It is now the time for the conscientious, particularly the retired personnel, journalists, academicians and the experts to come forward and give a helping hand by sending us ideas/suggestions which can take the Country forward. We shall have these examined by a panel of experts and if found suitable, you would not only win a prize but have the satisfaction of its reaching the right quarters. A total amount of Rs one lac is offered in prizes with individual prizes of upto Rs. 5000/- depending upon the value of the idea/suggestion.

The ideas/suggestions may cover all major activities of the government like industry, commerce, agriculture, housing, rail and road transport, education, telephone, postal, tourism, banking, income-tax, sales-tax, law, labour, family planning, rural and urban unemployment, eradication of corruption, discipline and ethics, youth welfare, public sector undertakings, UPSC DDA, MCD, DTC Army, Navy Airforce, BSF, Police and others.

The ideas/suggestions will be selected mainly on the basis of their originality and innovativeness. These must be practical and capable of being implemented within a period of 3-6 months. These will be suitably edited, compiled and forwarded to the government.

The write-up may contain more than one idea/suggestion but must pertain to **one subject** only clearly specifying the problem and its precise solution. It should be as brief as possible and of not more than 400 words. Two copies, typed in double space along with your name and address are to be sent, so as to reach within 10 days of the issue of this advertisement, at the following address:-

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VARIETY

CHESS

The true merit of an extra pawn, however weak, isolated, distant or doubled, is the ability to lose it and maintain material equality

Nowhere will the principle be illustrated more eloquently than in the following game. White grabs a perfectly worthless pawn in the opening but uses its return as a springboard to activate his own pieces, finally proving the value of what once was his weakling by queening it

White: Knaak. Black Ftachnik Grunfeld Defence.

1 P–Q4 N–KB3 2 P–QB4 P–KN3
3 N–QB3 P–Q4 4 PxP NxP
5 P–K4 NxN 6 PxN B–N2
7 B–QB4 P–QB4 8 N–K2 O–O
9 O–O N–B3 10 B–K3 P–N3
11 PxP

Winning this pawn in the Grünfeld is generally an utter waste of time

11 . . . Q–B2 12 N–Q4 N–K4
13 N–N5 Q–N1 14 B–K2 P–QR3
15 N–R3 P–QN4 16 R–N1 B–N2
17 Q–B2 N–B3 18 KR–Q1 Q–K4

The time is now ripe for White's trump card

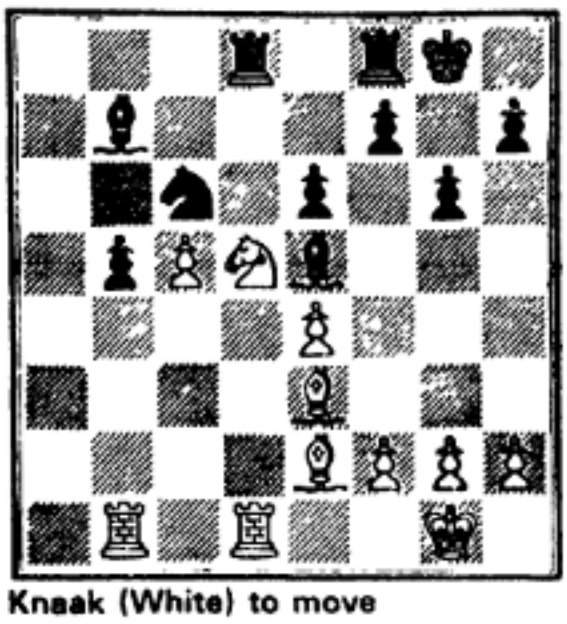
19 N–B4! QxBP 20 QxQ BxQ
21 N–N6

With material equality re-established, but White is now holding the initiative.

21 . . . QR–Q1 22 N–Q5 B–K4
23 P–QR4 P–K3 24 PxP PxP

DIAGRAM

Ftachnik (Black)



Knaak (White) to move

25 BxP!! PxN 26 PxP N–K2
27 P–Q6 N–Q4 28 B–N5

Forcing Black's hand, as 29 P–B3 30 B'–QB4 would be most unpleasant

28 . . . N–B6 29 BxR RxB
30 R–K1! NxR 31 RxB B–B1

The only defence to the threat of P-Q7 and R–K8, namely 32 P-Q7 BxP 33 R–Q5 R–N1! 34 BxB N–B6.

32 R–K3!

Renewing the threat of P-Q7 and blocking out the knight's escape

32 B–K3 33 R–Q3 R–N1

Or 33 B-B4 34 P-B6! BxR 35 P-B7 R-KB1 36 BxB

34 P–Q7 BxP 35 BxB N–B6
36 P–B3 R–N8+ 37 K–B2 R–B8
38 K–K3 K–B1 39 K–Q2 N–R7
40 P–B6 R–B5 41 R–N3 N–N5?

With 41 K-K2 Black may still fight on

42 RxN Resigns

Positional wipeout

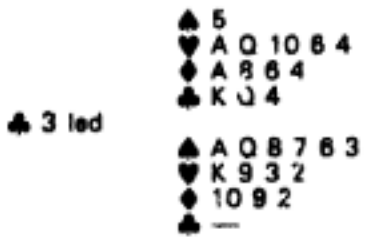
White Belyavsky Black Georgadze
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 P–Q4 P–Q4 2 P–QB4 P–K3
3 N–QB3 B–K2 4 N–B3 N–KB3
5 B–N5 O–O 6 P–K3 P–KR3
7 B–R4 P–QN3 8 B–K2 B–N2
9 BxN BxB 10 PxP PxP
11 O–O Q–K2 12 Q–N3 R–Q1
13 QR–Q1 P–B3 14 KR–K1 N–Q2
15 B–B1 N–B1 16 P–K4 PxP
17 NxP N–K3 18 B–B4 R–K1
19 N–K5 QR–Q1 20 P–B4 BxN
21 QPxB N–Q5 22 Q–N3 R–KB1
23 N–Q6 RxN 24 PxR QxP
25 P–B5 Q–B4 26 Q–B2 R–Q1
27 B–N3 B–R3 28 R–K4 B–K7
29 R(K4)xN Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Australian bidding like the continent, is always upside down, with the result that South somehow became the declarer in Six Hearts on this deal from an international trial:



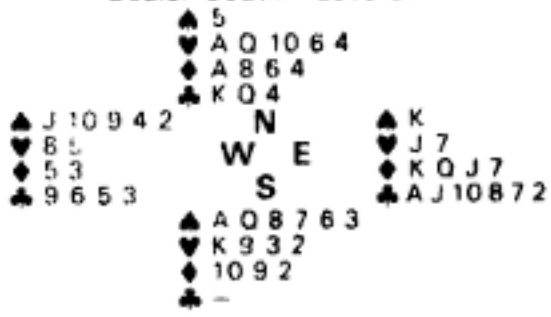
East had shown long clubs in the course of the bidding. Dummy's queen of clubs was covered by the ace. How would you set about the play?

The Australian magazine follows the estimable practice of presenting in advance the problems that arise in later pages

Looking at this one, it occurred to me that it might be a good idea to let the ace of clubs hold, discarding a diamond and retaining entries to the South hand Reading on, I found that Peter Gill, who won the trial in partnership with Ron Klinger, made this unusual play The full hand was —



Dealer South Love all



Having won the first trick with the ace of clubs, East returned the king of diamonds, won by dummy's ace When the king of spades appeared on the first round, the declarer ruffed a spade with the queen of hearts, then drew trumps with ace and king Another spade was ruffed, the diamond loser was thrown on the king of clubs, and with two trumps still left in hand the declarer was able to establish the spade winners

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. Which country was formed by the merger of the states of Serbia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia?
2. How is Karol Wojtyla better known as?
3. Oxygen is the commonest element found in the earth's crust. Which is the second commonest element?
4. What is the wooden support over which strings are stretched in violins, cellos and guitars called?
5. Name the Indian physicist awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930 for his research on the scattering of light rays?
6. What is a Jewish priest called?
7. With which sport do you associate the names of Mario Andretti and Niki Lauda?
8. Kestrel, merlin, hobby and peregrine are birds of prey belonging to which species?
9. Who invented the typewriter?
10. What is phasmophobia the fear of?

ANSWERS

1. Yugoslavia.
2. Pope John Paul II.
3. Silicon
4. The bridge.
5. Dr C.V. Raman.
6. The rabbi
7. Motor-racing
8. The falcon
9. Pellegrine Tarri of Italy in 1808.
10. Ghosts.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

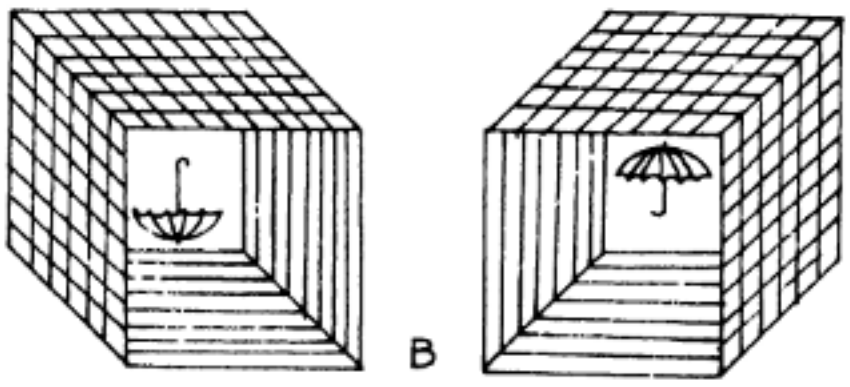
Word Play

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B	H	A	A	D	Y	I	E	E	A	A	L	A	M	A	M	E	E	A	E
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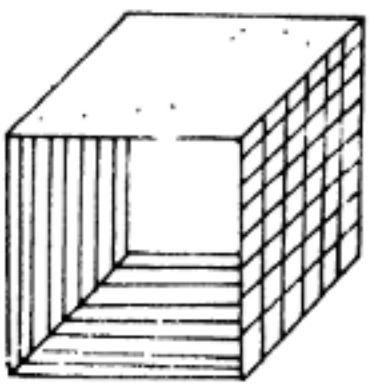
The letters in each column below the grid go into the boxes directly above them. Your job is to find which letter goes into which box. Fill in one and two letters words first. As you use a letter, cross it off. When you have used up all the letters, you will have a famous quotation.

Shape Sleuth

The first two positions A) and B) of this open box show which way up. Can you find which way up it is in the position C)?



A B



C

Figure it Out

Using various combinations of four 9s only make up numbers from 1 to 20. For example, (9+9)÷(9+9) =1 or (9×9)÷(9×9) = 1. There are more than one combinations for many numbers. Use of brackets square root sign and decimals is allowed.

Wit Sharpener



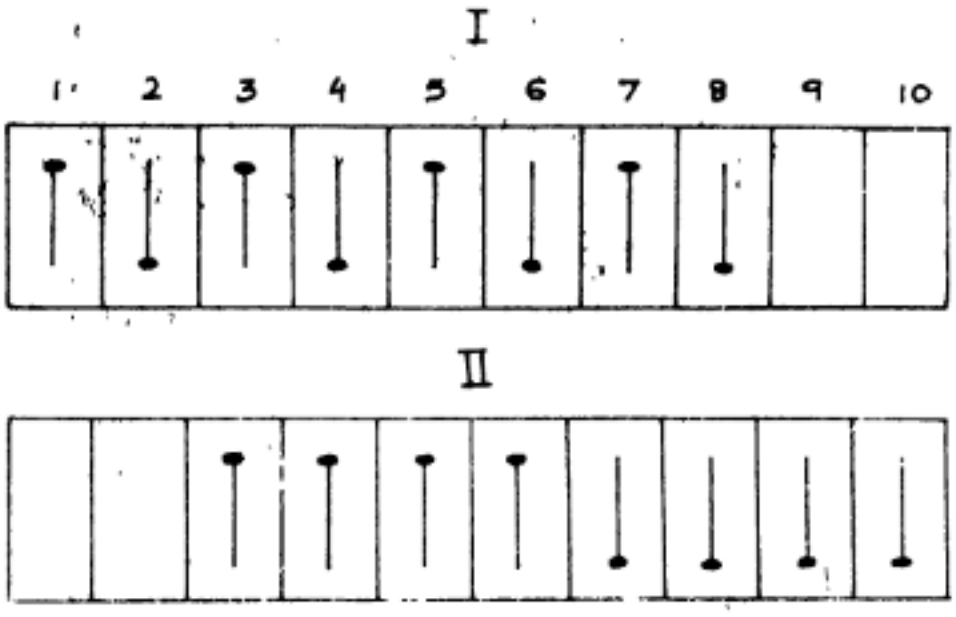
Joseph, Ruma, Devina went out for tea, and sat around a cosy table in a nice, little restaurant. Each of them ordered two items each. This is what they were served:
Joseph: Channa and fruitcake
Rumma: Melon and mango.
Devina: Cola and bread rolls.
Mahesh: Ice cream and sandwiches.

As it happened, everything they had ordered arrived, but not in the correct order. Not one of them was given what they had asked for, neither did any one person get both the items ordered by the other person. After exchanging of plates, etc., they finally settled down to eat what they had asked for. This is how they were sitting:

The one opposite Mahesh had fruitcake. The one on Devina's left had Channas and on Ruma's right had Cola. Joseph was between breadrolls on his right and ice cream on his left, and mango opposite him.

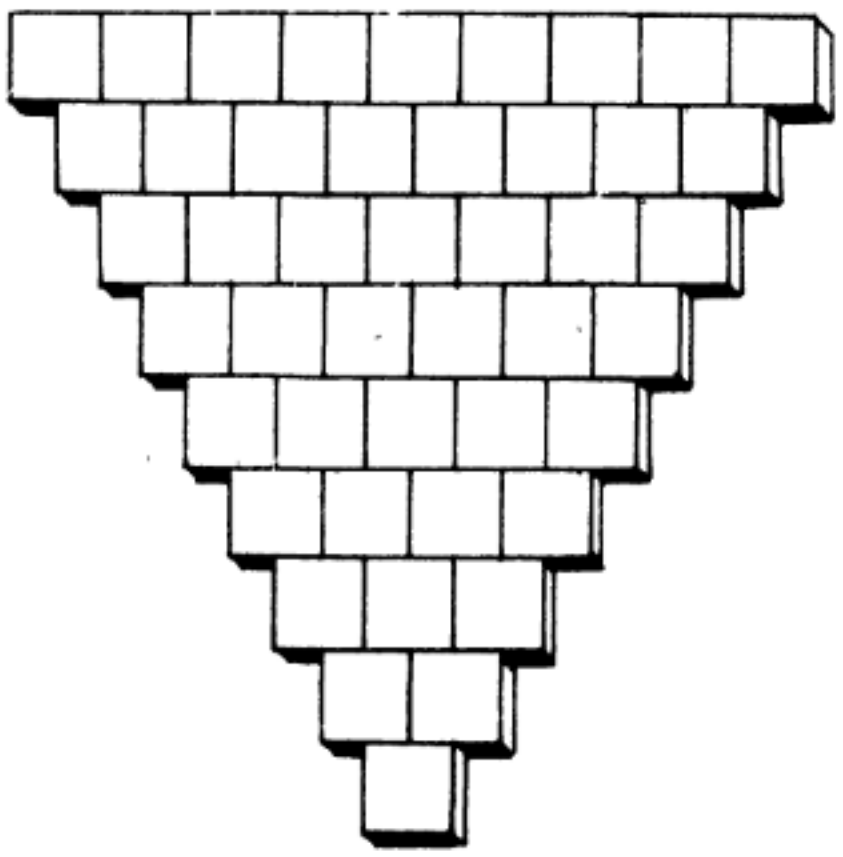
How were they seated and what had each one ordered?

Quick Think



Eight matchsticks are placed with their heads alternately up and down, as shown in illustration I. Moving two consecutive sticks at a time, what is the least number of moves you require to bring them to position II.

Blockbuster



In this inverted pyramid, the 9-letter word at the top is an anagram of SLIT GRANT. Remove one letter at a time, and do not re-arrange the letters. The remaining eight letters form a word. Continue in this manner till you reach the lowest box.

Quizbizz

A truffle (pronounced troofle) is a: i) vegetable ii) herb iii) fungus.

Missing Link

Can you complete this chain: 7783, 7777, 1111, 1106, 158, 154, —

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Cryptocross:

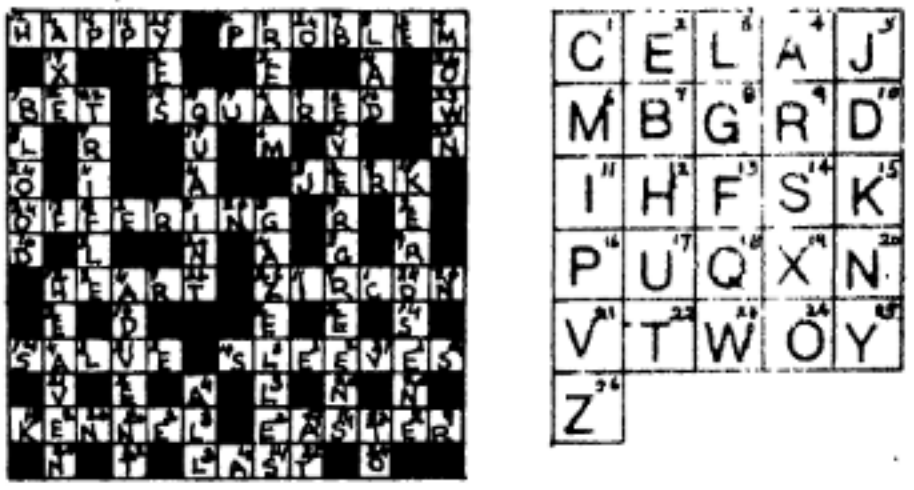
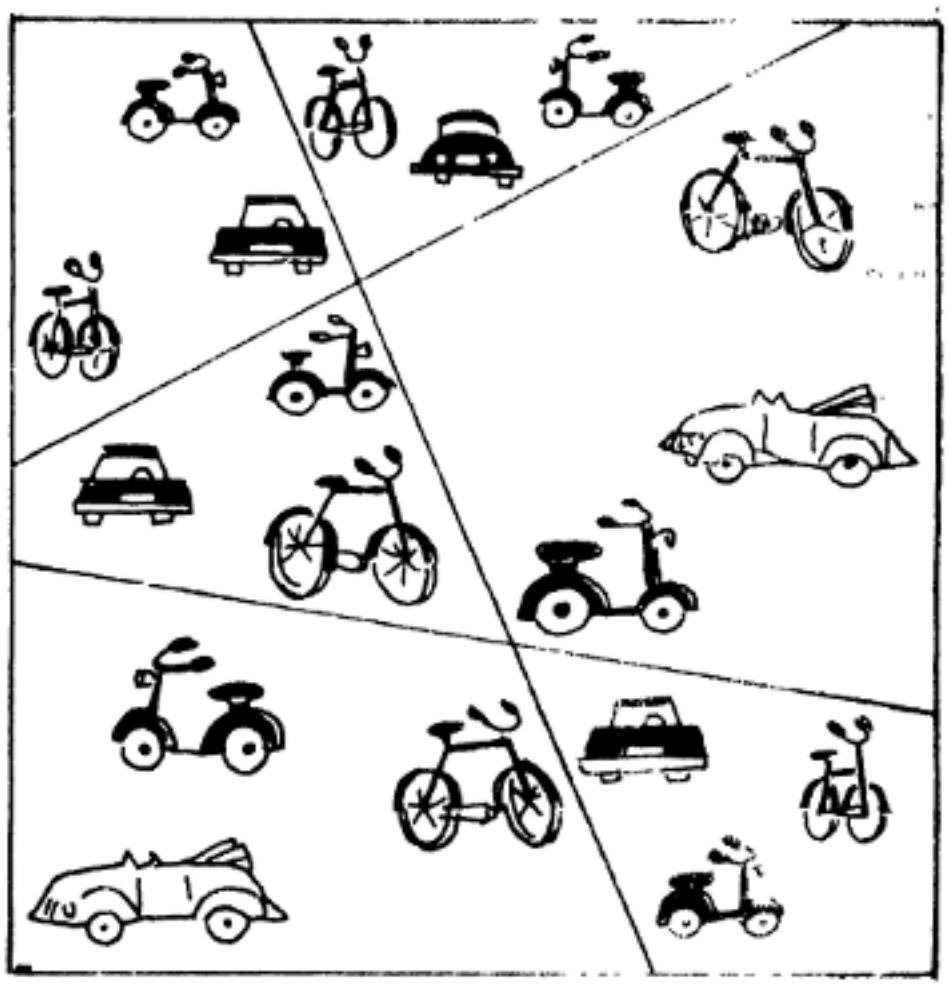
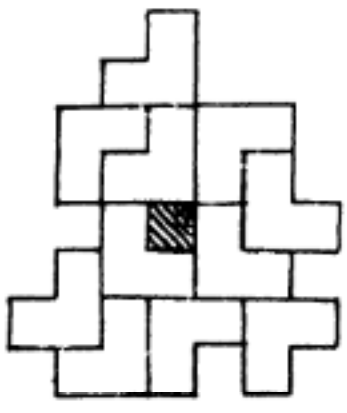


Figure it Out:



Shape Sleuth:



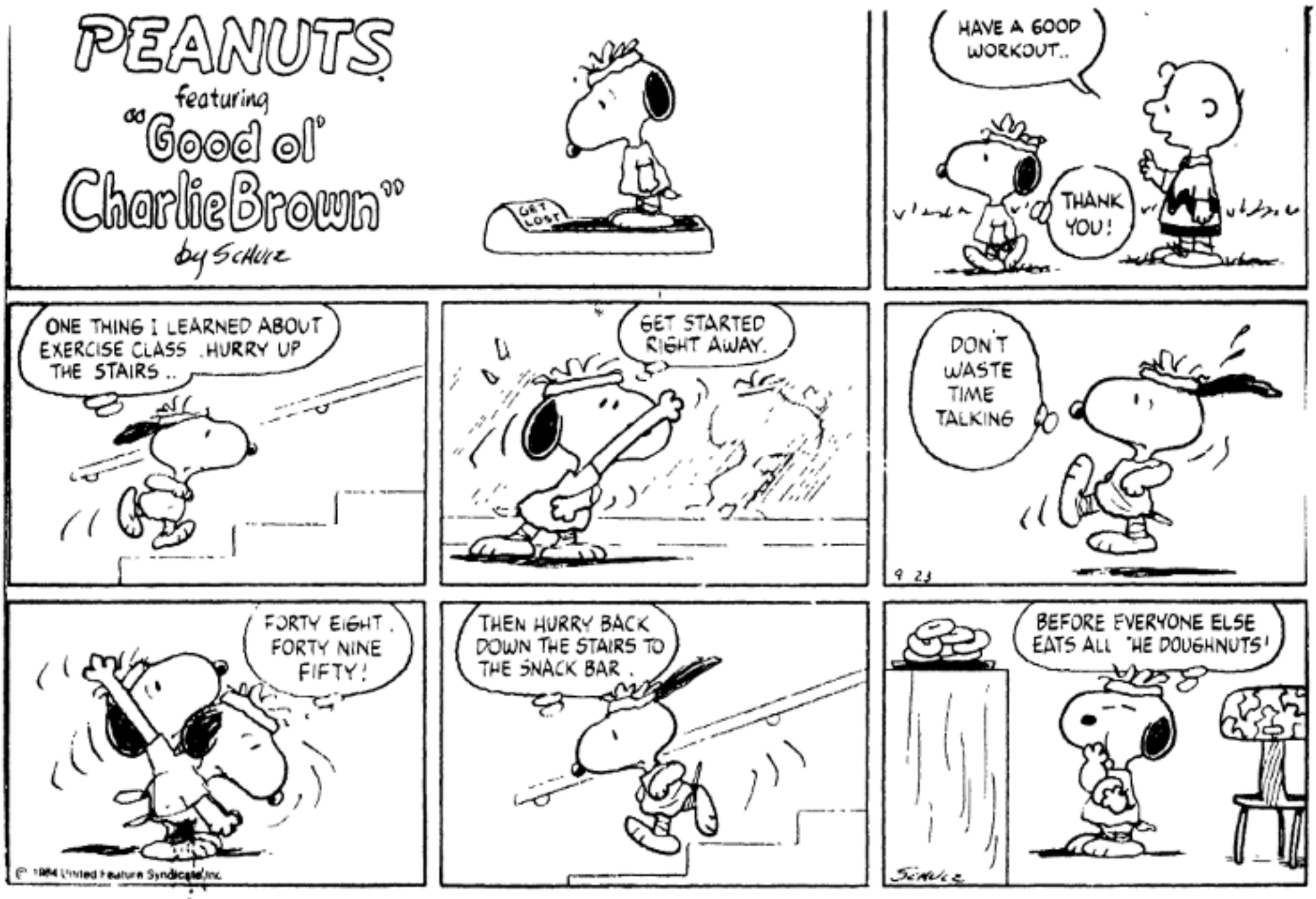
Blockbuster



Word Power: Boomerang, Anglican, Candelabra, Brassie, Siesta, Taboo
Blankagrams: Ran, Near, Snare, Reason, Treason

What's in a Word: a) Canton b) canopy c) canal d) cantata e) canasta f) canyon

Quick Think: If A is superimposed on B it will produce figure 1.



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VARIETY/KHAAS BAAT

What's wrong with *Ranjeeta?* Her career, which at one point of time seemed to be promising, has now almost come to an end. She has just two or three films on hand but these films have been in the making for years now. Realising that there is no other way out for her, Ranjeeta has given up hope and has started investing her money in a number of projects. And if the rumours in the tinsel city are correct, Ranjeeta is soon to become Mrs Akbar Khan.

It took *Sarika* two years to forget the semi-nude scene in Jalal Agha's *Nirvaan*. "Wherever I went people only talked of that scene. It did irreparable loss to my career," Sarika confided with a shudder thinking of those days. But Sarika is worried about the rumours that are being spread about her again. These concern two "hot bedroom scenes" she has done with Marc Zuber in a film called *Qatl*. "I don't know when this kind of talk will stop. I did both the scenes," said Sarika, offering a weak explanation, "because the story demanded them."



Umesh Vyas

Sarika (above) and Ranjeeta (below)



Durgaprasad

The *Javed Akhtar-Shabana Azmi* marriage which took place at 2.00 am in the morning not so long ago, has become a pet subject of gossip-mongers. Javed, incidentally, has not yet divorced his first wife. Shabana too has never spent more than two days with Javed at his home. This strange behaviour on her part has given rise to all kinds of speculation and many of the duo's well-wishers have already started saying that the marriage "will not last." Javed, however, is very reluctant to talk about his marriage. Says he: "It is a strictly personal matter and whatever happens to us or between the two of us is for us to worry about. We are mature adults and we know what we have done."

Shyam Benegal wanted to make another film with *Jennifer Kapoor* (she had acted in his *Junoon*), when she died so suddenly. Benegal, in fact, had been working on the script of the film when he learnt about the actress's death. Naturally, he started searching for a replacement. His efforts have been rewarded, for *Leela Moraes* (wife of Dom Moraes and a one-time Hindi film actress) has agreed to take the leading role. Leela was thrilled when she received the offer.

Another young girl trying to make it big in South Indian films is *Rani Sudha* nee *Archana* who has a diploma from the Adayar Film Institute, Madras. Her first Tamil film *Ningal Ketta Vai* was directed by *Balu Mahendra*. She has also acted in the Malayalam film, *Malmukhalile Daivam*, directed by *P.S. Menon*.

DELHI DIARY

Jagmohan's Ire



Sandeep Saran

Jagmohan

The Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Jagmohan, is annoyed with the government of Ghulam Mohammad Shah. Of late, the Governor has been expressing his annoyance in writing as well. He has asked for an explanation as to how the Gulshah (as G. M. Shah is known in the state) regime is considering the appointment of a person as a director of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank against whom four vigilance cases are pending. That is not all: the bureaucracy in the state too is up in arms. In the Lok Sabha elections, the chief minister and especially his deputy, D.D. Thakur, had pulled up many officers for "inefficiency" after the Farooq Abdullah faction of the National Conference swept all the three seats in the Kashmir valley. These officers are now openly defying the government. To top it all, the bad mark for the G. M. Shah regime has been that in the case against Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari in the Jammu court, the son of the deputy chief minister D. D. Thakur has been engaged as a defence lawyer. But is Jagmohan annoyed with G. M. Shah or is it an indication of the changing times? It is well-known that Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah have been moving fast towards a patchup and the National Conference (Farooq) in the Lok Sabha did not join the opposition in the walk-out on the deputy speaker issue. Is the Farooq-Rajiv detente the reason for G. M. Shah's worries?

Important Kaul



Sandeep Saran

Shiela Kaul

Vikram Kaul may soon be an important name in the capital. Son of Indira Gandhi's maternal aunt, former union minister Shiela Kaul, Vikram Kaul is an Air India employee posted in London. He is being recalled to Delhi and in all likelihood he may join the political secretariat of Rajiv Gandhi. His brother, Gautam Kaul, is the additional police commissioner charged with the Prime Minister's security. This would make the Shiela Kaul family very important. After she was dropped from the council of ministers, Shiela Kaul has been put in charge of the Congress centenary celebrations, a job which will put her in the limelight within a few months. Vikram Kaul had been active in the initial days of the estrangement between Menaka Gandhi and her mother-in-law and had tried to bring about a patchup

Forgotten Party?

What happened to the party called the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch (RSM)? Neither the RSM nor its leader, Menaka Gandhi, have been seen around in the Assembly elections. The defeat at Amethi certainly was stunning. But should politicians be numbed so easily? This was the natural corollary of the lack of ideology in the RSM's policies.

Bright Spark

The petroleum ministry is in a quandary. R. L. Kapoor, a divisional manager of the public sector Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC), has written to the government that he is in a position to supply Saudi Arabian crude oil at a price which is eleven per cent lower than the one now being paid by the canalising agent, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). The MMTC management is visibly embarrassed by this offer by one of its staff members; the IOC has been buying crude at the international price of 27 US dollars per barrel fixed by the OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries). Though on the face of it Kapoor's offer looks attractive, behind it lies a long story of eccentric behaviour by a public sector manager, who has caused the government a lot of embarrassment. Sometime last year, in a staff meeting, Kapoor complained to MMTC chairman Raghavan that he was not being given the right opportunity to boost the company's turnover. He claimed that within three months he could secure orders worth a thousand million dollars for MMTC, which is now a general trading house. Raghavan agreed. Initially Kapoor wanted the exclusive use of a staff car and a staff office to be sanctioned to him. This was done. Months passed by but no deals materialised. As time ran out for the three-month deadline, with the blessings of a staff member of the former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee's office, Kapoor offered the MMTC import of crude from Libya four dollars per barrel cheaper than the OPEC prices. A note was sought from him, in which he spelt OPEC as "Opaque," thereby exposing his knowledge of the petroleum market. Apparently, a lot of hearsay had been guiding him. The Libyan deal looked too complicated and the danger of annoying the OPEC over a small quantity of import was also considered and the proposal jettisoned. Again he came forward with an offer from Malaysia in which too rough weather was faced. He has now come forward with the Saudi offer, which is also a backdoor deal. What has surprised the petroleum ministry is that the offer has been made officially from the MMTC, without the MMTC chairman being aware of it. Interestingly, the proposal is accompanied by a suggestion about what could be done with the "empty barrels." The crude prices are determined on the basis of barrels, which is a traditional usage. Crude no longer comes in barrels, but in huge tankers. Kapoor, apart from his references to "Opaque," has still to learn what a "barrel" in crude imports means.

D. K. Hiranandani

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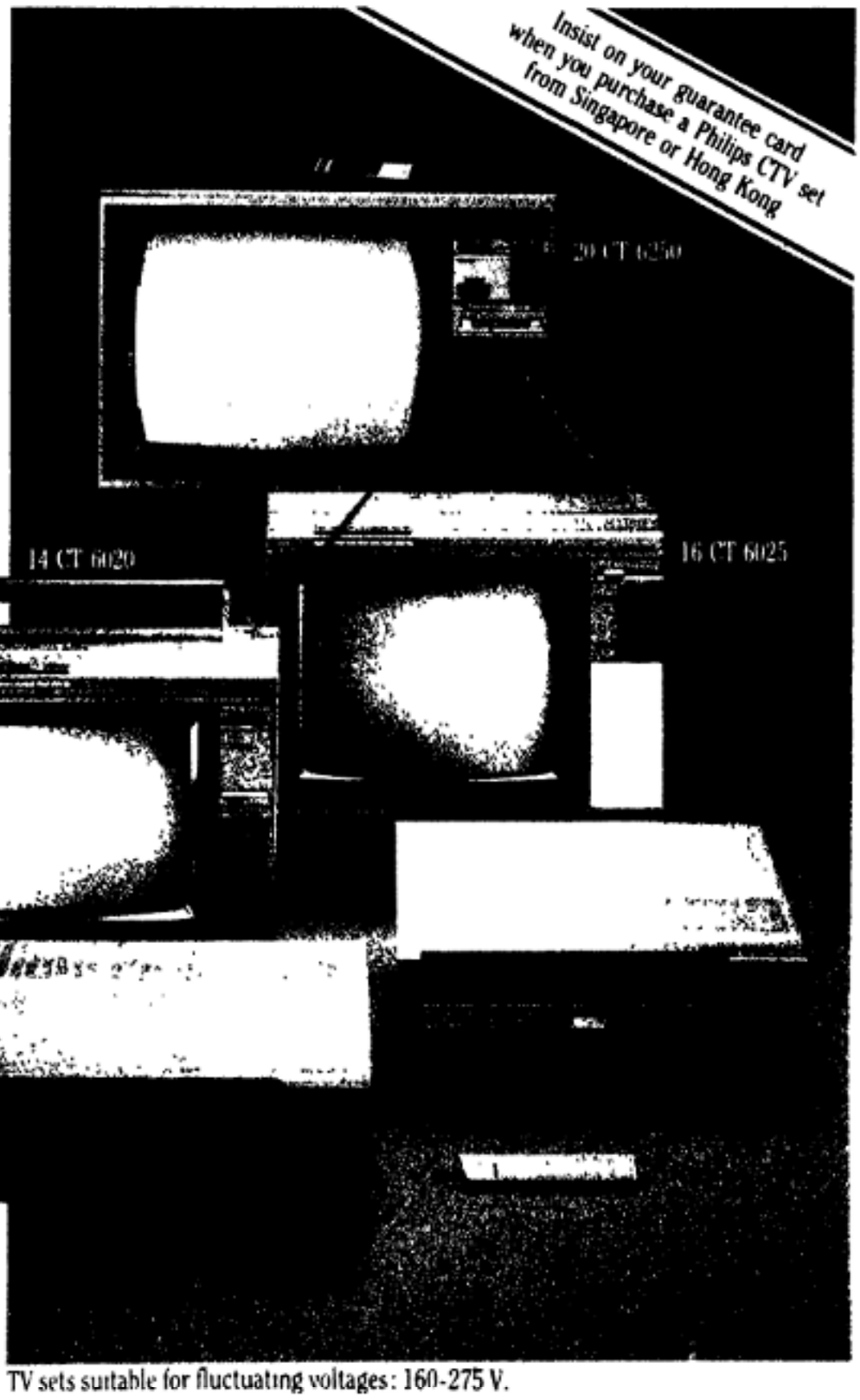
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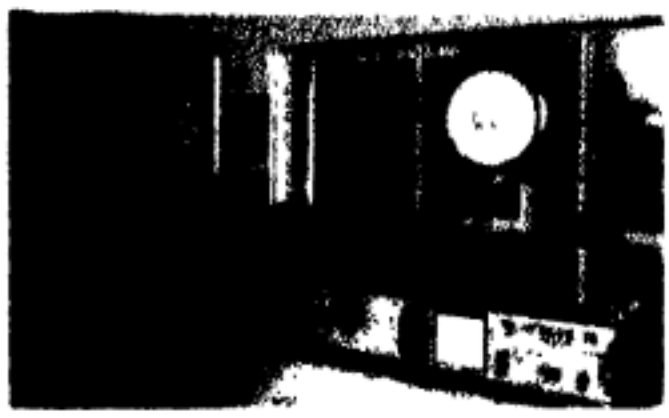
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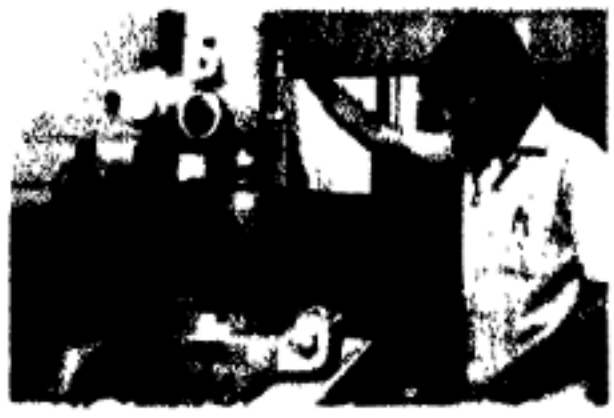
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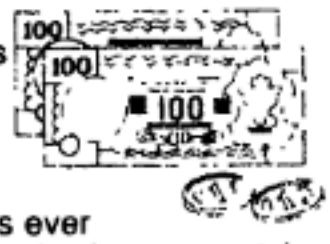
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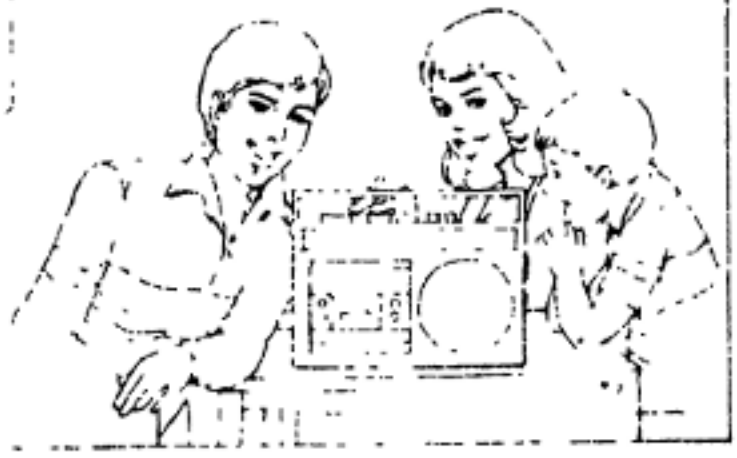


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The Company a Minister Keeps

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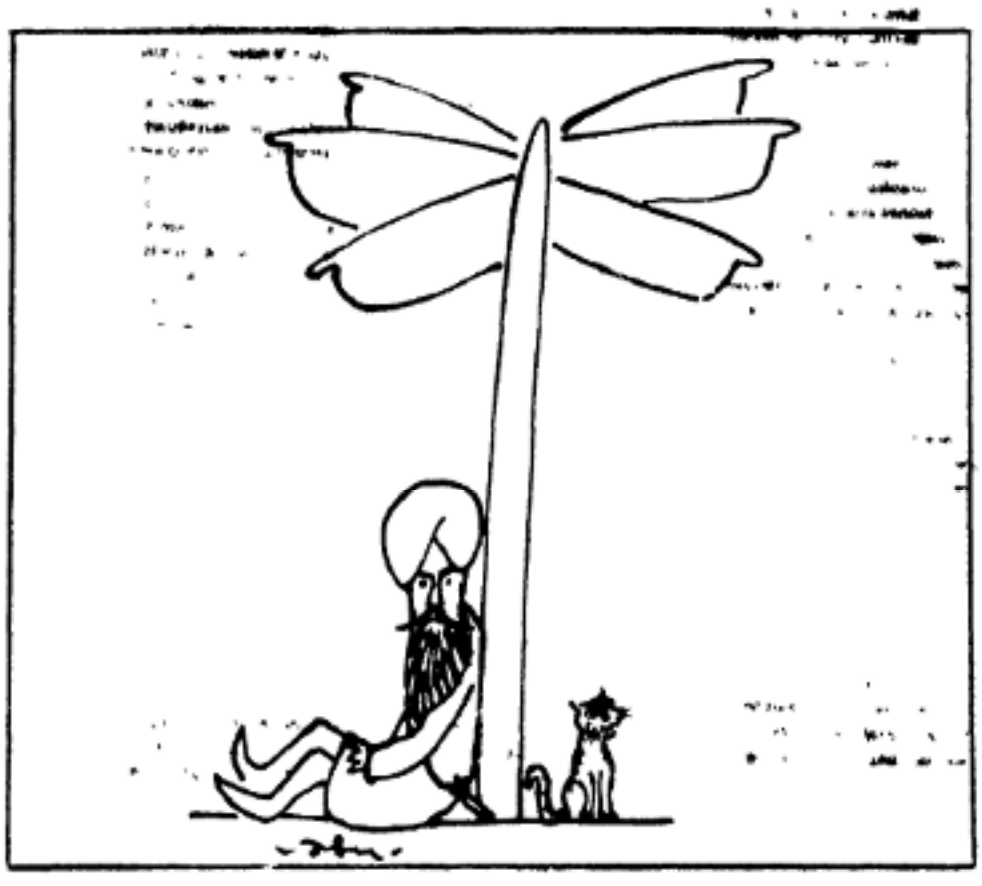
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1113

DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Calcutta: Once in a while, one does get the impression that the pen is mightier than the bureaucrat. Daud Haider was a familiar presence in our office. Being by stubborn inclination an unrepentant Philistine, I had very little idea about the kind of poetry he had written in Bengali. Though I knew he was a Bangladeshi poet, I did not find out why he was living in Calcutta. A free country like ours spoils the mind. We tend to take the right of a human being to breathe freely for granted, quite forgetting that there are large parts of the world—particularly the newly-independent world—where, on one pretext or the other, liberty is merely a reward for acquiescence. The law is not the law of justice, it is martial law, it is religious law, it is racist law and on and on and on. And on top of that comes the more insidious threat of power arbitrarily seized, arbitrarily exercised. It is an achievement (which the politically wise often scorn in their homage to foreign gods, and the cynics berate in their puny egoism) that India still lives under a Constitution and a rule of justice which is truly liberal and value-based.

But sometimes the strain shows, particularly when those in government puff their chests and clatter like tin gods. Daud Haider had been living peacefully enough in the house of his mentor Annada Sankar Ray when some bureaucrats decided to throw him back to the wolves who had denied him a place in his own country. The poet had angered the Ulema in Bangladesh by questioning the relevance of all gods, and now they wanted to throw him back there. Why? No rational reason. Pique, perhaps. Or may be Haider had not been sycophantic enough to some glorified clerk.

He got his eviction notice, though we have thousands of such refugees (and may we have the courage to always keep them). But India proved itself again. A number of eminent Calcuttans (including Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen) wrote to Jyoti Basu pleading that Haider be allowed to stay on. I too had signed the appeal, and followed it up with a story in *The Telegraph*. Mr Basu wrote to Delhi. And Daud Haider remains in India.

What a beautiful nation we have created. My pride doubled and tripled and multiplied endlessly when I heard the news.

My heart goes out to the concerned programme executive at Doordarshan. For no fault of his Konstantin U. Chernenko dies and the government of India, in a suitable gesture towards the special Delhi-Moscow relationship orders a mourning period. All India Radio immediately unearths its mine of devotional music and its executives relax, confident that nothing much can go wrong between one *bhajan* and another. But the box is something else altogether: here the show must go on, particularly since there is a lot of hard cash supporting at least some of the programmes. The task then, is to make the show appropriate to the mood. Now, unfortunately, none of these sponsored programmes were designed to make the viewer feel mournful (although one or two eminently succeed in doing so). How, then, does one square the circle, particularly with a programme like *Chitrahaar*, the half-hour of film songs which is aired every Wednesday evening and draws a bigger audience than all the talk shows put together? On Wednesday 13 March Doordarshan found its own solution to the problem

Indian television decided to show respect to the departed Mr Chernenko by making every song on that half-hour programme an expression of sorrow and tragedy (barring the last, which was an exercise in patriotic nobility). Unfortunately, hardly any of the numbers would have won the approval of the late leader of the leftist world. Take the first song: a tear-stained Smita Patil in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary, with a host of sad-looking orphans behind her, singing *Mother Mary*. Now if the idea was to pray to the Virgin Mary for the soul of the Italian President, this would have been just the thing. I wonder, though, if the late Mr Chernenko, a devoted, committed communist atheist of the old, hardboiled school, had ever contemplated encountering the Virgin Mary in the afterlife.

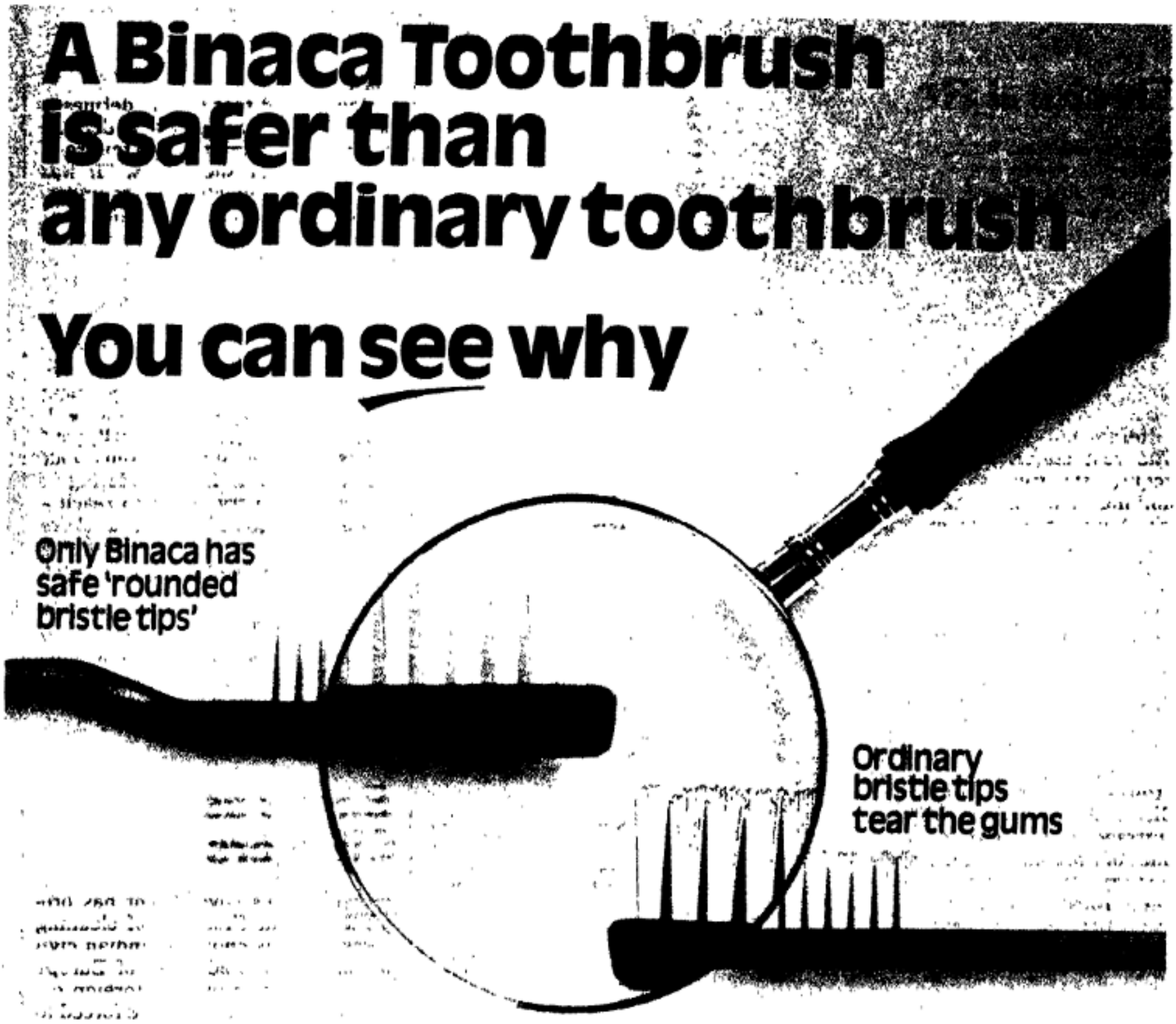
Song number two was from the romantic film *Jahanaara:* a soulful Bharat Bhooshan warbled (an excellent *ghazal*, by the way, sung by the inimitable Talat Mahmood) *Phir wohi shaam, wohi gham, wohi tanhaai hai*, with a heartbroken Mala Sinha peeping through her black *dupatta*. Sadness was appropriate enough, but one wonders how the Soviets who overthrew the Tsars would feel about being mourned by a Mughal prince (which is what Bharat Bhooshan is in the film). Nor could the palatial environment of the next song (Dilip Kumar; *Dil Diya Dard Liya; Koi saagar dil ko behlata nahin*) be considered of much revolutionary significance, unless someone was being satirical about *dachas*, which I am sure was not at all the case.

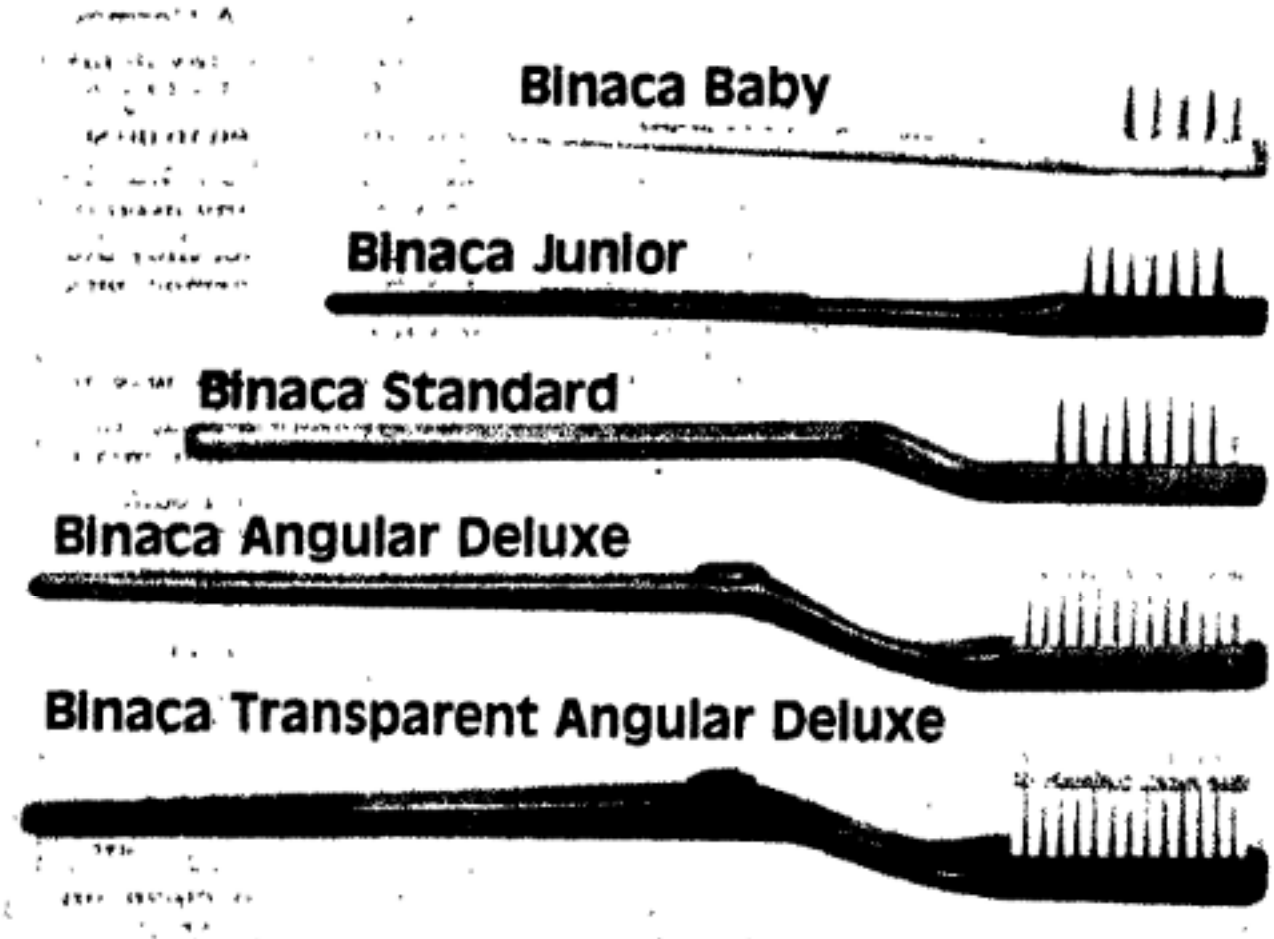
We finally did get something which had a vague connection with the Left, even if one generation removed. The hero of the next song (*Teri duniya se bahut door, bahut door chala*: very apt) was Parikshit Sahni, son of the great Balraj, one of the truly outstanding figures of the IPTA movement. Just at this point one did begin to wonder why, if such a programme had to be made, no one had thought of filling it with that excellent lot of songs from Hindi films made in the Fifties like *Naya Daur* glorifying labour and workers and the construction of a new society free from exploitation. Instead, we got the bitter-sweet Rajesh Khanna mourning his own impending death from cancer: *Kahin door jab din dhal jaaye*. And on our screens came the great Doctor Moshai, very thin but thoroughly impressive in the role that launched the most glamorous career in Hindi cinema—Amitabh Bachchan in *Anand*. The Doctor Moshai has now, of course, become an MP Babu. A second Congress(I) MP followed, Sunil Dutt, clad in white shirt and trousers, looking very purposeful as he dug into the task of creating the infrastructure of the economy of the new India in *Ham Hindustaani*. In fact the last song was the best. And, incidentally, both Congress MPs had been included in *Chitrahaar's* tribute to Konstantin Chernenko. But one really missed the third Congress(I) Member of Parliament, Vyjayanthimala singing *Saathi haath batana, saathi re, ek akela thak jaayega milkar bojh uthana* would have been a far more fitting way to say farewell to the leader of the most powerful Marxist nation in the world.

A free country like ours spoils the mind. We tend to take the right of a human being to breathe freely for granted, quite forgetting that there are large parts of the world—particularly the newly-independent world—where, on one pretext or the other, liberty is merely a reward of

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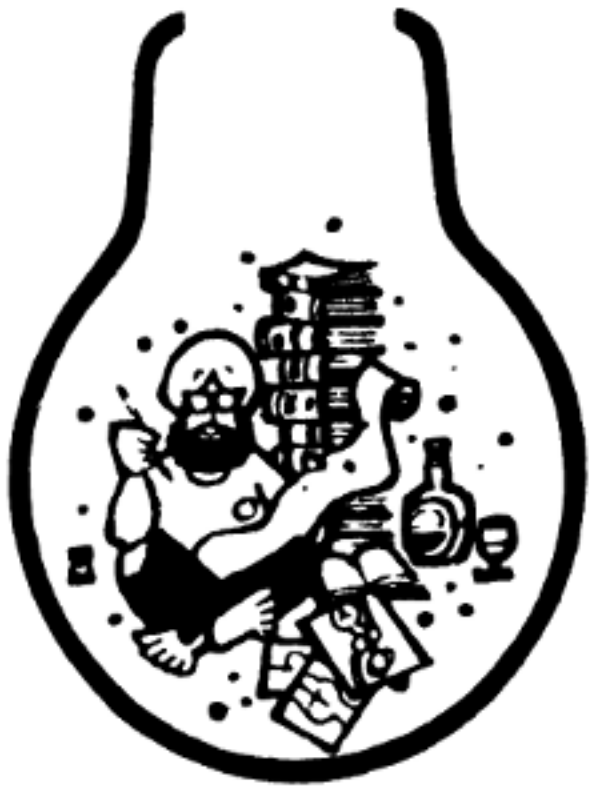
Electoral Reform

State elections being over, let me ventilate my grouse against the unquestioned acceptance of the principle of one man one vote. I am not a megalomaniac but I feel I should count for more than the unlettered riff-raff who queue up in their hundreds outside polling booths and blindly put their thumb impressions against names of candidates whose qualifications they know nothing about; nor have they the vaguest notion what party manifestos are or what different political parties stand for. The vast majority of those people acquire the right to vote by doing nothing except growing up and coming of age. Treating them on par with the majority which understands what voting is about seems to me to be a travesty of justice. It is based on the notion that a person does not have to be a cobbler to know where the shoe pinches. They are believed to know their interests and who will best guard them. This is a canard. Most of them do not even know how or who will best look after their interests because they are little more than grown-up children. I subscribe to the Bismarckian belief that universal suffrage is like putting the governance of the country in the hands of its nursery. It makes people like me keep away from the electoral exercise. Bad governments came into being because people like me do not vote. Will Rogers in *The Illiterate Digest* echoed my sentiments: "With all the mechanical improvements they have in the way of adding machines, and counting machines, they can't seem to invent anything to take place of the old political mode of counting—two for me and one for you."

We are not the only country where the literate and the better qualified feel that being treated as equals of those who are not our peers amounts to discrimination against us. W.H. Auden put this in his usual irreverent way:

I'm a carefree floating voter
Basking daily in *The Sun*
Politics are bloody boring, grin, be jolly.
Social justice? Kiss my ass!
I've a mortgage and a Datsun
I'm no longer working class

Now that talk of electoral reforms is in the air, I hope our law-makers will consider the possibility of laying down minimum educational and property qualifications for candidates as well as for voters. I do not think it is outrageous to suggest a



candidate must be a graduate paying income-tax or land revenue and the vote of a matriculate should count for two of those who are not. Otherwise the purification of politics will remain a pipe dream.

What is Love?

My latest acquisition to my very limited collection of friends is an attentive young lady journalist, a spinster. Long after my mythical birthday had passed she gave me a gift: a novella by Oriana Fallaci entitled *Letter to a Child Never Born*. I don't think my lady friend had read the book before presenting it to me. It is the true story of unmarried Oriana conceiving a bastard child which died in her womb. I had not read anything by Fallaci save her outrageous interviews with world celebrities including Indira Gandhi and Ayatollah Khomeini and had dismissed her as a brazen hussy. However, once I started her long letter to her unborn child I could not put it down till I finished it two hours later. It is sensitively and very beautifully written. Amongst the many observations she makes about life are her views on the phenomenon of love. Did she love the man who made her pregnant? "I still don't understand what it's all about," she admits. "My guess is that it's just a gigantic hoax, invented to keep people quiet and diverted. Everyone talks about love: the priests, the advertising posters, the literati, and the politicians, those of them who make love. And in speaking of love and offering it as a panacea for every tragedy, they wound and betray and kill both body and soul. I hate the word."

Having said that Oriana defines it better than I have heard it defined before. After admitting the failure of her love affair she writes: "It was worth something after all: to understand that nothing threatens your freedom as much as the mysterious rapture that a human being can feel towards another, a man towards a woman, or a woman towards a man. There are no straps or chains or bars that can hold you in a blinder slavery, a more desperate sense of helplessness. Beware of giving yourself to someone in the name of rapture: it only means forgetting yourself, your rights, your dignity and thus your freedom. Like a dog floundering in the water you try vainly to reach a shore that doesn't exist, a shore whose name is Loving and Being Loved, and you end in frustration, scorn, disillusionment."

If so, why do people fall in love? Fear of solitude? Of Boredom? Of Silence? A need to possess and be possessed? No, answers Oriana Fallaci, "It is a hunger that, once satisfied, leaves you with a kind of indigestion."

Babus as Cleaners

Mr Clean's government has provided its first crop of cleaning jokes. Here is one: Two Indian civil servants on a study tour of Europe ran out of their meagre foreign exchange allowance and were forced to find free accommodation. A German farmer agreed to let them stay in his barn for nothing if they did odd jobs for him. They readily agreed to do so. The first task given to them was to clean up the cow byre. Being used to cleaning up things at home, they did an excellent job. The farmer was very pleased with them.

The next job given them was to sort out apples lying in a heap into three lots; large, medium and small. After a few hours the farmer came to see how they were getting on with the work. He found them sitting crest-fallen without having sorted out a single apple. " What's the matter?" asked the farmer, "Can't you sort out big apples from the small?"

"You see, we are Indian civil servants," explained the *babus*. "We have been taught how to clean up things by our new Prime Minister, but he has not taught us how to make decisions."



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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Legislation Can Solve Assam Problem

It appears that the Election Commission has had to revise the instructions it issued for revision of the electoral rolls in Assam. The Bengali-speaking population in the state found fault with them. Further the union law minister Asoke Sen, who is responsible for answering questions regarding the Commission put up in Parliament, conveyed to the Commission the objections that had been raised; hence the new set of instructions.

The original instructions, issued on 3 January this year, had proposed the preparation of two lists. The first was to contain the names of persons who, in a recent house-to-house count, had qualified as voters as they "could be traced either directly or through their linkage to the entries (names) on the electoral rolls in 1971." The second list was to contain "all other entries which did not figure in the first list." The work of verification, however, was entrusted mainly to the police. Those covered by the second list had to produce a certificate "from the place where the question of citizenship has been decided finally by a competent authority" for their eligibility to be considered. An officer of the rank of superintendent of police was to verify "whether the person has been found to be non-citizen or citizen as per any decision of a competent tribunal or authority." This was in line with the home ministry's instructions dated 20 August 1975.

The students leaders, who have been in the forefront of the Assam agitation, were not unhappy with the instructions. They did not want 1971 as the cut-off year, they went along because the Assam police were in charge of verification and a certificate for ctizenship was necessary. Perhaps, another reason for their acceptance was that the Commission had ignored New Delhi's desire to signify 1979 as the cut-off year. Under pressure, the Election Commission issued a new set of instructions on 1 March, under which the Assam electoral officer was asked to ensure that "no eligible person is left out." The most important instruction was: "Existence of an entry in 1971 or pre-1971 roll of a person himself or of one to whom he can establish his linkage or parentage should be taken as *prima facie* proof of eligibility of an election and his name should find place in the draft roll. In case the name of such person does not find a place in the draft roll and he prefers a claim application. the burden of proving that he is not a citizen should devolve on the objector." This is, however, subject to the condition that no adverse order of a court or tribunal has been passed against him about his citizenship.

The Election Commission has gone on to say: "Existence of an entry in the post-1971 rolls, say up to 1971, can be treated as one of the supporting evidence of eligibility." However, it is for the claimant to satisfy the electoral registration officer with satisfactory evidence to prove his eligibility. The police, who are said to be "burdened with other work," need not be pressed for verification; the officers of the revenue and forest departments can do the job as well.

This may not, however, please the Assam student leaders. But then there is something else that New Delhi may not like and the state's Bengal-speaking population might protest when it comes to know of it. The Election Commission has added a rider which says: "In certain areas there may be instances where no one may be in a position to file an objection against a non-eligible person being found in draft electoral rolls...(The) Electoral Registration Officer should take *suo moto* necessary action under the law. If the officer is satisfied about the objection, then the entry should be deleted from the draft roll before its final publica tion after following the procedure pre scribed." For some time the deletion of "foreigners" from the electoral rolls has been the main demand. Lately, even the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) representatives have talked about the deletion of foreigners' names from the electoral rolls as the first step. The question boils down to the voting rights of foreigners.

India is not alone in facing the problem of "foreigners." America was tormented by a similar situation sometime back when immigrants from Latin America poured into the US. Washington found the solution through legislation.

A similar legislation in Assam may retrieve the situation because the problem centres around political power. The Assamese feel that outsiders would keep them out if they were to exercise their franchise. To some extent we have seen this happening in the last Assembly polls. The situation has been further aggravated because the government in the state does not represent the people; its very existence is a provocation. Whatever New Delhi may offer to resume negotiations with the AASU and the AAGSP representatives, it cannot have a ring of honesty as long as the people elected in a sham poll continue to occupy the Assembly seats.

The situation in Assam has been further aggravated because the government in the state does not represent the people; its very existence is a provocation.

Mockery of Democracy

SUNDAY did a commendable job by exposing the murky side of Indian politics (*The Underworld of Indian Politics*, 3—9 March). Muscle power is an inalienable part of politics in our country and more than anyone else the politicians themselves are responsible for such a state of affairs. It is an open secret that politicians patronise criminals to stay in power. However, I did not appreciate the interview with Haji Mastan ('*Politics Mein Sab Chor Hain*'). Who is he to advise us?
Manindra Nayak, Bhubaneswar

• Sankarshan Thakur and Olga Tellis's article read like a crime thriller. I was ashamed to learn that our destinies are being guided by such unscrupulous men like Haji Mastan and Vir Bahadur Singh.
Radha Kanta Roul, Bhubaneswar

• The cover story reminded me of the words of Dr Johnson: "Politics is the last refuge of a scoundrel." Haji Mastan made some interesting remarks during the course of the interview. He rightly said that elections cannot be fought without black money.
V.N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

• The cover story made a bold attempt to unveil the darker side of Indian politics. A law should ensure that people intending to contest an election should have a "clean background."
Tushar Chakraborty, Haldibari (WB)

• There was a time when politicians were admired and they inspired the lives of their followers. But that is a thing of the past and these days the very word 'politician' is a filthy abuse. Corruption has seeped into every aspect of our lives and honest living is a mere delusion. Our leaders are criminals in the true sense of the word.
Ajay Pant, Moradabad

• Any man wielding money and muscle power can enter Parliament or the state Assembly. MPs and MLAs do not devote time to social work any more: their only aim is to gather money to fight the next elections. Isn't this a mockery of democracy?
S.C. Malakar, Agra

• I was shocked to learn that criminals represent us in Parliament. I would welcome a more detailed list of 'underworld' characters in the various state Assemblies.
S. Venkatasubramanian, Calcutta



• Most of Haji Mastan's views are coloured by his communal feelings. He should know that it was Mahatma Gandhi who saved millions of Muslims in India during the post-partition riots.
Rajnish Verma, Jamshedpur

• I was amused at Haji Mastan's ignorance. Mahatma Gandhi sacrificed his life for the cause of the Muslims, yet Haji Mastan accused him of being a communal man. Bapuji was aware of the consequences of partitioning India and that is why he opposed the concept of a divided India.
Bibhudatta Mohanty, Cuttack

• SUNDAY gave undue publicity to Haji Mastan. No one is interested in a smuggler save the police and the customs authorities.
Dhananjay Patro, Bhubaneswar

• Anti-socials like Haji Mastan and Phoolan Devi do not deserve to be interviewed. Portraying them on the cover damages SUNDAY's image.
M.A. Kazmi, Bulandshar

Heaven and Hell

Khushwant Singh's article, *Neither Heaven Nor Hell (Gossip*, 24 February—2 March) was provocative enough. The author's malicious intentions are evident when he writes: "Where are the thousands of innocents who were massacred in the anti-Sikh riots in northern India or perished in the embrace of poison gas in Bhopal?" Mr Singh has been pointing an accusing finger at the Hindus ever since the riots following Mrs Gandhi's assassination and he never loses an opportunity to harp on this theme. Why doesn't Mr Singh write on lighter topics?
B.K. Sinha, Barauni

• In the course of the interesting article Mr Singh has commented at length on the idea of "purgatory" as a Christian belief. But the idea has nowhere been mentioned in the Bible. In fact, the notion is opposed to the teachings of Christ. In the concluding paragraph, the author has only echoed the sentiments in the Bible: a clear conscience makes life on earth a paradise and a guilty one makes it a hell.
H. Richard, Madras

• Heaven and hell exist on this planet. The mind creates its own heaven and hell on earth.
A. Wilson, Amritsar

• I was amused to go through Mr Singh's article. His understanding of the Hindu philosophy, it appears, is incomplete. The *karma* theory provides a convincing explanation for the apparent contradictions of this world. God has created this beautiful universe and each creation is unique. Man, the jewel among his creations, is gifted with the power to do whatever he likes and his actions determine whether he will be sent to heaven or hell.
R. Srinivasan, New Delhi

Punjab's Waters

Madhu Limaye has presented a distorted picture of the *River Waters Dispute* (30 December '84—5 January '85). Moreover, the definition of the "river basin," on which he builds his argument, is also not correct. The accepted definition of a "basin" as laid down by the Conference of International Law Association runs as follows: "A drainage basin is an area within the territories of two or more states where all streams of flowing surface water, both natural and artificial, drain a common watershed terminating in a common outlet either to sea or a lake or to some in-land place from where there is no apparent outlet to sea." The Indian Constitution uses the word "valley" (not basin) whose meaning is even narrower than that of a basin. Rajasthan and Haryana fall outside the river basins of the Sutlej, Ravi and Beas. As such there is no substance in Mr Limaye's arguments for the sharing of the river waters. Such articles will only harm the interests of Punjab.
K. S. Doad, Chandigarh

Naxalites are Dedicated

I do not agree with Kuldip Nayar that the Naxalite movement has withered away *(Are Naxalites Dedicated?* 3—9 March). As long as the gulf between the rich and the poor exists, the movement is bound to remain alive. The Naxalites struggled for a great cause, creation of an egalitarian society, and the blood of so many youths cannot go to waste.
Abir Padhy, Berhampore

• A journalist like Kuldip Nayar should refrain from second-hand reporting. For his report on the Naxalites he has relied on the police and the government. Both are biased. I would like to inform Mr Nayar that during the recent parliamentary elections many villagers of Srikakulam had boycotted the polls. I would like Kuldip Nayar to travel to the forests of the Godavari region and meet some of the Naxalite cadre and then come out with a more meaningful article.
S.M. Rao, Calcutta

I support Kuldip Nayar's view that the Naxalite movement lost popular support because of the violence unleashed by some of their cadre.
Kamal G, Trivandrum

• I disagree with Kuldip Nayar that *The Collector's Authority Has Eroded* (24 February—2 March). During the British rule the collectors were known as the deputy commissioners and they wielded immense power. The situation has not changed after independance. Today, at the district level, collectors are the real rulers and MLAs have very little say in the administration. They behave like autocrats
Taj Singh Lakhmna, Jamshedpur

• A district collector or the SP is posted and transferred at the whims of the politician. Moreover, young officers who are given the authority of a collector tries to behave like an autocrat.
C. Pradhan, Sambalpur

Stop Wasting Space

The enchanting cover blow-up of Rekha along with Akshay Upadhyaya's article, *Queen Bee* (24 February—2 March) made interesting reading. Even the free and frank interview, *'I Am a Rare Person,'* deserves to be preserved.
Kamal. G., Mysore

• The cover story was packed with a lot of information regarding Rekha but the interview disappointed me: there are a lot of unanswered questions.
Subal Chandra Saha, Malda

• I was disappointed to see the glamour queen of the film world, Rehka, on the cover of SUNDAY. There are scores of film magazines to publicise the deeds of Rekha. Has SUNDAY run out of its usual investigative stories. Or do you think that Rekha merited seven precious pages?
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• I was surprised to see the issue on films. At a time when important political developments are taking place and we are on the edge of a new era, SUNDAY's sudden interest in the tinsel world was unwarranted. However, I admired the glittering photograph of Rekha on the cover.
Muyyam Rajan, Singrauli (MP)

• The glamour world of Hindi films does not concern the common man. SUNDAY wasted precious pages.
S.S. Raju, Bombay



Rekha

• Rekha may be an actress extraordinary, but she did not merit a cover. I hope that SUNDAY will focus on more relevant affairs.
Deepak, Hyderabad

• SUNDAY occupies a pride of place in the publishing world. It should not tarnish its image by concentrating on frivolous issues like films.
Srinivas Patnaik, Khurda

Women's Problems

Rajiv Gandhi has taken a bold step in the right direction by initiating a number of schemes for the upliftment of women (*Women in Rajiv's Politics*, 10—16 February). Our Prime minister's efforts remind me of the words of Swami Vivekananda: "As it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing, so also a country cannot go ahead by leaving its women behind."
Santoo Palchoudhury, Siliguri

• Margaret Alva, Mohsina Kidwai, Kiran Bedi, Roda Mistry and Mamata Banerjee are all distinguished women leaders and they rightly stressed the role of women in nation building. Under Indira Gandhi women were not treated at par with man but I hope Rajiv Gandhi will take steps to improve the lot of women.
Geeta Dutta, Habra (WB)

• Margatham Chandrashekhar who heads the new women's ministry does not seem to have a clear perspective of the situation of women in India, and merely repeats wornout cliches. The new government should work to alter the Indian female psyche to make it more progressive.
Kamal G., Mysore

• None of the women MPs, except Roda Mistry, have dealt with topics other than dowry and women's education. But merely affording educational and job opportunities to women is not enough. they should be adequately protected.
C. Sunil, Kottayam

Persecuted Tamils

I was disturbed to go through Anita Pratap's moving article on *Sri Lanka's Unwanted Tamils* (3—9 March). The Jayewardene government has all along silently supported the atrocities perpetrated on the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The army has taken a lead role in Jayewardene's mission to wipe out Tamils from his country. I appeal to humanitarian organisations to intervene.
Sangram Mishra, Cuttack

• Anita Pratap is right when she says if the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka spills over to India, the world cannot expect us to sit and watch. If the solution is the creation of another Bangladesh, then we cannot help it. For, the evicted Tamils coming to India will create another Palestine within our country.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

COVER STORY

Distant Neighbours

After over three decades of independence, this sub-continent remains plagued with doubt, despair and violence: Sri Lanka, once the 'Paradise Island,' is now specked with blood as the ethnic turmoil continues; in Pakistan, the voice of thousands of its freedom-loving citizens remains muffled; in Bangladesh, major opposition leaders languish behind bars. Kuldip Nayar, who was recently in Sri Lanka, reports on the growing violence in the country, Tariq Ali, from London, says that the recent referendum ordered by General Zia-ul Haq was a sham and Chanchal Sarkar records his views on Bungladesh today.







SRI LANKA

An Island of Turmoil

By Kuldip Nayar

This year, long after their Independence Day (4 February) was over, Sri Lankans kept their national flag fluttering atop houses, shops and factories. When I was in Colombo a few days ago, I saw their national flag flying on almost every vehicle. It was meant to reassert independence, unity and territorial integrity.

The Sinhalese are in a panic over the "threat" to their country. Nearly two years ago, soon after the killing and looting of Tamils in Colombo, I found an atmosphere of fear in the midst of rumours that India might initiate punitive action. Now most Sinhalese have convinced themselves that New Delhi will "intervene." President J. R. Jayewardene himself believes that he is in the "midst of war" which, he says, has been waged by the Tamil terrorists "operating from India." No amount of argument with him—and I told him that India has nothing to gain by breaking up Sri Lanka—can sway him from his position that there is no use talking to anyone unless terrorism is first eliminated.

In fact, he reflects influential opinion when he says that he would like to talk with the terrorists instead of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) which, Jayewardene believes, is itself afraid of terrorists. Like the rest of the Sinhalese, Jayewardene considers the TULF and the Tigers, a terrorist organisation demanding *Eelam* (independent country in north Sri Lanka, embracing Jaffna and the eastern area, including Trincomalle), as two sides of the same coin. And the Sri Lanka President is quite forthright: "I do not trust the TULF leaders." The recent statement of the TULF leader, A. Amirthalingam, that India must invade Sri Lanka has only queered the pitch and angered the Sinhalese still further.

Jayewardene makes a distinction between the TULF and the terrorists but wonders if it can deliver the goods. However, he gives one the impression of a person who is prepared to hold negotiations to settle the Tamil problem, provided it is prepared to denounce terrorism and own Sri Lanka's flag, language and national anthem. Surprisingly, he talks very little of the indiscriminate killing of Tamils at the hands of his army. Indeed, he has hardened since he, as a young politician, took part in an anti-Tamil march. He was then protesting against a situation in which most positions in government and business were with the Tamil minority. Today, as President, he is suppressing the Tamils who have been largely replaced by Sinhalese in positions of power and have sought desperate remedies, including a separate state, to assert their rights.

Tamils comprise 12.6 per cent of some 15 million people; they have been in Sri Lanka for as long as the Sinhalese, who constitute nearly 72 per cent of the population. Another five per cent are the Tamil labourers who were taken by the British from Tamil Nadu in the last century to work on coffee and tea plantations. Even though the Tamils are all over Sri Lanka, 48 per cent of them are concentrated in the north and east of the island, around Jaffna; so much so, they are called Jaffna Tamils.

To understand the current phase of estrangement, one must go back to 1948 when Sri Lanka was granted independence by the British. Both Sinhalese and Tamils were in the forefront of the nationalist struggle and the contribution of Tamil leaders was no less than that of the Sinhalese leaders. But as is inevitable after independence, the majority formed the government. So, the Sinhalese came to power. And one of their first acts was to pass a law which made almost one-third of the Tamil labourers stateless. Since then, a series of government measures have pushed the Tamils down in the affairs of Sri Lanka, especially in employment and business. The reaction of the Tamils earlier was just an agitation; today, however, it is one of revolt.

Those involved in the present troubles are Jaffna Tamils, who are highly educated and intelligent and who have been slowly edged out by the less-educated Sinhalese. No doubt, the happenings have economic undertones but they also have an imprint of chauvinism and intolerance on the part of the Sinhalese. Although Jayewardene made Tamil a national language in 1976, the 1956 Act says "Sinhalese" is the "only" official language. Tamils feel they have been degraded during his tenure of office. Only three per cent of the armed forces and five per cent of those in the police are Tamils. Driven to the wall, they have adopted the



Shyam Tekwani

Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka arriving in Rameswaram



Tamil refugees on their way to a relief camp

Shyam Talwani

demand of a separate state, or Eelam, which was once the slogan raised by the radical Tamil Tigers. What also divides the Tamils and Sinhalese are their religions. Tamils are mostly Hindus and Sinhalese Buddhists. They dress differently too. Also, the Tamils still speak the same tongue as the people in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere do.

A tactful government would have tried to retrieve the estranged Tamils but instead it has resorted to violence. Tamils have been beaten up and tortured by the police and the military and detained without trial. Amnesty International has listed instances of cruelty and solitary confinement of Tamil detenus. The emergency has been extended again and again and the press remains suppressed under censorship. Since the resistance of Tamils has been increasing, the Sri Lanka government has been allowing the army to tackle the problem in the way it likes. The atrocities the armed forces are committing may put to shame what the American soldiers did in Vietnam. The killings of "terrorists and their sympathisers" are indiscriminate. To cover such killings, the government issued a regulation two years ago to authorise the disposal of bodies without a judicial inquest and post-mortem. This is where New Delhi came into the picture. It expressed India's unhappiness over the measure.

New Delhi has been impressing upon Colombo since then, to quicken the pace of granting citizenship rights to the 3.75 lakh Tamils, as was agreed between New Delhi and Colombo, first during Lal Bahadur Shastri's regime and then reiterated during Mrs Gandhi's. Some action has been visible. It appears that Sri Lanka is willing to take a "sympathetic and constructive approach" on other matters also and listen to India. But New Delhi feels that Colombo goes back on its word again and again.

I could not go to Jaffna during my recent visit; the government did not grant me permission and even President Jayewardene said, "No." I found there was no plane, train or bus going to Jaffna. The government proposes to evacuate the people living in the vicinity of Jaffna airport to make it safe. The entire Jaffna area has been handed over to the military. "There is no life in Jaffna," a top Sri Lanka government official told me, adding "It is the military all over. What will you see there?" At least one lakh fishermen are idle because the military has blocked their access to the sea. Even otherwise, life is hard since the limited movement of goods to the area has pushed up prices and shrunk avenues of employment. After talking to Jayewardene for about two hours, I got the impression that a solution to the Tamil problem is possible within Sri Lanka. The Tigers may not like it because they want nothing short of an independent country. Since New Delhi is committed to a united Sri Lanka, it can prepare the ground for negotiations. Jayewardene is willing to send his troops back to barracks in Jaffna and begin negotiations provided there is a joint surveillance to stop the inflow of "man and material" from India to Sri Lanka. India may not be training the terrorists or providing them with weapons but there is little doubt that the top leaders among the terrorists use Tamil Nadu and Kerala as a sanctuary; the joint surveillance will at least seal the borders.

Jayewardene is reluctant to a time limit for a settlement. When I asked him to agree to a three or six months' limit, he kept quiet. But I think some kind of timetable can be worked out. True, Jayewardene can go back on his commitments as he has done in the past under pressure from extremists and the Buddhist clergy. But India will not lose much by making yet another effort. Moreover, time is not on Sri Lanka's side.

If things are allowed to deteriorate, as is happening, a crisis like that of Biafra in Nigeria is in the making; still worse it may turn into a Cyprus, which Turkey invaded to save Cypriots of Turkish origin. Already a war-like atmosphere is prevalent in Sri Lanka and the government and the people blame New Delhi for the situation. Tamils in Sri Lanka are its citizens and India has no business to give them false hopes. True, the killings must stop in Jaffna, Mannar and other places. So, should New Delhi's connivance, if not interference. What it is doing may be good politics, but it is not good for the country.

"India is Bullying Me"

Sri Lanka President J.R. Jayewardene told Kuldip Nayar

***Q**: Let's start with the three things India and Sri Lanka have in common: unity, democracy and independence.*

A: Then we forget the past. We are faced with terrorists' threat, borne out only by the facts. They were terrorists; they have become insurgents. Terrorists, I don't think, are for overthrowing the governments; they are all over the world: as far as Iran. They are insurgents because their idea is to overthrow governments. Now I would say it is more. They are the enemy in a war—a war between a group of individuals and the state.

Statements made by their leaders in India, which have not been denied, mention that their objective is to overthrow the government of Sri Lanka and establish their own government; some say (it may be a government of) Socialists, some say Marxists, but not the sort of government that we have today.

Q: Throughout the island it is only Eelam's leaders, not the Tamil leaders, who are saying this...

A: No, I said terrorists—those who believe in violence. I'm worried about them, not others—at least not so far. Then from the weapons we have recovered—two or three raids we have made—in quantity, quality, type they are meant for a war, not for terrorist assassinations. I fear they are not for hit-and-run activities. I know nothing about weapons. I have got photographs. I showed them to a foreigner who has been in the war. He said these weapons were made in Germany, UK, Russia and India. All this is for a war... I tell you this is for a war. You haven't got a list. I have got one. Well, that too has been confirmed recently by written statements in newspapers in Sri Lanka and India.

Also statements were made by witnesses and captives who confessed they are planning an agitation. I call it terrorism, which means a major offensive, (it would mean a) combined offensive against the state in Jaffna and Sri Lanka. There are about five or six groups, a majority of whom have been hiding. They want to overthrow the armed services, the police and achieve their objective by governing a certain part of the island in the beginning. What do I do? You record this and go away. I am (always) hearing (about) this problem. Now you can go somewhere and give advice.

Q: In such a situation, do you go around saying, friends, look my country is going to be invaded. I want your help. Your predecessor, Mrs Bandaranaike, for instance, had asked India for help which she got. Have you asked for that?

A: (We have asked) all our friends, including India (for help).

Q: But you would agree with me that there is a difference between these terrorists, whom you refer to as the enemy of your country, and those who have been wanting or struggling for democratic rights. Then, the last time I came here a year and a half ago, I felt you were inching towards some kind of a settlement over the Tamils. Then you called the all-party meeting. Now you say, no, I am not going to have any talks with the TULF. Whom do you want to talk with? The others are only terrorists.

A: If they want I can talk with them.

Q: Who are 'they'?

A: I don't know. Then I want to have elections.

Q: Anybody who has to contest the election should take a vow before you that he believes in the integrity of the country. Now, would you find enough Tamil candidates who would be ready to do that and enough voters to support them?

A: We feel that. The terrorists don't feel that. Terrorism is ruling. Terrorism is supreme. Why didn't India help us?

Q: But you have reason to believe that India is helping the terrorists?

A: Then, why doesn't India help maintain my democracy?

Q: Why should she not?

A: Why? Answer it yourself. Why?

Q: I think it would be foolish for India not to want to help you. After all, what has she to gain by it?

A: I will come to that. Till the elections—the recent Lok Sabha elections—there was a problem in India because Tamil Nadu was the centre of the terrorists' activities and some politicians were making use of it. And those in office who were for Mrs Gandhi's government had to support the secessionists in Sri Lanka, though they were not for secession.

Q: Did you take that up with the Tamil Nadu authorities?

A: Not then.

Q: Why didn't you?

A: Because the elections were due. They wanted to win the elections. I kept quiet. This is not the right time to do that I thought. This is a separate issue to be taken up at the central level. Now that is over. And the Karunanidhi group has been wiped out. The people did not worry about Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka and Eelam. What I did inform Mrs Gandhi and her colleagues about was that these terrorists are in India and living in training camps. They didn't deny that.

Some politicians, including Mr



Statements made by their (terrorist) leaders in India, which have not been denied, mention that their objective is to overthrow the government of Sri Lanka and establish their own government...



I really wanted to give up the armed services when I again became President, and only wanted trained police, military police throughout the island. Why spend all this money on arms? Why do you want arms; for what purpose? We even stopped recruiting people in the armed services. I am not a soldier; I am not for war...I am a friend of India.

Parthasarathy, met them to try to bring them together. Then there was Mrs Gandhi's cremation and some terrorists went to Delhi and met Parthasarathy. I read in Indian papers, (like) *The Hindu*, that some politicians (had) met them. They live in the plush room of the state guest house in Tamil Nadu That also I found.

I told Mrs Gandhi that we do not meet the terrorists, either from Punjab, Tripura or Assam. They (terrorists in Sri Lanka) go to Delhi and meet them. Then I did not take it (up) strongly because the all-party conference was there. So all I say now is this: let (us; forget terrorists' camps. If you want them to be turned away that is well and good. I was told to file extradition papers. We waited for the elections to be over. I did not want to do (it) before that. We shall do that now. But some people can be extradited without papers if it is in the interests of a foreign country; that is the rule under the constitution. Forget the contact with the TULF, forget the terrorists. Can't you help us to have an effective surveillance zone, a joint surveillance zone, without ammunition coming by sea? You have trained men coming by boats. We can control the terrorists' movement here. That is my appeal to India now.

Q: *Have you made a formal proposal to this effect?*

A: I have not put it to the (Indian) Prime Minister formally but I told the (Indian) high commissioner.

Q: You will agree with me, sir, that the Tamils are your citizens. They are not our liability, but yours. You know they have a grievance.

A: What kind of grievance?

Q. Their grievance is that they do not have enough say in the government.

A: Who said that?

Q: I am not saying that you should give them a separate country, state or the like. But they are the people—17 per cent of your population, or so—who want to have a say in your government. Of course, you did say a year and a half ago that you would set up a regional council or whatever it is.

A: Yes, regional autonomy.

Q: But unfortunately the talks broke down.

A: No, no, they did not break (down) We came to certain conclusions: have more delegation of power to district councils—annexure C—and in fact I proposed that. And at the all-party conference I said that the district councils will have the right to join the provinces and have provincial ministers. They will be responsible to provincial councils. We had agreed to do that.

But there were differences on two points: they wanted the two provinces to be joined. We said we could not do that because firstly, we have a hold in the eastern province—10 out of 12 seats. The Muslim organisation is totally theirs. And the other one was that the provincial ministers should not be in the second chamber, and they should be in the provincial Assembly.

I said I cannot do that, I cannot make a minister unless he is in Parliament. So I said I would create a second chamber consisting of delegates from each district; if I can make a minister, I can give him all powers. I already made a minister—a Tamil minister. I will make a minister in Jaffna who will be in complete charge of police. We were discussing irrigation, law and order. Then came the 21st December. I heard that some of the delegates wanted to postpone the meeting for their own purposes, and carry on an agitation against us. So I met all those who had come in. And I said we would finalise this. Already my draft is ready and I am placing it before the cabinet on the 19th.

And I had arranged to meet them—they went to India— when they were to come again in January. Two days, three days passed. Nothing came off. The next day Amirthalingam issued the statement without a word to me. It appeared on Sunday, saying that the proposals were totally unacceptable to them. And I looked like a fool.

Q: Still, shouldn't you have unilaterally implemented them?

A: I cannot implement them because the district councils in the northern province don't exist. Throughout the three districts from the eastern province they don't exist, because they commanded a majority and the members have lost their seats. Our plan was to resuscitate them by law as in the registration. Whether they will agree or not, I don't know. So that cannot be implemented unless it is agreed (upon).

Q: Now, that you are thinking in terms of holding elections without the district councils, do you realise that the people may boycott them and there may be violence? After all, you are taking a kind of risk. Unilaterally implementing annexure 'C' would probably be a lesser risk.

A: I will implement it. They have all the members, 95 per cent of them; I have only one or two.

Q: Could that be a starting point again?

A: Well, we have not thought of that. I will tell you why it failed.

Q. You were not to blame but they were?

A: I don't know. We have put it before the cabinet for discussion. But I was going through it. (I wish) the TULF went through it with me, as I put it before the people, because the TULF had promised to liaise with us. They had promised to accept the national flag, national language, except this. Then we will fight terrorism. I must also convince my people.

I am also an elected man. I am not here by virtue of (the) gun. So I was left stranded. I could leave it to the cabinet.

Q: Now that three months have gone by, is there no way of restarting this?

A: So my plan now is to have elections. I am having (them) in Trincomalle, in Padriu, in May or June, but not in Jaffna.

Q: *But you don't want to start negotiations again?*

A: There is nothing to talk about. They can still accept it. Now what do they want me to do? Commit suicide?

Q: The impression is that if there is no time frame to the negotiations then it goes on and on and nothing comes out of it.

A: Well, we will have elections. There are the district councils, they will be given more powers.

Q: So you will be implementing annexure 'C' as far as possible except where it is not required (and) transferring more power to the districts? But at this stage it still does not retrieve the Tamils. How do you retrieve them?

A: Tamils? After the terrorism, there is no question of retrieving them.

Q: But they are only a few. So how do you retrieve them?

A: I have no other way (except) the merger of the district development council within the province after accepting the council members and a referendum in the district that a poll (should) be held there.

Q: Before I came to meet you Mr Parthasarathy told me that you had gone back on everything you had agreed with him.

A: (*interrupts*) Where have I gone back?

Q: That's what I'm asking you.

A: What is he saying? I don't know. Where have I gone back? He has got to discuss it with me then.

Q: You proposed joint surveillance. But don't you agree that there is no other way to solve the problem except by talking to the TULF?

A: I don't think so. There is no use (in doing that) unless terrorism is wiped (out). They will never help; they threaten (us).

Q: You proposed joint surveillance.

A: Yes, that is all I am asking (for). India is talking of anybody giving me help, anybody providing me arms, anybody giving training.

Q: But you do have the Israelis, or SAS here, training people.

A: Yes, they cannot stop them. I have SAS people, I am going through them. Mrs Bandaranaike had no problems. It was after the July riots, a one and half year genocide Now that all countries in the world, except India, believe me, they want to help us but they want a state. The lobby against us is strong. The US has (a) powerful senate, the UK has (a) powerful Marxist lobby. Pakistan is sending arms. we are buying them. China also (is sending arms).

Q: But don't you agree that you do need India's cooperation?

A: Otherwise it would take us a long time. But we wish to do it. Of course, there will be no problem of terrorists if they cooperate with us. But they (India) cooperate with the terrorists. I am positive about this. Terrorists say so. They are bullying me to give in to the TULF's demand for autonomy.

Q: You suggested joint surveillance, and that you for your part will try to normalise the situation in Jaffna—send the army back to the barracks and the police too, and then you start talks.

A: No, I cannot talk. Today they fired (at) a helicopter. They fired (at) an aeroplane a few days ago.

Q: I was going to ask you for permission to visit Jaffna.

A: But I don't mind that. But there is nothing to see there Only the army and the police; no sign of any life. In fact I (would) never have thought of not talking with them. But they have reached a point of no return. It will take some time to recover. There is no point in my being President, if I do not support the people. I cannot talk to anybody, I cannot discuss; I have no placement. You cannot even sleep there unless the terrorists are supporting (you). I can win a seat, but cannot unless I have the support of chauvinists, which I do not want.

Q: About joint surveillance, would you talk to the TULF?

A: Well, I will talk to Amirthalingam. Let them give up Eelam.

Q: TULF, not Eelam.

A: People think that.

Q: Do you think that Eelam supporters would like to be dominated by the TULF leaders?

A: (The) main opposition to the proposal (arises) because they say one thing here (in Sri Lanka) and another in India. We cannot trust them. Then there are problems as they go into the terrorists' areas. If they go there they will shoot them; if they come here they will protect them.

Q: But you are also facing a problem, and you think there is no solution except using the military?

A: I would agree. But there is no other way out, unless terrorism is wiped out. Why cannot India help us? I will withdraw the army.

Q: *But you say you cannot start negotiations. Don't you make any distinction between the TULF and Eelam?*

A: The TULFis behind Eelam.

Q: But you should start talking to them. They are your people.

A: No, they are for separation. That is their policy. They have said so recently. All this happened after

What should we do? Either you have to hit or get out, because nobody helps. I can tell you all the way. If India says we are with you, you are all elected men, we trust you, we are going with you, the rest we can discuss. I come back and tell my people here that terrorism will stop tomorrow. What the insurgents are feeling, they cannot understand. And I hear people say, Ceylon is useless.



December.

Q: Why don't you come to India and talk to our PM?

A: I will talk to him when I go there next. But he must accept this fact. Otherwise there is no point in wasting my time. Terrorism is strong now. They regard Amirthalingam as (someone) supporting them.

Q: Agreed sir, but Tamils are your people, after all.

A: So are Sinhalese.

Q: Do they think the Tamils will revolt against you.?

A. (They do) not think; they fear that. Not only that; it will happen And I would not blame them.

Q: Since my last Sri Lanka visit 18 months ago, I find that the anti-Tamil feeling tends slightly towards an anti-Indian feeling. Am I wrong?

A: You are right.

Q: Is that because people here think that India is behind it all?

A: It is because for the last one and a half months here the TULF has been quiet. It may become anti-Sri Lankan Tamils and anti-Indian feelings. There is one problem that we should take care of. The 20,000 Tamils settled in that centre. The entire area around it needs to be vacated. I mean Jaffna.

Q: But don't you think that this territory is, for all practical purposes, in the hands of terrorists?

A: No, we cannot settle people there because it is an urban area. And (there is) no land to settle. There are 600,000 people there. And no ground to settle.

Q: But don't you think you are now drawing the line between Sinhalese and Tamils?

A: That has not been there. There are more Sinhalese than Tamils concentrating there. We cannot settle people there.

Q: Has your tourist trade suffered due to the strife?

A: That is right.

Q: Don't you think the strife is costing you dear?

A: What should we do? Either you have to hit or get out, because nobody helps. I can tell you all the way. If India says we are with you, you are all elected men, we trust you, we are going with you, the rest we can discuss. I come back and tell my people here that terrorism will stop tomorrow. What the insurgents are feeling, they cannot understand. They love the people. And I hear people say, Ceylon is useless, murderous—they are raping and all that.

Q: Sir, I have heard that a lot of atrocities are committed by the army. Would you consider appointing a commission to go into these?

A: Not now. Did the British appoint a commission during war? I was very firm at the beginning. And these things started about five, six years ago. They committed various acts that should not have been (committed). But there is a problem around there. They have burnt the library and all that. Yes, the army has to have discipline. And now they think that I was the one who did not allow them to do things (the) way they liked.

Q: *Do you fear a military coup?*

A: Well, you can never say that because they would not tell you, and the longer the emergency lasts, the greater the danger.



I know nothing about weapons. I have got photographs (of the terrorists' weapons). I showed them to a foreigner who has been in a war. He said these weapons were made in Germany, UK, Russia and India. All this is for a war...

Q: How long ago was the emergency imposed?

A: From 1983—two and a half years nearly. See, these terrorists have acquired modern weapons. You just have to press the button. A volley of bullets comes from the barrel of the gun. I spoke to a general who fought the Vietnam war. See Mrs Gandhi has gone. That fellow came and shot her dead. He pumped a whole volley of bullets into her. Why did he do that? Not to kill her. Some blood lust. So this happens in the world. They do it. I find them a new type of men. The Vietnam soldiers fought when they went to America. They (suffered from a) psychosis. They are not used to this. They are trained for ceremony, drill and parade. I really wanted to give up the armed services when I again became President, and only wanted trained police, military police throughout the island. Why spend all this money on arms? Why do you want arms; for what purpose? We even stopped recruiting people in the armed services. I am not a soldier; I am not for war.

Q: All right, but if something happens to you, who succeeds you?

A: I don't know...I am a friend of India. I am a lover of its people.

Q: But you got along well with India during the Janata regime. Why not now? What is the difficulty?

A: Then there were no terrorists. They started after the July riots. Ramachandran was born in Sri Lanka, (he is) a friend of Sri Lanka. He has come here.

Q: Sir, you say they started after the July riots. I studied that, and I think it is a motivated statement.

A: But they were against the government. But their planning was done very recently. The main planning was (done) after the July riots.

Q: Do you think it might happen again?

A: I think the people now understand that there is much more to watch.

Q: But your UNDP (United National Democratic Party) people are also making a row about it. Where do we go from here?

A: I said elections.

Q: But you said it is not possible in Jaffna, that it will be a long time before you can hold the elections there.

A: We are getting ready to fight them.

Q: Do you think the Soviet Union is somewhere behind it all, or is India the only villain?

A: No, I don't think the former is there; it is only India.

Q: Is that your hunch or conviction?

A: No hunch, but conviction.

Q: If you think there are training camps in India, why don't you send a parliamentary delegation. Let them see for themselves.

A: What is there to see? They are not public servants. Your papers say that they have seen the camps.

Q: Do you think now you are in the midst of war?

A: In the Jaffna area.

Q: Well that affects your government also.

A: They are bombing my planes, my helicopters.

PAKISTAN

Behind the General's Election

By Tariq Ali

Pakistan has recently experienced a General's election. It was masterminded by a General, orchestrated by the military high command (i.e. the Generals) and the desired results were achieved with the kind collaboration of the Pakistani civil service. The opposition parties had called for a boycott. Hence the main objectives of the Zia-ul Haq dictatorship were to ensure a reasonable turn-out. The largely tame candidates, of course, made sure that their supporters rolled up, but it was the civil servants in the countryside who dragged the people out to vote.

The real question, however, is not how many people voted, but why the Pentagon's favourite Asian dictator felt it necessary to have an election in the first place. There was no real pressure from the State Department in Washington. The Pentagon actually prefers a military regime in Pakistan as it is believed, with good reason, that virtually any civilian government would reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union and settle the Afghanistan question. Zia-ul Haq's desire to achieve some legitimacy for his rule, however fraudulent and tenuous, was motivated by the situation which has been building up inside the Pakistan army itself. Given that this institution is the only solid pillar of the dictatorship, any dissensions within its ranks could prove fatal. Even here, it should be said that Zia's electoral farce could backfire badly. Winning an election by locking up the opposition is, after all, hardly a new tactic for the Pentagon-backed dictators in the Third World. The fact that Zia made the attempt at all is an indication of his weakness. The surface signs may not show this, but the military regime in Pakistan is undergoing a severe crisis of confidence.

The single most important thing which took place in Pakistan in recent weeks was not this surreal election, but the secret trial of over one hundred military officers in Attock fort. This trial, which has not received any detailed coverage in the Western press, is an event of great importance for the dictatorship. The officers under trial have been charged with the most serious offence in the book, which is, "conspiring to overthrow the government by force." The fact that this was how Zia himself came to power is only one of the many ironies of this case.

During the second half of 1983, the people of Sind sparked off a movement against the dictatorship. It was brutally crushed by the army and hundreds of Sindhis, a minority nationality in Punjabi-dominated



Supporters of the outlawed Pakistan People's Party demonstrating in Sind

Pakistan, were killed, several hundreds subjected to torture and thousands placed in prison without trial. At one stage it appeared as though the revolt for democracy would spread to Punjab. A number of senior army officers wrote private letters to Zia at the time and suggested politely that the time had perhaps arrived for a transfer of power to the politicians. The letters were sent on to the directorate of inter-services intelligence in Islamabad in September 1983. The dissident officers had begun to meet informally during the Sind movement. What they were planning was not a *coup d'etat*, but an organised and concerted refusal to obey orders



MRD supporters demonstrating in Karachi

if they were instructed to shoot demonstrators in the event of the movement spreading to Punjab. The coterie of senior officers who run Pakistan decided that it was crucial to weed out every democratically-inclined dissident in the armed forces as soon as possible.

Inter-services intelligence (ISI) was given the go-ahead to plan a "conspiracy" to tap the dissident officers. The planning stage had begun. The entire operation was masterminded by the director general of the ISI, Lt. General Akhtar Abdul Rehman Khan. It was Akhtar Khan who had, as commander of a crack infantry division, pledged his loyalty to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the country's last elected leader, one year before the Zia coup of July 1977. It was also the same Akhtar who had led his commandos to storm the Prime Minister's house on 5 July 1977. Akhtar was assisted throughout by Brigadier Imtiaz, known within military intelligence as the "blue-eyed jackal."

The aims of the ISI were as follows: To "prove" that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of the executed Prime Minister Bhutto, were involved in planning, sabotage and arson; to implicate India in the plot and present the PPP as instruments of New Delhi; to divert attention from Indo Soviet allegations of the Junta's arming and training of Sikh militants from neighbouring India (there were several training camps in Pakistan which had been established for this purpose); to purge the army of malcontents and democrats; to lay the basis for a Supreme Court ruling to declare PPP politics and "Bhuttoism" alien to Pakistan and ban them permanently; and to identify the dissident officers and physically eliminate them, while claiming that a coup attempt had been forestalled.

The plan was to plant agents within the ranks of the dissidents, organise them into a loose "study group" and then plant Indian ammunition on them and arrest or kill them. The ISI decided to use a well-known Pakistani smuggler-millionaire, Seth Abid, to arrange for a cache of Indian arms and explosives. Abid, a close personal friend of Zia, agreed to become the conduit and he was accordingly introduced to dissident officers as a man with influence who could be useful in the future.

Within five months after the plan was first conceived, the blue-eyed jackal had prepared a list of 1,000 army officers from whom the dissidents could be selected. The list was culled from intelligence files and all the officers named were stated to be hostile to Zia and the continuation of martial law and the large-scale corruption (especially in relation to heroin smuggling) that had tainted the army. A hundred names were picked from the larger list. The jackal was instructed to tell agent provocateurs to "harness and identify" the dissidents and give them an organisation.

The last act was meant for Lahore, the largest city close to the Indian border. General Akhtar Khan himself visited a number of possible sites for staging the "coup attempt." The operation was code-named "The Hangman's Second Rope" (the reference was to Bhutto, who had been dealt with by the "first rope").In Lahore, only Colonel Yamin was taken into complete confidence in early December 1983. The operation was scheduled for the night of 23 December 1983, but intelligence telephone-tappers heard two dissident officers expressing their doubts about coming to Lahore. These men told each other that something odd appeared to be taking place. Akhtar panicked. The officers were sent away on official business and the operation postponed to 3 or 4 January 1984. On 1 January 1984, the troops involved in the plan were told that they were needed to crush a "bloodthirsty gang of anti-Pakistan conspirators." Large-scale arrests were planned in cantonments and naval and air force bases throughout the country at the same time.

The last-minute change in schedule had an odd effect. The venue of the dissidents' meeting was changed from the affluent Lahore suburb of Gulberg to Nawan Kot. Seth Abid's men brought their consignment of arms and explosives to the new venue in great haste. Abid is a veteran trafficker in drugs and is said to be the Mr Big of the smuggling of hashish and heroin to Europe and America from Pakistan. His men accidentally picked up 12 boxes containing a quarter of a ton of pure Pakistani hashish and planted these with similar boxes which contained arms and ammunition. The whole operation was botched by Abid's clumsiness. Thus, there were boxes containing safety fuses, but no explosives, there were twelve sub-machine guns of 7.62 mm calibre, but the ammunition for these was of 9 mm calibre. This became obvious as the boxes were opened in the presence of police and magistrates.

Further problems arose. Only six dissidents had been informed of the

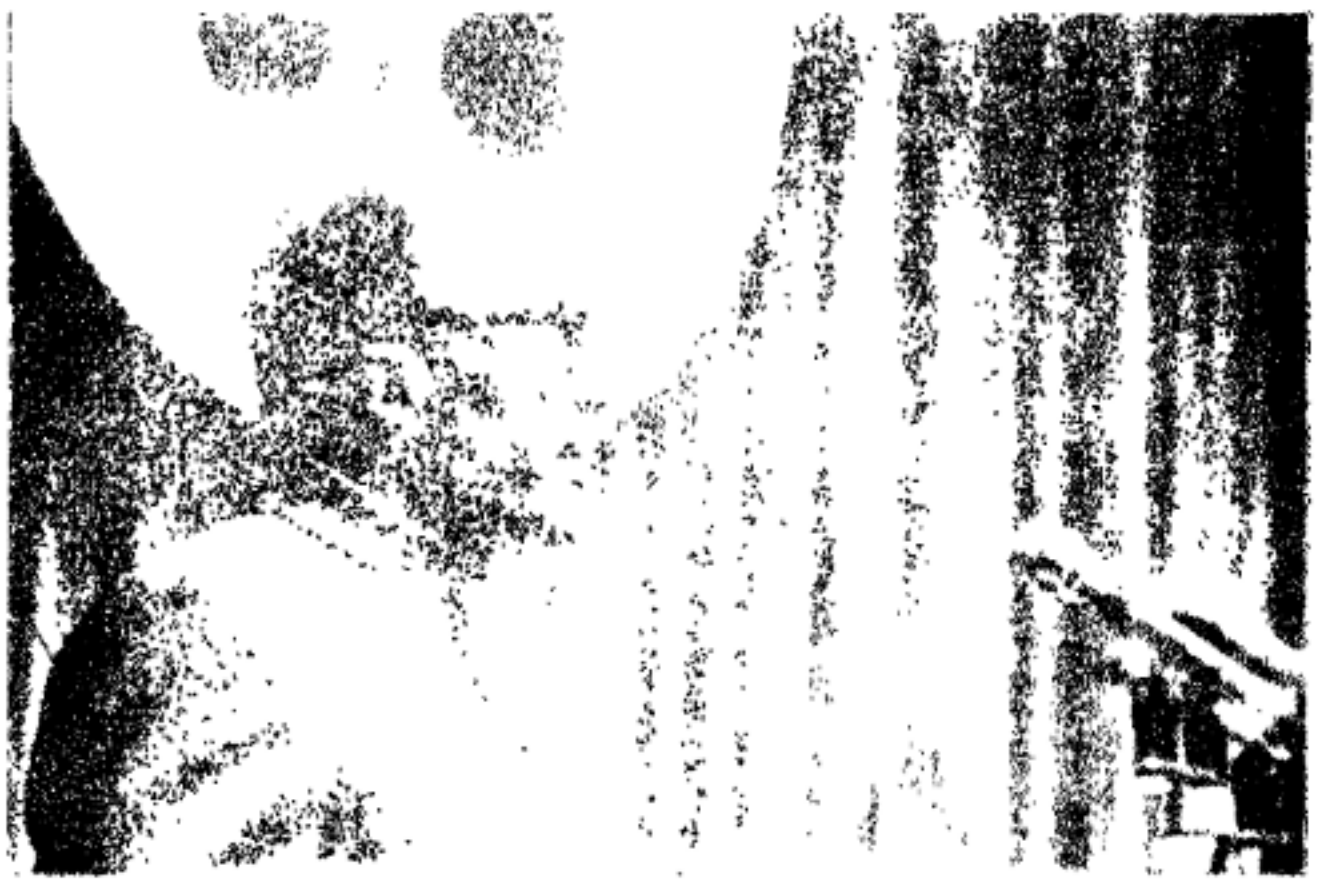
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change of venue for their supposed "social evening." Only three turned up. The others were more concerned with their personal commitments. The Sind uprising had been crushed. Punjab was quiet and many officers felt that, for the time being, the storm was over. Three officers, Squadron Leader Tahir Maqsood, Major Nisar Hussain Bokhari and Major Sadiq Abdullah, were guided to the new venue by an ISI agent, Major Shahid, a man who had been cashiered from the army for corruption, but had been re-employed by the intelligence wing because of his close affinities to the Jamaat-i-Islami (a fundamentalist Muslim sect). At 7.00 pm, Major Shahid brought the three dissidents to the trap. He directed them through the gate and disappeared into a side lane. The three officers were confused and decided to stay at the gate and wait for him. Without warning they were greeted by a rain of bullets. Colonel Yamin's ten-man squad had opened fire. The dissidents fell to the ground and Major Bokhari was seriously wounded. Three passers-by were also felled by the gunfire and died instantly.

The event was then proclaimed to be a conspiracy which had been nipped in the bud and arrests were made elsewhere. Over 70 armed forces officers were arrested and 100 civilians, including women and children, were initially detained. A lawyer, Raza Kazim, who knew some of the officers,was also arrested. The imprisoned officers were kept in total isolation in tiny underground cells (four feet by six feet) and fettered and handcuffed. They were blindfolded at regular intervals. They were strapped to ice-blocks (a traditional sub-continental torture), given electric shocks, whipped, denied food, sunlight, fresh air and bathing facilities. A number suffered serious collapses after torture. Virtually all of them suffered a loss of eyesight and developed numerous diseases. Their medical reports were destroyed at the special intelligence bureau on the orders of Major Tariq Afzal and Major Masud.

As a result of the tortures, the intelligence agencies obtained their "confessions." They were recorded on video. Then a tame magistrate, Karam Elahi Beg, a creature of the military, was brought in to hear the "confessions." He was flanked by two Majors from the ISI staff, Najeeb and Javed. When some of the accused refused to make the ISI-dictated confessions they were threatened by the magistrate and the young Majors. The main purpose of the torture was to prove "Indian involvement" and counter Indian charges of training camps for Sikhs in Pakistan. Suddenly, however, the pressure to implicate India was dropped. What had happened? The major reason is that the high command feared a violent Indian reaction and were warned by a friendly foreign power not to play the "Indian card." A minor reason may have been that some army messengers had disappeared with crucial evidence proving that the trial was a fake from the beginning to end. The evidence contained "confessions" written in the offices of the ISI and destined for interrogators at Attock fort.

He supervised the torture and the interrogation as well as threatening officers with capital punishment. Badar concentrated initially on attempting to torture the following officers to become approvers: Squadron Leader Tahir Maqsood, Lt Col. Shirazi, Major Abdul Qayyum, Major Mustafa Kamal, Major Khalid Mahmood, Major Zafar Iqbal and Captain Muhammed Sibtain. The officers refused and withstood the torture. Tahir Maqsood later broke down when his wife and younger brother (also detained at Attock) were humiliated and subjected to a vileness that proved unbearable to Maqsood. Later, a mentally tortured Maqsood retracted and, together with his wife and brother, was whisked off to the ISI headquarters in Islamabad for more "coaxing." This time he succumbed.

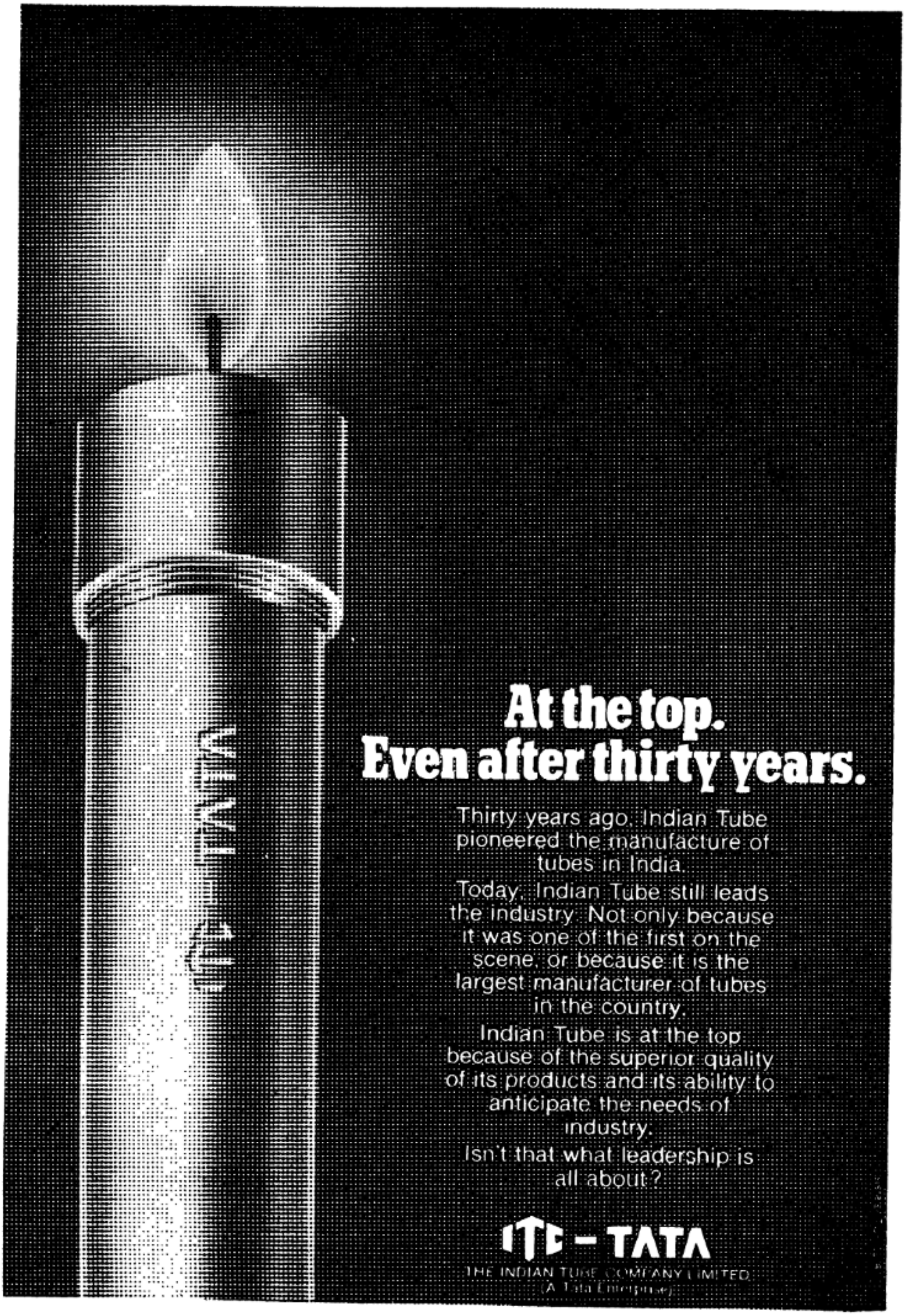


Gen Zia

The entire affair created dissension within the higher ranks of the army. Accordingly, some of the accused were forced to mention names of senior officers and others prepared by the intelligence agencies. Generals Iqbal Khan and Sawar Khan were retired. Two senior corps commanders, Generals Majid and Jamal, as well as a number of Major Generals and Brigadiers were sacked. Zia's own military secretary, Brigadier Khawar Zeb Butt, and the deputy military secretary, Colonel Zaheer Abbasi, were subjected to interrogation and transferred. Altogether 550 Majors and Captains were released from service in January-March 1984. The effect of all this on the army's morale cannot be underestimated. The news that has been smuggled out of Attock fort is also widely known within the army and it has not enhanced Zia's status.

Zia's young favourite, Lt Colonel Badar, was in charge of Attock fort.

Within the ruling army clique, senior Generals argued for a field general court martial (FGCM) but the ISI, fearful that a FGCM might reveal too much, insisted on a military court which they could control far more directly. The trial at Attock is currently taking place behind closed doors. What has not emerged fully is which card the army chiefs have decided to play. With the General's election out of the way, Zia has started hanging people again. The framed officers are accused of high treason. Their lives are in danger. It would be ironic, though not surprising, if the so-called defenders of democracy in Washington and London allowed any of these officers (whose only crime was to demand a return to democracy) to be executed.


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The London Plot

It could be Benazir's best way to fight Zia

The posh flat in the newly redeveloped Barbican area of east London is a far cry from Pakistan. Not merely is it a continent and a half away from the military state, but cosy, unfettered and out of harm's way as far as the heinous designs of President Zia-ul Haq are concerned. And it is from here that Ms Benazir Bhutto, daughter of the executed Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and acting president of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), marshalls her resistance against the martial law regime.

Ms Bhutto, 31, an Oxford graduate and a former president of this university's students union, is prettier than pictures make her out to be, with a bright and perceptive appearance to boot. Indeed, with her aptitude for tasteful attire and befitting facials, she could just be the person whom one would prefer to invite to a party as the leader of one of the Third World's most important political groupings.

Perhaps, as the child of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and given the Indian subcontinent's preoccupation with dynasties, Ms Bhutto possessed an interest and inclination for public life. But she has been thrust into the limelight rather prematurely. In fact, she is yet to shrug off the style of public speaking typical in intercollegiate debates, as she revealed when addressing a press conference recently; and yet, she has to contend with a most ruthless opponent in General Zia.

Her present weakness, and indeed uneasiness, stems from the reality of her escape from oppression in Pakistan, and an apparent reluctance to return to the scene of battle. On her release from house arrest in January 1984, she flew to the United Kingdom for medical treatment—she had developed an ear problem—and though fully recovered, is unwilling to go back because she is "bound to be interned" once again. She claims she wanted to return when she heard rumours that political parties would be allowed to field candidates in the recently-held elections (which they were not), but changed her mind when she came to know the truth, and also, because, according to her, the Karachi airport and her house in the same city had been cordoned off by the army in anticipation of her arrival. Since the time of the coup that overthrew her father, Ms Bhutto has endured great humiliation and hardship in the hands of the military rulers. But her associates confide that she might have become a little wary of suffering, and would, perhaps, like to run her campaign from London, though she is still to seek political asylum

The invitation to the international media was part of this exercise. She appealed to them to help her cause, while emphasising that the partyless polls were "a farce" and "selections not elections," that the movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD), of which the PPP is a constituent, will "successfully boycott the polls." She even challenged Zia, saying that his nominees would lose their security deposits against every single PPP candidate "in a free and fair general election."

While the PPP is probably the only party with a respectable base—47 of the newly-elected members of the National Assembly (the total seats being 207) are said to have won purely on "*shaheed* Bhutto's" name—the results of last week's elections have come as a rude shock to Ms Bhutto, and reduced much of her earlier assertions to just rhetoric. The largest grouping in the new house is believed to be the Muslim League, with 60 seats, whose only link with Mohammed Ali Jinnah is its nomenclature. It has no record of dissent against military rule and no discernable ideology, which, if anything, goes in the General's favour. The defeat of six of Zia's ministers negates the charge of widespread rigging. And the turnout, too, of 52 per cent, compares well with the 57 per cent of votes cast in 1970.

But though disconsolate, Ms Bhutto is still determined to attain her goal, that of ousting General Zia. And it is true when she says that the outcome of the hustings has not granted General Zia any legitimacy, for the sovereignty of the new Assembly, not to mention the President's own unelected status, remains in doubt. When asked whether she would consider guerilla tactics as a means of removing Zia, her reply, skilful, if not sincere, was, "We are a political party and would like to pursue political means." These methods now seem to have failed, so, sooner than later, the only alternative could be the revolutionary path. This is how General Charles de Gaulle did it, while in exile in London. And if Ms Bhutto is capable, this would appear to be her only choice.



Benazir Bhutto (waving) with friends

Ashis Ray, London

GUEST COLUMN/CHANCHAL SARKAR

Foiling a Conspiracy

As I left Dhaka on my last visit, I thought how lucky the people of Darjeeling were. They'll watch the next instalments of the two family serials running on Bangladesh TV and I won't, I said to myself. They are captivating, the serials, and prove the truth of the quintessential Bengali principle that culture and language are immensely stronger than political boundaries and diplomatic demarches. Today it is Darjeeling and across the other frontier areas. Tomorrow everyday technology will make sure that there will be no holding back the signals anywhere. Those crossgrained grey eminences who burrow in the offices of the National Security Intelligence and Armed Forces Intelligence in Dhaka, and their counterparts in New Delhi and Calcutta had better cotton on to that fact soon.

Neither Rabindranath Tagore nor Kazi Nazrul Islam sang about any particular district but of Bengal as a whole. So why not push aside the iron curtain that separates the culture and language of the two Bengals?

It is absolutely certain that powerful soft-pedallers in both countries work in a determined fashion to keep the two countries from getting any closer. Else why should the elementary issues of linking them by direct telephone and a direct air service be gathering icicles while there is so much caterwauling about South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC)? Every time there's a meeting of the bilateral joint committee there is an optimistic press handout. Then it is back to square one. Whenever I have talked to the officials of either country, they invariably blame the other side. In truth the fault lies with both and it is due to suspicion and a blinkered, negative view of the sub-continent's future.

Take theatre, for example, which is enthusiastically loved by the people in both Bengals. There used to be a number of scholarships for Bangladeshis at Delhi's National School of Drama and these scholarship-holders were a powerful influence on many aspects of Bangladeshi drama. They have been stopped now. Any troupe coming from Calcutta to Bangladesh or going there has to pass through the eye of the needle, that is the scrutiny of several ministries and departments of the government of Bangladesh.



Bangladeshi actors performing in Calcutta: breaking cultural barriers

The Indians in their turn are prize-blunderers. When Dhaka's well-known Nagarik theatre group came to India in 1984 on an invitation from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), they sent in their professional requirements months ago. For their famous play *Nuruldiner Sarajiban* (The life entire of Nurulḍin) they needed three hillocks on the stage to represent three different centres of action of the play. At the ministry of culture they were told by the secretary that this had not been arranged because there was no allocation in the budget for it! The ministry also wanted the troupe to go to Jaipur, not on the original programme. Nagarik agreed but said that two of their cast had not yet arrived. A suggestion was then made: Couldn't someone in the ministry who had taken part in Bengali amateur theatricals take on the roles? It was like telling Zubin Mehta that, since the first violinist of the New York Philharmonic was held up, couldn't an additional secretary's daughter, who was taking violin lessons, stand in? In Calcutta, the ICCR could not find anything but a second-grade theatre hall for Nagarik's performance whereas any Calcutta group would have been happy to surrender their bookings to the guests.

The record in books is no better. Together, the two Bengals provide one of the greatest potential book markets in the world. I asked in Dhaka's New Market bookshops for the works of Kazi Nazrul Islam and was told that the Bangladesh edition was out of print and that copies would now have to be scrounged from Calcutta: a difficult job. I had taken over a list of books to buy from the Bangla Academy and found almost all of them to be out of print. Paper is very expensive in Bangladesh (despite a limited amount put out for cultural use) and so is good printing. Book prices are prohibitive. Result: Dhaka University published just seven books last year. People in Bangladesh know more about authors and books of the West. In fact, they know more than the people of West Bengal do. But the traffic in books is very, very thin.

Sitting under the spreading banyan tree in the grounds of the Bangla Academy and listening to the songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam one evening and of D.L. Roy, Atul Prasad and Rajani Kanta Sen the next, it occurred to me that there is only one way to beat this

grey conspiracy of small, tunnel-visioned people: by-pass it. Individual travel is now fairly easy specially if there is a sponsor and so more and more writers, singers, sportsmen, doctors, scientists, accountants, economists, chess players, technologists, mechanics, voluntary organisation people and women's organisation workers should invite each other over. Neither Rabindranath Tagore nor Kazi Nazrul Islam sang about any particular district but of Bengal as a whole. So why not push aside the iron curtain that separates the culture and language of the two Bengals?

Taking the Madhu Sarak from Jessore I drove up to Sagardari and it was heart-rending to see the decrepit state of Michael Madhusudan's ancestral house and the poor quality of the two old busts of the poet that stand in front of it. The river Kapotakshi, slender now, still runs by Sagardari and Michael's poem on the river is inscribed on a marble slab near where once was the *ghat*. Lalan Fakir and Hosen Raja's homes could not be faring any better, I am sure. To their eternal credit the Bangladeshis have not changed the names of places or institutions in their country—it would have been stupid if they had because they are part of our composite heritage although they have not done much about preservation. Even old Dhaka is decaying fast. West Bengalis have an equally bad record about preserving the homes of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee or Jibananda Das or anyone else. (Did not Haraprasad Shastri once say that "Bengalis are a people who've forgotten about themselves?") Enthusiastic people could try to join forces with their counterparts and savour their past in both parts of Bengal. There must be a rediscovery of roots. There must also be generosity in the recognition of roots—Calcutta has not even a street named after that most Bengali of its chief ministers, A.K. Fazlul Huq.

Gift-mail or send by hand a lot of Bengali books across the border—send magazines, clippings and records and cassettes—that will help beat the conspiracy. "Xeroxcracy" is a powerful weapon. There are other ways too. The only channel between the two Bengals that has always been open is radio (and now TV). If books and magazines cannot cross, what is there to prevent All India Radio, Calcutta, from fashioning the latest novels of West Bengal into seven or eight readings (or into plays) as the BBC's World Service does all the time? Spike Milligan's latest novel *Pucknoon* and Kingsley Amis's *I Like It Here*, for instance, were adapted recently. Then why not the latest of Samaresh Basu and Shankar? Until the administrations take off their blinkers—and that won't happen for a long, long time—only person-to-person efforts can foil the conspiracy, take the wrinkles out of our relationship, and let the language and culture of the two Bengals mingle.

Until the administrations (of India and Bangladesh) take off their blinkers—and that won't happen for a long, long time—only person-to-person effort can foil the conspiracy, take the wrinkles out of our relationship, and let the language and culture of the two Bengals mingle.

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SPECIAL REPORT

Punjab: The End Game

The release of the Akali leaders from jail and the appointment of Arjun Singh as the Governor of Punjab have raised hopes of a settlement of the Punjab crisis

By any reckoning, Mr Arjun Singh's sudden entry into Punjab has to be seen in the perspective of this troubled and strife-torn border state bedevilled by extremism and terrorism by Khalistani protagonists and their supporters and sympathisers. Mr Arjun Singh is far more important for Punjab than he perhaps ever was for Madhya Pradesh. His appointment took the nation by surprise, especially because it came within 24 hours of his being sworn in as chief minister of MP for another term

The suddenness of the decision by the Prime Minister prompted many theories to be floated in political circles. Had he been shunted off because he was becoming too powerful as a chief minister? Had his wings been clipped because of his growing popularity? Had he to leave MP because most of the MLAs were his nominees? Even as these questions were asked, there were other queries too. Why had Rajiv Gandhi taken the decision so suddenly? Why had he chosen Mr Arjun Singh for this job? Why not any other chief minister? Did Rajiv Gandhi think that the Rajputs in his party would gang up against him if Mr Chandrashekhar Singh of Bihar was denied another term in office? There were a host of questions. In this surcharged atmosphere came the report that Mr Sitaram Kesri had tendered the advice to the Prime Minister that Arjun Singh's wings should be clipped right now as he was getting too big for his boots.

Mr Arjun Singh's new assignment as Governor of Punjab is a crucial test for this suave, sophisticated and soft-spoken gentleman politician. By his performance, to a great extent, will be judged the calibre of the new government headed by Rajiv Gandhi. And success in this tough and challenging assignment will most certainly have a positive impact on the mood of the Indian nation. If Mr Arjun Singh succeeds as a politician where his predecessor bureaucrats have not made a mark, he stands a very good chance of being inducted into the council of ministers as India's home minister. In that event, Mr S. B. Chavan may be sent to Maharashtra as chief minister.



Arjun Singh

Left with just a few options to resolve the Punjab imbroglio, Rajiv Gandhi must make his moves on the political chessboard with caution and care. In releasing Sant Longowal and seven other Akali leaders in appointing Mr Arjun Singh as the Governor of Punjab, and in clarifying that only certain portions of the Anandpur Sahib resolution need to be rejected, Rajiv Gandhi can be said to have made some very vital moves in what we may call as the "end game."



Harchand Singh Longowal

The release of the Akali leaders is, by any stretch of imagination, an extremely bold and wise move. One wonders whether his late mother would have ever shed her reluctance to make such a move. Their release, after nine months of detention, will give them the opportunity to renew their contacts, and get a feel of the mood of the people in general, an aspect that may help them determine their future course of action.

At the time the Madhya Pradesh Congress(I) legislature party unanimously elected Mr Arjun Singh as its leader and chief minister of the state, there was a question mark over who would be his counterpart in Bihar. The tussle there was between the chief minister, Mr Chandrashekhar Singh, a Rajput, and Mr Bindeshwar Dubey, Bihar PCC(I) president, a Brahmin. The Rajputs would gang up if Mr Singh was not made the chief minister of Bihar, Mr Gandhi was told. Some name-dropping was indulged in. The names included those of Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Mr Sanjay Singh, Madhavrao Scindia and even Mr Arun Singh, a close aide of the PM. It was made out that the Rajput clan should be dealt a blow at this juncture. This could best be done by getting rid of Arjun Singh and choosing Mr Dubey as the chief minister of Bihar. Thus, one of the most prominent Rajputs in the Congress(I) was to be given a treatment that would put the others in their place and weaken their possible resolve to plot against the PM.

But if the move was made prior to Arjun Singh being elected CLP(I) leader, the opposition would utilise it to say that a leader who could not become a chief minister was sent packing as Governor. So the process of his being unanimously elected was gone through. And then, when the chief minister, about to begin his second five-year term, came to consult the Prime Minister on whom to include in the council of ministers, he was told to drop everything and proceed as the Governor of Punjab.

In a related development, the moment it became known that Mr Arjun Singh was being posted as the Governor of Punjab, a beaming Mr Vidya Charan Shukla made no effort to

conceal his joy to a select band of newsmen. He invited them to his house where he distributed "kaju barfi" and issued a statement, the first in recent years, welcoming the choice of Mr Motilal Vora as the new chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. Mr Chandulal Chandrakar is as depressed over Vora's choice as Shukla is happy. It remains to be seen how Mr Gandhi deals with Mr Shukla on this score. What is certain is that Shukla's effort to steal the limelight by pretending that he was behind the move to rid his home state of Arjun Singh has been frowned upon by the PM. Shukla has spoken after a long time. Yet, he may find he has spoken too soon.

But to return to the main issue, the question arises as to why Kesri should fear Arjun Singh's second term in office. The reason is simple. In 1980, when he first became the chief minister, he was dependent on New Delhi. But this time, Arjun Singh had selected his party nominees in a manner that most of those loyal to him personally were included and emerged victorious in the recent Assembly poll. This meant that Mr Arjun Singh could emerge as the most powerful chief minister in the country. In Kesri's assessment, this was a disturbing fact and could be profitably used to ensure that the political game in Bihar was played the way he wanted it. Hence the story of the Congress Rajputs joining hands to put up a common front against Rajiv Gandhi. It was a convenient story, a plausible story. Most important, it sold, enabling Kesri to kill more than two birds with one stone. One bird was an individual and the other a state. It also might have helped him move closer to the PM.

Mr Arjun Singh undoubtedly put up a brave front while answering a variety of questions, very probing in nature, from newsmen who met him in Madhya Pradesh Bhavan. But those who met him alone found him pensive and nervous, unsure about what lay ahead of him. He was at a loss to understand why he had been picked up so swiftly for this gubernatorial assignment.

The drama about the surprise posting had its impact. Many other chief ministers saw uncertainty around them. They all realised that what had happened to Arjun Singh could happen to any one of them. However powerful they may be, these chief ministers knew that their destiny lay in the hands of one individual: Rajiv Gandhi. Arjun Singh had been lucky to have so many nice things said about him at the time of his removal from Madhya Pradesh. The others may be far less fortunate. Somebody like Vasantdada Patil may not even get a governorship after dislodgement.

The Prime Minister's decision evoked several other questions. Was this an impulsive action? Was this the new style of functioning? Would it not create an air of uncertainty for all other chief ministers, put them on tenterhooks and force them to be beholden to Rajiv Gandhi for every day they remained in office? Was it not an insult to the verdict of the CLP(I) of MP? Was not a discarded chief minister being sent as Governor? He enjoyed the solid backing of his CLP(I), it was stated. He himself said it was not an insult to the CLP(I) but an honour to him. He was proud that the PM had placed faith in him and he pledged to do his utmost to resolve the Punjab tangle.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

The Government's Litmus Test

Things are apace again in Punjab. The release of eight top Akali leaders including the president Harchand Singh Longowal, Jagdev Singh Talwandi and Surjit Singh Barnala was quickly followed up by a series of announcements concerning the state in Parliament and outside: The decision of the cabinet sub-committee on Punjab to visit the state, a reaffirmation of the commitment to restore popular rule and a discernible move towards the withdrawal of the army. The Prime Minister himself softened his stand on the issue when he told the Rajya Sabha on 14 March that the government had at no time demanded that the Akali Dal give up the entire Anandpur Sahib resolution as a precondition to the resumption of talks for solving the tangle in Punjab.

The Akali Dal, however, does have preconditions and is still treading the hard line. Harchand Singh Longowal has been, since his release, making it clear that the road for talks will not be opened until the army is pulled out of Punjab and an enquiry ordered into the riots following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. There are other conditions being placed by the Akalis which the government might find unpalatable. The release of all members of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) and the withdrawal of all cases against Sikhs who deserted the army in the wake of Operation Bluestar. Everyone from Longowal down to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) acting President Prem Singh Lalpura and the Akali Dal convener, Surjan Singh Thekedar, is making these demands.

Perhaps, a more important indication of things to come is the call that Longowal has given to the Sikh community. Stressing that the prime task of his party was to restore the self-respect of Sikhs in the country, he has appealed to all members of the Sikh community to come together in this hour of "deep crisis" and fight the government's policy of "aggression and repression."

If the attitude of the Akali leadership is any indication, things do not seem to be looking up in Punjab. The recent past looms large over the state and the Akalis are not uttering a word about the future. All that Harchand Singh Longowal has done so far is to cry hoarse over what he calls the government's attempt to crush the Sikh community. His long list of complaints begins with Operation Bluestar, meanders through the detention of Akali leaders and the riots and comes finally to his allegation that the Sikh community has been shabbily treated by a government that has itself become communal. Longowal went as far as to say that Rajiv Gandhi's mandate was one that was got by inciting the sentiments of the majority community against the Sikhs all over the country. He has been unequivocal in his criticism. Commenting on the army operation inside the Golden Temple, he said that the government had surpassed "even the Mughals in committing atrocities against the Sikhs."

Keeping the sword out of the scabbard, feel Punjab watchers, has almost become a necessity for the Akali leadership. Even the moderates will have to do it for sometime if not for anything else, to maintain their credibility in the Sikh community. The government's decision to let off a section of the detained leadership is quite obviously a litmus test to gauge the mood in Punjab. Whether it will bring forth the right colours is something only time will tell.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

INVESTIGATION

The Company a Minister Keeps

Hotel Leela-Penta which is being set up near Bombay's new Sahar international airport, will not only be unique because it is located on prime government land but also due to the official patronage it has enjoyed so far. Shubhabrata Bhattacharya investigates into the "special treatment" the hotel has enjoyed, courtesy Mr Khurshed Alam Khan, the former minister for tourism and civil aviation and presently the minister of state for external affairs.

Bombay's new Sahar international airport is soon going to have a hotel in its vicinity. The Leela Penta Hotel, which is being set up by Hotel Leela-venture Ltd, a firm promoted by a defunct textile unit, Leela (Scottish) Lace Ltd, will not only be unique due to its location on prime government land but also because of the official patronage it has enjoyed thus far. The foundation stone ceremony (*bhoomi-pooja*) on 16 October 1983 was "graced" by the Maharashtra chief minister, Vasantdada Patil and the then union tourism and civil aviation minister Khurshed Alam Khan (who is now the minister of state for external affairs). The entire family of Khurshed Alam Khan, his son, his daughter and his son-in-law, attended the ceremony. This was not the only VIP connection which Hotel Leelaventure Ltd could boast of. The present board of directors of the company has tennis star Vijay Amritraj as a member. Two former secretaries to the government of India are on the board. Dr B Venkatramaan (who was secretary, tourism and civil aviation at the time when the hotel's lease with the International Airports Authority of India was being negotiated) and P J Fernandes, a distinguished retired civil servant whose daughter is married to Khurshed Alam Khan's son. The presence of both these gentlemen on the board would not have evoked interest but for the fact that in the government's ethics, when a person has any nexus with the decision-making for a private project, sitting on the board of the beneficiary company is unheard of.

Apart from Vasantdada Patil and Khurshed Alam Khan, another VIP who is friendly with the patriarch of the Leela Lace family, C P Krishnan Nair, is the Kerala chief minister, K Karunakaran. While Mr Patil and Mr Khan went out of their way to "grace" the *bhoomi-pooja* of Leela-Penta Hotel three days before the lease was actually signed with IAAI, the Bombay and Trivandrum grapevine has stories about how Mr Karunakaran tried to bail out Mr Nair after he had been served an Urban Land Ceiling notice in November 1983 (Remember Mr Karunakaran's secret trips to Bombay in the last phase of 1983? The Kerala chief minister has thus far been unable to explain his visits to Bombay.)

Leela Penta Hotel is coming up on prime government land *(see box)* which has been given to it for a song. The lease and licence agreements with the IAAI have many strange characteristics. According to Dr Rashmi Mayur, the well known environmentalist and chief of Greater Bombay Citizen's Vigilance Committee, "Very seldom has a project violated so many statutes and laws as Leela Penta Hotel." Dr Mayur told SUNDAY that the laws violated by the hotel were: The Companies Act 1956, The Transfer of Property Act 1882, The Easements Act, The Indian Stamp Act, The Income Tax Act 1962, The Wealth Tax Act 1957, The Gift Tax Act 1958, The Urban Land Ceiling Act, The Foreign Exchange Regulations Act 1973, The International Airports Authority Act 1972, The Bombay Municipal Corporation Act 1888, Development Control Rules for Greater Bombay, Building Regulations of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Development Plans for Greater Bombay, Geological Survey of India, height restriction on building within two kilometres' radius around international airports in India. "One really wonders how such violations could have taken place without the connivance of lawmakers and several implementing agencies. The whole project is ultimate in mafiaism at its best," Dr Mayur asserted.



Khurshed Alam Khan

The Krishnan Nair family's prime business before the hotel project came up was Leela (Scottish) Lace Ltd. a textile company floated in 1964, which has not been reporting much production in the past few years. Initially C.P. Krishnan Nair's wife Leelaamma was his business associate (hence the name "Leela" in the companies). Now his son, Dinesh Nair, is the mananging director of Leela Lace and another son, Vivek Nair, is managing director of the hotel. Initially, the Nairs planned the hotel on their own land but as political patronage came in, the hotel shifted out of the family's land to government land.

The Nairs initially planned to set up the hotel on their own land which now has been left untouched, thanks to the IAAI bonanza. In March 1982, the family, in order to attract non-resident funds, issued a project report, prepared by one Dr J.K. Krishnaswamy, who styled himself as an

"independent economic and tourism consultant." Page 64 of the report refers to the location of the project. It runs as follows:

Land Characteristics

The existing plot of land has an area of approximately 10,000 sq yds (90,000 sq ft) on the periphery of which is located a 28-room mansion measuring about 1983 sq yds (12,000 sq ft) After cordoning off this mansion there is available 8017 sq yds (72,154 sq ft) for the hotel project.

It is the intention of the hotel company to construct a 284-room hotel building in one stretch.

However, the company's application to the state government in Bombay for an increase in plot ratio or floor space index (FSI) has not yet been approved and is still under its scrutiny. The increase in FSI is required to build a 284-room property on the available land. Due to the procedural delay usually consistent with such variances, it has been decided to go ahead with the construction of 180 rooms in the first phase of the project.

The company has moved the central government's department of tourism to strongly recommend to the state government the need for an immediate sanction of the higher FSI requested. Also the company had petitioned the International Airport's Authority (IAAI) of the central government to consider giving to the company on long lease some portion of the land contiguous to the proposed

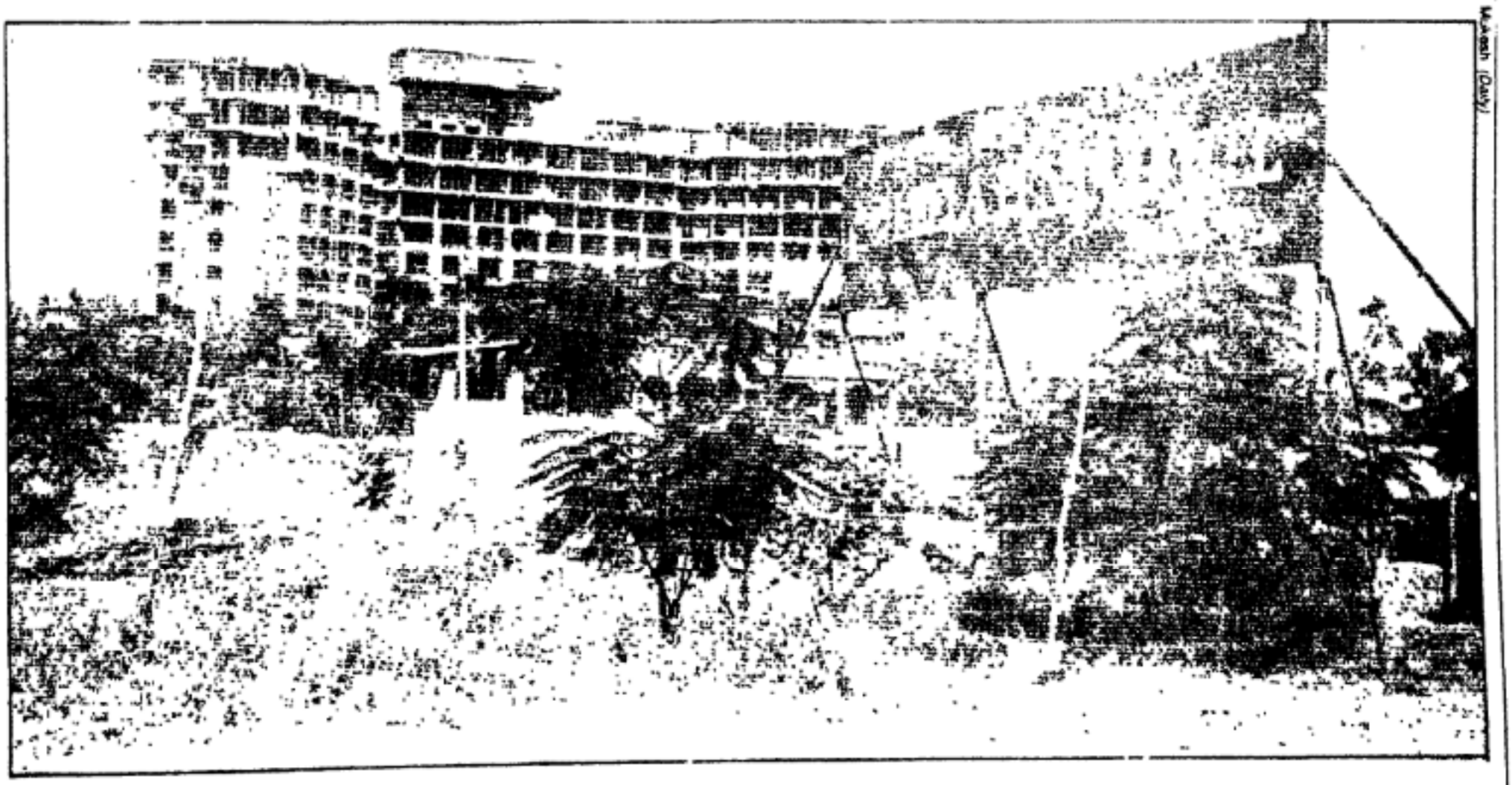
Irregular Dealings?

The licence agreement, under which Leela-Penta hotel has been given 20,000 sq. meters of government land is an interesting document with some unique characteristics. The land has been given to Leela (Scottish) Lace Ltd., a textile manufacturing company which has not much of production to show over the past few years, for a period of five years (beginning from 2 August 1982) for "beautification and recreation purposes." The plot is adjacent to the land leased for construction of the hotel and shall form part of the hotel premises. Though the licence was given to Leela (Scottish) Lace Ltd., the utilisation is being done by Hotel Leelaverture Ltd., which is a different company. Normally licensed land is not transferable, but in this case this is only a small irregularity compared to other breaches of licence norms. Clause three of the agreement states that the licence fee (fixed at Rs two lakhs initially) could be revised every three years: thereby clearly suggesting that the licence is likely to be renewed indefinitely (which makes it as good as a lease).

When the prospectus of Hotel Leelaventure Ltd., shows that the company has "acquired" 29,000 sq. meters of IAAI land, it is presumed that the licence has been deemed to be a perpetual agreement. Under normal circumstances, buildings are not permitted on licensed premises. But clauses six, eight and nine of the licence agreement clearly permit construction of buildings and structures on this land. (The buildings are apparently meant for "beautification and recreation purposes," so that the approach road to Sahar airport does not look shabby!)

The Nair family apparently has been given the licence to make profits on this land. The agreement is with Leela (Scottish) Lace Ltd., which is letting Hotel Leelaventure Ltd., use the land. On the books, Leela (Scottish) Lace can earn money from the hotel company on this account. The "beautification and recreation" motives of the Nairs can help them to easily siphon money from the hotel to the textile company. The curious feature is that normally a licence agreement's benefits cannot be transferred. While Leela (Scottish) Lace Ltd., is blatantly violating this stipulation and while Hotel Leelaventure Ltd's prospectus issued in February 1985 provides proof of such transfer, the IAAI has apparently turned a blind eye to these irregularities.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya



Mukesh (Daily)

The site of the construction of Leela-Penta Hotel

The Government's Losses

In the last two years the government has lost Rs two crores, at a conservative estimate, due to the whims of minister Khurshed Alam Khan. And a recurring loss of around a crore of rupees each year has been projected for years to come, till the lease-cum-licence arrangement on prime land in Bombay, entered into with Hotel Leelaventure Ltd. expires on 11 July 2012. The international airports authority of India (IAAI) has allowed Hotel Leelaventure Ltd. to use 38,000 sq metres of IAAI land near the Sahar International airport. 20,000 sq m have been given on licence to Leela (Scotish) Lace Ltd, which has promoted Leelaventure, at an annual licence fee of Rs two lakhs. Two lease agreements have been signed with Hotel Leelaventure Ltd., each for 9,000 sq m of land, at an annual fee of Rs 2.5 lakhs each. Thus, for Rs 6.5 lakhs annually, till 11 July 2012, Leelaventure has been given charge of 38,000 sq m of government land.

The land near Sahar airport is lucrative. The most conservative estimate puts the price of land now at Rs 2,000 per sq metre. Had the IAAI sold the land to Leelaventure, then Rs 7.6 crores could have accrued to the government immediately at 14 per cent rate of returns; had IAAI merely invested the sale proceeds, then annually Rs 1,06,40,000 would have come in as interest. Thus, by entering into the land deal with Leelaventure, the IAAI is notionally losing Rs 99,90,000 or almost a crore of rupees per year.

The lease-cum-licence deal was entered into in 1983. So, for 1983-84 and 1984-85, Rs two crores have been lost. The deal also stipulates that four per cent of the total annual turnover of the hotel and two per cent of the turnover of the flight kitchen shall go to the IAAI as royalty. The hotel is slated for "soft opening" (partial opening while construction continues) in June 1985. For a crore of rupees to accrue to the IAAI on account of these percentages, annual turnover of around Rs 25 crores will have to be envisaged. Unless the hotel generates such turnover, howsoever profitable it be for the private owners, the government certainly is a loser.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

hotel site. This petition has been received favourably by the IAAI and when this petition is granted, the company would have enough FSI to build 284 rooms even if its application to the state government is not approved by then.

On page 71 the report goes on to say: The company formed to promote the project is Hotel Leelaventure Private Ltd. This company was formed and incorporated on 20th March 1981 after a merger was made with Leela Scottish Lace Private Ltd. The new company has taken over the assets of Leela Scottish Lace Pvt Ltd. including land measuring 10,000 sq yds situated on Andheri-Kurla Road, 900 yds from the new Sahar international airport.

Page 37 of the report says: In fact the subject hotel is the only hotel which has had final plans drawn up with the architect and necessary approvals received from the government which is being opened in the vicinity of the Sahar international airport."

It is therefore clear that the hotel was to be built on land belonging to the company and only some land contiguous to the hotel was requested from IAAI on lease The promoting company, Leela (Scottish) Lace Pvt Ltd which was a seemingly flourishing company engaged in large exports of fabric was mysteriously willing to hand over all its assets, including the land for the construction of the hotel and the plans for the hotel based on this land had already been sanctioned. This was in March 1982. By August 1982, the IAAI by a licence agreement, had handed over 20,000 sq metres of its land to Leela (Scottish) Lace for a paltry consideration of only Rs two lakhs per year.

Not content with the above land on lease-license it appears that Mr Nair even applied to the Bombay Municipal Corporation in the first instance, to build the hotel in the name of IAAI. And the IAAI readily lent its name to such a gross misrepresentation. In reply to the IAAI's application dated 8.9.83 for permission the Municipal Corporation, by its letter Ref No. GE/1194/WS/AK dated 2nd January 1984 rejected the application on the ground that the land in question did not belong to the IAAI. The land referred to bear CTS No 1405, 1404 and 1407. The above survey numbers are those of land belonging to Leela Lace.

On 1 November 1983, by letter bearing No IDV-1080/1149/(181)D. XVII Mrs K.A. P[illegible]dnekar, under secretary in Maharashtra's housing and special assistance department, informed Leela Lace that the company had not obtained Urban Land Ceiling permission for transfer of land to them from one Mr Gandhy and commenced construction of the hotel without taking permission as required under the above Act. By this letter, the above official threatened to launch proceedings against Leela Lace.

It appears that both the above violations were hushed up and, as Mr Vivek Nair would like to put it, the hotel was given "top priority." It is also clear that a company *viz* Leela (Scottish) Lace, which had already been amalgamated with Hotel Leelaventure continues to function as an independent company. In fact, on 1 April 1984, Mr C.P. Krishnan Nair was crowned as a "chairman for life" and his son Dinesh Nair appointed managing director for 10 years. Under the Company's Act any company seeking to amalgamate with another company has to take the prior permission of its shareholders, creditors and the High Court. Once it is amalgamated it ceases to function as its identity and all its assets are merged with the amalgamated company. As this has both legal and taxation repercussions it would be interesting to know by what sleight of hand Mr Nair has de-amalgamated his company. The reasons are, of course, clear. Being flush with government land he saw no purpose in amalgamating and selling the land and other assets to the hotel company.

How Leela Lace came to own its land is yet another story. In 1980, Leela Lace filed a suit (No 1523 of 1980) against Mr Nair's wife, Mrs Leelaamma. The brief facts leading

A photostat copy of a letter by Vasantdada Patil recommending the Galadharis



[illegible]

13th October, 1981

Dear Yashwantrao Dada Patilji,

I write this to say that Gilad[illegible]brothers, I believe, have again shown interests in building super five Star Hotels at Bombay along with other necessary facilities for conventions etc. I understand that they have met you some time back in this connection and as there is still need for such a hotel in Bombay I would suggest that their request may kindly be considered on priority basis so that Bombay may have the hotel of the type mentioned above. I am further given to understand that they have recently constructed a hotel at Colombo, Sri Lanka, which has been acclaimed as one of the best in this part of the world. I am sure if given facilities in Bombay they would certainly like to construct a hotel still better in our country.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Khurshed Alam Khan)

Shri Yashwantrao Bhaurao Patil,
Chief Minister,
Government of Maharashtra,
Bombay

to the suit are: On 1 July 1976 Leela Lace lent a sum of Rs 3,45,000 to Leelaamma at nine per cent interest per annum. She made some small repayments from time to time probably to obligingly ensure that Leela Lace would not be barred, by the law of limitation from claiming repayment. In September 1980, when the suit was filed the amount swelled to Rs 5,55,000. When she borrowed the money in 1976, Leelaamma also obligingly created a lease of the land in favour of the company. When she pleaded 'helplessness' in repaying the above amount she did not want to make life difficult for her husband's company. So, she handed over all the title deeds of the land to the company. In the suit filed by the company, they asked that the land should be sold by the court as repayment of their above debt. Having cleverly created a prior lease in its favour the company had ensured that there would be no other buyers. Leelaamma gave away over 6367 sq. metres of prime land for a total sum of Rs seven lakhs. It must be remembered that 10,000 sq yds of this very same land was valued at Rs 2.75 crores by the Nairs in their project report for the purpose of selling it to the hotel company and for collection of money from non-residents and others. Why was all this resorted to when Mr C.P. Krishnan Nair and his wife, then as well as now, continue to reside together?

In 1976, the Urban Land Ceiling Act came into being. It required prior permission of the government before any transfer of land could take the place. Every transfer of land also involved payment of stamp duty upto 15 per cent of the market value of the land. To avoid both people started filing collusive suits and thereafter arriving at a compromise to get an order from the court. Though this device certainly enabled

"We Are Not Breaking Any Rules"

C.P. Krishnan Nair told SUNDAY

Q. *How did you make this jump from fashions to the hotel business?*

A: Our Leela Lace factory set up in 1962 has been just a few kms from Sahar and so is our bungalow. The land on which the factory was built (9,000 sq metres) belonged to the Belgian consulate and we bought it over. In 1979-80 when Sahar airport came up literally in our backyard, I used to see the endless queues of taxis and the problems that the tourists had and it struck me that we could put up a hotel and a flight kitchen. The only five-star hotel in the area was the Centaur. We had to convert our land which was for light industrial purposes to completely residential to put up the hotel. All sorts of hurdles for this change of land use were put during Mr Antulay's regime and we finally got it in 1982 during Mr Vasantdada Patil's regime.

Q: It is said that you got preferential treatment by getting the land cheaply—for something like Rs four-and-a-half lakhs annually when it costs Rs six crores.

A: Our land was contiguous to the airport authority land and it had been in dispute since 1962. Leela Lace, promoters of Hotel Leelaventure Ltd., agreed to settle the dispute by taking the land on lease. Hotel Leelaventure did not get anything more than what people like the Oberois and Ambassador Hotels got. Oberois got 22,000 sq. metres of land on lease for 30 years, the Ambassador Hotel and flight kitchen got 4,000 sq. metres on a long lease and 1,500 sq. metres more in 1982. They had encroached on this land but this encroachment was regularised and subsequently given on lease. They got an additional 1,200 sq. metres in occupation. Hotel Leelaventure got 18,000 sq. metres on lease for 30 years and 11,000 sq. metres of marshy land on licence for five years for beautification. It is this latter land which is the envy of everybody but we are levelling the land etc. at our own cost for a garden. The land is certainly not worth Rs six crores. Just recently a plot of land next to ours, some 18,000 sq. metres was sold for Rs 35 lakhs. So you see your figures are not correct.

Q: The lease you have says it is for 28 years, 7 months and 19 days. Why such a curious time frame?

A: The lease is for 30 years. You see the lease was given to Leela Lace for 30 years in July 1982 when it was originally putting up the hotel. Then, since Hotel Leelaventure was formed, this licence was transferred to the hotel company so the lease came into effect on 22.11.83 and will be in force as the document says (*shows the document*) till 11.7.2012.

IAAI, in addition to the lease rent amounting to Rs 7.25 lakhs per annum will also get two per cent of the gross turnover of the hotel and flight kitchen, which works out to about Rs 14 lakhs in the first year, Rs 16 lakhs in the second year and about Rs 20 lakhs in the third year. As the turnover increases, compensation for IAAI also will increase. Just for your information, the airport authorities have given land at Delhi airport to the following: Oberoi Hotels flight kitchen, Taj Hotels and flight kitchen and Mohan Hotels and flight kitchen. They have each got about 20,000 sq. metres.

Q: Did the induction of persons like Mr P. J. Fernandes, who is close to Mr Khurshed Alam Khan and Dr Venkatraman help you get the facilities like land use change immediately? It is said that you have been allowed to build more floors, and consume more FSI thereby, because of your connections.

A: We got this long before Mr Fernandes was inducted. Praxy (Fernandes) has been a good and dear friend of mine for several years. When he was additional textile commissioner, I was a member of the handloom board and then I also worked with him on the executive committee of the Apparel Export Promotion Council. When Praxy was chairman of the State Trading Corporation, I was then promoting Bleeding Madras fabrics and he asked me to channelise my imports through STC which I did. So when Praxy returned to India last year after his assignment abroad, I invited him to join our board. He is a clean and upright man. Why should we be denied the privilege of putting up a hotel and why should only some people have the monopoly for this? We had a good case. Besides all those earning foreign exchange are given extra FSI. We are not in the airport belt, so we are not breaking any rules. It is also a lie that we swallowed the approach road to the Yellow Fever Hospital.

Interviewed by Olga Tellis

Bhoomi-puja Before Signing of Lease

How much of IAAI land has the Hotel Leela-Penta acquired? According to the prospectus issued by Hotel Leelaventure Ltd. in February 1985 (when a public issue was floated), "The company has acquired land admeasuring 29,000 sqm from IAAI on lease/licence for the purpose of setting up a hotel/ flight kitchen." The *bhoomi puja* (foundation-stone ceremony) for the hotel was performed on 16 October 1983, three days before the actual lease agreement was signed. The chief minister of Maharashtra, Vasantdada Patil and union minister of state for tourism and civil aviation, Khurshid Alam Khan "graced the occasion" (as per the invitation card issued by Leelaventure). On 19 October, the lease agreement was signed and given retrospective effect from 23 September 1983. This lease was for a period of 28 years nine months and 19 days, slated to terminate on 11 July 2012. The area leased by this agreement was: "Plot of land (marked in sketch attached) containing 9,000 sq m in the district of Bombay, Andheri (East), Andheri-Kurla Road, village Marol, bearing survey No. 141 (part) and cts No. 1405 north of Yellow Fever Hospital, south of Andheri-Kurla Road, east of property belonging to Leela (Scottish) Lace Private Ltd. and West of new approach road to terminal II."

Another lease agreement was signed, also for 9,000 sq m of land, on 22 November 1983. This time, the period was for 28 years seven months and 19 days, terminating, like the previous agreement, on 11 July 2012. Here, though the lease amount remained unchanged at Rs 2.5 lakhs per year, the area covered varied. Other details remaining same, the description became "survey No. 135 (part) and 141 (part) and cts No. 1405 and 1407 and 1411/12 north of Yellow Fever Hospital...."

Thus, in two lease agreements, different plots of land (with some commonality), totalling 18,000 sq m was given. In addition, by a licence agreement, for an annual fee of Rs two lakhs 20,000 sq m land was given to Leela (Scottish) Lace Pvt Ltd. by IAAI on 2 August 1982. This land has gone to the hotel project. Hence, 38,000 sq m and not 29,000 sq m (as given in the prospectus) has been given by IAAI to Hotel Leela-Penta.

The lease period is interesting. Under provisions of the International Airports Authority of India Act, 1971, (section 15) the IAAI is allowed to enter into lease and contracts for upto 30 years. Beyond this period, government approval is required. As the then civil aviation secretary, M.M.Kohli, did not agree with the land loot, he was conveniently bypassed by the minister's office by taking advantage of the 30-year stipulation of the IAAI Act. Normally leases are for 99 years in such land deals. With Hotel Leela-Penta coming up on a lavish scale, is it possible to imagine that on 11 July 2012 the IAAI shall reenter its land? The short-circuit route adopted by the friends of Leelaventure shows how government rules can be made pliable to ministerial whims.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

avoidance of stamp duty it cannot circumvent the obligation under Section 20 of the Urban Land Ceiling Act to obtain prior permission of the Urban Land Ceiling authorities whenever there is any vacant land involved. And in this case there are over 8,000 sq yds of vacant land out of a total area of 10,000 sq yds

The most pertinent issue that arises is the attitude of the IAAI. The entire land of the IAAI probably running into several thousand acres was acquired around 1950 from private owners for the purpose of 'expansion and development of Bombay airport.' Compensation paid to the owners was so little that many of them did not care to claim it. What is now being sought to be done to those plots? In 1984, the *Indian Express* had published a report which portrayed a startling picture of two builders of Bombay who had started the construction of 17 multistoreyed buildings on IAAI land at Vakola near Bombay airport. The newspaper reported that despite its attention being repeatedly drawn to this matter, the IAAI did nothing about it. Mr Nair may not be the only lucky recipient of the IAAI's benevolence. It is reported that three other five star hotels have been sanctioned by the IAAI on land taken away from hapless owners for a 'public purpose.'

The "ultimate in mafiaism" charge of Dr Rashmi Mayur may not be able to stop the Leela-Penta Hotel now. It has the attractive collaboration of the international "Penta" chain, promoted by British Airways, Swissair and Lufthansa. The construction is going on rapidly and a five-star hotel not being a shanty, the government's demolition squads cannot reach Leela-Penta. (Interestingly, while demolition of unauthorised structures, especially on government land are dealt with severely, the IAAI is oblivious of the violations by Leela Penta. During the recent Maharashtra Assembly polls, the Congress(I) candidate from South Bombay's Colaba seat, Marzban Patrawala, got a few public lavatories constructed for "jhuggi" dwellers near Cuffe Parade. The Bombay Municipality immediately demolished the "unauthorised structure," which was meant for public good Apparently the norms are different where five-star hotels are concerned.

The Leela Penta episode is not the only one in Khurshed Alam Khan's regime where "mafiaism" was promoted. He wrote a letter to the chief minister of Maharashtra in October 1984 (see xerox copy) in which he espoused the cause of the Galadhari brothers. (The Galadharis of Dubai had been declared proclaimed offenders in India due to gold smuggling some years back.) SUNDAY had sought Khurshed Alam Khan's replies to all the specific issues raised by us in this report as well as on the letter which he wrote favouring the Galadharis. While refusing to answer questions on Leela Penta (because the IAAI, apparently without the minister's knowledge, had allotted the land) the minister wrote to SUNDAY that he did "recall that a usual letter of recommendation was given as in normal course" regarding the Galadharis. In that letter, while recommending the case of a party which had been banned from India due to smuggling activities, Mr Khan had "suggested" to the Maharashtra chief minister that the Galadhari request should be considered on "priority basis." One wonders how many such "usual letters" were written by Khurshed Alam Khan "in normal course" during his days as minister for tourism and civil aviation.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, Bombay

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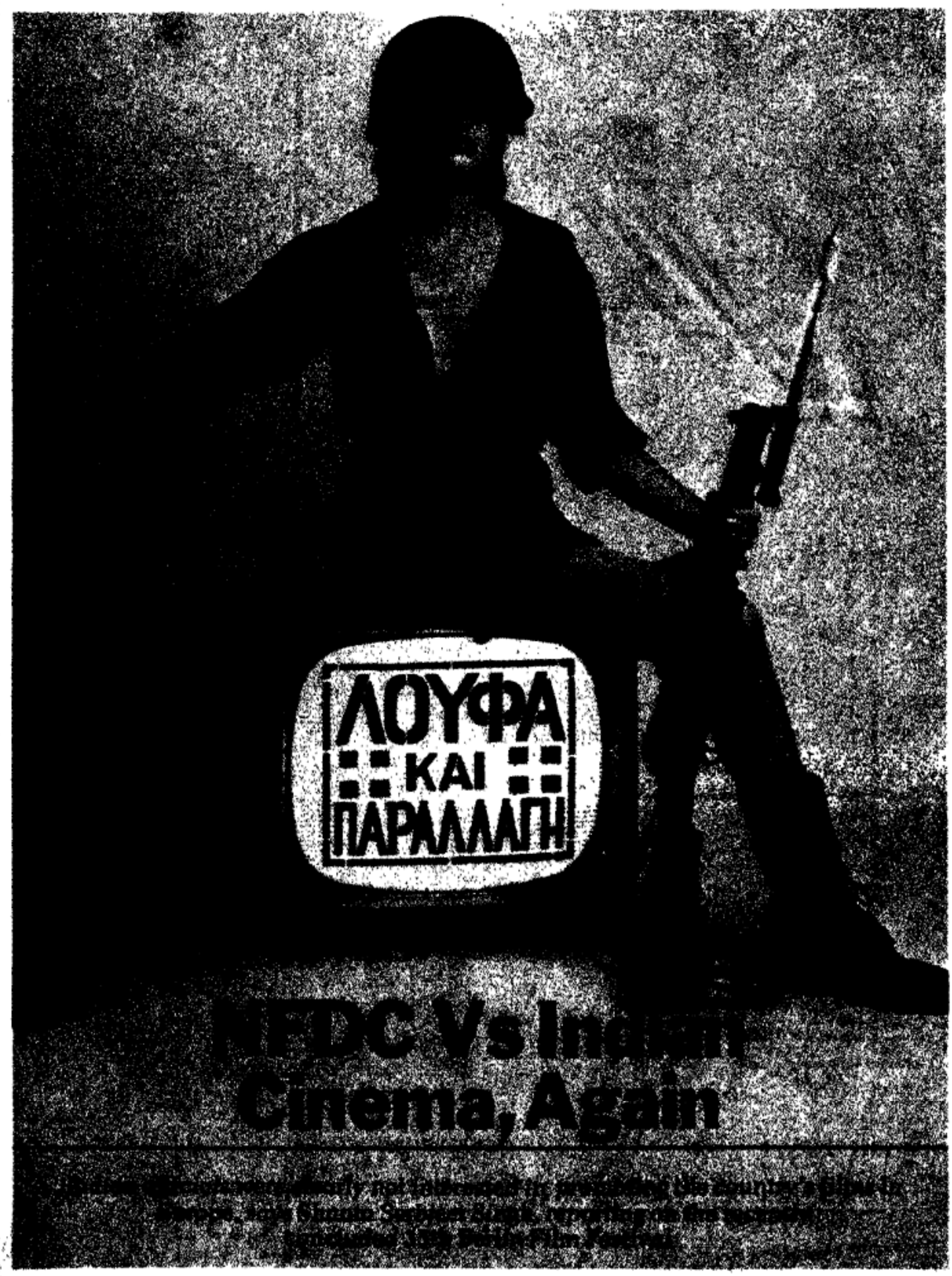


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IFDC Vs Imagi Cinema, Again

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Jean Renoir once said that visitors to international film festivals were like pilgrims at holy places, looking for miracles. He was talking chiefly about Cannes and Venice and Berlin, not Moscow or Karlovy Vary where film events are organised much like the Olympic games, each country having the same right to compete, regardless of whether they are good or not.

If one talks to the organisers of the Big Trio, even in the midst of different opinions, there is a contrary but eventually converging agreement on one point: there are just not that many top quality international film productions these days. Without sounding too dismissive, one can forget about the cliche that there are too many film festivals in the world and not enough good films to go around. As Moritz de Hadeln, director of the Berlinale says: "There's an abuse of the term film festival, when film weeks or 'friendly little gatherings' are spoken of in the same breath as the 'A' fests." He adds, "On the other hand, film festivals today are a very important way of promoting cinemas in general. Due to the increase, and not the decline, in the number of film productions worldwide, and provided the film festival has a strong enough backbone financially to move around the world, we'll be able to continue with the product of the new and older producers."

He may well have added, "provided there is a will to have a film festival in the first place." How many people in India, let alone the world of cinema internationally, know that the New Delhi Festival, like Cannes and Berlin, has an 'A' rating? And this non-starter of a festival cannot even complain of lacking a "financial backbone." The chance of filling the vacuum left by the demise of both the Teheran and the Manila International Film Festivals has been sadly lost for ever and the new Tokyo Film Festival being planned for an unveiling this year looks like it is all set to capture the Asian scene.

The initiative, being taken by the Far East generally to dominate the film scene, was pinpointed at this year's Berlinale by the aggressive promotion mounted by the South Koreans. This correspondent happened to be in the press room for still photographs when two German journalists walked in and asked for a photograph each of *Holi* and *Paar*.



Photograph Courtesy Sebastian Ghosh

A still from the French film, *Le Meilleur De La Vie*

◀ A still from the Greek film, *Loafing and Camouflage*

The former, while withdrawn from the competition section, did get a showing in the special screenings section while *Paar* was shown in the market. This correspondent heard the girl at the stills counter tell the Germans that she had only been given four stills and they had long since been given away. The journalists had hardly walked out of the room when in walked the chairman of the Korean Film Export Corporation. He wanted to know if the stills that he had supplied of their films had been exhausted and if the girl at the counter required more. He personally checked up the number of photographs left over and said he would soon be back with more. Unlike India, which for the fourth year running has no film in the main competition section, Japan and Korea have a film each in the competition. In addition to Sadao Nakajima's extravagantly shot exotica on a Japanese mountain tribe, paralleled by the Koreans' equally spectacular film *Blazing Sun*, the Japanese have brought the five-hour documentary on the famous Tokyo Trials, made by Kobayashi. They have matched the screenings with the expected onslaught of posters, publicity and parties and it is clear that the Koreans, in particular, will go back with a very rich interest created in Europe in their cinema.

What of the Indian presence at Berlin? It is the same depressing story told a million times over. Okay, so there was no film in the competition. But there had been enough of a film peg for an enterprising bureaucracy to hang its promotion drive on, provided, as mentioned earlier, there was a will to do so. There was *Tarang* in the prestigious Forum for Young Cinema, there was *Tasveer Apni Apni* by Mrinal Sen and *Holi* by Ketan Mehta in the special screenings section as well as Anand Patwardhan's long (82-minute) "short" on Bombay, *Hamara Shehar*. There was *Bhombal Sardar* in the Children's Filmfest, an important adjunct of the main festival and there was an assorted set of cassettes of *Paar* and *Party* to name a few



A scene from the French film, *Le Meilleur De La Vie*

which Pam Cullen of the NFDC had brought out from London. The cumulative effect? Zero. And if one must be fussy one could add a minus to that zero, like the temperature itself in Berlin during the film festival, varying between minus nine and ten degrees Celsius There has been the usual contingent of officials from the NFDC head office in Bombay and the directorate. It is indeed so very democratic to send new people from these offices each time. Also it is such a waste of public funds. These worthies require so much time to find their bearings in these alien climes and locales, not to speak of the special flavour and language that festival regulars employ as their main shortcuts to communication that they can do nothing in their one-visit-in-a-lifetime allotted span! More than anything else, it is the totally apathetic attitude of the Indians to their cinema, a mirror, of course, of the entire Indian bureaucracy, led by those at the topmost levels in the ministry of information and broadcasting itself. It mirrors the total absence of the deeper concepts of a *film culture* as against a quantitative counting of heads. That a country which talks of producing nearly 1,000 full-length and short productions annually should dare to come to a major festival like the Berlinale with a *handful* of one-sheeters on one or two films, no stills or posters or any other kind of publicity material on films actually entered in the festival, is a shocking indictment, not of an individual here or there but of an entire country's death-wish regarding one of its most important cultural resources. There is something strangely obscene in telling a foreigner in these parts that you actually produce 1,000-odd feature films annually when countries like Greece and New Zealand with less than ten films a year to their credit are more visible. The Greek Film Centre annually brings to Berlin special give-away paper bags which every journalist carries and as for publicity material, the smaller countries of the world are always better represented on the hundreds of tables and stalls in the Cine Centre than India. As far as journalists are concerned, they are literally flooded with material from every nook and cranny of the world film scene. At the time of filing this report, there are two days left for the festival to end and there is not one line on Indian cinema in this correspondent's press box other than the official documentation provided at the outset. On the other hand, one is supposed to be grateful that the NFDC worthy from Bombay has finally seen the merit of having an NFDC stall at all.

What of the Berlin Festival, now in the sixth year of de Hadeln's reign? It continues to be a miracle of an organisation. Its core staff, the people who run the whole show the year around, number just seven. Hired hands are brought in from November onwards and even the press section starts functioning under free-lancer Benzrath from autumn only. All the other people who man the hundreds of counters and sections, from cloakroom services to the expert simultaneous translations in four languages, come in only a month or so before the festival begins. De Hadeln has two full-time secretaries and his two main deputies, Werner Gondolf and Winfried Weiss, between them, take care of the enormous and entire gamut of selections for the different programmes, screenings for the selection committees, keeping a tab worldwide on what is the latest on the film scene and how to get it for Berlin and of course the nitty-gritty of actual handling of prints and publicity material once the programmes have been decided. The Berlinale documentation is error-free. And helping it all is the festival's four-year-old computer system, now increased to 12 terminals using 37 programmes. Lists in hundreds of different categories of names, for instance, are all kept by the computer and the gains in efficiency have to be seen to be believed.

Now for the films for which one braves the blizzards and the film-fest fatigues that come sooner, rather than later, despite the ideal viewing conditions: theatres which are all within a stone's throw of one another and to which you can go to at all hours of the night without any fear of mugging or similar street nuisances elsewhere.

The competition section attracted enough big names to justify its standing as the main section of a competitive festival. The latest Godard film, *Je Vous Salue Marie* (Hail Mary) is already a big name-dropper in film-fest circles, primarily due to the ire it has attracted of the Catholic church! Godard flew down to Berlin for the screening at the Zoo Palast, the main festival theatre (the theatre as well as a number of other buildings in its neighbourhood are called 'zoo' because of the famous Berlin Tiergarten, the zoo and the aquarium in it right behind the festival's Cine Centre and screening theatres). Understandably, Godard called the agitations mounted by militant Catholics against his film—primarily due to the explicit references to Biblical parallels and a central figure of a girl who is pregnant but virginal—as a "benediction" on the film by the church. At a largely attended press conference, Godard spoke about his 30 years in cinema and the search for the image from which everything else flowed, including religion. Also in the competition was the latest Marguerite Duras film, *Les Enfants*, a droll, witty commentary on the futility of formal education. The British entry, *Wetherby*, the first film by the famous playwright David Hare (*Map of the World*, etc.) stars Vanes-

sa Redgrave and is a valiant champion of the new British cinema. Talking about his film, already a serious contender for critical notice, Hare who was also present in Berlin confirmed his penchant for undermining Britain from within. "I don't see any other film around to which it relates ...The nuance of sexuality and violence—that mix is something the English don't do... *Wetherby* is about English repression and how bad we are at expressing our feelings, the disastrous consequences of bottling up our feelings and that part-emotional landscape that is England."

The Soviet entry, *Descendant of the Snow Leopard* is a distinguished work by Tolomush Okeyev, one of the leading exponents of Kirghiz cinema. A beautifully conceived folk epic of a Kirghiz hunter, the film is an empassioned study of the conflict between the old and the new, set very sincerely and spectacularly against the mountain background of the Kirghizian republic of the Soviet Union.

The Hungarian entry, *Flowers of Reverie* by Laszlo Lugossy is a reflective work on the nature of individual dissent and that strongly old-fashioned word, heroism. Lugossy, who won the Berlinale's Silver Bear in 1976 with his *Identification* chose to focus his new film on the story of a man guided by ideas because "in our age I can't find heroes living by and for ideas. Nowadays we cannot meet these characters and hence I revive them from the past in order to become their contemporary at least for four-and-a-half-hours."

The Americans, too, are in full strength. Robert Benton, winner of the Academy Award for his film, *Kramer Vs Kramer*, author of that other, tempestuous chunk of small-town Americana, *Bonny and Clyde* was there with *Places in the Heart*, a lovingly recreated homage to his hometown, somewhere in the depths of Texas, through a family drama that leans heavily on his own family history—a great grandmother (played by Sally Fields) whose husband, the town's sheriff, was killed leaving her with two small children to raise and a constant struggle with the bank to prevent foreclosure of her land. The film, nominated for seven Oscars this year, has its real strength in the autumnal light and the reflective naturalism created so memorably by cinematographer Nestor Almendros.

My own favourite for at least some top awards is the other American entry, *Mrs Soffel* by Australian woman director, Gillian Armstrong. Some years ago, when Ms Armstrong,



Photograph Courtesy Swapan Ghosh

A still from the German film, *Flugel Und Fessein*

then only 27, made her debut at Cannes with her first feature film, *My Brilliant Career*, she won instant recognition and went on to win awards, critical acclaim and box-office success internationally. Later, the Melbourne-born former art student made a lightweight but fun movie on rock musicals before the inevitable lure to Hollywood to make *Mrs Soffel* for MGM with a suitably starry cast, headed by Diane Keaton as the real-life 1901 Kate Soffel, wife of a Pittsburgh prison warder who becomes passionately involved with one of the young inmates of Murderers' Row placed in her ministerial care. The character is played by Mel Gibson, Australia's answer to Brando and Travolta rolled into one. He and his bandit brother, aided by Kate, make a bid for escape, an attempt that ends in tragedy for the trio. The film is distinguished by an arresting design that captures, in every detail, the bleak, grey mood of the period. The Soffel household, next to the prison, the original jail which provides a flamboyant but still used locale, seems like an extension of the prison itself, so real is the atmosphere of clerical rigidity and austere puritanism that provides the answer to Kate Soffel's bid for escape in the company of two convicted murderers. Clearly Gillian Armstrong's attention to detail stems as much from her work in the field of documentaries as from a certain feminine sensibility.

Beside the competition films, there are nearly 600 films in the various sections. They include typical Berlinale products of research and reconstruction. One such is a reconstructed version of the famous 1929 film commissioned by Gloria Swanson, *Queen Kelly* but left incomplete due to differences with the director, German-born Erich von Stroheim. Another is a restored rarity, a tinted copy of the 1919 world-famous classic, *Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. A pioneering effort has been the mammoth retrospective on films that have used special effects down the ages—literally. They go back to films made by George Melies (1896-1912) shown with piano accompaniment to experimental films like Dziga Vertov's *The Man With a Camera* (Soviet Union, 1926-29) and the French film, *End of the World* (1929-30) by Abel Gance. In between come all the *Sindbad and the Sailor* films, the *King Kong* series, *Exorcist*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Star Wars* and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* genre. I was lucky to catch David Lean's *Blythe Spirit* made in the Forties with Rex Harrison and Margaret Rutherford. One can see, quite distinctly, the maestro's love-hate relationship with women and the special effects are charmingly used to bring back and dismiss wives and mistresses. The Special Effects Retro had tried to get at least one Indian film for this section. After many attempts to track down *Sita Svayamvara* through the aegis of the NFDC, all in vain, the organisers told me they had to let the idea go up in—what else—holy smoke!

"It's a Frightening Job to Be a Director"

David Lean tells Kanta Talukdar

David Lean is among the few British directors to have spectacular success in a world dominated by Americans. He has made films which have become household names today. They include Lawrence of Arabia, Dr Zhivago, Oliver Twist, Bridge over the River Kwai *and* Ryan's Daughter. ***His films have won 26 Oscars. In a daring comeback, after a self-imposed exile of 14 years, he has directed E.M. Forster's classic,*** A Passage to India *which tells the story of two Englishwomen on a trip to India in the 1920s. Their visit is to prove catastrophic. They meet a young Indian doctor, Aziz, who invites them—Adela and Mrs Moore—which goes all wrong. Aziz ends up being tried, accused of attempted rape.***

The film has received rave reviews in North America and Europe. Time *magazine has called it "superb" and made it the subject of the year-ending cover story. A special honour indeed. Forster's book is staging a spectacular revival in the United States: it has already sold over a million copies. The film itself is tipped to win quite a few of the 11 Oscars—it has been nominated for—on 25 March which, incidentally, is Sir David's 76th birthday. The director, who is notoriously shy of publicity, agreed to talk to Kanta Talukdar in his plush London hotel suite about the film and his experiences. Excerpts.*

Q: *Gossip has it that when Lord Brabourne (the producer) rang you up, to ask if you would direct A Passage to India, the first thing you said as you picked up the phone was, 'What happened in the caves?' Was it a welcome invitation to make a comeback after 14 years of silence?*

A: John Brabourne, whom I had only met once, rang up and had left a message. So I said to David Puttnam, who is a friend of mine and who was sitting where you are now, 'I wonder what he could want?' David said, well I can only say one thing, he has just bought the rights to *A Passage to India* and so, when Brabourne did ring up and say 'I want to talk to you about something.' I said, 'Oh, what happened in the caves?' and that really surprised him. He came and sat here, where you are now and said, 'Will you do it?' I said, 'Yes.' And he said, 'Do you mean it?' And I said, 'Yes.'

To hell with the comeback. I only do films if I really want to do them and you know I had seen *Passage* on stage here 25 years ago. I remember I tried to get the rights but Forster wouldn't sell them. I asked through a friend of mine, Baroness Buttberg, who worked in London Films. I asked



David Lean

if she knew Forster and she said 'Of course I do.' She went up to King's College, Cambridge, but Forster simply wouldn't sell the rights because he didn't trust movie people and didn't want anyone to come down on either side of the English or the Indians and he said he wanted a balance.

But, in fact, I don't think that the book is a balance really. I think he comes down hard on the side of the Indians. The English are a lot of idiots. So I gave up. Then Forster died and obviously Lord Brabourne got the rights from the executors or whatever you call them at King's. Well, I think Forster was unfair in that he depicted the English as a lot of idiots. Now, whether you agree with colonialism or not now, which you probably don't—nobody does now—it has gone out of fashion, I think the English were not idiots. I think the men at any rate did a damn good job, you know the railways, the post offices, the administration, all sorts of things, the telegraphs. I think they did a good job, they weren't fools and I think Forster was wrong to make them out to be fools and I was damned if I was going to do that and so I shifted a lot of the dialogue onto the women because I think the women can be abominable. You can still find them—Forster's women there right now. I think Forster's characters—the English characters are caricatures and I didn't want to make them caricatures—not because I am sticking up for the English. For example, Turton, in the film, is not a very likeable character but he is not a fool. That is more or less true.

Q: You have won fulsome praise for the screenplay for the film: the first you have taken full credit for. What is the importance of a good script?

A: It is a frightening job to be a director in a way. You have hundreds of people around you, lot of highly-paid technicians, the money people practically looking at their watches all the time. Are you going to combine schedule, etc, etc, there are tremendous pressures and my script, then, is something I can lean back on.

Q: You have discovered or helped almost unknown stars to great fame—Peter O'Toole, Omar Sharif and Alec Guinness—but your hero in Passage, *Victor Banerjee, has not been nominated for the Oscar. Are you disappointed? How would you explain it?***

A: Yes, I expected him to be nominated for an Oscar. Well, it is a curious thing: Oscars. I remember Peter O'Toole. Katherine Hepburn's a great friend of mine. She said to me at the time, 'David, you better steel yourself to it, he is not going to win an Oscar,' and I said 'Why?' And she said, 'They'll give it to young women.

I won it for *Morning Glory.*' I think she was in her early 20s or teens. 'They'll give it to girls but with men they say let's wait a bit. They've got to win their spurs. And if he is good in the next picture, he'll get it.' And she is quite right I think Victor suffered from that. It's 'Well, we haven't seen him before. It's a good part. We'll wait till next time.' I' admire Victor as an actor, I think he is a first-rate movie actor and I really wish him the best of luck. I wish I could have a film in which there is a part for him again. I hope there is, one day.

***Q**: A lot has been said about the tense atmosphere and the disagreement between you and Victor Banerjee. What was it about?*

A: When you work in the film like Victor, it is the first big film outside India he has ever done and he thought—and I am sort of half-guessing at this—but he thought I was making an anti-Indian film and I wanted him to play the early part of the film with an Indian accent

He doesn't do this. I said to them all, all of you are talking like Oxford undergraduates and it is just not true that all Indians in India talk like that. Victor's accent is not a sing-song, and you see some of the lines were written for it, such as "and is it the entire of your family now" *(recites in a sing-song).* Now, if you say the same thing with a clipped accent, you think what he is saying, what is the point of this. It goes (the Indian accent) so beautifully with the lines. Now, the whole point of Victor's part is, as he starts the film—I said to the casting people when they said what kind of person do you want, I said, 'Count ten after I tell you: Charlie Chaplin, Indian.' They said, 'What do you mean?' And I said, 'Well, he is buffetted by fortune and always bounces up, as Charlie did. You laugh with him, you laugh at him and you cry with him.' And he is a bit of a goat, a bit of a buffoon, at the beginning. He thinks that the English are just wonderful. And when they get thrown off the bicycle and the other chap says, 'that's Turton,' he says "Tu-r-r-ton, Tu-r-r-ton" as if he is the king. I thought the accent would help him because as the film goes on he gradually goes through the fire and in the end he says, "I am an Indian at last." It is a great change and if you don't start from down there you can't go up there. I was trying to help him and I think he is a fool to keep on moaning about it.

Q: You saw a number of Indian films in your search for Aziz. What do you think of Indian actors?

A: Well, you see I just love the part of Aziz. I think Aziz is one of the best parts of the film and I think Victor did frightfully well with it and as I say I am awfully disappointed that he hasn't been nominated for an Academy Award. But he got the Board of Review Award and I believe made a very nice speech in New York for it.

I think Indian actors have one big difficulty in coming to work for Western films. If you go to the Indian cinema, and I have seen quite a few Indian films, to the West they are all over-acted. I am not talking about Satyajit Ray, but there is a tradition of over-acting. It is rather like the old days here on stage—people threw their arms around and rolled their eyes, and I think I helped Victor, as it were, to be simple. Keep still. If you watch the big stars they don't move much. They don't roll their eyes. they don't wave their hands about, they look at the person they are playing with, and above all they think. Victor caught on very quickly, after the first few weeks, and in the end I think his performances are absolutely terrific.

Q: One of your hallmarks is filming in exotic locations—Dr Zhivago *in Spain and Finland,,* Bridge on the River Kwai *in Ceylon,* Lawrence of Arabia *in the deserts. How do you make sure you capture the spirit of the place authentically?*

A: I travel around, I do my homework as you do when you write an article. You can't do anything unless you have done your homework. And I like strange places. I enjoy doing it, and nearly always drive. For example, I have been to India five-six times for longish stretches, and I have driven around extensively. I used to have an Indian wife. My wife (the present one, Sandra Hotz) grew up in India, where her parents used to run hotels, and speaks Hindi.

Q: Were there any problems associated with making the film in India?

A: There weren't any problems in making the film in India. There was terrific suspicion at first—what are you going to say about India, is it anti-Indian? No it isn't. If it is anything, it is anti-English.

We had to bring in quite a lot of equipment: lights, you have no silent generators, and we had to fly them in, believe it or not. Our lives were much easier by a wonderful customs lady who understood. We kept having to get in things or send out things associated with the film. I am sure her confidence wasn't abused even a bit. So different from the treatment we got at the other Indian customs. I like India but not its customs. They need to use a bit more discretion.

I love the gardens in India. They are so sweet. This time, driving up from Bangalore to Kashmir, the mangoes were in flower. Wonderful, I just love it. I was taking photographs and an Indian asked me through my wife why I was taking pictures of something so common. When I told him there were no mango trees in England, he simply wouldn't believe us. We had a wonderful time. Awfully sorry to leave.

Lean Expectations

Andrew Robinson, film critic of Sight and Sound, reviews A Passage to India

I first read that David Lean had got the rights to film *A Passage to India* in an interview in *The Times* in 1981. Despite his insensitive remarks there, including "no one has really captured India on the screen with the possible exception of Renoir's *The River*," I was curious, willing to believe that a part of the maker of *Brief Encounter,* coupled with his years spent in India, might rub off on a film of Forster's finest novel.

Everything I heard from those involved or read subsequently diminished my expectations; it became clear, mainly from Lean's own pronouncements, that not only did he feel unable to risk showing the spirit of this elusive novel on film, he was also temperamentally incapable of responding to it. During shooting in India, he told an interviewer that "in movies you don't have loose ends." Why, oh why, did he choose this novel then? As Peter Burra wrote in an essay that now forms the foreword to the Penguin edition of *Passage*, it is "one of the most aesthetically compact books ever written, whose thought, like music's, cannot be fixed, nor its meaning defined." Lean has efficiently stripped the novel of its affection for its central relationship, its irony and its subtle mys-

tery, distorted its delicate visual beauty towards the tawdry-spectacular, and fixed its meaning very firmly in the realm of the banal; his ear for its music can be gauged from the abysmally unsuitable Palm Court sound of Maurice Jarre's score. The depressing truth is that Forster's original and Lean's pale echo, with its surface depth, resemble each other no more than *The Far Pavilions* (which was also funded by Home Box Office) resembled *The Jewel in the Crown*.

Does all this matter very much? Or should one simply dismiss the film as a late arrival in a long line of films peddling Hollywoodish eastern exoticism? I think it does matter, for at least two simple reasons. Firstly, so much ballyhoo (including, no doubt, Oscars to come) is being generated by so many supposedly responsible critics, though by no means all, that film criticism is in serious danger of becoming a bad farce to be ignored. Secondly, the building up of an authentic picture of one of the world's oldest civilisations has been retarded, just when real progress was being made. This would not matter if many other channels of awakening interest in India existed, but they do not; several million people will believe Lean's nonsense. We may be sure they will not read the novel.

In the USA, where the film was released in New York to packed houses in December, *Time* went so far over the top that it disappeared into cloud critic land: "..sober, witty, yet eminently approachable... Above all, it is true to our sense of the world as it echoes in the common consciousness of our times." What leaves one gasping, though, is the common implication that Forster would have liked the film. *The New York Times* review, published in *The Times*, thought that "Forster might be equally pleased with most of David Lean's respectful, handsome screen version." Respectful, note, when Lean has changed the entire last third of the novel into something completely irrelevant to Forster's conception, just for starters. And the *South Bank Show* weighs in with a long, effusive tribute. Alec Guinness, at least, has doubts on this point. "I don't know whether Forster will be rejoicing or revolving in his grave." Another prominent member of the cast told me: "Forster would have gone up in smoke!"

There cannot be the least shadow of a doubt that Forster would have loathed the movie. His whole life, with its close association with India of over 50 years, was a rebellion against Lean's "them and us" attitude to the meeting of East and West. *Passage* stands out from fiction about the *raj* as the *only* novel written by an Englishman with personal experience of that time, including those by Paul Scott, to show some real understanding of the totality of Indian culture—which is why it continues to seem contemporary. As G.K. Das says, in *E.M. Forster's India:* "The novel's outlook is on the future. It presents India not as a sad concluding spectacle in British imperial history, but as a subject of vital and permanent interest."

A number of efforts were made to persuade Forster to part with film rights, both to *Passage* and other novels, he refused them all. At one point he was offered $ 25,000 for *Room with a View*. He wrote to a friend: "Nothing would have survived of the original except my name, and if I had tried to control the production I should have broken my heart at Hollywood, besides spending my life there." Ironically, a few lines later, he shows his interest in films by commenting that people are showing "huge excitement over *Great Expectations*."

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In 1967, Santha Rama Rau, who adapted *Passage* for the stage in 1960 with Forster's complete blessing, wrote to him asking for permission to write a script for Hollywood, with the support of Satyajit Ray. "Always, before, when you didn't wish to consider the idea of such a film, I understood and agreed with your refusal to 'sell' a work of art to 'barbarians'..." and she also pointed out that a film could treat the last section of the novel properly, which had been impossible on the stage. Forster replied: "I didn't and I don't want *Passage* filmed. I am so sorry."

Rama Rau was in fact the original scriptwriter of Lean's film. Under the terms of the Forster estate she had to give her permission for an adaptation. It is known that she is very dissatisfied with the film, whose script is, of course, by Lean himself, but she is unable to speak publicly due to a clause in her contract with the producers.

Satyajit Ray's own interest in *Passage*, one of the great missed opportunities in cinema, culminated in meeting Forster in Cambridge in 1967, when he was 88. Ray knew of Forster's legendary refusals, but a friend thought there was a chance. They met in his rooms, had lunch and took a walk around Cambridge. Forster's old friend tried to help Ray by impressing Forster with Ray's distinction as a director in case he hadn't seen any of his films, which it seems he hadn't. But it was useless, despite Forster's affection for Indians. He kept shaking his head, Ray recalls with wry amusement. "That was the drone—no!—in words, gestures, looks, everything. He was adamant. And I felt there was no point asking him why." He was also very frail, having had one heart attack already.

When the trustees eventually wrote to Ray in about 1980, ten years after Forster's death, he had lost interest. He was "a little bothered about the logistics"—foreign actors, big budgets and coproduction money and so on—having recently survived the experience of *Shatranj Ke Khilari (The Chess Players)*. He was also bothered by the ethics. "That was the main consideration really. The moment I found out he was not interested I said I'd better not pursue this any more. I felt it would be wrong. I remembered how the old man had reacted."

Ray hasn't seen Lean's film yet, though he suggested Victor Banerjee to the producers to play Dr Aziz at their request. He has read the reviews though and comments mildly: "It is obviously an advantage there not to know India very well. I hadn't thought of *Passage* as a spectacular film at all. I thought of it as an intimate film. The relationships are so delicate that to give it a big background would just be distracting."

The odd thing about this expensive fiasco is that there are occasional glimpses of a film that might have been. When Mrs Moore is seen alone, dying by moonlight aboard the P and O liner going home—an event not spelt out at all in the novel—the real Mrs Moore emerges with disquieting mystery. Why does Lean with the next shot, choose to smash the atmosphere by showing her body ceremoniously tipped over the side into the Indian Ocean the following morning? Unfortunately for us, and for Forster, Lean is obsessed with tying up those loose ends.

OSCAR AWARDS

Pick of the Films

A look at the films in the running for the awards

It was once fashionable to display contempt for the Academy Awards. Ben Hecht, winner of the first screenwriting award, boasted that he used his Oscar statuette as a doorstop. George C. Scott gave his trophy away. Woody Allen didn't even bother to show up for the ceremonies one year, and Marlon Brando once sent an American Indian in his stead. But now that the Academy Awards are back in vogue, the world is awaiting the black-tie gala on 25 March this year at the Los Angeles Music Center, with undisguised anticipation.

At the top of the list, of course, are *A Passage to India* and *Amadeus*. These two spectacular films have got 11 nominations each, and they will be competing closely for the best picture award. Indeed, the three other nominees, *The Killing Fields*, *Places in the Heart*, and *A Soldier's Story* pale in comparison though they certainly outdo the regular Hollywood fare.

The Killing Fields tells the true story of a prize-winning *New York Times* correspondent Sydney Schanberg and his friend and assistant Dith Pran who can't get out of Cambodia when the Khmer Rouge start butchering millions of people. A good story and a sincere effort, the film still suffers from a disjointedness between the contrived sequences of Sydney's efforts back in the United States to locate Dith and the truly gripping chronicle of Dith's survival in Cambodia and his eventual escape.

Places in the Heart is another sincere story, based on the reminiscences of director Robert Benton (who also directed *Kramer vs Kramer*). It deals with the conflict between Christian beliefs and human limitations. The central thread follows the plight and heriocs of a young widowed woman, who through grit and determination manages to get her cotton crop to the gin before the authorities repossess her farm. But the film has too many cliches to merit the top prize. Similarly, *A Soldier's Story* falls short. The film is adapted from the play about a black army captain who is sent to a base in the racist southern state of Louisiana in 1944 to investigate the murder of a black sergeant.

A Passage to India and *Amadeus*, then, are the two contenders for best picture. Critics have invariably marvelled at David Lean's inimitable grace in juxtaposing the large-scale landscape and the intensely intimate. But critics have disliked his stereotyped characters, the occasional slapstick interludes, and the final half-hour of the film, which seems to flounder. Some critics have complained about the contrived climax in *Amadeus*, but others feel it is a film that improves on the original play by Peter Shaffer, a film that is Czech director Milos Forman's best.

The choice is clearer for the best actor award, which should certainly go to F Murray Abraham. Well-known in theatre, but a newcomer to films, Mr Abraham plays Salieri in *Amadeus*, the second-rate composer and Viennese court *Kapellmeister* who, in his senile old age, imagines he has poisoned Mozart. Tom Hulce, who plays the arrogant, vulgar, spoiled young Mozart, was also nominated for the award, but his performance has been criticised for being too shrill, too unmodulated and Sam Waterson, nominated for his portrayal of Sydney Schanberg in *The Killing Fields*, has been criticised for being stiff and expressionless. By contrast, Abraham is full of expression. With the smallest movement of his facial muscles he has betrayed utter joy at hearing in his mind strains of Mozart's music.



American director Milos Forman

The best supporting actor award has a number of top contenders. Adolph Caesar in *A Soldier's Story* gives a solid performance as the barking drillmaster of a sergeant who is murdered by his own men. The role is an emotional and a difficult one, bearing on the theme that in a racist society, self-hatred is an inevitable part of the black experience. Haing S. Ngor, a physician, not an actor, is altogether natural in his part as Dith Pran in *The Killing Fields*, perhaps because Ngor himself lived through the excesses of the Khmer Rouge. John Malkovich, nominated for his role as the blind man, Mr Will, in *Places in the Heart*, has won near-unanimous praise from critics.

In the best actress category, Judy Davis as Miss Quested in *A Passage to India*, faces stiff competition from Vanessa Redgrave. (Of the other nominees, Sally Fields, critics say, can't handle more than one emotion at a time in *Places in the Heart*, and Sissy Spacek, a good actress, is not at her best in *The River*.) In *The Bostonians*, Ms Redgrave plays the repressed lesbian Olive Chancellor who grooms the flirtatious Verena to be a spokesperson for the suffragettes. Most critics have called Ms Redgrave the only reason to see what is otherwise an insignificant film. Jessica Lange, who made her debut 8 years ago in *King Kong*, has won respect for her part in *Country* as the strong woman who holds her family and farm together despite marital and financial troubles.

But more than one critic has called Judy Davis' "perfect" or "near perfect" as Adela Quested, leading to speculation that she could claim the trophy for the best actress. As one critic wrote, "an attractive woman, she is actress enough to convey an unattractive woman who becomes attractive through our experience of her."

A Passage to India is also expected to pick up the best supporting actress award for Peggy Ashcroft's portrayal of Mrs. Moore. No other nominee in the category has won the kind of acclaim Ms Ashcroft has won. One critic wrote, "The highest tribute I can pay: her death in the film is not acting, it is a loss."

Sharon Butler, Washington D.C.



Gavaskar and some of his teammates with the Benson and Hedges World Championship trophy

Invincible Indians

Team spirit and motivation led to the success

In December 1984, while enthusiasts revelled at India's thumping victory over England in the first Test at Bombay, a dark and ominous cloud had formed over Indian cricket. A few weeks later, the cloud burst during the second Test in Delhi. And by the fourth Test in Madras, after a brief respite during the third Test in Calcutta, it had turned into a thunderstorm. This rather inclement atmosphere swept away whatever chance the Indians had of defeating the Englishmen. And indeed, the home side succumbed to one of the weakest teams ever to leave London, losing not merely the Test matches two-one, but going down in inglorious fashion—four-one—in the one-day internationals. But akin to the Norwesters that afflict us this time of the year, after the havoc, there is bliss. The same, it would appear, applied to Indian cricket, and with a magnificent display of professionalism and skill Sunil Gavaskar and his team lifted the Benson and Hedges World Championship of Cricket trophy.

When the tournament commenced, other than Sri Lanka, the longest odds were being offered on India—a 200-1 bet with the United Kingdom bookmakers. Only the most patriotic would have taken it, or those attracted by the price. For any knowledgeable follower of the game, it was money down the drain. There was still the hangover of the Kapil Dev affair and other internecine problems when the 14-member Indian squad took off from Bombay. There was also a big question mark around the team's bowling and fielding. Against England, Kapil Dev seemed to be on the decline, Chetan Sharma and Manoj Prabhakar were disappointing while Sivaramakrishnan, as the Englishmen grew in confidence, became less effective. And the outcricket, which was poor to start with, became worse.

The national selectors, however, took the important step of recalling Roger Binny and Madan Lal, and they kept their faith in Siva, thus dismissing the theory that a wrist spinner is a luxury in limited overs cricket. But all these decisions were reached not with any great degree of conviction. There was no option of arriving at a compromise between youth and experience. Binny and

Madan Lal, who were overlooked for all the Tests against England, had done nothing spectacular during their spell in the wilderness. Indeed, why else would Sharma and Prabhakar be also included in the party if Chandu Borde and company had such exceptional faith in them?

"We really worked hard from the moment we landed in Australia," Gavaskar told this correspondent soon after his team's triumph in the final. He emphasised that the Indians had laid particular stress on fielding and the rest sort of followed suit. But how could a side so badly humiliated only a few weeks earlier be suddenly galvanised into world beaters? There is no answer, no authentic explanation for this.

Admittedly, India did not play to their full potential versus England at home and selection mistakes were also to blame, not to mention the lifeless pitches which did not suit India's modest attack. And of course, team spirit was a factor. But even if one accepts that the situation was different in every respect Down Under, there is no logical explanation for the Indians bowling out their opponents, except the Pakistanis in the final (who were only a wicket away from suffering the same fate), and winning with such comfort.

The fact, however, is that Kapil Dev demonstrated a welcome return to form, Binny and Madan Lal were among the wickets exactly the way they were in the World Cup in 1983, Ravi Shastri was extremely economical and Siva was the sorcerer he was destined to be. Even Sharma, in the final, who had bowled so unimpressively at home, striving for pace at the cost of line, length and lateral movement, put in a decent performance. The wickets at Melbourne and Sydney were, of course, of ideal bounce, and also turned to India's benefit.



All the captains: (front row from left to right) Allan Border and Geoff Howarth; (second row) Clive Lloyd, Sunil Gavaskar and Dilip Mendis; (third row) Javed Miandad and David Gower

Besides, the Indians were led brilliantly in what must go down as Gavaskar's finest hour as captain. The inspiration he had shown in his initial days as Bombay and West Zone captain, but was rarely seen when he captained India, gushed forth at every step. And added to his one-and-a-half decades of experience at the highest level of the game, it turned out to be a devastating combination. He never missed a trick, improvised wonderfully as in his use of Siva—can you imagine a leg spinner bowling the last over of an overlimit innings!

Moreover, he, at the age of 35, set an excellent example to his fieldsmen. He ran like a hare, fielded on the run and threw accurately. It was Gavaskar re-born, rejuvenated and a source of inspiration for his side. In fact, the fielders undertook their task so aggressively, they added a whole new dimension to aggressive cricket. The fielders, especially wicket-keeper Sadanand Viswanath (who should restrain his appealing), Krishnamachari Srikkanth, Azharuddin, Kapil Dev, Binny, Madan Lal, Siva and Sharma fielded brilliantly. But of course, talent always counts. And in this respect, Shastri, Srikkanth and Kapil Dev somewhat outshone the others. No doubt, Dilip Vengsarkar, always classically correct, Binny and Madan Lal, with their medium paced stuff, Viswanath and Siva also stood out. But India's heroes were Shastri, Srikkanth and Kapil Dev.

Apart from his bowling, Kapil Dev's demolition of the redoubtable Richard Hadlee in the semi-final at a crucial moment was one of the memorable moments of the tourney. The flying start that Srikkanth provided with three half-centuries in five outings was also remarkable. But more than these, it was probably the sheer reliability of Shastri that released all the tension from an Indian standpoint, so much so that some of the later order Indian batsmen



Jubilant Indian players atop the car which Ravi Shastri won

changed to their evening clothes and enjoyed the proceedings,quite certain that they would not be called in to wield the willow.

It might be argued by some that Shastri, at times, was a bit slow in getting his runs. This is not really correct, for this Bombay all-rounder was never called upon to rush matters, such was the commanding position maintained in all matches. It was an extraordinary performance and reminded one of the kind of superiority displayed by the West Indians in the past, more dominant than the showing in the last World Cup and a unique lesson in one-day cricket. In cricketing terms, India's exhibition is beyond analysis. But it is also an eye-opener on how much can be attained by motivation, the miracle that India can conjure if they have the will to do so. And let no one suggest that the other participants were tired or out of form. They feel like nine pins, and were only as good as they were allowed to be.

One can only hope that in future this Indian incisiveness will be more durable, though one suspects that the same cricketers will struggle to regain their form in Test matches, unless the selectors can unearth at least two truly more penetrative bowlers to back up Kapil Dev and Siva. But the batting can stand up to the stiffest Test on paper; it is today the best batting line-up in the world. Let us lift our goblets, therefore, to a recurring resurrection of Indian cricket.

Ashis Ray

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THE BUDGET

Taking Things Into Account

Finance Minister V.P. Singh takes a bold step

The big document came, as it always does, in a small leather casing, but with a different, perhaps more sober, custodian—Vishwanath Pratap Singh—who preferred a black briefcase to the cherry-red that his predecessor, Pranab Mukherjee, always carried his budget papers in. As he walked to the Lok Sabha accompanied by the parliamentary affairs minister, looking trim in his cream *sherwani* and spectacles, one could almost hear "tread softly" in the air. Sharp at five o'clock Vishwanath Pratap Singh began his maiden union budget speech and by the time he had ended almost 108 minutes later, he had already been accorded several generous rounds of bench-patting. Some of it for the various points he had made about the budget, and some for the quips he punctuated his speech with. At one point for example, while talking of the tax levy on *pan masala*, he referred to it as an "organic chemical" which was a "preparation containing betel-nuts and any one or more of other ingredients such as lime, catechu, cardamom, copra and menthol put up for sale in unit containers." While members were just straining their brain on what such a blend could be, the finance minister quipped in: "honourable members will recognise this coalition as *pan masala*." The house was rolling in laughter once again when the finance minister brought up another matter of "interest," this time a raise on the basic excise of soda water. Immediately after finishing the part on aerated waters in the text, Vishwanath Pratap Singh looked away from it and said, a twinkle visible in his eyes, "I do not know how many members would be affected by that." Even the galleries were falling over this time.

Not that they were full though. Apart from the press gallery where there was not an inch to spare and people were sitting on the steps and aisles, all others were sparsely peopled. In the diplomatic gallery sat Harry Barnes, the United States ambassador, all alone, all attention to the finance minister and among others in the VIP gallery was seen Priyanka Gandhi, who had been escorted by Makhanlal Fotedar. But of course the attention was on the man sitting sombre, right in front of the Rajya Sabha gallery—former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee, who was later to talk tall of the budget. There were those who were conspicuous by their absence too. Opposition stalwarts Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram, ruling party stars Amitabh Bachchan and Vyjayanthimala Bali.

The budget speech, which began with a quote from the books of Mrs Indira Gandhi, would have become a rather drab affair, had not the finance minister himself broken up his monologue with witticisms here and there. The opposition benches it seemed had little to say all through it; that usual barrage of criticism, some studied, some premeditated came only later. The most common complaint was that by leaving a large deficit of Rs 3,349 crores uncovered the finance minister had made room for massive increase in prices for the poor while leaving the door open for the rich to amass wealth. The mandatory sugar-coated-pill-criticism was dropped again and there were others who tried to point out "structural flaws" and "administrative drawbacks" of the budget. But on first sounding on 16 March, there was quite a euphoria. The raising of the income-tax exemption limit from Rs 15,000 to Rs 18,000, the abolition of the compulsory deposit scheme and of estate duty, raises in the exemption limit of wealth tax from one and a half lakh rupees to two and a half lakhs, the removal of license fees from radios, televisions and videos, a string of excise and customs concessions on computers and other electronic goods, all added to it. But then there were the balancers, for the middle income group at least. Housewives could not have been too happy: they have to pay more for kerosene or cooking and have to spend an extra sum on other commodities as a result of the increase in prices of petrol and railway freight. Give with one hand, take away with another?

Well, anyway, the first crunch of the budget came on the night of 16 March itself—on the streets of Delhi. Learning of the hike in petrol prices effective midnight, most gas-stations promptly shut-shop and waited to get better returns, leaving hundred stranded in all kinds of places.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi



Vishwanath Pratap Singh

SARKARIA COMMISSION

A Snail's Pace

Very little progress has been made

Of the plethora of commissions idling in New Delhi's administrative jungle, the Sarkaria Commission set up by the late Mrs Indira Gandhi on 9 June 1983 for a fresh look at centre-state relations, is perhaps the most important in the present political context. Be it the ferment in Punjab and Assam or the problems in the North-East, the financial problems of West Bengal and the southern states or the crisis in Jammu and Kashmir, it is the Sarkaria Commission the people are looking to for solutions. Every time centre-state relations have deteriorated in the last couple of years, the government has come up with the same convenient answer "The Sarkaria Commission is looking into it." Even as late as 14 March 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told the Rajya Sabha that the Akali demands were being looked into by Justice Sarkaria. It is, but with no sense of urgency. While the centre-state strains become more insistent every day, the commission deliberates.

Already on a one-year extension term, the commission will have to get another one in June this year and perhaps another, if it is to complete the task assigned to it. During the two years that it has been functioning, the commission has not even been able to complete the preliminaries. Officials working for the commission agree that the work has been "a bit slow" but fail to give reasons for the slow progress.



Justice Sarkaria

The commission has to date recorded opinions in only five states—Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Tripura—and received replies to its exhaustive questionnaire sent out in mid-1984, from only eight. These states, apart from the ones already mentioned, are Nagaland, Karnataka and Assam. This is a mere note of views, their examination will come later.

One of the major reasons for this delay has also been the preoccupation of the governments in the states with other matters. At one time, for example, the chief ministers of three major southern states—Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu—were ill and had gone abroad for treatment. The state leaders were also busy with the Lok Sabha and the Assembly polls. The states did not have time, they told the commission to stay put in Delhi. Now that the elections are over and all the three chief ministers in the south are in better shape, letters are going out to all of them for setting up a meeting. If the commission had its way, these meetings would have been held in the first week of April Once all the states have been visited, the main task of assembling and arranging opinions and formulating recommendations to the government of India will begin

It appears that the commission made little progress in research. In these two and a half years it has been able to interview only 250 eminent people on the question of centre-state relations. Besides, more than 100 researchers assigned to the commission have been able to pinpoint only 25 high profile issues on the entire question of centre-state relations. Officials themselves say that half the work is yet to be done. And although they have been working on the issue for so long, they do not seem to know which way the commission is going "Nothing concrete has emerged as yet. We have got a cross-section of views but we are yet to analyse them," said one official

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

RAJASTHAN

An End to "Non-rule"

The election of Harideo Joshi has been welcomed

The election of Harideo Joshi as leader of the Congress(I) Legislative Party and his taking over as chief minister of Rajasthan for the second time has been welcomed in the state. In fact, his coming to power is considered by the people and the Congress(I) rank and file as an end to the five years of Congress(I) "non-rule".

In 1980, people dislodged the Janata Party government in Rajasthan and voted for the Congress(I) which promised a government which works. But the hopes of the people were soon shattered. First, Jagannath Pahadia was made chief minister by the Congress(I) high command though he did not enjoy a majority in the legislative party. To ensure his unanimous election, the CLP(I) meeting was held at New Delhi instead of at the state capital. But, he proved inefficient and the government machinery in the state came to a standstill.

Shiv Charan Mathur was then chosen to succeed him though he did not have more than half-a-dozen supporters in the 150 strong CLP(I). Mr Mathur had been a minister in state governments, but it was soon clear that he lacked the qualities of a leader required for a successful chief minister He was soon surrounded by sycophants and incurred the displeasure of the senior party leaders and MLAs. His casteist approach to the bureaucracy also had a highly demoralising effect on the services.

In fact,11 of the22 state ministers were refused party tickets in the Vidhan Sabha elections. Three others were defeated in the elections and all the relatives of the ousted ministers too, who managed to get nominations as Congress(I) candidates, were also rejected by the people. Each time the dissidents intensified their campaign against him, certain national problems diverted the central leadership's attention providing Mr Mathur a fresh lease of life. Almost every day, there were rumours that the chief minister was resigning leading to more chaos.

Harideo Joshi is the choice of the high command but he also enjoys the support of his legislative party. He has been brought at the helm of affairs in order to hold the party together and provide an effective government. Mr Joshi's ability on both counts has been tested. After the death of Raja Man Singh, he is the seniormost legislator of the state He has been MLA since 1952 and his political sagacity and administrative acumen is well known His election as leader of the ruling party has already had a salutary effect on the government machinery.

Mr Joshi has so far projected himself as a chief minister who works. He inducted seven ministers in his cabinet the very next day after his own swearing-in Both Pahadia and Mathur had taken a long time in finalising lists of their cabinet Unlike his predecessors who took many days to distribute portfolios, Mr Joshi announced the portfolios of ministers immediately after the oath-taking ceremony at the Raj Bhawan The ministers, following the example set by their chief minister, went straight to the secretariat to attend to office work after being sworn in. Mr Joshi has decided not to use the limousine at the chief minister's disposal and opted for an ordinary Ambassador car. "You know I had been using a Fiat car when I was the chief minister last time Why should we spend anything only for pomp and show?" Mr Joshi told SUNDAY. With the formation of the Joshi cabinet, all those who were humiliated by Shiv Charan Mathur have been rehabilitated.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

"I Have No Intention of Protecting the Guilty"

Rajasthan CM Harideo Joshi told SUNDAY

Harideo Joshi has become the Rajasthan CM at a time when the Seventh Plan of the state is yet to be finalised and the state's finances are in a poor shape. The morale of the services is very low. The ruling party's strength has gone down while the opposition, after the elections, has gained strength.

Q. *During the Lok Sabha elections last December, the Congress(I) candidates had convincing leads in 183 out of 200 Assembly segments of the state. But the trend was reversed within two months and the party lost 70 more segments and could capture only 113 seats. This was 37 seats less than the party's strength in the last Vidhan Sabha. How do you explain this phenomenon?*

A: No one can deny the fact that our party has won fewer seats this time but at the same time it has been given an absolute majority. People want our party to continue to rule.

Q: Does the debacle not mean that the people have expressed their displeasure about the performance of the past government at the state level?

A: You can't call it a debacle. The policies are formulated by the centre. Guidelines and a major part of the financial outlay also come from there. Once the Planning Commission approves the plan, the responsibility for its implementation rests on the state government. The people have thus overwhelmingly approved Rajiv Gandhi's policies and plans without any reservations. But on the implementation side, their approval has been limited and to some extent our candidates have lost.

Q: The people's faith in the government's ability to deliver the goods has been considerably eroded The honest and able administrators find themselves out of place and the elected representatives feel humiliated.

A: My first job would be to restore the faith of all walks of society in



Harideo Joshi

the government. This is possible only when the bureaucrats implement government policies faithfully and fearlessly and the elected representatives, not only MPs and MLAs but even the *sarpanches* are given due respect and a proper role to play and are allowed to make a constructive contribution to the development of their respective areas. Rajasthan has been adjudged as the number one state in the implementation of the 20-point programme. But the fact is that statistics have no relevance to reality. Even Rajiv Gandhi had once expressed such feelings in a public meeting at Jaipur. And I quite agree with Rajivji. There is a vast difference between claims and the real impact of these programmes. We will activise the government machinery to ensure that it delivers goods in real terms.

Q. You have got a government which is in a very poor state of health financially. The Seventh Plan is to be formulated but because of the lack of funds, how will you be able to take up the required number of welfare schemes?

A. You are right. The finances of the state are in a precarious position But I want to be realistic. A balance between plans and resources has to be drawn and we will strive for the same.

Q: The law and order machinery of the state appears to have gone out of the government's control. Use of excess power on the slightest or little provocation, murders in police stations, rape by uniformed men and harassment of innocent people, even of MLAs and ex-ministers appears to have become the government's policy The policy of protecting every deed and misdeed of the police has emboldened wrong elements in the police set-up, the culmination of which was the killing of Man Singh.

A: The very first act which I did after assuming charge was to call the director general of police, the home secretary and the chief secretary to discuss the law and order situation. I have made it clear to them that the new government wants all the pending judicial enquiries completed without further delay and that minimum possible force should be used for maintaining law and order. I have no intention of protecting anyone found guilty.

Interviewed by Milap Chand Dandia

MADHYA PRADESH

"I Believe in Work, Not Talk"

Madhya Pradesh CM Motilal Vora told SUNDAY

With his "clean" image and a successful stint as the Madhya Pradesh PCC(I) chief behind him, 56-year-old Motilal Vora was the obvious choice as the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh after the resignation of Arjun Singh. Vora had worked as a journalist before beginning his political career as a Socialist over 25 years ago. He joined the Congress(R) in 1971, in protest against the Socialist Party's decision to join the "Grand Alliance" which included the Jana Sangh in the 1971 polls. Vora has successfully contested the Legislative Assembly elections from Durg in MP in 1972, 1978 and 1985 and was vice-chairman of the MP State Road Transport Corporation and minister of higher education before becoming the state PCC(I) chief.



Motilal Vora

Q: *You have been an MLA since 1972 and have worked with three chief ministers: P. C. Sethi, Shyama Charan Shukla and Arjun Singh. Do you think you will make a successful chief minister?*

A: With the cooperation of my partymen, the people and everyone concerned in running the administration, I hope to be a successful chief minister.

Q: A chief minister can be successful only through good administration for which the cooperation of officials is needed. At present, there seems to be a lack of trust between the political leadership and the executive.

A: I don't agree with you. In my capacity as minister for higher education, and earlier, when I was vice-chairman of the MPSRTC (Madhya Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation), I had the cooperation of the bureaucracy. My approach is that we should review their (the bureaucrats) work from time to time to see that they work correctly, but we should trust them. There was never any atmosphere of mistrust, nor shall be there any such thing now or in the future.

Q: What are your plans for streamlining the administration?

A: I believe in work, not talk. I shall not be able to discuss at present all my plans but time-bound programmes for development projects are a must. Given proper budgetary allocations, every programme must be complete according to schedule and I am not going to tolerate any excuses. No person erring in this respect will be spared. We shall make proper budget allocations for developmental programmes and we shall accept only concrete results. Our biggest problem is the shortage of drinking water and we are going to launch our plans on a war footing.

Q: Heaps of files are lying with the ministers who don't even attend the Secretariat.

A: A large number of files are pending with ministers because of the elections and I have asked them not only to dispose of the pending files, but also dispose of expeditiously files concerning their portfolios in future. It will be essential for the ministers to sit in the secretariat regularly and attend to their files and other administrative matters. The programmes for the socio-economic upliftment of the weaker sections of society launched by Arjun Singh will be continued.

Q: Arjun Singh as chief minister was subject to constant attacks from his rivals like P. C. Sethi, V. C. Shukla, Madhav Rao Scindia and Kamal Nath. Do you expect similar problems?

A: I don't agree with you. During the chief-ministership of Arjun Singh, there was no groupism or opposition. Differences of opinion on issues do not mean opposition. As a minister in Arjun Singh's government and later as PCC(I) chief I got full support from Sethi, Shukla, Scindia and Kamal Nath and I am sure I will get full cooperation from them now.

Interviewed by M. V. Kher, Raipur

ANDHRA PRADESH

Death in Hyderabad

Six die in communal riots

History repeated itself in Hyderabad when communal riots broke out in the old city on 8 March claiming six lives and leaving 20 others seriously injured. "Since 1978, communal riots have become seasonal in Hyderabad," says a senior police officer cynically. In the past few years, riots have broken out despite heavy police patrols, whenever Muslim and Hindu religious festivals have fallen close to each other. But the most disturbing feature of the communal problem in Hyderabad is communal violence during the elections. Two years ago, communal violence erupted in Chandrayangutta on 5 January during the Assembly elections. On 5 March 1985, trouble began again at Chandrayangutta during polling. In both cases the sparks which ignited the communal flame were purely political.

Voting began peacefully on 5 March. Police arrangements were thorough in this "sensitive" constituency and the day of vote-counting passed off peacefully as did 7 March—Holi. But the city authorities were caught unawares when communal passions flared up on 7 March. The city police force and the reinforcements brought in from other parts of the country had been on constant vigil since 4 March but by 8 March, the difficult period was thought to be over.

According to the directives of the Election Commisssion, election results should not be declared in any constituency where over 90 per cent of the votes have been polled without informing the Election Commission. In Chandrayangutta,in the old city area of Hyderabad,93 per cent of the votes were cast according to the figures supplied by the polling officials. In seven polling stations over 100 per cent voting had taken place. In 133 of the 173 polling stations, voting was over 90 per cent. Election results thus were withheld pending confirmation by the Election Commission. Tension mounted on 8

March after a rumour spread through the constituency that a repoll had been ordered in the entire constituency.

Fights broke out after workers of one group claimed that their candidate had been declared elected while supporters of the other party asserted that a repoll had been ordered. The police rushed to the scene (Kaveli Kaman near Sultan Shahi) to bring the situation under control. The crowd dispersed but regrouped and brickbatting and looting continued. A young boy was stabbed near the market place that day and this began a series of retaliatory attacks which led to the death of five persons by the evening. Curfew was once again imposed but trouble began to spread . As Kadar Ali, a vegetable vendor whose wooden cart was destroyed in the violence said, "It is only us poor innocent people who suffer. These political people fight and we suffer.

In 1983, the contest in Chandrayangutta between the BJP and the Majlis-e-Ittehadul (MIM) had initially led to clashes between supporters of both parties when the candidates and their supporters (Mr Narendra of the BJP and Mr Amanullah Khan of the MIM) met during the campaign tour. Curfew was not imposed immediately till polling ended and when normalcy was restored ten days later the death toll had gone up to 11.

Polarisation of the electorate in the old city is almost complete. This is mainly because of the mutual distrust between the two major communities, which is aggravated during election time by party rivalry which divides the people along communal lines. Chandrayangutta does not have a clear majority of any one community and has been consistently returning the MIM candidate but with a margin of less than 3,000 votes. It has therefore always been the scene of hectic electioneering with volatile speeches by the BJP and the MIM leaders.

This time, the BJP did not field an official party candidate, since Mr Ale Narendra had moved to Himayatnagar constituency, in a byelection. But the BJP supported a former party member R.G.Krishna contesting as an independent against the sitting MIM MLA Amanullah Khan. Mr Khan is no less volatile and was involved in an unseemly incident with the Congress(I) candidate Habib Mustafa and assaulted him just before the election. But neither the Congress(I) nor the Telugu Desam has made any inroads in the area.

Shobha Singh, Hyderabad

BIHAR

Victory for Jagannath Mishra

Chandra Shekhar Singh steps down from office

On 12 March, the reign of CM Chandra Shekhar Singh ended and Bindeswari Dubey, the 61-year-old trade union leader became the 19th chief minister of Bihar. Ironically, Mr Singh ended his reign exactly the way he had begun it. Two years ago, on 14 August 1983, the state's outgoing chief minister Jagannath Mishra, complying with the Congress(I) high command's wishes, had reluctantly proposed Mr Singh's name. This time, Chandra Shekhar Singh, hopeful till the end of retaining his position had to announce his resignation and the decision to make Dubey the new chief minister.

Mr Singh's dismissal was actually a victory for his arch-rival Dr Jagannnath Mishra who had been lobbying in Delhi for the dismissal of Chandra Shekhar Singh. For Mishra, who enjoys the support of a majority of the party MLAs, it had become a prestige issue and he had even declared that the CM be selected by direct elections.

The issue however hung in the balance, with both the Singh and the Mishra-Dubey lobbies confident of getting the nod. But even after the interviews of the MLAs by the AICC(I) observer, union minister Bansi Lal and the AICC(I) joint secretary V.N. Patil, the issue hung in the balance. According to sources, a majority of the legislators left the decision to the Congress(I) high command while most of the others preferred Mr Dubey. That evening a confident Mishra basing his claims on his support in the state CLP(I) assured his supporters that Dubey would be the next chief minister. Meanwhile C.S. Singh, gaining in confidence from the support by the AICC(I) treasurer Sitaram Kesri who switched his support from the Mishra-Dubey camp, remained equally confident.



K.M. Kasim

Bindeswari Dubey (left) with Mishra

In fact, till one pm on 12 March, Mr Singh's supporters remained jubilant, maintaining that Mr Singh would be reinstated. They even stated that Mr Bansi Lal had met Mr Singh and congratulated him. Actually, Mr Lal had met the CM only to ask him to propose Mr Dubey's name. According to sources, Dubey had the support of about 100 MLAs and 50 others supported Singh while the others preferred someone of the high command's choice.

Visibly upset by the decision, Chandra Shekhar Singh promised full cooperation to Dubey in order to strengthen the party, implement Rajiv Gandhi's directives and development work in the state before leaving for Delhi by a special plane. In return Dubey promised a clean and efficient administration. He also suggested that he would have an open mind regarding the formation of the ministry, indicating that some of Singh's men could find a place in his cabinet.

Though Dubey was projected as the new CM even before the Assembly elections (he was denied a Lok Sabha ticket and made PCC(I) chief) his chances, till Mishra stepped in to lend his weight, were rather slim. And according to a senior Congress(I) leader, Mr Bansi Lal was persuaded by the "old guards" to settle for Mr Dubey. But despite the election of Dubey, the balance of power in the state remains, with the Dubey-Mishra faction considerably weakened by the exit of Mr Sitaram Kesri to the Singh faction. What political observers will be watching with keen interest is the future of the Dubey-Mishra alliance.

For Dubey, the path ahead is likely to have many pitfalls. A major problem that Dubey will have to face will be his attitude towards the Congress(I) rebels—all of whom are supporters of Dr Mishra—who have won the elections. Though Dubey has announced their expulsion, many of them are already pressing for re-entry. For Mishra, the fall of the Singh government and the installation of Dubey has been a major victory. As one of his supporters claimed, "Dr Mishra has not only survived in politics, but has proved that the high command was wrong in replacing him."

Yubaraj Ghimire, Patna

KERALA

UDF Weathers a Storm

CM Karunakaran continues to remain in power

The United Democratic Front (UDF) ministry in Kerala which has been clinging to power for the last two years weathered another series of storms in the last few weeks. After a good performance in the Lok Sabha elections, the UDF lost all three seats in the 28 'February byelections to the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front of which one seat was held by the UDF. Then three MLAs of the UDF's coalition partner National Democratic Party (NDP) wanted their ministerial nominee to be removed after 18 people were killed and many more seriously burnt when kerosene supplied mostly by the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation exploded in kitchens in parts of central Kerala. The UDF nominee for the speaker's post, V. M. Sudheeran (Congress-I), just managed to win by a whisker after two votes of the eight seat majority UDF were, as observers believe, purposely invalidated by disgruntled MLAs.

As though he had not had enough, chief minister Karunakaran was at the receiving end of some serious allegations by Gundu Rao the ex-chief minister of Karnataka. After the stunning defeat at the hands of the Janata Party, Gundu Rao angry at not being given a ticket, lashed out at Karunakaran who along with A. K. Antony was in charge of conducting the party campaign in Karnataka saying that he had purposely scuttled the campaign. Karunakaran's aim, he said, is to become the Congress(I)'s only strongman in the South. Gundu Rao went to the extent of advertising this allegation in Karnataka newspapers with pictures of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. Another charge against Karunakaran was that he distributed only Rs 10,000 to each candidate from the party funds.

But as Rao alleged, Karunakaran still remains the party's strongman in the South which would not have been the case if a strong Congress(I) ministry had come to power in Karnataka. What made Gundu Rao even more angry was the way Karunakaran made him plead for a ticket. Rao even went to the extent of pleading before the 26-year-old Kerala MLA and president of the National Students Union of India, Ramesh Chennithalla, who is close to Karunakaran. Ironically, it was Gundu Rao who had gone out of his way to encourage Chennithalla when he was the CM. Rao had even presented the student leader with a Premier Padmini car which he still uses. Ramesh Chennithalla is now reportedly a favourite of the Prime Minister. According to a source who was in the plane with Chennithalla and Karunakaran, an aide of Rao almost fell at Chennithalla's feet as they were walking from the plane at the Delhi airport.

The unity of the two groups of the Kerala Congress is not a happy omen for Karunakaran who has very shrewdly been following the policy of divide and rule. A united Kerala Congress with 14 MLAs is a major pressure group within the UDF and sparks have already started flying with the economist and chairman of the economic cell of the KPCC(I) Dr K. P. Gopalakrishnan accusing the Kerala Congress finance minister K. M. Mani of mishandling his portfolio and landing Kerala in a financial trouble. Dr Gopalakrishnan told SUNDAY that the finance minister had exempted up to 1,000 coconut trees, 700 rubber trees from taxation resulting in a huge loss of revenue. The Kerala Congress is backed by rich farmers and planters of central Kerala for whom this tax exemption is a gift.

Mani retorted by issuing a booklet defending his role but as Gopalakrishnan said, "What I am amazed is that he has managed to hoodwink two chief ministers Karunakaran and Nayanar." The Kerala Congress was a partner of the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front under E. K. Nayanar before it switched sides. Mani cherishes ambitions of becoming chief minister which he can fulfil if the Kerala Congress decides to change camps again and join the LDF. The process has already been initiated with the student wing of the party. The Kerala Students Congress, aligning with the Students Federation of India (SFI) in the Gandhiji University Union (central Kerala) elections and defeating the Congress student wing, the Kerala Students' Union, which lost all the three prestigious university union elections in the state to the SFI and its allies. But E.M.S Namboodiripad has announced that the LDF is not a shelter camp for parties being "smoked out" from the UDF. However, other Left Front leaders like Baby John of the RSP are seriously continuing their efforts to woo the Kerala Congress.

Meanwhile, housewives in Kerala are putting aside their kerosene stoves as reports of stoves bursting are coming in from different parts of the state. The government has asked the Hindusthan Petroleum Corporation to withdraw stocks for the month of February if they want to continue distribution. The government will also insist on guarantee certificates for each load. According to Hindusthan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum, the kerosene got mixed with naphta while it was being transferred from tankers to the refinery in Cochin. About 50 people have been seriously burnt by the explosions.

Binoo K. John, Trivandrum



K. M. Mani



Karunakaran

LAW

Crime King to be Freed

Charles Sobhraj will soon complete his seven year term

Charles Gurumukh Sobhraj, one of the 20th century's most notorious criminals is soon to be released from Karwar jail, in Karnataka. All nine criminal charges faced by him have been tried in Indian courts and after undergoing rigorous imprisonment in India for seven years, Sobhraj will now be a free man. He, however, is wanted in several cases abroad. There is a warrant against him from the government of Thailand and he is on the wanted list of criminals in Greece and Nepal.

According to Interpol sources, the warrant of arrest against Sobhraj has been renewed recently, so that once released from the Karwar jail, he will not be allowed to leave the country. The Karnataka government has been instructed to transfer Sobhraj to Delhi's Tihar Central jail, after which charges against him in foreign countries would be examined. An extradition court would be set up to study the applications for his extradition and if charges against Sobhraj are found substantial, he would be deported on the basis of Section 5 of the Extradition Act of 1962 (he is a French national, who had an Indian father and Vietnamese mother. He was born in Saigon).

At the time of his arrest in New Delhi on 5 July 1976, Sobhraj faced as many as 100 charges around the world. He was wanted on charges of murder, drugging, looting and forgery in Paris. Beirut, Kathmandu, Hong Kong and Saigon besides facing a series of charges in New Delhi, Madras, Bombay, and Varanasi. He had cleverly managed to hoodwink the police in all these cities and had a narrow escape from the police in Bombay when he had been hospitalised for an appendix operation in 1974. Two years later, he was recognised in Delhi as the same Sobhraj where he, posing as a tourist guide, was apprehended while drugging French tourists at the Vikram hotel. His accomplice and wife, Marie Andree Leclerc, was also arrested with him. Since his sensational arrest in 1981, he was shifted from Tihar jail to Varanasi jail. The following year he was imprisoned at Allahabad and later in February 1984 transferred to Karwar jail.

The last of the criminal charges faced by Sobhraj in India was initiated by a French national, Tete Bruno, who alleged that on 9 January 1976, Sobhraj had administered to him and two other French tourists stupefying drugs and when they became unconscious robbed them of their belongings worth Rs. 40,000. When the complaint was lodged by Tete Bruno on 11 January 1976, Sobhraj faced several criminal charges in other cities. In the capital itself, there were three cases against him. The first was recorded at the Chanakyapuri police station in 1971 (FIR No 412). He was charged in case No 561/76 at the Connaught Place police station and a third case was registered at the Daryaganj police station charging him with the murder of a foreign national, Luke Solomon. (Sobhraj was later acquitted in the



Charles Sobhraj

case and charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder). Sobhraj was also charged with the murder of A. A. Jackob in Varanasi in January 1976. In this case too, Sobhraj was acquitted of murder charges because of an eye-witness account given before the court.

Sobhraj has written to several of his friends in India and abroad about his future plans after he leaves jail. He is said to have been approached by a host of writers and journalists to write about his eventful life. A famous Hollywood producer is also in touch with a proposal to film his life, police sources say. Sobhraj who has already been the subject of two biographical sketches *Serpentine* and the *Life and Crimes of Charles Sobhraj* has recently completed a manuscript in prison which he has sent to Pan Publishers, London and has entered into an agreement with a British writer to co-author his autobiography covering the period of his captivity.

In one letter written by Sobhraj from Karwar jail to R.K. Ohri, his lawyer in New Delhi, he has said, "My trial here is over. (What) only remains now (is) my statement under Section 313, argument and judgment. So by the end of this month I'll be meeting you." In the same letter he has also written to his lawyer about the Bhopal gas tragedy, "I am interested in that Union Carbide case in Bhopal and am thinking of investing some money in it, for I am sure it's a gold mine stuff. My idea is to come into an agreement with one or two lawyers and tie up a contract with two or three (of) Bhopal's victims, and then hand over their cases to my lawyers in the USA..." Apparently hoodwinking innocent people has become a habit, which Sobhraj cannot easily give up.

It is evident that seven years of imprisonment has not dampened the penchant Sobhraj had for making something out of nothing. In fact, he has been an enigmatic and charismatic prisoner behind bars. At the Tihar jail, he used to receive VIP treatment. His cell in jail was lined by hundreds of books and even now in Karwar, Sobhraj is surrounded by books and piles of correspondence he receives from all over the world. He was also in the news about the "marriage ceremony" that was performed between him and an American writer, Shereen Walker on 15 November 1981 in Varanasi jail. Shereen Walker was asked to leave the country on 14 February, 1982. His first wife, Canadian born Marie Andree, who was also wanted along with Sobhraj on criminal charges in India was allowed to leave the country for treatment by a Supreme Court order of 1983. Marie Andree, after a year of hospitalisation in Canada died of cancer in September 1984.

"I consider myself a businessman, not a criminal, and I know I never killed good people," Sobhraj had said to Richard Neville and Julie Clarke, the American authors of *Life and Crimes* who had conducted a series of interviews with Sobhraj in Tihar jail. In the same book, Sobhraj has also declared that if he is ever made to face a trial in Thailand, he will "deny everything." According to his lawyers, Sobhraj will seek residence in India after his release. The extradition court proceedings, mean while are being finalised.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

A Change of Site ?

Scientists feel that the research station is incorrectly located

Four years after embarking on an ambitious programme for the exploration of Antarctica, the department of ocean development is now wondering whether the selection of the site for India's research station Dakshin Gangotri was correct. A new site will be selected by the time the fifth expedition sets sail for Antarctica by the end of the year. Since December 1981, when the first batch of 23 Indians went to Antarctica, four successful expeditions have been concluded, the last of which will be returning to India by the end of March. The search for a new site has begun after scientists and geologists on the four expeditions expressed dissatisfaction over the site, situated 22 kilometres away from the Antarctic ocean, where a permanent manned station has been setup. Easy accessibility from the sea, which would facilitate the comfortable movement of men and cargo, apparently led to the selection of this site. However, there is sufficient proof now that Dakshin Gangotri which is part of the continental ice shelf is not a suitable site for exploring for mineral and oil reserves.

Most stations of other countries are dotted along the interior of the continent, along areas called the Ross Sea and the Weddel Sea. There are very few manned stations near the Dakshin Gangotri, the two largest being the Russian station Novolazarevsksya and the South African station Sanae, are also in areas not considered rich in mineral and oil reserves. The Russian station set up more than 20 years ago, is one of the 28 such stations of the USSR and is in fact not even manned by the Russians throughout the year.

A senior official of the department of ocean development told SUNDAY: "If India has to make a serious stake for Antarctic wealth, it will have to move inside. As long as we are at the Dakshin Gangotri, we will not benefit at all." He also pointed out that the life of the station is not likely to be more than five to seven years, since the ice shelf is in constant movement and there is the danger of the station caving in.

Since India embarked on its ambitious programme of scientific exploration of Antarctica, the investment in the programme has been increasing. While the first two expeditions cost Rs 1.90 crores and Rs 1.95 crores respectively, the two subsequent expeditions have cost much more. The third expedition, which was the first to leave behind a wintering party in the continent, cost Rs 5.85 crores and the last expedition, which has left 13 members behind has already spent Rs 6.03 crores.

Future Indian investments in Antarctica are likely to go up. There are various proposals awaiting the sanction of the government which, if approved would improve Indian prospects in the continent. One of the factors which has been restricting Indian interests in Antarctica is the fact that inspite of deciding to have one Antarctic expedition every year and putting up a permanent manned station, India has not purchased a ship to transport Indians to the continent. Instead, ships have only been chartered at tremendous cost. At present the Finnish ice breaker *Finnpolaris*, which is being used by the Indians is costing the government 12,500 dollars every day. It is now believed that the government has approached several ship builders in Europe to present proposals for the construction of a research vessel for India.

A decision is also likely to be taken shortly to purchase an aircraft which would establish a permanent air link between India and Antarctica. Negotiations have begun with the USA for the purchase of a C 130 Hercules for this purpose. Once such an aircraft is purchased, a permanent air strip will be erected on the ice shelf and an air link established, most probably through Argentina.

Another major investment is the purchase of the *Sagar Sampada* an ice-strengthened fishing vessel from Denmark. The vessel which has cost Rs 18 crores repayable on a soft loan, will soon commence operations in the Antarctic waters in the summer months and catch krill, a high protein marine organism found in the Antarctic waters.

The race for Antarctica is hotting up. It has been established that there is tremendous potential and wealth hidden below the ice pack. According to the US geological survey conducted recently, there are 15 million barrels of oil and three trillion cubic feet of gas below the ice shelf. There is also ample evidence of large quantities of iron, coal, nickel, zinc, gold and uranium. As a member of the consultative committee of Antarctica, India can share the rich reserves of the continent.

Ritu Sarin. New Delhi.



Members of a previous expedition to Antarctica

SMUGGLING

The Gulf Connection

Bombay Customs smash a racket

Rajukuttan Asari, a poor labourer from Trivandrum, returned to India from Dubai in December 1984. At Bombay's Sahar airport, he declared that he was coming back after working for three years abroad and was thus covered by the provisions of "Transfer of Residence" (TR) rules, which permitted him to import all his used household articles. Five crates were coming by sea, which were declared by Asari as his "unaccompanied baggage." A landing certificate was duly issued. When these crates were not claimed for over a month, Asari was traced by the Marine and Preventive Wing of Bombay Customs at Trivandrum and taken to the Unclaimed Baggage Centre (UBC) of Bombay's Indira docks. When the crates were opened, it was found that Asari had imported goods worth Rs 4.41 lakhs. The brand-new items seized by the Customs included three Hitachi refrigerators, three National (Japanese) airconditioners, a cooking range, a seven-system videocassette recorder (National NV 780), a model which had been marketed only in October 1984, Japanese Noritaki and Nagoya crockery sets, 15 carpets, microovens, vacuum cleaners, hundreds of Kitkat and Tobler chocolates and scores of two brands of perfume: Masculine and You and Me.

Asari had become a courier for contraband at Dubai. He had paid Rs 15,000 to a job racketeer three years ago, to get employment in the Gulf. He had been unemployed for a major part of his stay at Dubai. Starvation and penury in an alien land made Asari a desperate person. He had no money to eat, leave aside buy a ticket back to India. Then, some friends took him to a "Robin Hood" who visited Dubai from Bombay often. The "Robin Hood" gave Asari an air ticket to Bombay. In return, he was asked to obtain a landing certificate at Sahar airport. He was given an address, where he was to report and arrangements for his stay at Bombay were also assured by this "Robin Hood." Not only that, Asari was told that once "his luggage" was cleared from the Indira docks, he would be given a train ticket to Trivandrum plus Rs 10,000, which he could carry back home as his "earnings at Dubai." For a person in Asari's plight, it was an attractive proposition. At Bombay, he went to the assigned address. He was put up in a dormitory in the Nishanpada area, near Dongri. Solkar Manzil, the guest house where Asari had been put up by his smuggler-patrons, had come under Customs surveillance from mid-December. Asari was told that the "trail was hot" and asked to stay at Solkar Manzil till arrangements could be made to clear his baggage. The Customs rules require the presence of the passenger at the Indira docks when the clearance is done. So, till his "baggage" was cleared, the promised Rs 10,000 was not forthcoming. Asari ran away to Trivandrum in early January. He did not wait for the money. His passport and landing certificate were recovered by the Customs on 8 January, when they raided Solkar Manzil. He was traced in a slum in Trivandrum and Asari willingly confessed. On the basis of his statement, the "Robin Hood," Moinuddin Sharfuddin Parker, was arrested. When the crates were opened at the Indira docks, Asari looked at the luxury goods with surprise. No, they did not belong to him, he told the Customs. Suddenly he spotted a battered suitcase: "This is mine," he said. The suitcase was opened. There were some used clothes and a new frock for a little girl. "I had bought this for my daughter," Asari said, tears streaming down his cheeks. The Customs officers let him take his suitcase along with him to Trivandrum.



A refrigerator stuffed with contraband, found in the crates

The abbreviation 'MP', in Customs parlance refers to the Marine and Preventive wing. The team of "Customs MP," comprising P.K. Kapoor, S.K. Pali and G.N. Deshpande had been amazed by the quick clearances certain consignments had got at the Unclaimed Baggage Centre (UBC) at Indira docks. On 18 December 1984, they found one consignment being presented for clearance at 11 am and by 1.30 pm, a truck carrying the goods was unloading at Mohammed Ali Road in the Dongri area of the city. Normally, each crate should require 30 minutes for clearance. The five crates belonging to one Mohandas Kanarakutti had been cleared in record time. The truck was followed up to Dongri and after the unloading was almost over, the place was raided. Kanarakutti was not found, but Abbas Dandekar, a local resident, came forward with the Customs clearance papers and Kanarakutti's passport and told the officers that the goods were not contraband. The passport showed Kanarakutti as a resident of a slum in Chembur, near the Mahul Refinery. The slum was visited by Customs officers and the address was located, but no one there had heard of any Kanarakutti.

Kapoor, Pali and Deshpande, however, decided to take over the clearance activities at the Indira docks UBC. From the next day, the conniving Customs staff were replaced by "Customs MP" personnel. A bonanza of recoveries followed. Within two days, the average number of passengers cleared daily at the UBC nosedived from 50 to 20 per day. An alarm was sounded in the underworld. "*UBC mein lafda hai* (there is trouble at the UBC)" was the general alert. Rajukuttan Asari of Trivandrum had landed in Bombay during these days. Hence, his luggage remained unclaimed for weeks.

The *modus operandi* of the smugglers who have been misusing the "transfer of residence" rules is simple. They scout for poor Indian labourers cheated by job racketeers wanting to return home from the Gulf. Even for people returning to India in the normal course, the lure of money, ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 (depending on the consignment) is attractive. An air ticket is provided, accommodation in Bombay is ensured in dormitories owned by the smugglers. All that the passenger had to do is obtain a landing certificate under TR rules and present himself at the UBC when the goods are cleared. The "customs cleared" imported goods sold on Bombay's footpaths usually came from the TR racket.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, Bombay

UNITED KINGDOM

A Blow for Democracy

The Conservative government reduces municipal autonomy

The age-old aphorism—"An Englishman's home is his castle"—is often accompanied at least in the minds of the people of England, by a firm belief that local government (that is, municipal autonomy)is the foundation of British parliamentary democracy. Or so it appeared until the return of the Conservative government of Mrs Margaret Thatcher to power in June 1983, because since then it has concentrated on reducing the powers of the boroughs and counties and even decided to end the very existence of seven "metropolitan counties."

With the steamroiler majority in the House of Commons which the Thatcher administration enjoys, it is carrying out its policy of clipping the wings of the borough councils and councils and axing the metropolitan authorities, so that by the time the next general election is held in 1988, these seven metropolitan authorities will have ceased to exist and the borough councils will be more or less tools in the hands of the central government in Whitehall.

There is little doubt that the Tory government has come to adopt a hard line because of the running fight during the last five or six years between the central government and the borough councils (and the county councils) where they are led by the Labour Party, as in many cases especially in northern and north-eastern England. But what brought matters to a head was the arrival on the political firmament of Ken Livingstone, the young left winger, who was elected to the post of the leader of the Labour Group of the Greater London Council (the former London County Council) in May 1981.

Within a month of his election, Livingstone began to openly defy Whitehall. As the first measure of his defiance, he announced the reduction of the fares of the bus and underground services of London transport (then under the control of the GLC) by half and increased the rates (municipal tax) levied by the GLC proportionately to compensate for the loss of revenue of London transport. This was strongly objected to by the Tory boroughs especially by the borough of Bromley (Kent) which challenged in the High Court the rise in the GLC rates. When it lost the case in the High Court, Bromley took it to the House of Lords, the final court of appeal and won it, so that the GLC had perforce to reduce the fares to their original level and then reduce them to modest levels as agreed with the central minister of transport, much to the chagrin of Mr Livingstone and his associates.

Meanwhile, Livingstone started challenging the authority of the central government or asserting his financial independence on another front by giving large or handsome grants and subsidies to all sorts of fringe organisations, much to the annoyance of the Tories at local levels and especially at Westminster. According to the Tories, it was intolerable and undesirable to have in their midst councils which are politically opposed to the ideology and practices of the Conservative Party.

But not only Tory politicians but also ordinary or lower middle income



Margaret Thatcher

groups felt that the increases in rates levied by the Labour-controlled boroughs or counties had increased the burden on the ordinary people and it was about time that this age-old power of the municipal authorities was curbed. Indeed, this principle of "rate-capping," like the principle of the abolition of the GLC had found an important place on the manifesto on which the Conservative Party won the general election of 1983.

Therefore, after the election Mrs Thatcher's ministers undertook to introduce legislation imposing "rate capping," that is financial legal limits on the increases in rates which borough councils or county councils can make. This Act was passed by Parliament just before Christmas and in February, the secretary of state for the environment laid down actual limits of rate rises for each individual borough or county council.

Throughout January and February, most Labour-controlled borough councils or county councils made loud noises proclaiming their determination to defy the government's rate-capping *diktat*—9 March was observed as a "day of action" to protest against rate capping and the government's assaults on local democracy and in keeping with the pledges taken on that day, some "ultraleft" councils (such as Islington, Hackney and Harinvey in London) have announced their intention to refuse to fix any rate at all so as to bring their local administrations to a standstill.

However, the Rate Capping Act gives the secretary of state for the environment wide powers. Using these, he can "surcharge" (that is, impose fines personally on councillors) or declare them bankrupt and thus debar them from holding public office or send municipal commissioners from Whitehall to administer the finances of the borough councils. In the face of these threats, several Labour councils have already given in and even the GLC, led by Ken Livingstone, had to abandon the fight and on 10 March it fixed a rate slightly below the limit set by the government ("rate capping ceiling") of five per cent over last year.

Meanwhile, it is important to remember that for generations the Conservatives whether in the urban boroughs or the "shire counties" (agricultural counties) have proclaimed themselves to be firm defenders of local democracy. Therefore, during the last two years many of them have watched with growing apprehension the battles in the House of Commons and the House of Lords over the Thatcher government's legislation. During the debates on the Bills to abolish the GLC and to impose "rate capping," Tory stalwarts like Edward Heath and Enoch Powell made passionate speeches opposing those Bills, so that the Thatcher government could secure their adoption only with small majorities.

This unease over the threat to local democracy in the minds of the Conservatives especially in the land owning belts still continues. At the back of their minds is the fear that a future Labour government can take a leaf from the Thatcher book and enact legislation curtailing or clipping drastically the landed classes' age old powers or privileges and thus their hard won local democracy might eventually wither away.

Peter Pendsay, London

Indian Sahibs in England

A *Raj* nostalgia in reverse is now taking place. For all the passages to India, there are a few passages to England as well. One such is the gorgeously illustrated *Indian in Britain: The Indian contribution to the British Way of Life* by Kusoom Vadgama and published by Robert Royce Ltd., London (distributed by UBS Publishers Distributors Ltd). This coffee-table book—though it is so by the very nature of its subject—is a pictorial record of Indians in England during the years of the *Raj*: 1952 to 1947. The photographs aptly illustrated by excerpts, largely from commentaries which appeared in *The Times*, especially its court and social pages, the *Illustrated London News* and the *Graphic Chronicle* detail



the activities of the Indians in Britain during this epoch and their impact on British life, high and low. "The establishment of the day, the politics of the time, the society of the period, the sports of the season were all enriched by the Indian connection," writes the Indian expatriate writer.

Ms Vadgama states quite unequivocally that her intent in depicting how bright and essential the jewel in Britain's crown was an answer, in part, to the "one-side view of imperial history...The tide of anti-immigration and racial feelings must be checked by a considered reappraisal of the services rendered to Britain by noble, if unremembered, men and women of India."

Although, there are more about kings in the book, the section on Queen Victoria, Kaiser-i-Hind, is fascinating in its portrayal of her world with its many Indian servants. The great white mother across the seas, who never managed to visit the jewel in her vast empire, depended to a fairly large extent on her servants for knowledge of their homeland and often for advice on matters of policy. One of the most compelling photographs shows the Empress seated at her desk covered with an Indian table cloth studying Hindustani in the Garden Cottage, Balmoral in 1895. Beside her stands Munshi Abdul Karim, her teacher.

Prominent in the galaxy of the stars are, of course, the Maharajas. Gaekwar of Baroda, the maharaja of Cooch Behar, Gwalior, Bikaner. There are the cricketing noblemen too: Maharaja Ranjitsinhji and the Nawab of Pataudi. The first Indian Members of Parliament, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru are also there. Appropriately enough, there are two forewords to the book one by the Prince of Wales and the other by Indira Gandhi.

Cooking Up Tales



Coffee-table India is still in vogue, it would seem, by the number of glossy books being churned out. *Seasons of Splendour: Tales, Myths, and Legends From India*, a large, glossy and beautifully illustrated book written by Madhur Jaffrey and illustrated by Michael Foreman is a collection of children's stories. These are not the usual dry fairy tales. The book is in a way the childhood revisited of Madhur Jaffrey, the talented actress who became even more famous with her cookery books and television programmes in England on Indian cuisine. The stories are not retold in the didactic manner of many of the mythological tales excerpted in countless unattractive publications. The author retells them in a simple and colourful language, as they were told to her in her childhood by her mother. Recorded in the best of tradition, they retain the flavour of this tradition which is rapidly disappearing. Each story is accompanied by personal recollections from Ms Jaffrey's childhood. Published by Pavillion, this book (£7.95) will be distributed by Dass Media.

An Old Man and His Thoughts

Although A.J.P. Taylor's *An Old Man's Diary* is as spritely as a spring chicken and as fresh, the controversial historian's jottings begun in November 1984 are touched with a little melancholy, brought, no doubt, by the onset of the debilitating Parkinson's Disease. Example: "All my life I have used an open, or as it is called, a cut-throat razor. My hand trembles slightly. So far I have managed to steady the razor against my cheek. What am I to do if the degeneration continues? I have no idea how to use a safety razor. Let alone how to clean it. I have no faith in an electric razor. Perhaps, I should grow a beard. But I am told that growing a beard changes one's personality and I am quite content with my personality as it is..."

The diary, certainly no rantings of an old man, is a collection of items full of this irrepressible historian's idiosyncratic views on topics ranging from the Falklands War, Malcolm Muggeridge, Michael Foot, Margaret Thatcher, television, nuclear disarmament and even the art of making breakfast.

One of the more well-known pieces is from his lecture in 1981, *War in our time*, which has some chilling thoughts. "When the holocaust comes and destroys nearly all, have no fear. Shelters to withstand nuclear weapons were already in existence for the members of cabinet, for the chiefs of staff, for the senior civil servants, and for the outstanding scientists who have directed the mass slaughter. When the nuclear storm has passed, these superior persons will emerge from their shelters and will be able to contemplate, I hope with satisfaction, the destruction which they have brought on their fellow men."

"Oops... I forgot..."

"I think I've got it right— this time!"

"Oh no!"

"Did I? Didn't I?"

"Wait a moment..."



"I'm positive. I'm almost sure.
I think...maybe..."



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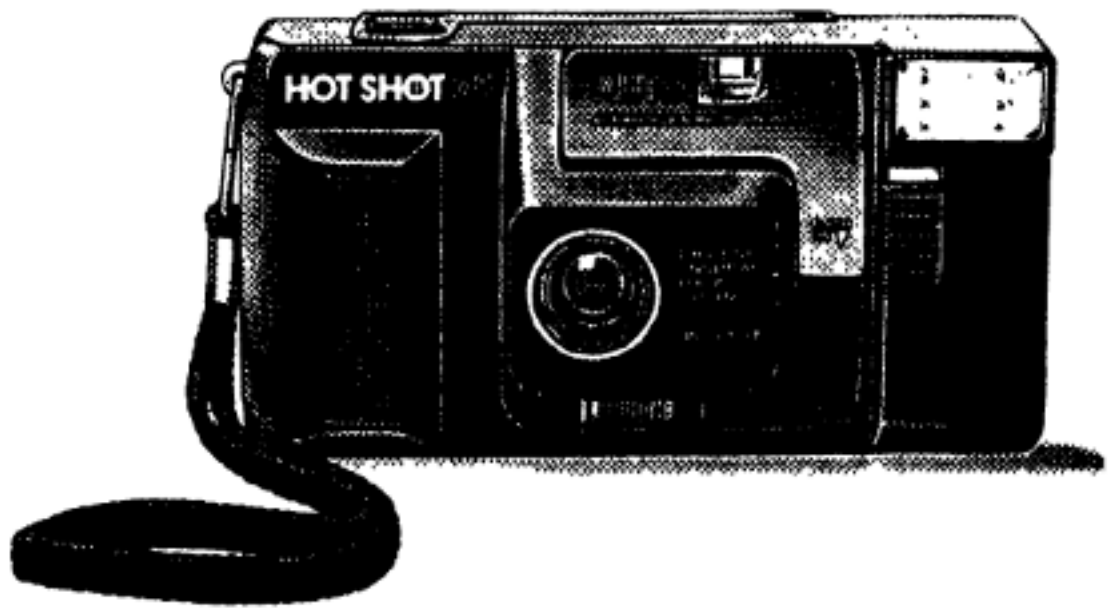
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VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debashis Deb

HOWRAH: Mr Abdul Bari, West Bengal's minister of state for primary education, said here on 26 February that he had detected a "ghost" primary school at Lakshmandas Lane in central Howrah, during his surprise inspection of primary schools in Howrah. According to Mr Bari, the school was supposed to have four teachers. But when he went to the school he could not find any student or teacher there—*The Statesman* (P. V. Seshadri, Calcutta)

WARANGAL: Even the Lord, the originator of all laws, seems to be not above them once they are laid down. Maybe, he should be taken to a police station and kept in 'protective custody' following mortals' quibbings and quarrels over His 'ownership.' On the night of 14 February, the Shivalingam in a small ruined temple on the Ramappa tank bund here was shifted by a 'group of persons.' The watchman and others at the place reported the matter to the police. The custodians of the law set out to find out the Lord's 'fate.' The local unit of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, it is said, quietly removed the Sivalingam, in all good faith, to reinstall it at another temple. It had, of course, taken oral permission from the endowments department officials. However, as there was no written permission, the police took away the Shivalingam to the station where the Lord spent the night of 15 February—*The Hindu* (P. M. Irfan Ahmed, Madras)

HYDERABAD: The "shadow" man Mr M. K. Raghu of Bangalore, proved to be one of the instant hits at the World Humour Conference which concluded here on 12 February. Playing with the shadows of his hands and even his head, Mr Raghu sent the audience into peels of laughter when he created images of popular figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Winston Churchill with his famous pipe and Chhatrapati Shivaji, priests and even animals within seconds—*The Times* (C. P. Rao, Hubli)

KEONJHAR: Marriage still has its charms for him, "after tying the knot 88 times," claims 61-year old Udayanath Dakhinaray of Orali village in Orissa. At present, he has five wives living with him, 59 of them have deserted him and 24 others have died. The six-footer is looking forward to 'having more brides'—*Indian Express* (Rishi Ranjan, Bombay)

BANDA: Even a snake bite did not deter a voter from casting his vote. When a middle-aged voter went to cast his vote at a polling station in village Baghalwari under Man Vidhan Sabha constituency on 2 March, a snake came out of a ballot box and bit him. Undeterred by this the voter exercised his franchise. Later, medical aid was given to him—*The Times of India* (B.B.L. Sharma, New Delhi)

BANGALORE: Four mothers were presented an award of Rs 500 and conferred the title "Veera Thai" for begetting ten or more children at the hands of Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam at the Kumarakottam temple in Kanchipuram near Madurantakam. Six other mothers were given an award of Rs 100. The award was instituted by the Hindu Munnani—*Sunday Herald* (T.V. Krishnan, Bangalore)

BAREILLY: A piquant situation developed in Cantonment Assembly constituency here, when the rebel Congress(I) candidate, Mr Asfaq Ahmed, paraded his symbol, a lion, with a view to attracting large crowds. The lion, which was carried in a cage, disrupted one of the meetings addressed by the Congress(I) MP, Mrs Abida Ahmed. The meeting could be held only after the district authorities intervened and removed the animal from the scene—*Indian Express* (V. Barathi, Madras)

BARODA: A couple here decided to withdraw their petition for divorce after seeing the Hindi film, *Pyar Jhukta Nahin*. The divorce proceedings had been going on for a long time, but the judge felt that both husband and wife still seemed to care for each other. He suggested they see the film before he delivered the final verdict. The couple saw the film and subsequently decided to withdraw the case—*The Telegraph* (Jiten Das, Goalpara, Assam)

WITHOUT COMMENT

I am against mixing religion with politics. They do not make a good cocktail—Ramakrishna Hegde in *Debonair*

Rajiv Gandhi is an idealist, it shows. It is time idealism came back to politics...that is why people like me are needed—Jayalalitha in *Savvy*

No person can convert his state into an island and behave like a modern-day Robinson Crusoe—Srikant Verma, blaming Andhra CM, NTR, for the outbreak of riots in the state, in *The Times of India*

His (Srikant Verma's) mouth is as big as Raj Narain's—Advocate P. N. Lekhi, former vice-president of the Delhi unit of the BJP, in *The Sunday Observer*

I need not learn discipline from Mr Karunakaran (Kerala CM). I know what is discipline and what is not—R. Gundu Rao, reacting sharply to Karunakaran's remark that he was not a disciplined Congressman, in *Indian Express*

I have never done gimmicks. Gimmick is done by people in films—in film music rather—Ravi Shankar, when told that his experiments with Western music and musicians were seen as "gimmicks," in *Weekend Review*



Films are like cigarettes and alcohol. You either give them up totally or you don't—Rati Agnihotri, who is quitting films, in *Filmfare*

I could not have asked for a better gift in my last year as captain of India—Sunil Gavaskar, when India won the Benson and Hedges World Championship of Cricket

Padmini Kapila, the woman who starred in a number of flops and then went into hybernation has made a phoenix-like comeback. Just when producers shied away from her, she played one of her aces: she 'hooked' director *Prakash Mehra*. The 'affair' worked wonders for Padmini and within months she bought a flat close to Mehra's bungalow and started moving around in an imported car. She even launched a film and *Meetha Zehar* has become an instant hit after it was released recently. All's well that ends well.

Once upon a time there was an actress called *Asha Sachdev*. Initially she showed promise but somewhere along the slippery sets of Hindi films she slipped and fell. In desperation she excepted whatever roles came her way and she even exposed herself more than what the directors wanted her to reveal. But with age such roles too have become scarce. Now she spends most of her time writing Urdu poetry, perhaps, to give vent to her frustrations.

Shatrughan Sinha has learnt lessons from bitter experiences. He tried to pose as an intellectual and make such highbrow stuff as *Kalka* but the film did not do well. According to the rumour mill in Bombay, he has given up his ambitions of trying to be another *Satyajit Ray* and is now concentrating on the usual *masala* films.

The much talked-about affair between *Mithun Chakraborty* and *Sri Devi* has finally ended. At least this is what Mithun has been saying. *Rakesh Roshan's Jaag Utha Insaan* had brought the two together and gossip magazines took over. Soon Mithun's marriage was on the rocks but better sense finally prevailed and he withdrew in time.



Mithun Chakraborty: end of an affair?

Nagesh, the undisputed hero among comedians in the south, seems to have taken Shakespeare's saying that a fool must be wise enough to play his part a bit too seriously. For, these days he never loses an opportunity to lecture on life. Even while relaxing on the sets between shots, Nagesh is always willing to oblige the more discerning.



Anuradha: less clothes, more roles

A fierce competition is underway between the southern belles, *Anuradha* and *Jyothilakshmi*: that of shedding clothes. Both are determined to outclass the other in bagging roles and the directors are clearly setting a challenge for the censor board. At the moment Anuradha has left Jyothilakshmi way behind but the latter is known for her sudden spurt just before the finish line.

Kishore Kumar does not give up so easily. His recent forays in filmmaking have flopped miserably but he has not given up hope. Why not? He makes the kind of money few Indians make. He charges a fabulous price for every song he sings. "What will he do with so much filthy lucre? It is good that he spends some of his money on his filmmaking madness. In doing that he helps so many men, women and children to make a living. A few lakhs lost is nothing lost for a man like Kishore Kumar," a friend of his says. Kishore is well-known as an eccentric and he has signed up another difficult man, *Rajesh Khanna* to play a leading role in the film he is planning to make.

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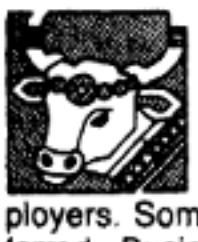
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BEGINNING 24 MARCH 1985 by AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) The stars shine brightly on the financial front and most of you will be able to repay your debts. This is an excellent week for professionals and businessmen. If you are in love and intend to get married, this is the opportune time to do so. The domestic front, however, will bother you. Avoid disputes with your friends and relatives. Watch your health closely

Good dates: 25, 27 and 29
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: South-west



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Misfortunes are in store for all of you Professionals are likely to come in for severe criticism from their employers. Some of you may even be transferred. Businessmen should be wary of deception. At home you may be misunderstood by someone close to you. Lovers are advised to postpone marriage or adventurous plans.

Good dates: 24, 26 and 28
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Those in service will find the period extremely favourable. Businessmen, however, are advised not to take up risky ventures. At home things will remain peaceful. Your financial prospects are also bright. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. A letter will bring good tidings Keep a close watch on your health and diet

Good dates: 27, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week you may suddenly fall sick consult a doctor at the slightest indication of illness. Social engagements will keep you busy throughout the week but do not overstrain yourself The financial front looks inspiring but avoid extravagance. Businesmen and politicians should make the most out of this favourable period. Lovers will make steady progress.

Good dates: 24, 25 and 28
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North-west



LEO (15 August—14 September) Friends and relatives will be of immense help to you this week. A journey which you were looking forward to is in the offing A promotion cannot be ruled out for those employed in the private sector. Women are likely to receive expensive gifts of jewellery and clothing. This is also a good phase for marriage negotiations. But do not neglect your health.

Good dates: 26, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South-east



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Professionals will be called upon to shoulder more responsibilities: do not hesitate to accept challenging assignments. This is also a good phase for creative artists and students Sportsmen will come out with flying colours in competitions The period is also good for love and matrimonial negotiations Your health will improve markedly.

Good dates: 28, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) The stars shine brightly on all your efforts this week, so make hay while the sun shines. Students will get opportunities to study abroad. Businessmen should not hesitate to implement expansion plans. A promotion or a posting to a better place cannot be ruled out for those in service. This is the opportune time to get married.

Good dates: 25, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South



SCORPIO (15 November-14 December) This is not a favourable phase for lovers: a misunderstanding may lead to estrangement The domestic front will add to your worries avoid arguments and deal with those at home diplomatically You may have to borrow money to tide over this lean season. This is, however, a good period for professionals A letter will relieve you of a lot of tension

Good dates: 26, 28 and 29
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) There is good news for those of you who are unemployed a job is in the offing This week you will come in contact with an influential person. The home front will remain inspiring. For bachelors this is the ideal time to get married or start marriage negotiations. Those above 45 should be careful about their health.

Good dates: 24, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 3, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Do not get frustrated at the slow pace of progress on all fronts. Professionals and businessmen are advised to exercise caution in all their dealings New opportunities are in the offing for students and creative artists. If you have legal problems concerning property, this is the right time to pursue them. This is also a favourable period for marriage.

Good dates: 24, 27 and 29
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) On the domestic front you will have to shoulder additional responsibilities. On the economic front some of you will gain money or property through inheritance. Professionals will make steady headway. Businessmen should utilise opportunities that come their way. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans. Keep a sharp eye on your health and diet

Good dates: 24, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (15 March—14 April) A week of hectic social activity lies ahead of you A new friendship which will blossom this week will be of immense help to you later However, the period is not good for those in service someone is working to harm you. Businessmen should check all documents carefully before signing them Those above the age of 50 should be careful about their health.

Good dates: 25, 28 and 30
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west

For those born on the 25th, 26th or 27th of any month:

Most of you are artistically inclined and you will do well if you take up the creative arts as your profession. You are gregarious by nature and you love to be surrounded by friends and relatives. Some of you have an inborn adventurous spirit and you do not hesitate to take risks. Women born during this period are usually very hard-working and they love to shoulder responsibilities.

VARIETY

CHESS

A learned philosopher of the game once observed that there are two types of chessplayer, problem solvers and problem setters. The latter voluntarily dig themselves into a hole so that they can then try to dig their way out again, whereas the former prefer to leave the mental archaeology to the opposition.

Czech grandmaster Vlastimil Hort is a model problem setter, always willing to create difficulties for himself if in doing so he can also create difficulties for his opponent. The following is a typical example in which the position only starts to crystallise when Black has already gone astray

White: V. Hort. Black: B. Zuger. King's Indian Defence. Biel 1984.

1 P–Q4	N–KB3	2 P–QB4	P–KN3
3 N–QB3	B–N2	4 P–K4	P–Q3
5 KN–K2			

Typical of Hort, leaving well-trodden paths at an early stage to give his opponent every opportunity of losing his way.

Zuger (Black)



Hort (White) to move

5 . . .	P–QR3	6 N–N3	P–B3
7 P–B4	P–QN4	8 P–K5	KN–Q2
9 B–K3	N–N3	10 P–QB5	PxBP
11 PxP	N–Q4	12 Q–Q2	

At first glance a surprising decision not to exchange knights, but after 12 NxN PxN followed by . . . N–B3 Black stands well.

12 . . .	B–K3	13 B–Q3	R–R2
14 NxN	BxN	15 B–K4	R–Q2
16 Q–QB2	P–QR4	17 P–KR4!	

Revealing tactical skill to achieve positional ends. If 17 . . . P–KR4 18 BxP! PxB 19 QxP+ K–B1 20 P–K6.

17 . . .	P–B4!	18 BxB	RxB
19 P–R5	P–K3	20 N–K2	N–R3
21 P–R3	R–Q6?		

Succumbing to the pressure of having to maintain a delicate equilibrium. Correct was 21 . . K–B2

22 K–B2	PxP	23 QR–Q1	RxR
24 RxR	Q–R5+	25 K–N1	N–B2
26 N–Q4	N–Q4	DIAGRAM	
27 NxKP!			

Knocking the props out of Black's position. If 27 . . NxB 28 NxB+ K–B1 29 NxBP!

27 . . .	Q–N5	28 RxN!	PxR
29 P–B6	P–KR5	30 P–B7	K–Q2
31 N–Q8!	RxN	32 P–K6+	Resigns.

After 32 . . K–B1 33 PxR=Q+ KxQ 34 Q–B6 mate is inevitable.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

A writer in the French magazine raises a point about the following hand that is worth considering. When you are missing the queen of the trump suit, or perhaps a combination such as ace and jack, can you draw an inference from the fact that the opening lead is in a side suit? There is, I suppose, a slight inference that if he chooses another suit his hand may include an 'awkward' holding in trumps. The theory was advanced (unsuccessfully) in connection with the following deal:

Dealer South Game all

♠ K J 9 3
♥ 10 8 7
♦ Q 8 6 3
♣ A 6

	N	
♠ 4 2	W E	♠ Q 6 5
♥ J 9 5 2		♥ Q 6 4
♦ 10 7 4	S	♦ A J 5
♣ Q J 9 3		♣ 10 8 4 2
	♠ A 10 8 7	
	♥ A K 3	
	♦ K 9 2	
	♣ K 7 5	

South opened 1NT and North produced the old Stayman, as players do. So they finished in Four Spades. With 10 points distributed over three suits it is more sensible just to raise to 3NT. 'The 4-4 major will probably be worth an extra trick', people say. Maybe, but to make ten tricks in notrumps instead of eight in a suit, you need two extra tricks



West led ♣Q against Four Spades. Putting his theory into practice, South won in hand, then led ace and another spade, finessing against the opening leader. East won and did well to switch to hearts. Now the defence made a heart trick before South could do anything with the diamonds.

More Deadly than the Male, by Rixi Markus, and **Aunt Agatha Plays Tournament Bridge**, by Freddie North, each Faber £8·95 or £3·95, are both excellent Christmas purchases. I will describe them both later.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. Soldiers of which country are called greycoats?
2. Of the seven wonders of the ancient world, only one still exists Which one?
3. With which sport do you associate the name of Meherwan Daruwala?
4. What do Voltaire, Adolph Hitler, Jawaharlal Nehru, Marco Polo and O Henry have in common?
5. The title Caesar was given to the heir presumptive to the Roman throne. What was the Roman emperor called?
6. In parliamentary language, what is a Call of the House?
7. How is ancient Cambria better known as?
8. What is Davy Jones' locker?
9. What are field pieces?
10. Klaus Altmann was the assumed name of which recently apprehended Nazi criminal?
11. What do the following have in common: cirrus, cumulus, stratus and cumulonimbus?
12. Where is O'Hare airport?
13. What is P C.P. better known as?
14. Where does the International Court of Justice of the United Nations meet?
15. The word calico is derived from the name of a place Which place?

ANSWERS

1. Russia.
2. The pyramids of Giza.
3. Squash.
4. All of them have written well-known books while they were in jail.
5. Augustus.
6. An imperative summons sent to every member of Parliament to attend.
7. Wales, in England.
8. The ocean bed.
9. Cannon.
10. Klaus Barbie.
11. They are all forms of clouds
12. Chicago in the USA. It is the busiest airport in the world.
13. Angel dust, a highly powerful drug.
14. The Hague in Holland.
15. Calicut.

A Harmful Habit

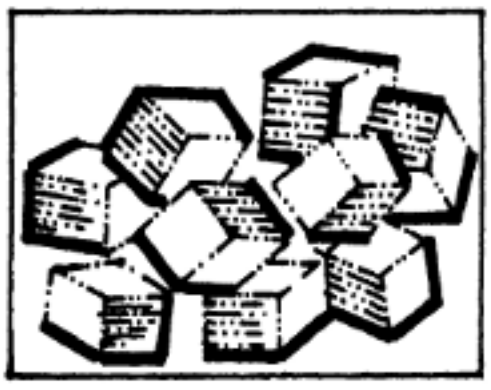


For those of you addicted to *pan masala*, think twice before taking it again. According to a Bombay-based weekly, excessive use of this dry betelnut mixture leads to dental and digestive ailments. The patient suffers from a disease called submucous fibrosis, which, according to Dr A.P. Bhatt, professor and head of the department of oral pathology and microbiology at Nair Hospital, Bombay, is "an insidious chronic disease affecting the mucosa of any part of the oral cavity and occasionally extending into the pharynx and oesophagus, sometimes preceded by blisters." The symptoms are: restricted ability to open the mouth, a burning sensation, intolerance to normal spicy food, a change in the colour of the mucous membrane from pink to marble white and the tongue is affected—the taste buds (papillae) lose their function and become smooth, and the forward movement of the tongue gets restricted.

Lending Library on the Paris Metro

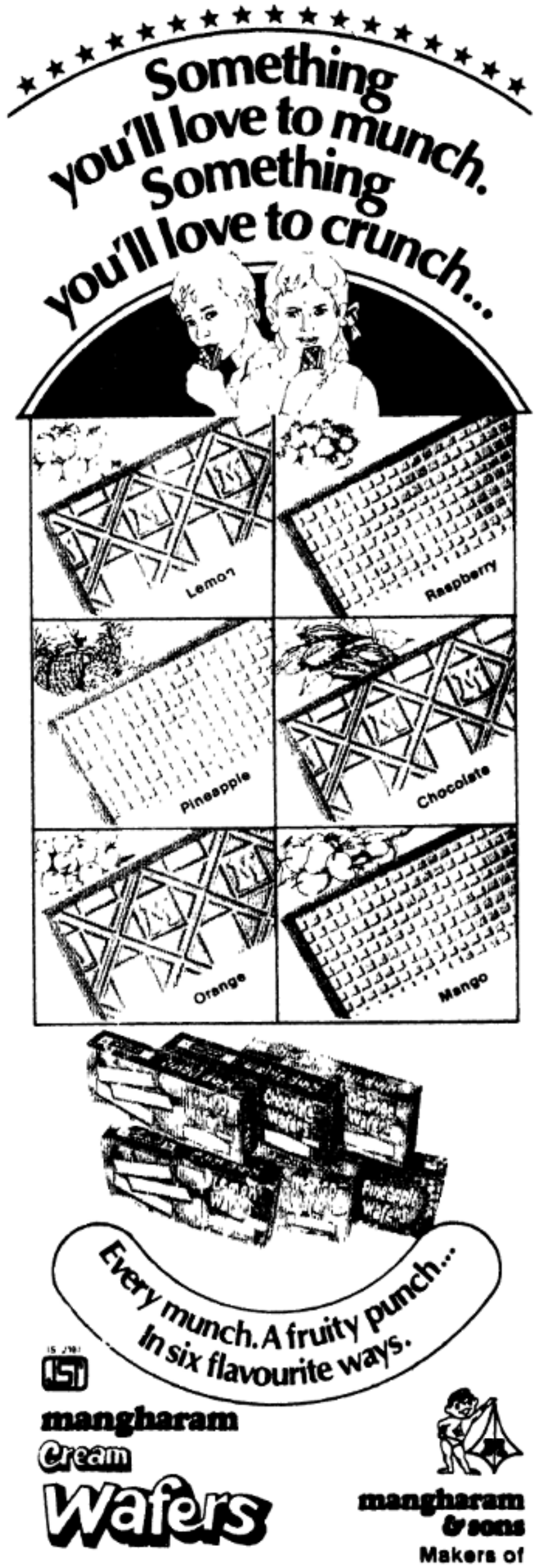
The Paris Metro has come out with a lending library, Metro Lire, which has been operating successfully for quite some time. The experiment, which has tried to open up the metro to the outside world, is the aim of the Regie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP). The experiment tried in one of the stations is positive. It is to be extended to some ten others. And that is not all: the transport company is also interested in video. Some 20 receivers for video texts have already been set up in experimental stations. They present travellers with immediate information on the whole of the Paris transport network (train, metro and bus). Moreover, one train has been fitted with TV sets.

The Sweetest Substance



One of the popular, and mistaken, beliefs doing the rounds in medical circles is that when you are taking an antibiotic, you should not drink alcohol at the same time. Only one antibiotic—metronidazole, marketed as Flagyl—will make you ill if it is mixed with alcohol. You will come to no harm if you drink a little while taking any other sort.

Doctors who suggest you should abstain from this err in their judgment. If you are ill, it would be wise to cut down on drinks: alcohol will slow you down, perhaps, reduce the absorption of the antibiotic and delay your recovery. If, however, you are prescribed antibiotics from the tetracycline group do not take them with milk. The calcium in the milk will combine with the antibiotic, make the drug inactive, and stop it from being assimilated properly. The most common side-effects involve the stomach. You could contract nausea and diarrhoea.

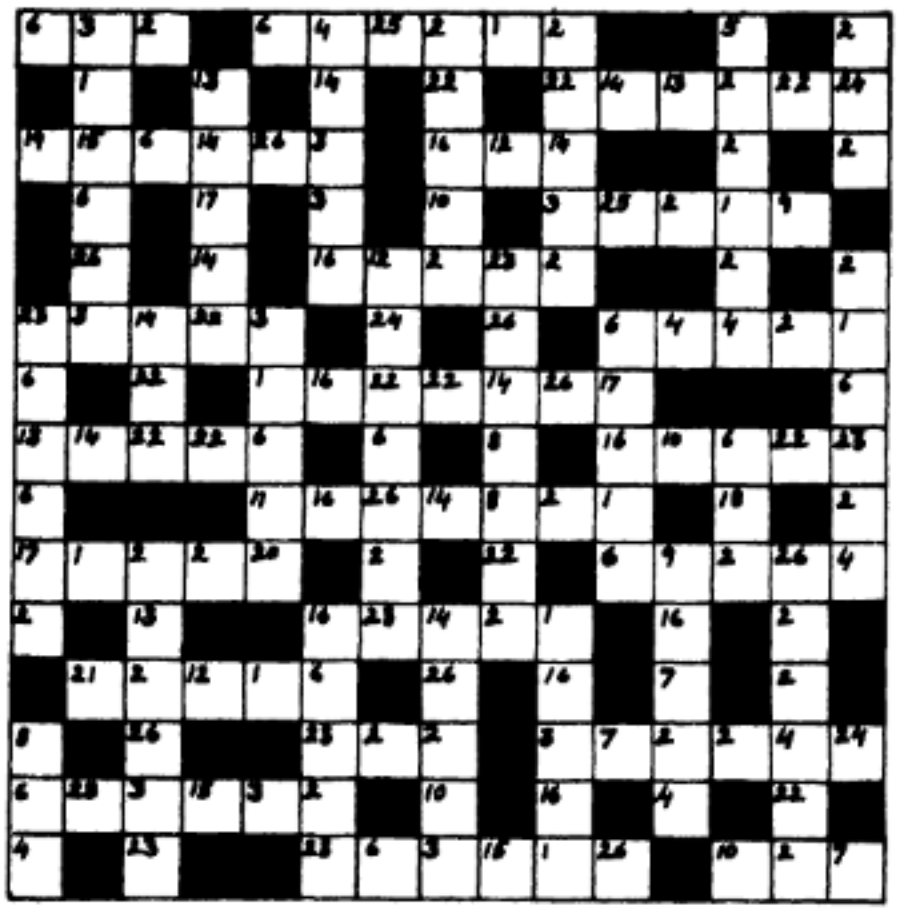


Illustrations Prabir Sen

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross

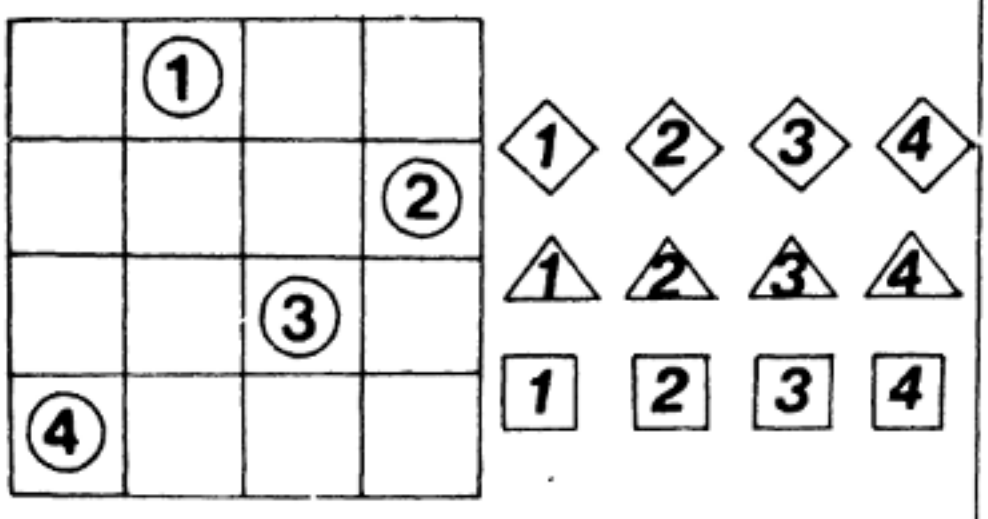


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R	E		D									

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Think Tank



Fit the numbered symbols given into the blank squares so that no two similar numbers and no two similar figures appear in any row, either vertical, horizontal or diagonal.

Quick Think

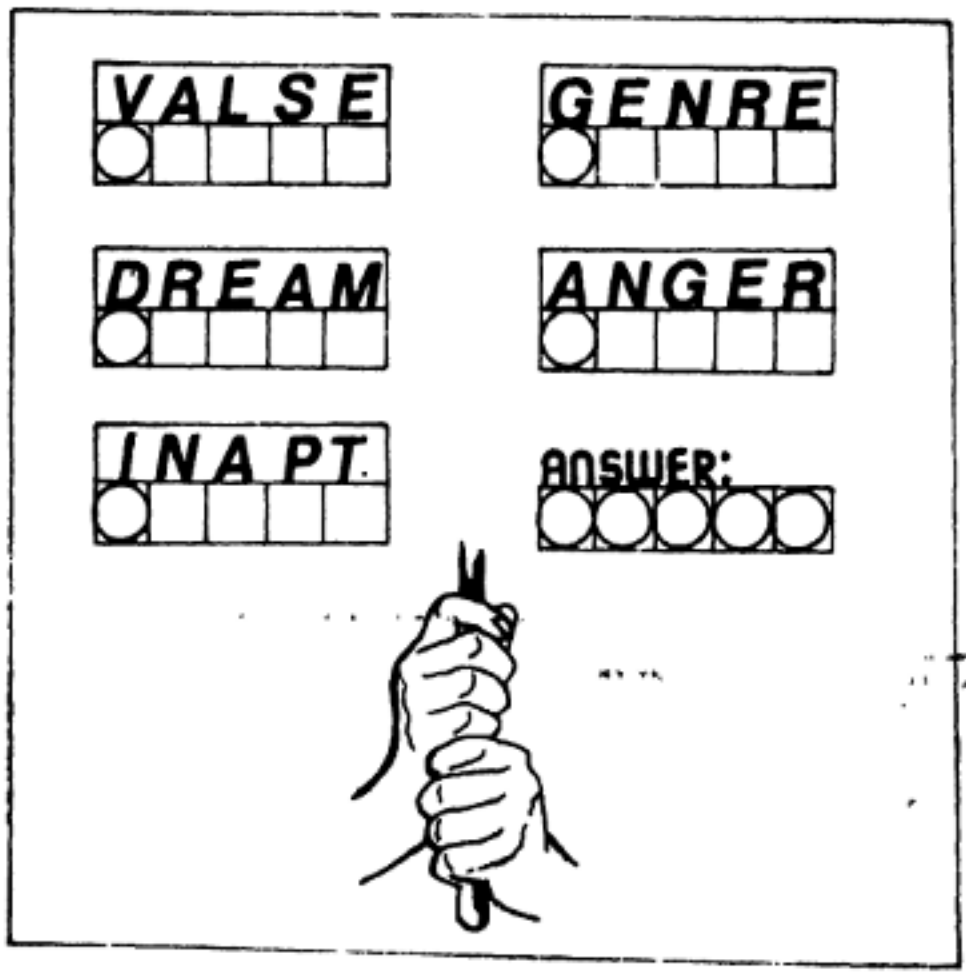
My grandparents married only once and my mother is an only child. My father has one more brother than he has sisters and his brothers and sisters are unmarried. My Aunt Gita has twice as many brothers as she has sisters. Without using algebra, can you tell me how many uncles and aunts I have?

Witsharpener

Eight teenagers divided 32 apples among themselves as follows: Anu got one, Bina took two, Kaveri three and Damayanti four Nandu Sharma took as many as his sister, Piyare Lal twice as many as his sister, Gajendra Kumar three times as many as his, and Dev Rajwade four times as many as his.

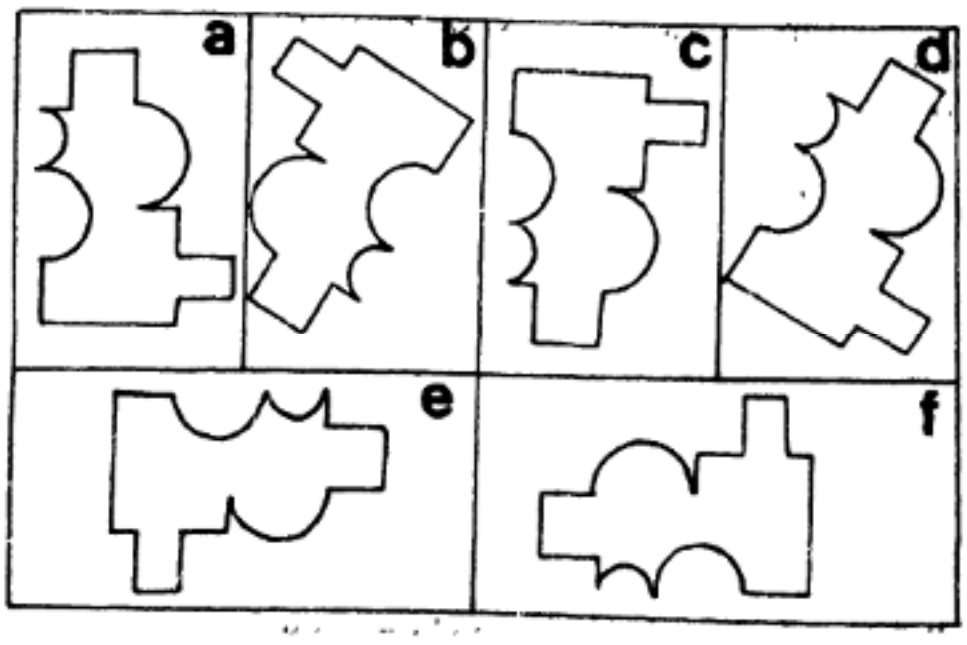
What were the full names of the girls and how many apples did each get?

Scrambles



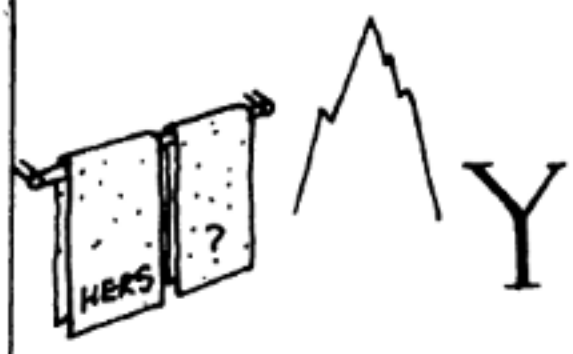
Rearrange these words to form new words. The circled letters arranged correctly will give you an idea of what the picture is about.

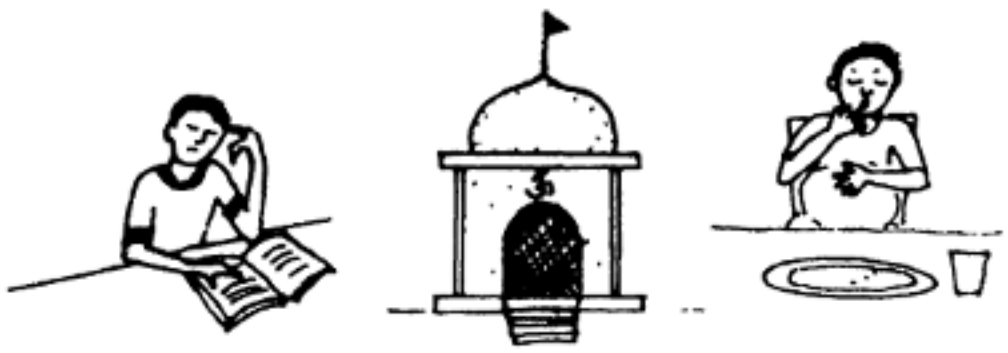
Shape Sleuth



Can you say which the odd one out is?

Wit Sharpener



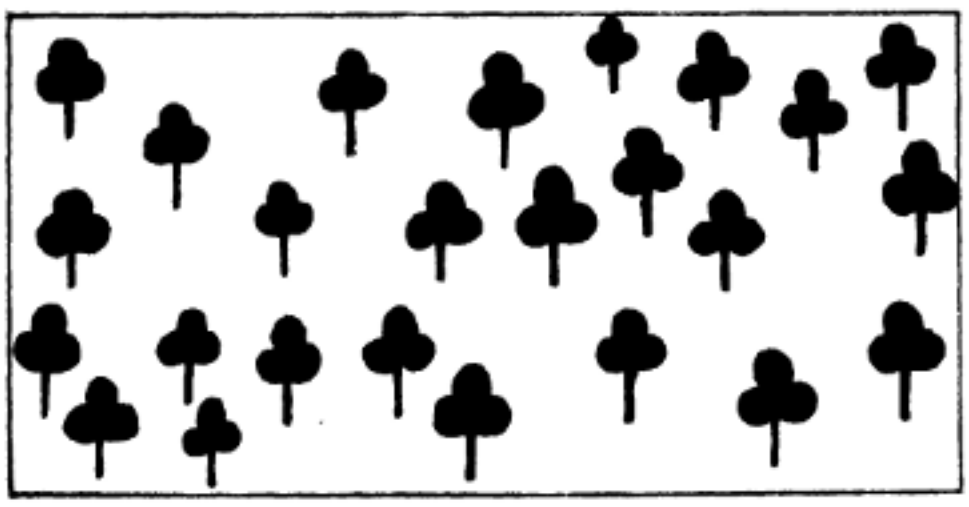






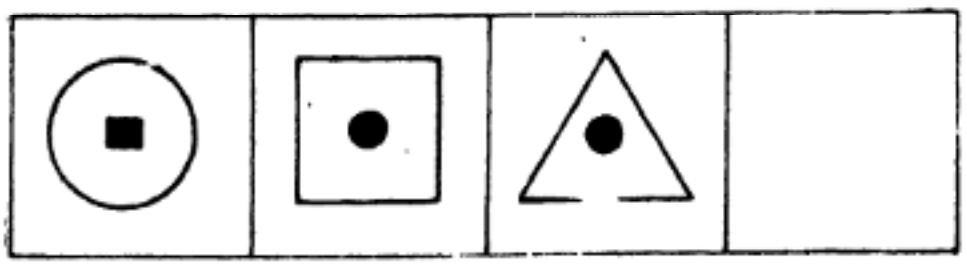
What word does each picture stand for? The first one, you may have guessed, is HISTORY. Find the others.

Figure it Out



Draw three straight lines so that this rectangular orchard is divided into five parts, each part containing five mango trees?

Mindbender



If A is to B as C is to D, what diagram could you draw in column D?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

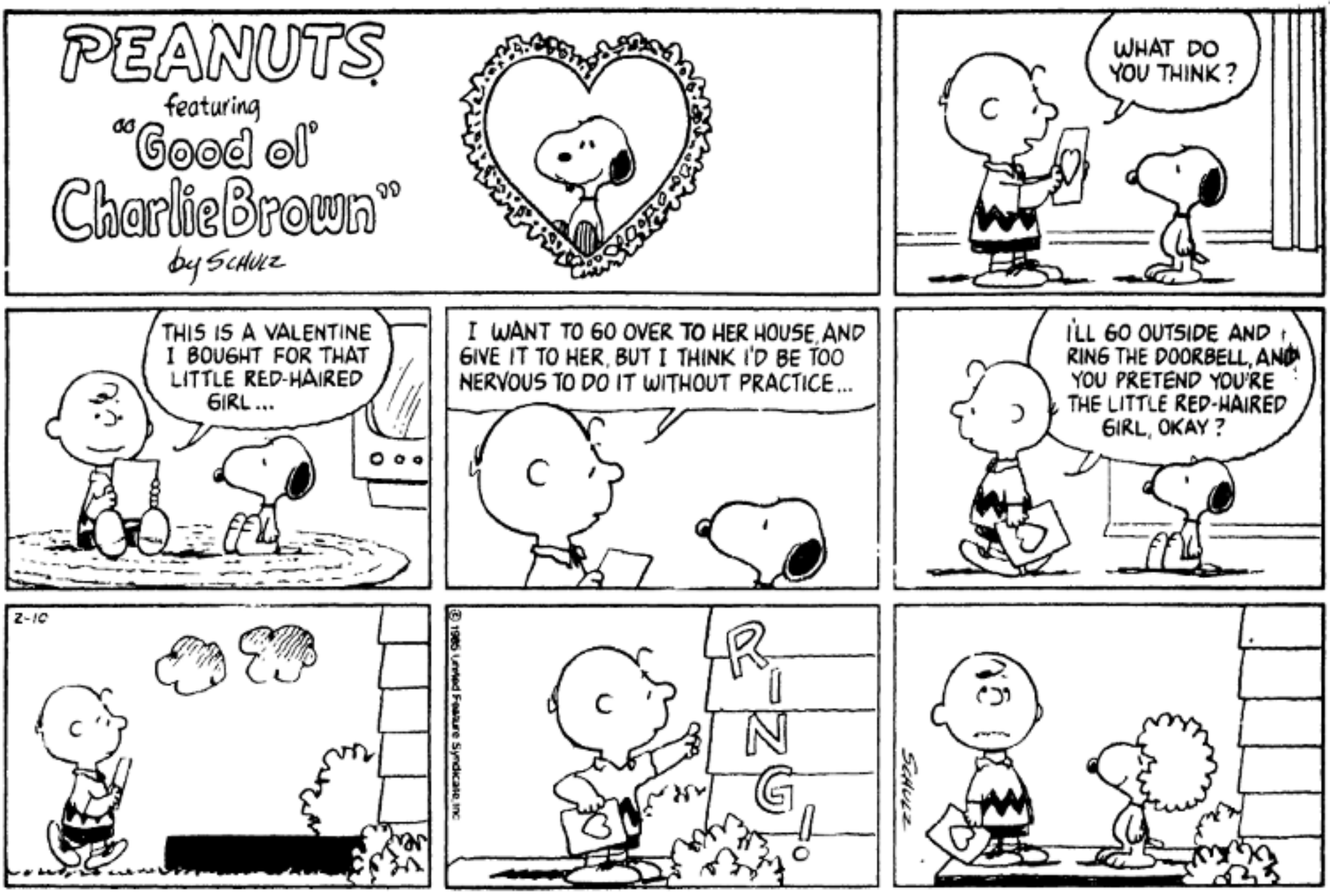
Quizbizz: 3) edible fungus
Missing Link: 22 (Subtract 6 divide by 7, subtract 5 divide by 7, subtract 4 divide by 7.

Witsharpener: Joseph: Cola and melon; Ruma: Icecream and fruitcake; Devina: Cheese sandwiches and mango; Mahesh: Channas and bread rolls.
Quick Think: Move 2 and 3 to positions 9 and 10, then 5 and 6 to 2 and 3; then 8 and 9 to 5 and 6 and finally 1 and 2 to 8 and 9

Figure it out: One of the many possibilities of combinations is:

$(9+9)-(9+9)=2$
$(9+\sqrt{9})-(9-\sqrt{9})=2$
$(9+9+9)-9=3$
$(\sqrt{9}\times\sqrt{9})-9+\sqrt{9}=4$
$9-\sqrt{9}-9-9=5$
$(9\times\sqrt{9})-9+\sqrt{9}=6$
$9-9+\sqrt{9}+\sqrt{9}=7$
$99-9-\sqrt{9}=8$
$\sqrt{9}\times\sqrt{9}-9+9=9$
$\sqrt{9}\times\sqrt{9}+9-9=10$
$99-(\sqrt{9}\times\sqrt{9})=11$
$9-\sqrt{9}-\sqrt{9}+9=12$
$9+\sqrt{9}+9-9=13$
$99-9+\sqrt{9}=14$
$(\sqrt{9}+\sqrt{9})\times\sqrt{9}-\sqrt{9}=15$
$9\div9+\sqrt{9}+\sqrt{9}=16$
$9+9-9-9=17$
$(9+9)\times9/9=18$
$9+9+9\div9=19$
$99\div9+9=20$

Word Play: What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.





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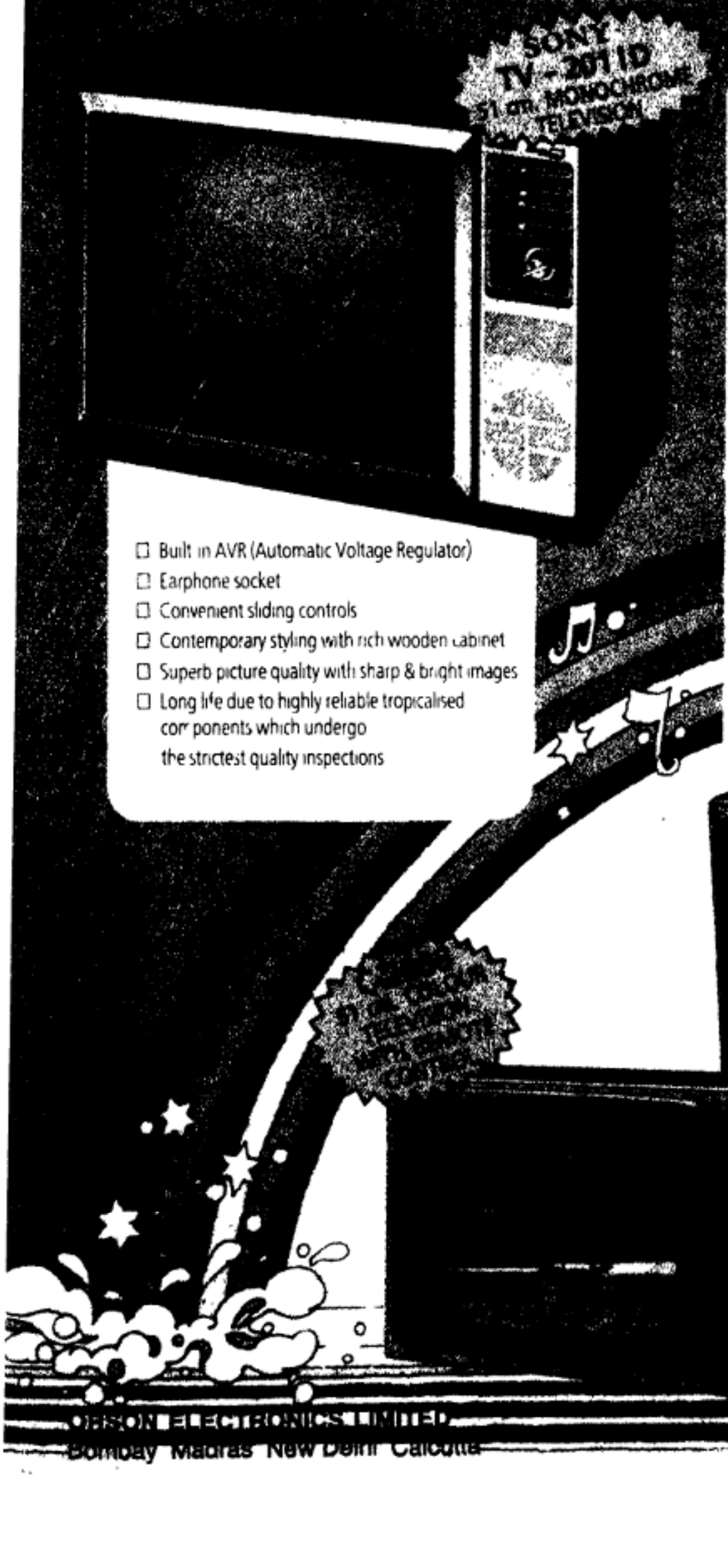
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DELHI DIARY

A Record Budget



V.P. Singh

The budget this year will create a record of sorts. Never before has the union budget been presented on a Saturday. On 16 March which is a Saturday, the stock exchanges will for the first time work on a weekend, to take stock of the budget of Vishwanath Pratap Singh. What the budget has in store is difficult to say, but by the very choice of the day, the new government's budget set a precedent.

Hotels or Dens?

Two names which have been controversial in the past few years have been those of the Galadharis of Dubai and the Hindujas of Iran. While many prosecutions were launched against the Galadharis, the Hindujas were involved in the famous Geneva payoffs engineered to please the sister of the former Shah of Iran (which were made by the government through senior officers of the intelligence outfit, RAW). Both these families have been merrily operating in India. Now both the Galadharis and the Hindujas are seeking a foothold in the hotel business. While the Galadharis want to set up their own hotel in Bombay, one member of the Hinduja clan is likely to be included in the board of directors of a prestigious chain of hotels.

Copyright or Royalty?

The much reported last speech of Indira Gandhi, delivered at Bhubaneswar a day before she was killed, could have gone unrecorded but for the tape maintained by the All India Radio. Her "last drop of blood" speech had been the main plank of the Congress(I) Lok Sabha campaign. How was this speech traced? At 11 am on 31 October, the PTI (Press Trust of India) correspondent who had accompanied Mrs Gandhi on her Orissa trip put out the quotation. Doordarshan immediately looked around for the recording, but found that the soundtrack of the video cassette was so poor that nothing could be made out. Was the quotation genuine? The PTI reiterated that its report was true. Ultimately, the AIR tape was discovered and the sound dubbed on to the Doordarshan tape. Should the PTI now ask the ruling party for copyright fees or royalty?

Wedded to Moneybags?

Is Murli Deora, the president of Bombay Regional Committee of the Congress(I) spending black-money? A Congress(I) worker from Colaba, which is a part of Murli Deora's South Bombay Lok Sabha constituency, has made an allegation to this effect in a letter to the editor published by the *Navbharat Times* on 27 February. The full text of the letter (translated from Hindi), reads thus:

"When during the election campaign it was alleged by the opposition that the successful Congress(I) candidate from South Bombay was a man of the capitalists, we did not believe it. But when we went to attend his niece's wedding last week our eyes were opened. Around 5,500 people had been invited for the feast and when we heard from none less than Murli Deora himself that Rs 15 lakhs had been spent on the wedding, we almost had a paralytic stroke due to shock and surprise. It is painful that the Congressmen have forgotten Mahatma Gandhi. A social worker should set an example in simple living. But our leaders seem to be setting new trends. Is expenditure of Rs 15 lakhs on a wedding permitted by law? In the wedding reception we noticed income-tax officers too. But apparently they had turned a blind eye (to such extravagance). Such an expenditure is impossible without black money. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi should curb such people, otherwise in the next elections party workers like us would not be able to show our faces to the people. After such extravagant weddings, we would not be able to convince the electorate that we are wedded to removing poverty."

Sd/- Ramnarayan Upadhyaya, Colaba.



Murli Deora

This letter appeared in a publication of the leading Times of India group, which is widely circulated. Murli Deora had not reacted to this till the first week of March. When such grave allegations are made, should our politicians not make any clarifications? In the absence of a comment from Murli Deora, are we to believe that the statements made in the letter to the editor are true?

O.E. Nizamuddin



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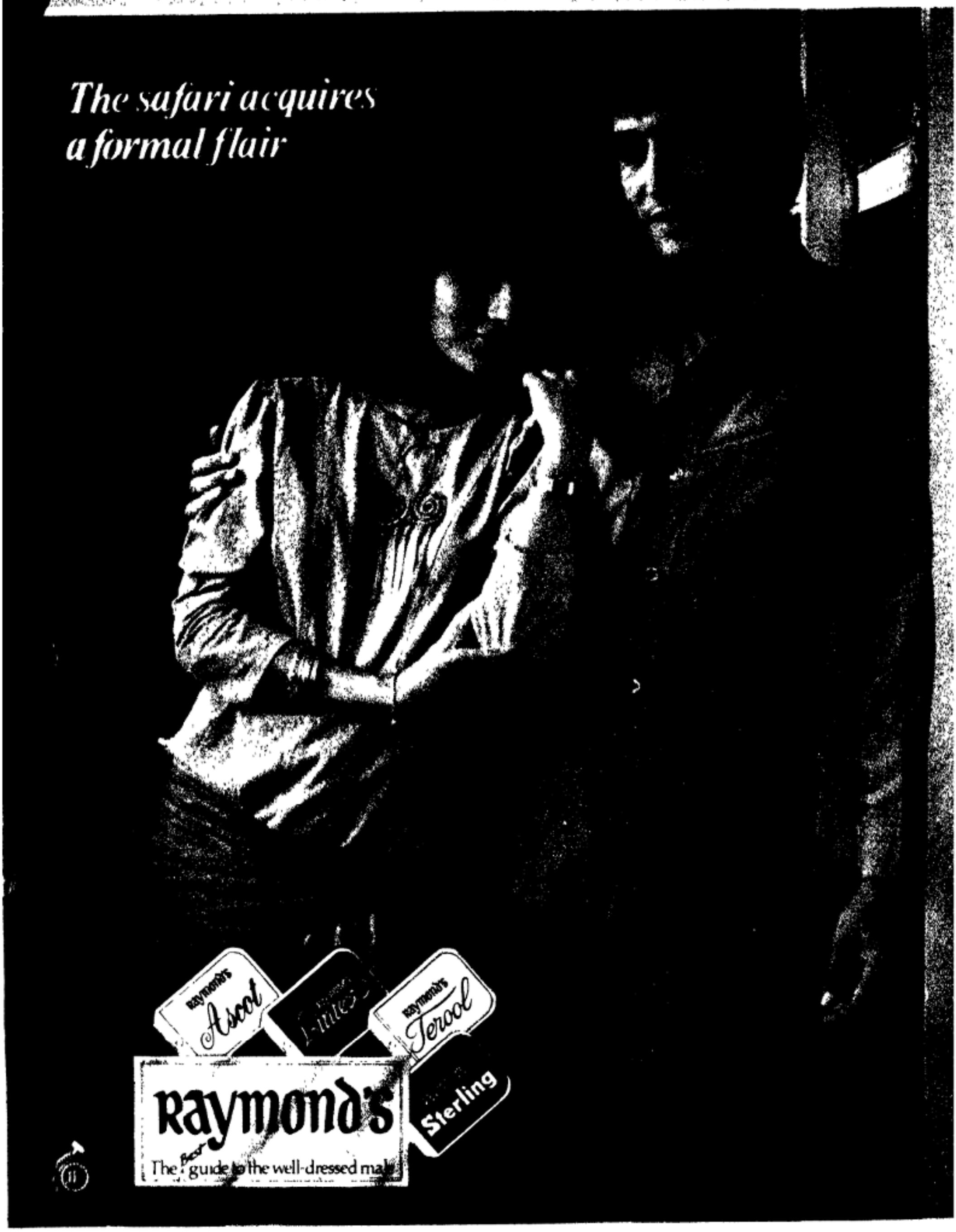
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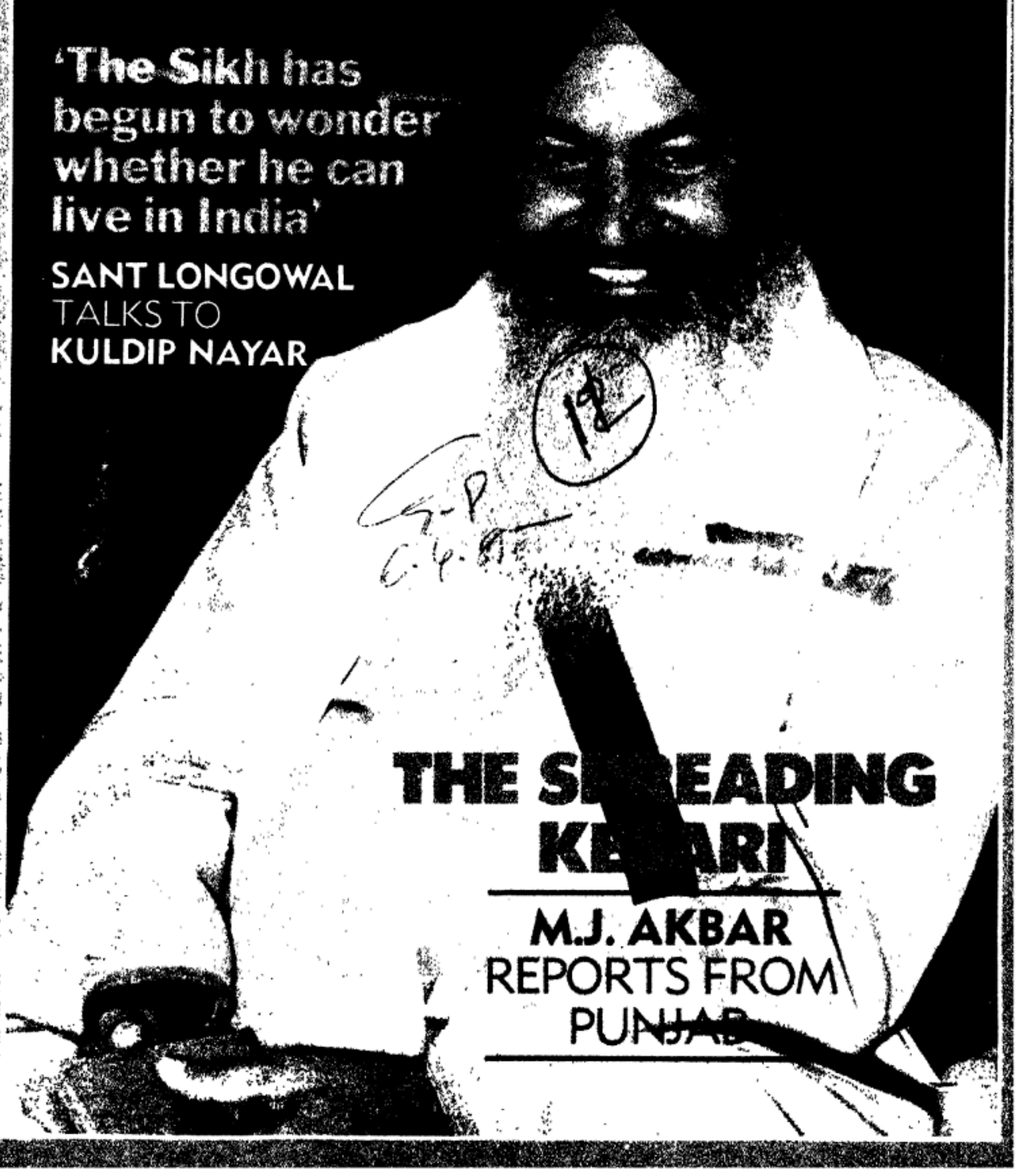


HUSAIN: Both MAQBOOL and FIDA

SUNDAY

'The Sikh has begun to wonder whether he can live in India'

SANT LONGOWAL
TALKS TO
KULDIP NAYAR



THE S[illegible]READING K[illegible]ARI

M.J. AKBAR
REPORTS FROM
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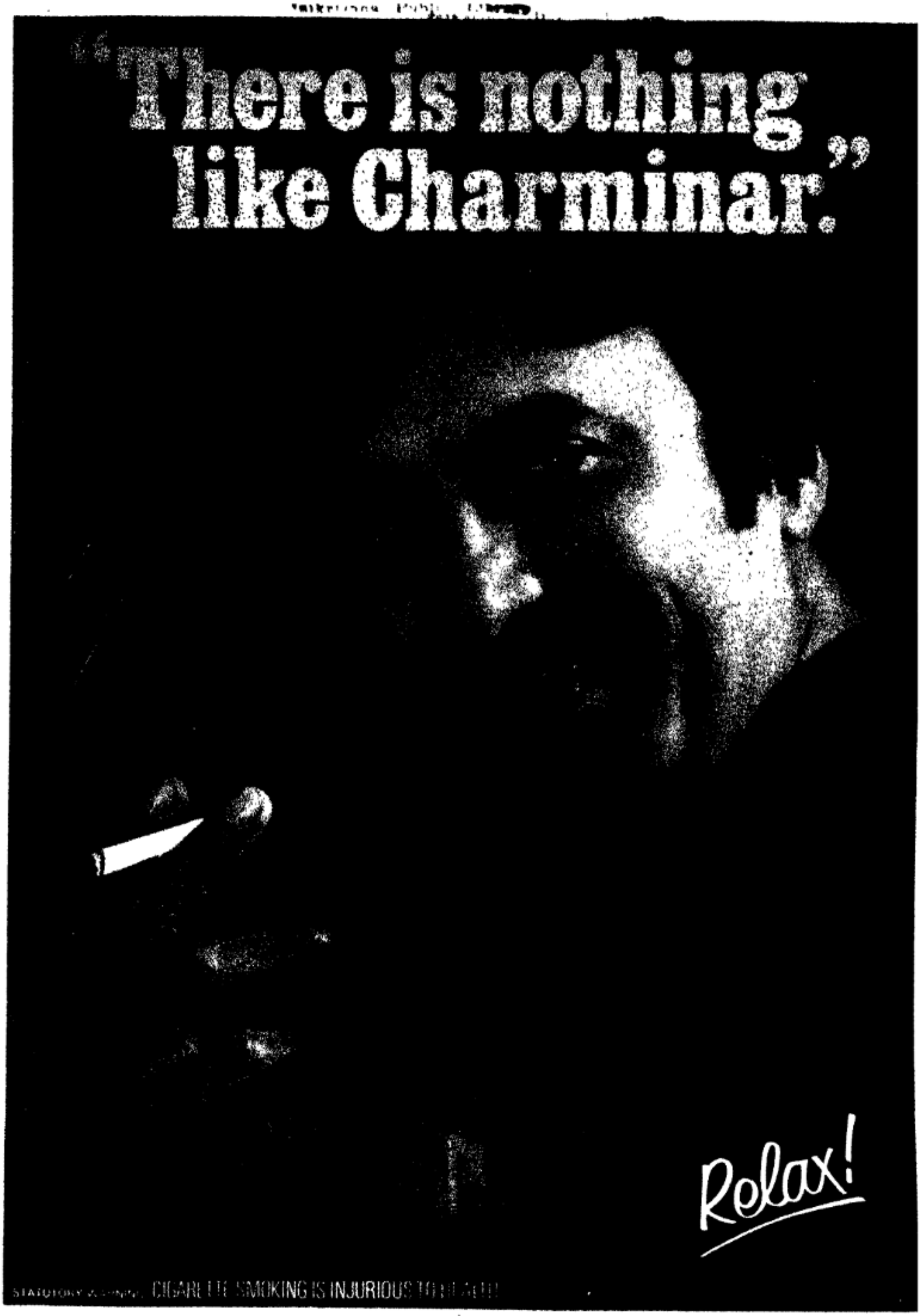
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'The Sikh has Begun to Wonder Whether He Can Live in India'

Akali Dal president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal told Kuldip Nayar in an interview which is bound to cause major ripples.

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Assassination is the theme of the artist's latest exhibition. A look at the work of an extraordinary man. Plus a profile of and an interview with the painter.



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Courtesy Times of India

Luckily we bought these jewellery and all that before he decided to become clean.

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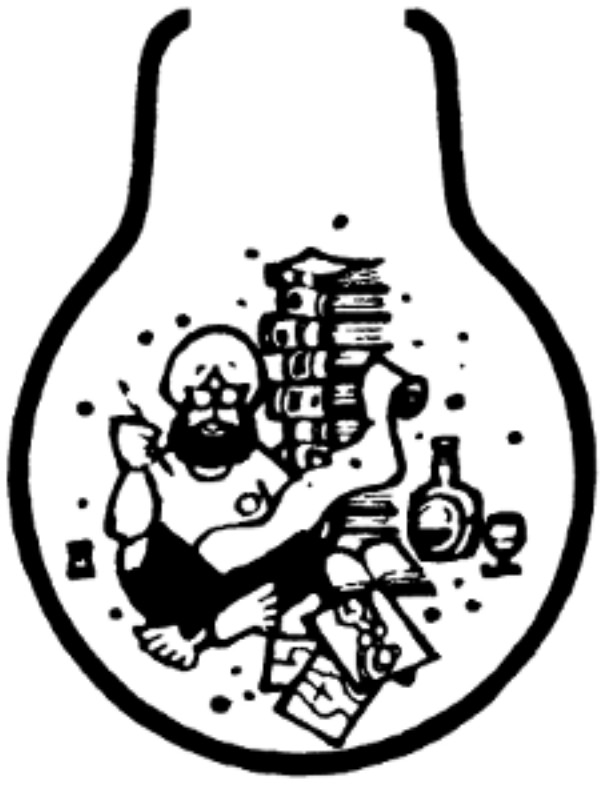
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Clean But Confused

Rajiv Gandhi's image as "Mr Clean" has been assiduously built up by the media. It has stuck because there is a strong element of truth in it. As politicians go he is cleaner than the cleanest political whistle. His transparent honesty carries conviction. He has also a very good presence. He is courteous and a thorough gentleman. However, a few ugly warts have begun to show on his handsome face. The darkest is his habit of making statements which, on advice, he is later forced to deny. He does it in the traditionally accepted politicians' formula: "I have been misquoted."

I have not compiled a list of his *faux pas* but mean to do so in the future. Some that I recall have already gone on record and will be difficult to erase from the pages of history. Did he or did he not describe Bhindranwale while he was alive as a purely religious leader and after his death denied having said so? Did he or did he not say that over 700 jawans had been killed in "Operation Bluestar" whereas the government's White Paper gave the figure of army casualties as 92? Did he not commit himself to M.J. Akbar that he would make an announcement about setting up some kind of judicial enquiry into the violence in Punjab and the post-assassination pogrom of Sikhs in northern India? In the Rajya Sabha when I tried to pin him down to this commitment and flourished a copy of SUNDAY carrying the interview, he simply replied, "I have not read the printed version of the interview but that was not exactly what I said." When I reminded him that he had promised to make the announcement before the 10th of March 1985, he replied, "Anyhow today is the 14th." An answer like that would have raised guffaws of laughter in a meeting of rustics in any *panchayat*. In the Rajya Sabha members of the Congress(I) applauded it, presumably as a witty retort. And now we have his statement to the Congress Parliamentary Party to the effect that the army would soon be withdrawn from Punjab, elections held and an elected government installed. The statement was repeated to the press by the very ebullient secretary of the party in the Rajya Sabha, J.K. Jain, and within a few minutes vehemently contradicted by Srikant Verma, general secretary of the party. At first it appeared that J.K. Jain had boobed. Then it appeared that Srikant Verma who, in his enthusiasm to put down a possible rival had told the press what he had got from the royal horse's mouth. It is quite clear now that J.K. Jain had faithfully reported what Rajiv Gandhi had said but since it amounted to a commitment Srikant Verma was asked to contradict it. If he is not more cautious with his words, Mr Clean may soon earn for himself a second sobriquet: "Mr Confused."



The Chaudhry Obsession

It starts being a complex and then turns into an obsession. As a complex it manifests itself in the form of a compulsive desire to be a Mr Somebody in every situation: member of every committee; if already a member, then its treasurer, secretary, vice-president or president. To be the centre of attention at every party, the bridegroom at every wedding, the corpse at every funeral. If the desire is not firmly curbed when it raises its head, it soon turns into an obsession. You can see it in epidemic form in India. Every villager wants to become a *sarpanch*, every social worker a politician, every politician an MLA or MP, and every MP a cabinet minister of the Prime Minister. There is no other explanation of the phenomenon of thousands of aspirants at every election, over 300 in one constituency.

The Chaudhry Complex manifests itself fairly early in life and assumes menacing proportions by campusage. You must have known boys who were forever wanting to be elected to something or the other: member of the canteen committee, carom club executive, university union—or whatever. Thereafter the same kind of fellows want to be somebodys in their beopar mandals, FICCI's Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs—or whatever. They append catalogues or what they succeeded in becoming on their visiting cards and letter-heads of their stationery. I knew a buffoon whose writing pads had his entire bio-data printed in the margin. He was the greatest clown in college because he wanted to be captain of every team. Later he became a minister, Governor and an ambassador. Then there are fellows who append honorary doctorates conferred on them as if they were men of medicine or learning. The same applies to government honours. There are regulations to the effect that they must not be used as honorifics. They are. See the number of chaps who describe themselves as Padma Sri or Padma Bhushan so and so.

The most ludicrous examples of the Chaudhry obsession can be seen at club elections: the more elite the institution, the more blatant the exercise in one upmanship. In the recent elections of the Delhi Gymkhana Club, members were bombarded with letters soliciting votes. Without exception all of them extolled the status of the aspirant: IFS, IAS, IPS, Squadron Leader, and more insidious than these in a club half of whose membership comprise of businessmen, chartered accountants, lawyers with taxation problems, were arm-twisting appendages like Indian Revenue Service or Commissioner of Income-tax. Believe it or not, these descriptions were even printed on the ballot paper.

What do these jokers get by becoming Chaudhrys? Not money (though some wouldn't mind making a little on the side) but patronage and for a time being *jee huzoored* by the staff. Little things affect little minds as small pants fit small behinds.

Humour From Pakistan

General Zia driving round Islamabad came across long queues of Pakistanis outside several embassies wanting visas and entry permits to go abroad. He got out of his car and joined a line to find out why so many people were wanting to leave the country. No sooner did people see their President with them they left the queue to return to their homes. President Zia asked them why they were doing so. They replied: "If you are leaving Pakistan there is no need for us to do so."

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WEST BENGAL STATE LOTTERY

EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



The Tragedy of Pakistan's Ahmedias

I have received a letter from an Ahmedia in Pakistan saying that though he is a devoted Muslim he has been declared a non-Muslim in a country which claims to be Islamic. What has hurt him most is the government's directive that the *Kalima* be erased from the mosques of the Ahmedias. Apparently, the witch hunt of the Ahmedias has increased. The Bhutto government in 1974 had amended the Constitution to declare all Ahmedias non-Muslims, but the amendment was never implemented. Then General Zia-ul Haq, through a presidential ordinance on 26 April 1984, prohibited the Ahmedias from calling themselves Muslims or their places of worship "mosques"; their priests were also forbidden from calling the faithful for prayers through the *Azan*.

Embittered Ahmedias resorted to wearing *Kalima* badges and the authorities began arresting those who did. *Dawn*, an English daily, reported in its 2 February issue that more than 100 Ahmedias had been arrested in various districts of Punjab. Again, on 23 February, the same newspaper reported that 36 Ahmedias were arrested for displaying the *Kalima* badges.

The military regime of Pakistan has a poor record of respecting human rights. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the Ahmedias being maltreated. How does the *Kalima—La Ila lil Allah, Mohammad Rasool Allah* which means, "There is no God except Allah and Mohammad is His Prophet"—become in any way objectionable if it appears in the places of worship of the Ahmedias? It is strange that anyone should be punished for accepting the finality of Prophet Mohammed and that too in a country claiming to be Islamic.

How can a law stop a person from calling himself a Muslim? It is a question of faith and no constitutional amendment or presidential ordinance can affect it. The Pakistan government may call the Ahmedias non-Muslims, but if it is firm in following the tenets of Islam, no one can take away this right from them.

How does the *Kalima—La Ila Ill Allah, Mohammad Rasool Allah* become in any way objectionable, if it appears in the places of worship of the Ahmedias?

The Ahmedias have a long record of distinguished service to Pakistan. To name some of them: Zafarullah Khan, once Pakistan's foreign minister, did a good job at the UN when he advocated the case of Pakistan regarding Kashmir. Nobel Laureate Professor Abdus Salam is an Ahmedia; he has settled in Italy because Pakistan, his motherland, does not treat him as an equal citizen.

I am happy to see that a distinguished Pakistani journalist, Mazhar Ali Khan,Tariq Ali's father, has taken up the case of the Ahmedias' and has demanded an end to their persecution on the grounds of religion. In a column in his magazine, *Viewpoint*, he wrote "Mahatma Gandhi's prayer meetings included a recitation from the *Quran*, and during the Khilafat period mosque meetings were often addressed by Hindu and Sikh leaders. Why then must the Ahmedias be singled out, stigmatised and discriminated against to this extent?"

The Ahmedias are also called Qadians; most of them were once living in Qadian near Gurdaspur. All but a few migrated to Pakistan in 1947. Numbering around four million, they live mostly in Pakistan's Punjab. The other day a few Ahmedias from Delhi met me to say that they enjoyed religious freedom in a secular country like India, but could not do so in the "Islamic country" Pakistan. I have no doubt that things will change one day because the universality of Islam and its high tradition of tolerance will assert themselves. I personally think Pakistan's discrimination against the minorities (a non-Muslim is prohibited from occupying the post of head of state or head of government) will be forgotten one day

In a way, the Ahmedias are like the Nirankaris, who emphasise Guru Nanak's concept of God being *Nirankari* (formless). They have compiled two scriptures for their sect. *Avtar Bani* and *Yug Purush*. Orthodox Sikhs strongly resent certain passages in these texts which, they feel, denigrates the Sikh Gurus and the *Granth Sahib*. Both the Ahmedias and the Nirankaris deserve to be treated with respect and tolerance. The Nirankaris in India have tried to come to terms with the Sikhs as the Ahmedias have vainly done in Pakistan. It appears that both communities are in for a long, arduous journey. This happens when the majority in a particular community jettisons justice and fairplay in the name of "purity of religion," even when the essence of that religion is tolerance and it is only intolerance that endangers its "purity."

Man's religion has taken endless forms. His names for gods and goddesses are many and his rituals vary from the horrible to the sublime. But whatever his beliefs, he has very often shown a capacity for tolerance. How can governments or those who claim to be true followers of God take away religion from man?

Mature Politician

The bold and detailed interview with the Prime Minister made absorbing reading (*The Assassination was Done Not to Kill Mrs Gandhi, it was Done for the Reaction*, 10—16 March). M.J. Akbar made our young PM aware of the problems facing the country through his questions and Rajiv Gandhi seemed determined to tackle the issues. From his replies Rajiv Gandhi seemed to be different from the general run of politicians in our country.
Bibek Sen, New Delhi

• It was nice to learn that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has decided to implement new methods of administering the nation. Rajiv Gandhi was all praise for Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi but he was aware of their shortcomings too. The PM's efforts to infuse morality in politics is laudable but I was not satisfied with his replies on curbing black money and corruption. Black money and corruption cannot be controlled unless mandatory checks are imposed on election expenditures.
Mahesh Prasad Roy, Vaishali (Bihar)

• Nothing much was known about the plans of Rajiv Gandhi till SUNDAY published the detailed interview with the PM. The earlier interview with finance minister V.P. Singh was also superb. I request Mr Akbar to interview the other ministers and opposition leaders as well.
Nandita Mishra, Berhampur (Orissa)

• Rajiv Gandhi's candid answers did justice to M.J. Akbar's provoking questions.
K.P. Andavan, Gobichettipalayam

• One sentence in the entire interview still rings in my ears: "Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has found the confidence of a man who knows what he wants to do."
Tufan Ghosh, Calcutta

• The Prime Minister appeared to be sincere in most of his replies but I failed to understand why the interviewer was silent on such vital issues as Sri Lanka and Pakistan.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

• I did not appreciate the interview since though the Punjab tangle was discussed at length the interviewer neglected the Assam problem. A ministry is functioning in Assam without the support of the people. Hiteshwar Saikia is ruling the state



with the help of the police. Other blatant omissions include the insurgency problem in the north-east and the Bhopal gas tragedy
S.C. Malakar, Agra

• I was amused by our PM's logic that the Delhi police failed to control the riots that broke out following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi since they were ashamed at the deed of two of their colleagues. I also felt that Rajiv Gandhi had indirectly blamed the Sikhs for the riots: the PM said that where the Sikhs openly rejoiced at the assassination, it was difficult to control the riots. May I remind the PM that it was a section of the Sikhs who rejoiced and not the Sikh community as a whole.
K.L. Khanna, Calcutta

• There was nothing new that Rajiv Gandhi had to say. Like all other politicians he too made a lot of promises which will soon be forgotten. The people should not expect much from him.
Ashish Choudhury, Darbhanga

• The dialogue with Rajiv Gandhi was interesting though not exhaustive. Since a record number of pages were devoted to the interview I expected M.J. Akbar to dwell on international issues also. Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh strangely did not figure in the discussion. However, most of the domestic problems were touched upon and Rajiv Gandhi's determination to solve them seemed honest. But it would be impossible for a man to wage a battle against so many social evils singlehandedly and so he quite rightly asked the people of the country to give him a hand.
M.H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

• Rajiv Gandhi was not candid enough regarding the government's stand on the controversial Anandpur Sahib Resolution. However, I was relieved to know that Rajiv Gandhi did not approve of the way in which N.T. Rama Rao was dislodged from the chief ministership of the Andhra Pradesh last year.
R. Suresh, Hyderabad

• Rajiv Gandhi seemed to be quite different from his mother who was hostile to the Indian press. Moreover, I failed to understand why M.J. Akbar did not question the PM on India's foreign policy.
Smita Narang, New Delhi

• The interview was a treat for all the readers. The young PM was frank and forthright in his replies to M.J. Akbar's tricky questions. The cover story was exhaustive but vital international issues were left out.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• After going through the entire interview I am still in the dark as to why Rajiv Gandhi dropped Pranab Mukherjee and A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury from his cabinet. His answer that Pranab Mukherjee was not a tough man was not convincing. But I agree with the PM that communism has no place in our country and that by 1987 Jyoti Basu will be out of power.
A.N. Veeraraghavan, Bombay

• Those who had doubts about Rajiv Gandhi's political acumen should go through his interview to M.J. Akbar. Our Prime Minister is a person with a rare mettle and a clean image. The boldness with which he faced the interviewer reminded me of his mother when she faced the press.
Lopamudra Ghosh, Sindri (Bihar)

Assam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the West, the Soviets, the economy, the quality of the cabinet, the faith in the bureaucracy...there is no end to the questions a Prime Minister of India could be and should be asked. Untortunately, the two hours of that Bombay-Delhi flight passed too quickly, long before the list of questions in my notebook was exhausted. My apologies, but I am sure you will understand—M.J. Akbar

Wretched Life

Nirmal Mitra's article, *Children of Despair* (24 February—2 March), has successfully revealed the appalling conditions in which children have to work. Apart from those employed in hotels and restaurants, where they are at least assured of two meals a day, there are scores who work in automobile garages and attendants in small shops where the treatment is more brutal.
M.A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

• Children from poor families live a wretched life in our country. No laws can stop child labour unless those who employ them are made socially conscious of this social evil.
B. Mohanty, Cuttack

Impressive Views

Vishal Mangalwadi's views on Punjab reproduced by Khushwant Singh in *Gossip Sweet and Sour (New Light on Punjab*, 10—16 March) may be unpalatable to the government and the majority community but his observations are objective. The government and the PM should utilise his observations to solve the Punjab problem.
Kamal G, Mysore

• I was impressed with Vishal Mangalwadi's assessment of the Punjab problem. In fact, the decision to send the army inside the Golden Temple should have been taken immediately after the murder of DIG Atwal.
B.R. Nanda, Lucknow

By Talent Alone

I do not agree with M.J. Akbar that the anti-reservation movement is a battle against untouchables and backwards (*Dateline*, 10—16 March). The movement, on the other hand, is a fight for a genuine cause. There are many backwards who have taken full advantage of the reservation policy and have risen in life; their children can no longer be called backwards but they still take advantage of the government's policy when it comes to the question of education and jobs. There are others, for example, the adivasis of Koraput, Kalahandi and Phulabani in Orissa, who continue to live a wretched life of poverty and ignorance. So where is the utility of the reservation policy? Is it meant to serve only the developed section of the backward classes? Thus, the time has come to modify, if not scrap the policy. Moreover, I feel that talent alone should determine whether a person is fit to become a doctor, scientist or an engineer.
Prasant Patro, Jeypore (Orissa)

Save Our Culture

Kuldip Nayar in his article, *Indian Antiques Go West (Exclusive*, 17—23 February) had focussed attention on a very important issue: draining of our country's antiques. The present laws are not sufficient to check smuggling of antiques. I was shocked to learn that Indian antiques find their way to the museums of the West. Should we then infer that western governments are encouraging such acts?
D.N. Mohanty, Kaladahi (Orissa)

• Ever since the days of Sultan Mahmud and Nadir Shah Indian art and culture have been victims of foreign powers. Our country had been drained of antiques that represented our culture. The process still continues and if the government does not check this we will soon lose whatever we have. India should campaign for an international law since most of the antiques find their way to government museums. I hope Mr Nayar's article serves as an eye-opener.
Kartikeswar Behera, Keonjhar

Unholy Nexus

The investigative cover story, *The Underworld of Indian Politics* (3—9 March) was a courageous expose of the murky side of Indian politics. In a country where votes can be bought for a pittance, it is no wonder that people with shady characters capture political power. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has announced his intention to cleanse the government and infuse morality in politics but his efforts will remain a pipe dream unless laws are enacted to prevent people with police records from entering the Parliament and state Assemblies.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• It was distressing to learn that some of our representatives in Parliament and Assemblies have criminal records. The criminal-politician nexus is a universal phenomenon and many a government would collapse without the help of the underworld. Rajiv Gandhi talked about cleaning the government and yet some of his nominees for the recent Assembly elections had police cases against them.
M.A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

• I doubt whether SUNDAY's courageous effort will be rewarded. For, muscle-power and money are an integral part of Indian politics.
N. Ellango, Tirunelvelli

• SUNDAY did a commendable job by exposing the criminal-politician nexus. It is the duty of every conscientious citizen to build up public opinion against such an unholy alliance. The main responsibility, however, lies with the press but the way the vernacular press is projecting the image of people like Haji Mastan is regrettable.
Abida Samiuddin, Aligarh

• Everyone knows that Haji Mastan is a smuggler How dare he compare himself with Mahatma Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan?
Rajneesh Bharti, Sitamarhi

We Protest

I was surprised to learn that the government is deporting Daud Haider, the brilliant poet from Bangladesh who was staying in India to escape religious persecution (*A Poet's Fight for Freedom*, 3—9 March). What reason can there be to deny Daud Haider political asylum? I appeal to the Indian government to review its decision in the light of the democratic principles for which we stand?
Mihir Bose, Calcutta

• Srinjoy Chowdhury had rightly pointed out that Daud Haider's presence in our country will only enrich the culture of India. As such the government's order asking Mr Haider to quit India has perplexed many like me. I would welcome a detailed explanation from the government. Meanwhile, I raise my feeble voice in protest through these columns.
Sanjib Chowdhuri, Calcutta.

Correction

The caption of the photostat document on page 34 accompanying the article, *The Company a Minister Keeps* (24—30 March) should read: "A photostat copy of a letter to Vasantdada Patil recommending the Galadharis," and not as published. The error is regretted—Editor.



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DATELINE / M.J.Akbar

Dhaka: Some nations are born democratic, some achieve democracy and one or two occasionally have democracy thrust upon them. The last has been the case with our neighbours to the east and the west, where attempts are being made to arrange a marriage between martial law and elections in order to legitimise a child already born. (Nothing personal in that: the phrase is merely a reflection of the writer's inability to accept the moral validity of a coup.) Martial law administrators are themselves conscious of the fragility of their foundations, which is presumably why they keep promising the return of elected rulers. One wishes they would sometimes mean it. The only kind of democracy they seem to find acceptable is the one which lets them retain the chair on which they have become comfortable. The argument for martial law is always prog ress, discipline and the good of the people. But what happens when the people themselves declare that they actually prefer the bad old days? Man has this funny habit of not wanting to live by bread alone.

General Hussain Mohammad Ershad has been trying (with some sincerity, insist his supporters—and they include men like Enayetullah Khan who has made left radicalism into a useful profession; he is being appointed Bangladesh's next ambassador to Beijing) to come to terms with the diverse elements in the country's power structure for some time now. The task is admittedly not easy; there are 78 political parties alone, most of doubtful merit and none short of lung power. Even the most important political parties, like the Awami League and the BNP (led by General Ziaur Rahman's wife Begum Khaleda) are not confident enough to go it alone; they are part of alliances whose minimum membership seems to be fifteen—and this does not take into account the number of factions that exist within the parties. In fact, Bangladesh seems to prove every cliche you ever heard about Bengali politics.

Then there are the ideological battalions; small fundamentalist organisations protecting "Islamic Bangladesh" from "Hindu India." General Ershad has to worry about them too. One religious leader, Hafe·ji Huzoor (who collected a fair vote in the last elections) has announced a *jehad* against the general, and vowed that he will spend his last few years (he is in his nineties) fighting the army. For a country as beset with problems as Bangladesh, a lot of people want to rule in Dhaka.

All the contenders for General Ershad's job decided to boycott the 21 March referendum. But the general thought he could pull it off; he likes the image of a democrat and a poet (an English translation of his poetry has just been published and is full of love and patriotism) and gets irritated if anyone uses 'dictator' in front of him. Perhaps General Ershad was deluded by the crowds that came to his meetings on his constant hops across the country. On 21 March the people boycotted the referendum. The streets of Dhaka were deserted. And there was not much more than a trickle in the rural areas. The figure of 71 per cent vote produced by the government was treated with cynicism. (Incidentally, India has rarely produced such a high vote in its passionate elections.) If the purpose of the exercise was to confirm the credibility of General Ershad then it failed—both at home and abroad. But the real point is that it does not much matter. General Ershad will remain in charge precisely as long as the army is happy with him. Power in Bangladesh nas now become the prerogative of the hundred thousand odd men who flourish in uniform.

It is, of course, a good sign that our neighbours seem to be edging towards democracy, however halfheartedly. I wonder how this is influenced by the sight of India keeping her commitment to elections despite all the enormous problems. However, if the game of democracy is to be played, the least one can do is stick by the basic rules. Dhaka did not go to the Islamabad extent and ban most of those who could have won from participating (see how dangerous polls are? General Zia's ministers still lost), but there was still enough to cause doubt on the structure of the polls. For instance, no voter was marked with ink after he or she had cast a vote; if anything the officials seemed to be in a mood to welcome "genuine false voting" to save them the trouble of producing the expected turnout. Nor did any ballot paper have to be stamped; you just placed the unmarked paper in the box of your choice. In any case, if you want to do all this then you should try and prevent the foreign press from witnessing all this. Perhaps the most humorous experience of Ganabhot '85 (Referendum '85) was watching a queue of voters lined up for our benefit dispersing (without having reached the ballot boxes) as soon as our backs were turned and we were presumed to have gone. The oldest delusion in the world remains self-delusion.

Squaring a commitment to Marx with a commitment to an olive green (as distinct from red) army should, in the normal circumstance, be difficult. But the affable Enayetullah Khan has done it before on the rationale of a common front against "expansionist India" and accepting the ambassadorship to China did not clearly pose any ideological dilemmas. Enayet's can be called a ruling class family of the modern third world kind: a combination of heritage, education and ability. He is both editor/owner of the left/radical *Holiday* and president of the Dhaka Club: and everyone agrees that he does both jobs extremely competently. He was in fact tipped for a place in the cabinet, but he is said to have refused this. Enayet and Beijing will be good for each other.



Voters, most of whom are children, queue up to cast their votes in Bangladesh

COVER STORY

THE SPREADING KESARI

The colour of anger is becoming increasingly visible on the Punjab landscape. There is a bumper crop on the fields and a consequent smile of joy now, but the mood could turn ugly if the Akali morcha after Baisakhi gathers momentum. The time has come for both Delhi and Punjab to stop scratching the wounds and start that long process of healing. M.J. AKBAR reports.



Securitymen check the meeting ground at Hussainiwala with mine detectors prior to Rajiv Gandhi's visit

In less than two weeks time, on Baisakhi, 13 April, one of the most critical phases in the history of the Punjab will formally begin. The passion and fear, the pride and prejudice, faith and challenge which have for so long created such turbulence so often are being stoked once again. The canvas is smaller. Once it swept from the Suleiman ranges in the west to the Jamuna in the east; now it stretches only from the Beas to Ambala and the ancient battlefield of Kurukshetra. But the danger is no less intense for that. Even this reduced Punjab retains the power to send dangerous tremors across the subcontinent. The worst will not come, because powerful nation states like ours have acquired the resilience and institutional capability to preserve their integrity. But there will be a bitter wind, and there is not much time left in which to change the direction of the coming storm.

One might be forgiven, after visiting Punjab now, for dismissing such talk as the product of an overheated imagination. There is an apparent mood of peace, even joy, in the villages and towns. The land is once again pregnant with a bumper crop; the fields glow with health. Where there were two combines in a district ten years ago, there are more than a hundred now. On the streets of Sangrur, in the early evening, the *dhol* master comes out and children dance the *bhangra*. There is, literally, milk and the modern equivalent of honey (whisky) flowing through the state and this is its happiest moment of the year. The drums of Baisakhi are out, announcing the maturity of another crop. In a matter of days the crop will be cut, stored and sold, and who could be happier at the thought than the farmer whose enterprise has lifted Punjab away from the quagmire of third world poverty into at least second world comfort?

In the final analysis, there are few effective arguments against prosperity. The Punjabifarmer is in a position of unique good fortune today. There is the abundant water from the rivers born in the Himalayas, and there is heavily subsidised fertiliser from the massive factories of Gujarat and Maharashtra. There is a ready buyer at a remunerative price for the produce in the government of India which bears the responsibility for feeding a large nation. There are consumer goods from a growing economy to lend a value to money: video recorders and television sets and refrigerators and cars and trucks from a hundred different points spread across the map of India. Which sane person would want to



A former Congress(I) MLA being given a security check at Hussainiwala, before the PM's visit



Jaspal Bawa/Tribune Photo Unit

SGPC acting president Prem Singh Lalpura (extreme right) pacifies the crowd at Anandpur Sahib on 7 March during Holla Mohalla; among others on the dais is former Punjab finance minister Balwant Singh

exchange such success for an uncertain dream called Khalistan?

And a dream which could so easily turn into a nightmare. Conceive: a hostile Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Rajasthan at constant loggerheads with Khalistan over water. No fertilisers from an angry India, and no buyer from Delhi, and no ports from which to export the wheat and rice. Trade at the mercy of Pakistan. The collapse of the cities and services with the erosion of the qualified Hindu population. The devastation from a constant war. The terrible retribution against Sikhs living in the rest of India. Decimation, plunder, revenge—and perhaps the inevitable attendants of war, famine and pestilence. A carnage which would set back Punjab for generations, even if it might halt the progress of India for a few years.

The farmer, with his tremendous sense of the real, knows this. He feels the threat to his prosperity in his bones; only a man who has created his own wealth can know how quickly it can be lost. You speak to him today in Punjab, and in his heart he wishes that the tension and fear of the last three years would go away, that the dispute with Delhi would be settled, that the Akali *morcha* would end, that the confrontation with Hindus which seemed quite unthinkable so recently would disappear, that both the communities would return to the solidarity exemplified in that gesture of common worship, the homage at the Harimandir. And yet there is a difference. For the first time since independence that wish is spiked with the seed of doubt. For in 1984, that Sikh farmer who had gained nothing but profit by his association with India acquired his first real grievance. That paper tiger called the Akali *morcha* got its first claw in the anger against Operation Bluestar, and the second in the anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale dead became a force that Bhindranwale alive so desperately wanted to be.

And now, amidst the green of the fields and the purple of the Akali turban, a new colour is becoming symbolic of Punjab: *kesari*. Everywhere in the state, young Sikhs are beginning to put on saffron turbans to announce that they are ready for the ultimate sacrifice—death in the name of religion. (It is ironic but only too appropriate that the colour of both Sikh secessionism and its counterpart, Hindu fascism, should be the same in Punjab.)

The message was most forcefully delivered at—where else?—the holy city of Anandpur where the three-day Holla Mohalla between 6 and 8 March this year was less a celebration and more a challenge to Delhi. A congregation much larger than normal and almost completely young had gathered: the men wore *kesari* turbans and the women *dupattas* of the same colour. They hid nothing, particularly not their secessionism. Moderate Akali leaders like Sardar Balwant Singh were booed (he walked off, rather than submit to extremist pressure); the young at Anandpur were looking for new leaders more in tune with their passions. And they found one too: Bimal Khalsa.

Bimal Khalsa is the wife of Sardar Beant Singh, assassin of Mrs Indira Gandhi.

An *ektara* provides the musical spine around which the song is built. The words are simple and unambiguous: the Sikh will not be cowed down, the Sikh will take revenge; don't you weep, Bimal Khalsa, your husband shall be avenged; thank you, Beant and Satwant and Kehar Singh,for protecting the honour of the community. The songs had been taped inside the jails of Punjab, copied on cassettes and circulated clandestinely. Obviously this was not possible without the collusion of some jail officials. Nor were the men who had lent their voices worried about disclosing their identities. One cassette begins with an introduction in Punjabi: *"Sikhan dein mahaan kurbaniyan aur prerana lai ke, Sardar*

Satwant Singh aur to Sardar Beant Singh do Sikh naujawana di bahaduri, te Indira Gandhi dee maut: pesh karden hai Sardar Ajay Singh Dhillon Singoleriwale aur Sardar Jasbir Singh Joshila Talwandisahabwale...(Sardar Ajay Singh Dhillon Singoleriwale and Sardar Jasbir Singh Joshila narrate the sacrifices and problems of the Sikhs, the heroism of Sardar Beant Singh and Sardar Satwant Singh and the death of Mrs Indira Gandhi...)" The cassette becomes only more inflammatory as it goes on. "*Sun lai, Bimal Khalsa, main bhi ohi kuch kar ke uttha, main ohi kuch kar ke dikhoyna... Sir deke lai loon badla* (Listen, Bimal Khalsa, I too will do something, I will emulate your husband... I will give my life to take revenge...)"

Sikh nal jisne hai bair karda
Badla lewaange gin gin, paapiyo

Such sentiment is limited to the extreme fringe, but it is powerful enough to intimidate and frighten those who would prefer a less volatile course. The danger of pressure from the extreme lies not in the extent of popular support it might generate but in the power of the scream; the strength of a war cry raised by a committed few often not only drowns out the argument of reason but can so easily be mistaken for the voice of the whole community.

In every gurudwara of Punjab the battle has begun for the possession of the Sikh mind. The young are there, asking their parents and their elders if there is a future possible in the patterns of the last 30 years. The parents of the arrested youth add to the chorus of despair, narrating story after story of the "innocence" of their children and the "cruelty" of oppressive Delhi. But the key lies in the worker and the farmer who earns from his participation in the national economy: which way will he swing? Where will the Sikh women, who would suffer under a fundamentalist Sikh state in terms of rights and inheritance, turn? The urban Sikh, who has been by and large anti-Akali, and the *mazhabi* Sikh, who has so much reason to mistrust the Jat Sikh: have they also been affected?

And what will the Akali Dal do, particularly now that its leaders are being allowed to dribble out of jail? Veer towards the voice of revenge in an effort to be more extremist than thou? The man to watch was Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, president of the Shiromani Akali Dal and "dictator" (an approved term in the Akali political lexicon) of the *morcha*, the man who had kept his lines open to all sides of Sikh sentiment before Operation Bluestar. True the Sant had not supported Bhindranwale; in fact, the two were not on talking terms. But he had not stood up against the secessionists to the extent expected And if the Sant was not a Gurcharan Singh Tohra, he was no Prakash Singh Badal either. Would the Sant continue to prevaricate, to say one thing to the young and another to the rest of India? Or would he provide the leadership to mobilise Sikh opinion behind him, and find the solution to the Punjab problem which had so long evaded everybody? As for Delhi: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had squeezed what was possible out of Punjab in two elections. Any more rhetoric of confrontation would be the surest passport to political suicide. The time had come to talk peace. And it was his turn to make the first move in the chess game which had to be adjourned under such calamitous circumstances It was still a continuation of the old game, but both sides had lost their principal players Delhi made its play: the Anandpur Sahib resolution was no longer beyond the pale; selected Akali leaders were set free including hardliners like Talwandi; and a knight was sent to Chandigarh to confront the bishops.

One of the first things that Sant Longowal did upon his release was to start a tour of his *pind*. A *jatha* from his area had been caught in the crossfire of the army action at the Golden Temple and there were casualties. He began a round of visits to every home which had suffered, and gave a speech at every gurudwara After the grief came the message: the Congress was the bitter enemy of the Sikhs, and there could be no peace with it. The war was with



Akali Dal president Sant Longowal at Delhi airport after his release from, detention

Delhi, as it had been so often through Sikh history; this war would also demand its price, and the Sikh would willingly offer that price. There was no condemnation of Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, and not much regret for the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. But there was anger at the anti-Sikh riots, and the warning that not a word would be exchanged with Delhi unless a judicial enquiry was ordered. But the Sikhs should not consider Hindus their enemy; the Congress was the villain, not the Hindus.

Nor did the tone change during our interview; if anything the anger intensified as the questions attempted to probe his real feelings. We sat in a small room on the periphery of the gurudwara still under construction, just a few miles from Longowal, the place which gives the Sant his surname. The "dictator" was not willing to condemn extremist behaviour on any count. If he could not support a particular action, he would try and justify it—but there was no question of apology, regret or embarrassment. Check:

- What was so wrong about wearing *kesari* turbans or *dupattas*? Why did no one object when N.T. Rama Rao's MPs wore saffron to Parliament? If NTR wore saffron it was fine, if a Sikh wore saffron it became a crime!
- Why should he condemn the hijackers? Why should the Akalis not arrange to provide a defence for those being tried in Lahore? If the Congress of Mrs Gandhi, Sanjay and Rajiv Gandhi could give Assembly tickets to those who had hijacked an Indian Airlines Boeing during Janata rule, why could not the Akalis defend the Sikhs who were protesting what they thought to be injustice?
- How could anyone object to arms in gurudwaras, when all through history Sikhs had been allowed to carry arms? The Sikhs worshipped weapons, and they would now worship the most modern guns since these were the weapons of today.
- Why should everyone insist that the Sikhs condemn the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi; after all the Akal Takht had been attacked too, and Sikhs killed in communal riots.

There are sensible answers to each one of Sant Longowal's posers. When N.T. Rama Rao wears saffron, he is only displaying a religious sentiment, not announcing that he is ready to sacrifice his life in a war against another Indian community. There is therefore a substantial difference in the two messages sought to be conveyed. What Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi did when they gave tickets to those who had committed a crime was wrong, and remains wrong. But there is a qualitative difference in the crime of secession and any other crime. By supporting the hijackers the Akali Dal is publicly affording sympathy and protection to those who are set to destroy the unity of a nation, not unseat a government. And while Sant Longowal has every right to protest and mourn the attack on the Akal Takht, surely he must also condemn the assassination of an elected Prime Minister of India? Or is he surreptitiously advocating the use of arms to settle political problems? Is his justification of sophisticated modern weapons in gurudwaras as part of the same intent? For two hundred years after Guru Nanak the Sikhs did not carry weapons; it was only the tenth Guru who enjoined them to do so to fight Mughal oppression. Have the Sikhs been oppressed since 1947? And how does one react to the decision of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee on 25 March (where Sant Longowal was of course present) that training in the use of arms would be given in the gurudwaras? Can the Sikhs blame the rest of the country if suspicions rise and in turn acquire a malevolent dimension? Not only this, the process of the canonisation of Sant Bhindranwale is being stepped up. Another resolution passed at the SGPC appealed to all the Sikhs to spread the purification movement: "Let at least one member of each Sikh family be baptised by 1999, (a year which will mark 300 years of the birth of Khalsa). This will also fulfil the dream of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale."

Not so long ago the dreams of Sant Bhindranwale were not part of either the SGPC or the Akali future.

'No Sikh leader can afford to talk the language of moderation now.' If I heard that statement once, I heard it a hundred times. The voice too must be touched with *kesari*; and its shrill tones must be tolerated until the anger has eased. Words are extremely malleable weapons: they are gelignite; they can be used for mining and undermining; they can be stored in the chambers of memory and detonated at precisely the moment required. They mean what you want them to mean. To find the answers to Punjab, one has to look beyond words and into hearts. If the Akali leadership today is using the words in its current arsenal to heal by pampering, then one can appreciate the need for the present rhetoric. If not...

Words have proved dangerously deceptive before. In 1940 the Muslim League at Lahore passed a resolution describing the Muslims as a nation, and demanding their right to protect their lives and culture from the greed and oppression of the majority. There was no mention of either Pakistan or secession, and among those who proposed the resolution were men like Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan who were opposed to the idea of partition and the creation of a new country called Pakistan. In fact, within a year or so when Sir Sikandar realised the extent of the conspiracy he resigned from the working committee of the Muslim League, and in debate after debate in the Punjab Legislative Assembly ridiculed the idea of a new country. But after Lahore 1940 Mohammad Ali Jinnah knew that he had his Pakistan. In the beginning was the word, and the word had been passed suitably disguised. Any political movement will include, within its fold, a whole spectrum of interests and pressures. The equivalents of Sir Sikandar and Jinnah sit on the Akali platform too, fighting for the control of the majority of the party.

And, in the Congress(I) and the government, the spread is similar;

Arjun Singh with President Zail Singh after being appointed Punjab Governor CNS



there are the bullies who want to teach the Sikhs a "lesson they will never forget": part of the lesson has already been administered, and presumably the education is not complete. Others see the need for consideration and dialogue, submission without surrender, acceptance of demand without the show of panic which could set off detonations elsewhere—and, worse, inspire the Sikh extremists to believe that the centre had finally become too weak to hold the nation. And then there are those who are simply confused.

While the Akalis can blow hot and cold, the government must now make a choice. One assumes that it has learnt that state-inspired aggression is bad policy at any time, and an impossible alternative in a democracy. After that, it has only two options left. The first is to grant Punjab (Punjab, not just the Sikhs; Chandigarh should go to Punjab, not just the Sikhs; the river waters should go to Punjab, not just the Sikhs) its demands through an agreement with the Akalis. The other is to do so bypassing the Akalis. The concessions have to include an enquiry into the post-assassination riots, the surrender of Chandigarh to Punjab and an increase in the water allotment to the farmer (which is the best way of wooing him). If the Akalis raise the ante any higher, they should not be ignored and their *morcha* treated as nothing more than a law and order problem. In fact, the logic of such action could be continued a stage further and the nation should consider legislation to stop religious politicians from entering our secular legislatures—we have seen enough damage being caused to India from the Sanghs and the Leagues. But Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi will have to display more clear-mindedness to push through such reform than he has shown so far on Punjab The decisions from Delhi are coming out piecemeal, and losing much of their impact, even though through this process far more might end up being granted than even demanded.

The other part is that the time for ambiguity is also over: the Akalis, and their dictator Sant Longowal, have to clarify not only where they stand but where they are heading. The time has come for the language of moderation to be heard. If their gestures continue to provoke, the consequences could be terrible. Surely they themselves know as much, which tempts one to suspect that the provocation is often deliberate in order to drag the Sikh community further away from the national mainstream. From Baisakhi 1985 the Akali *morcha* will be officially relaunched, and already the gunfire which has fallen silent is being heard again—the murder of the secretary of the BJP in Chandigarh, K. L. Manchanda being the worst example.

Once the spiral starts building it could again acquire a terrifying momentum. The last time, the Akalis said that Punjab would be in danger if their demands were not met. This time, they are saying that the Panth is in danger, that the fate of the religion hangs in the balance. The last time, the transfer of Chandigarh might have been enough; now a gesture also has to be made to convince the Sikhs that their religion, like every minority religion on this subcontinent, will be safe under the protection of the Constitution and its elected guardians. And all this has to be done now: every moment of delay is time unforgiveably lost. The last time the purple of the Akali turban was the colour of the agitation; this time *kesari* can be found in every town and village. We have learnt the cost of the purple battle. We must avoid the havoc of the *kesari* war.

What Should Now Be Done in Punjab?

Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora (Retired) answers

Much has happened in Punjab since Operation Bluestar in June last year. Yet a solution to the Punjab tangle remains as elusive as ever and a question that is being asked is: What should now be done in Punjab? Before I attempt to answer this question, it is necessary to look into the causes and the effects of what has come to be known as the "Punjab crisis."

The first point we must keep in mind is that the demands of the Akali Dal and the government's reluctance to come to a decision on them was primarily a political problem between the Akali party and the government of India. But—and there can be no doubt about it—the demands were presented by the Akalis in such a manner that even the political demands, which concern all Punjabis, were made to appear as though they were the demands of the Akalis; hence, a part of the religious demands. Though this was set right later on, it did create a certain amount of strain and misunderstanding between the Hindus and the Sikhs. But after Operation Bluestar, the Punjab problem became one essentially between the Sikh community and the government of India. This was because the storming of the Temple hurt the feelings of all Sikhs, irrespective of their caste, creed or political beliefs.

I do not know if Mrs Gandhi realised this when she ordered Operation Bluestar or whether inspite of realising this she decided that she was so correct in this matter that she could afford to alienate the whole Sikh community. In any case, matters did not end with Operation Bluestar. After it was over she stated through the media that she was applying the healing touch but, in fact, the propaganda carried out by the official media was such that it alienated the Sikhs further. This in turn had its fallout: differences grew between the Hindus and the Sikhs in Punjab. In fact, one could even call it the great divide. To make matters worse, there was a lot of repression in Punjab: the presence of a large number of security forces in the state, as well as the new Disturbed Areas Act, special courts the change brought about in the Evidence Act only added to it. I'm sorry to say this, but today there are possibly more extremists and terrorist-minded young Sikhs than there were at the time of Operation Bluestar.

The presence of the army in the state has further widened the gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs:

while the Hindus do not want the army to leave Punjab because of insecurity, the Sikhs feel that they are under repression and there is a lot of resentment on this score. Then there was the very unfortunate assassination of Mrs Gandhi and the holocaust that followed outside Punjab. This certainly contributed in the deterioration of relations between the two communities. Now, not only do the Sikhs feel alienated from the mainstream of the nation but there is also a lack of confidence *vis-a-vis* the government. What the Sikhs are asking today is: In case there is another incident like the one which took place in November, will they get proper protection from the government? One, after all, does not know the turns the situation can take. Today nobody is in a position to control the terrorists—neither the Akalis nor the parents of those who have become terrorists—and anything can happen. But can we blame the whole community for the crimes of a few? Again, there is the feeling, whether rightly or wrongly, that a number of young people have gone to Pakistan for training (in arms). But I have heard that a large number of young people, as well as those who are not so young, have gone to Pakistan as refugees. And why? Simply because they felt that they could be picked up at any moment by the police and interrogated. After that there is no certainty regarding their fate: whether they would be released or whether they would be bumped off. In fact, there is this total lack of confidence among the Sikhs of Punjab.

Therefore, as far as the Punjab problem is concerned—though I think it is more of a Sikh problem—before any fruitful negotiation can start, it is essential to create a proper atmosphere of confidence. This atmosphere can only be brought about if something concrete is done: whether it be an enquiry into the riots or drive home to the administration that the Sikhs be given the same sort of justice that other Indians have been receiving. There is this feeling that if a Sikh has a problem, chances are that he will not get a fair deal.

So, to bring the situation back to normal in Punjab, the Disturbed Areas Act has to be withdrawn and those young people who have been arrested and against whom no charges have been framed or against whom there is nothing major, should be released. Why are they being kept in custody for so long?

As for the demands of the Punjabis, all political parties in Punjab agree that Chandigarh should go to Punjab, that the dispute over the division of the river waters should be referred back to the Supreme Court where it was before Mrs Gandhi gave the award just before the elections in Haryana, for political purposes. What should be done next is to set up a boundary commission to decide on a boundary between Haryana and Punjab on a linguistic basis. These were the demands earlier and they still remain I do not really see how either the Akali party or any other party of the Sikhs can accept anything less, as the entire Sikh community in Punjab is unanimous about these demands.

Another problem which continues to plague negotiations between the government and the Akalis is the oft-repeated Anandpur Sahib resolution, about which there has been a great deal of talk without the people really understanding what it is all about. To my mind the operative clause of the resolution is the one that relates to centre-state relations That is the first resolution on the Anandpur Sahib resolution document. The authentic document was the one that was passed in 1978 in Ludhiana. That resolution only talks about centre-state relations: it says that we should have a proper federal structure, the states should have greater authority over their own affairs and goes on to say that in order to strengthen India, it is necessary for the structure to be redesigned. Nowhere does it talk of secession nor is there even a hidden clause relating to it. I think this matter can be referred to the Sarkaria commission. Or, if they so desire, it can be referred to some other commission.

What the Sikhs are asking today is: In case there is another incident like the one which took place in November, will they get proper protection from the government?

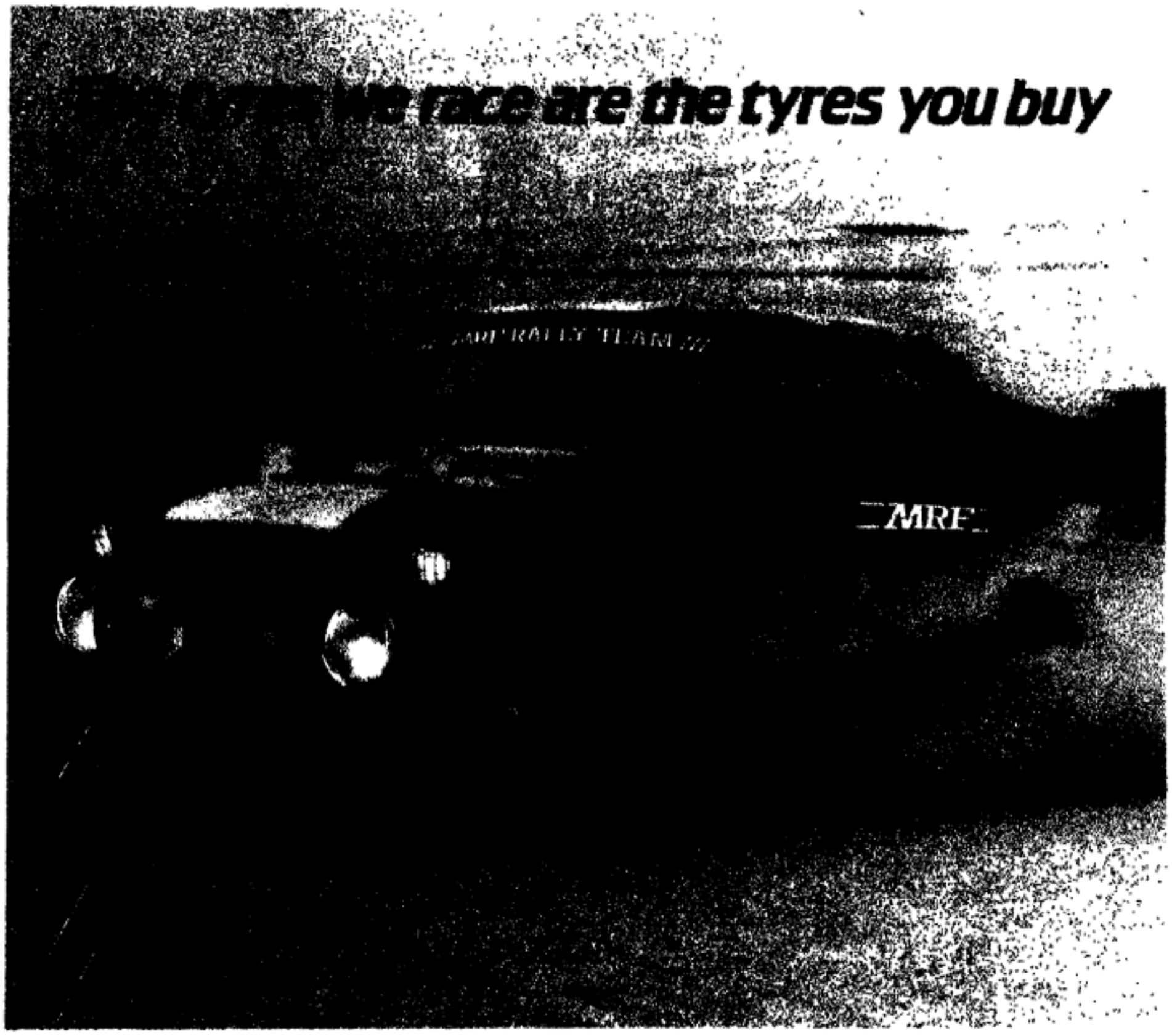
But if negotiations are to be meaningful, both the Akali Dal and the government should avoid taking public stands on the demands and issues concerning Punjab. Often leaders do this to try and justify to the public that they are right and the other side is wrong. No meaningful negotiation can take place if your attitude is such. Therefore, I feel, both sides should go to the negotiating table without taking any stand in public and with only one objective: to solve the Punjab crisis as it is vital for the security of the country; it is vital that the Sikhs who feel alienated, be brought back to the mainstream. So we have to put our heads together and find a workable solution, without making it into a prestige issue.

Besides, I would like to add, not as a Sikh but as an Indian, that the present government should deal with the problem more generously. It should give time to the Akali leadership, especially the moderate leadership, to regain its confidence. For instance, after nine months Longowal was recently released from jail. At the time when he was put in jail his stock was not very high within his own community because he had handed himself over to the security forces and it was put out in the press that he had surrendered. For Longowal, this meant a loss of face. So now after his release, in order to be accepted as the leader of the Sikhs, he cannot afford to take a soft line. And this is something which should be understood by the government. Longowal is a moderate leader and a reasonable person and he should be allowed to reestablish himself in the community. But if everytime he opens his mouth the media pounces on him, criticising him for making harsh statements, then it will simply vitiate the atmosphere, instead of giving him a chance to establish himself.

But I do think that by releasing some of the Akali leaders, and not all of them, the government has clipped the wings of Longowal and Barnala, because on their own they cannot take on the entire responsibility of negotiating a settlement of the Punjab problem. Besides, if under pressure they say something and the other leaders do not like it, it can threaten the unity of the Akali Dal, which, in any case, is being kept together with a great deal of effort. Again, while Tohra and Badal have not been released Talwandi has been, even though he is the most extreme among them and is someone who has taken great delight in criticising and disagreeing with Longowal, making it difficult for him to win the confidence of the whole community.

In the final analysis, I think the government should place its confidence in Longowal and his party, give him a chance to establish himself and then sit at the negotiating table with only one end in mind: to solve the Punjab tangle for the future of the country and the future of the Sikh community, which in spite of being a minority, is still viral to the country.

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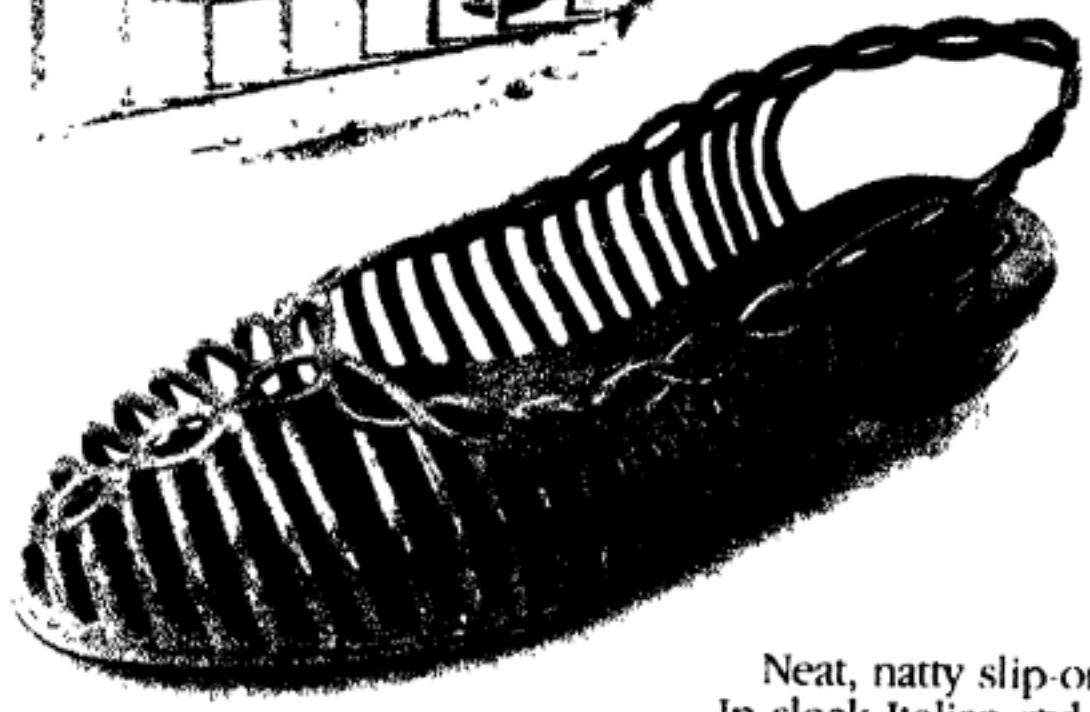
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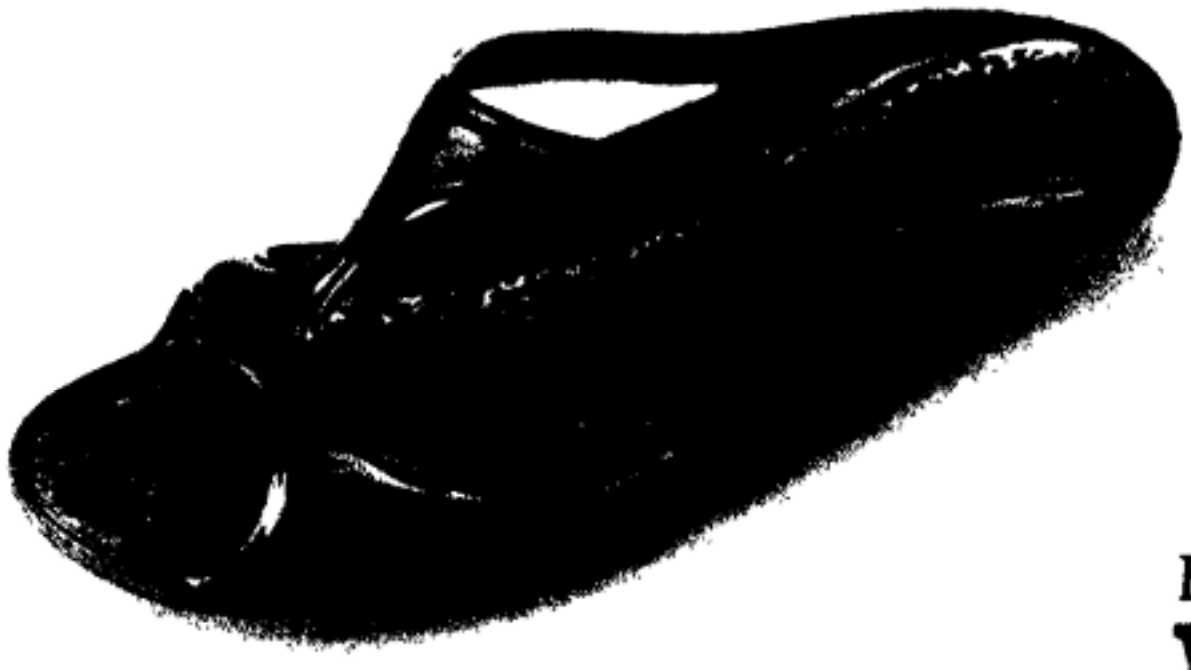
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'An Incomplete Step'

"There is hope but no optimism," says Istri Akali Dal President, Mrs Rajinder Kaur "Something might come out. We can't predict the future course of events. But today I am not very optimistic that Punjab will be normal in the near future." Hasn't the situation changed with the release of the Akali chief Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and the seven other prominent Akali leaders? Pat comes the reply from the firebrand daughter of the legendary Akali leader and the former party president, Master Tara Singh: "It is a tactical move of the government. I very much doubt the sincerity of Rajiv about the Punjab problem Moreover, the release of the Akali leaders is not of much significance. Other issues are more important—like the repression on the Sikh youth must stop, then the judicial enquiry into the Delhi riots, then the release of thousands of innocent Sikh youth now languishing in jails for months." Elaborating on the "tactics" of the government in releasing Longowal and Talwandi, the Istri Akali Dal chief and former Akali Lok Sabha member explained, "The government wants that the two of them (Longowal and Talwandi) keep on fighting. And obviously the government is very successful in its move." Of course, she sounds convincing in her argument

Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi, president of the rival Akali Dal began his attack against Sant Longowal immediately after his release from the Ambala central jail. Talking to the press after his party's 20 March meeting in Amritsar, Talwandi unequivocally held Longowal responsible for the death of the militant Sikh priest, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Again, though Longowal strongly denied this, Talwandi did not mince words in accusing both Tohra and Longowal of having surrendered to the army in the Golden Temple on 6 June last year. Talwandi, the former president of the undivided Akali Dal, even went to the extent of openly announcing that Longowal struck some deal with the government before his release. Observers feel that even if the charges levelled by Talwandi against Longowal may not be true, the latter's image is getting tarnished in the Sikh community.

How do the five Sikh high priests whose role in Sikh politics had become rather prominent after Operation Bluestar feel about the changed situation in Punjab following the release of Sant Longowal and other senior Akali leaders? Are they hopeful that finally peace will be restored in Punjab? These questions are uppermost not only in the minds of the Sikhs but perhaps all Indians today Especially since the Sikh high priests were at the helm of affairs not only as the supreme authority of the Sikh community but the Akali Dal as well for the last nine months Comments Giani Sahib Singh, "It is a good but incomplete step by the government" The head priest of the Golden Temple was talking to SUNDAY at his residence expressing his views about the release of Sant Longowal and other Akali leaders Speaking in a tongue now typical of Longowal, the Sikh clergyman repeated a long list of demands including lifting the ban on the All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF), withdrawal of army, abolition of special courts, release of all detained Sikhs including



Giani Sahib Singh

army deserters and of course a judicial probe into the November riots—all of which were to be accepted without delay Giani Sahib Singh said, "If all the demands are accepted then things can improve considerably." He stressed that "the government should have a lenient view about the Sikh armymen who deserted after Operation Bluestar. They are not traitors or anti-nationals. They only acted under strong religious sentiments after learning about the destruction of the Harimander Sahab The government should free them and also reinstate them." The Golden Temple head priest was "not ready" to give his reaction about the appointment of the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Mr Arjun Singh, as the new Punjab Governor He quipped, "It is a political matter and we have no role in politics."

Another Sikh high priest, Giani Pritam Singh, head priest of the Akal Takht, evidently lacking clear understanding of the complex Punjab problem and Akali politics suggested, "We all (the five high priests) have the same opinion. So if you have already talked to Jathedar Kirpal Singh and Giani Sahib Singh, then you are at liberty to endorse their views on my behalf too. But I will like to add one thing. It is the duty of every Sikh to pray to Wahe Guru for the restoration of amity and goodwill in Punjab."

If the high priests do not want to be vocal in discussing the political situation in Punjab, Sikh intellectuals say the fault does not lie with them First, they should confine themselves to the religious matters of the Sikhs and secondly, the Sikh intellectuals feel that the high priests do not possess the necessary political acumen. Said Dilbir Singh, a Sikh intellectual and member of the chief Khalsa Diwan, "Let the clergy not meddle with politics. We have already suffered in the rise of fundamentalism advocated by Bhindranwale. We do not want another Khomeini of Sikhs." Dilbir Singh, who maintains a fine rapport both with the Akalis as well as the government (he is a personal friend of President Giani Zail Singh) is of the view that the government's gesture of releasing Sant Longowal, was an appropriate one. He says, "The Sikhs who had been feeling leaderless for quite some time have a feeling now that they have a leader. Longowal is the acknowledged leader of the Sikhs today."

On the other hand, the president of the Punjab unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Dr Baldev Prakash, is not at all hopeful that normalcy will ever be restored in Punjab He asks, "Who will accept their demands which go on increasing every day? The goal of the Akalis is Khalistan and hence they will never be satisfied even if you give Chandigarh to Punjab and accept the other economic demands. With Talwandi having now started openly demanding status of a Sikh state, we are certainly heading for bad days in Punjab." Sums up Shyam Sunder Bhatia, an RSS activist and the younger brother of Raghunandan Lal Bhatia, president of Punjab PCC(I), "Rajiv Gandhi should give a unilateral decision on Punjab whether that is acceptable to the Akalis or not."

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar



'The Sikh has begun to wonder whether he can live in India'

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal told Kuldip Nayar









The place was a gurudwara near Sangrur, the pind of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, president of the Shiromani Akali Dal and "dictator" of the party's morcha. The Sant had just been released from Udaipur jail after nine months: he had been arrested during Operation Bluestar by the army. Great events had shaken the nation in these months: this was the first opportunity the Sant had of reacting to them. The very first programme on his schedule after his release was a series of meetings at gurudwaras interspersed with visits to the homes of those killed in the Akali agitation and Operation Bluestar. The Sant met* Kuldip Nayar *after one such gurudwara meeting—and spoke out frankly in an interview which is bound to cause major ripples.

Q: *It is said that in May, a few days before Operation Bluestar, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the SGPC chief, had agreed to a formula to integrate Chandigarh with Punjab in lieu of Abohar with Haryana and refer Fazilka to a territorial commission. How far is this true?*

A: This is not true.

Q: Was such a formula ever placed before you ?

A: No. I don't know anything about it.

Q. Was there any formula which would suggest that the government wanted to come to an agreement before Operation Bluestar ?

A: Really speaking, whenever the government wanted to have negotiations, we always welcomed it. But after every meeting we became more convinced that the government only wanted to serve its own ends and would sacrifice the interests of the people. It was then that we resolved that it was no use talking to them. Later the opposition parties forced us to resume the dialogue. My party was not really for it, but I forced it to respond. Nothing came out of those meetings. Then there were four other meetings which were secret. They too were of no use. We finally came to the conclusion that the government wanted only to shame us, embarrass us.

Q: Was there any new proposal at these meetings?

A: No, it was the same old story. (Surjit Singh Barnala, who had participated in these meetings and was present during the interview, interjected: "There was nothing new except that Chandigarh be divided".) It meant humiliating us after inviting us to the talks. Then there was a meeting on 14 February. The opposition forced us to attend the meeting. I agreed because we did not want the people to get the impression that the government wanted to settle the problem but the Akalis did not. The meeting started on 14 February; the government, the opposition and we participated in it.

While this meeting was taking place, Bhajan Lal, with his force, was dragging Sikhs from vehicles and killing them—at Karnal and Panipat and other places, they burnt the gurudwaras. The Akali Dal representatives said to themselves that this was a government which humiliated the Sikhs. They left everything and came back.

Q: Do you at times feel that the opposition let you down?

A: As far as we are concerned we have always supported the opposition; for example, while challenging the Emergency. Whatever has happened to us is only the (Congress) government's revenge for our support to the opposition. We took a stand and fought bravely. We threw out an authoritarian government and established democratic rule. Mrs Gandhi wanted to take revenge on the Sikhs and make them lower their heads (for the Akali role during the Emergency).

Q: Why do you think Mrs Gandhi turned against the Sikhs, with whom she had the best of relations at one time?

A: A ruler like her loves her interests more than those of the people. Mrs Gandhi was in love with her own interests: I, my sons and my grandsons should rule, this sort of attitude.

Q: There have been reports that some people met you in jail (after Operation Bluestar) to pursue the talks for a settlement. Are these correct?

A: Newspapers reported that Mrs Gandhi met me, that Rajiv Gandhi met me. This is not true. No one met me.

Q: Not even Mr Subramaniam, adviser to the Punjab Governor?

A: Yes, Subramaniam met me. He asked me how the Punjab issue could be settled

Q: Do you remember the date?

A: No, after staying alone in jail, one's memory becomes faulty I asked him whether he had come to find a solution or to further humiliate me. I told him that there should first be a judicial inquiry to punish those who killed the Sikhs in Delhi, Kanpur and the rest of India and the victims should be rehabiliated. I said, release all the Sikhs, whether they are Akali workers or others, students or soldiers who started going towards Amritsar to express their anger against Operation Bluestar, also treat those (the Sikhs) who hijacked the planes on a par with those (other hijackers) who have been rewarded with seats in Parliament and Assemblies. Also abolish special courts, withdraw the army from Punjab. Only after that come and ask me.

Q: Did anybody else meet you on behalf of the government?

A: Buta Singh came once He entered my room when I was reading the scriptures. He went on saying something. I told him: Sardarji, go to the Akal Takht. The *panth* comes first (Buta Singh has been excommunicated by the five high priests and has been asked to explain his conduct before the Akal Takht).

Q: How were you treated in jail?

A: For the first three months, they did not allow us any contact whatsoever with the outside world. Then after Ram Jethmalani pleaded at the Supreme Court, I started getting *The Tribune* but it was always 10 days old

Q: Were you given a radio?

A: No, not even for a day during the nine months of detention. My people brought radio and TV sets. But the government did not allow them in.

Q: Then when did you hear about Mrs Gandhi's assassination?

A: I was never told. I overheard two policemen talking and felt that it was about something grave that had happened in the country. When I asked them what had happened, they said they did not know anything. Subsequently, the jail superintendent told me, and that too in a very low tone as if he did not want anyone to know that he had told me. He was the one who said that Mrs Gandhi had been murdered.

Q: What was your feeling when you heard about it?

A: It was the same feeling as a person in jail should have.

Q: What do you think is its political impact. To be more specific, has this assassination stalled the settlement?

A: The problem has got very tangled. The Sikh has begun to wonder after the assassination—and even before it—whether he can live in India and what his future will be.

Q: You must have at least felt for a personality like Mrs Gandhi who had been eliminated by murder.

A: In India, everyday there is a murder of an honest man. Looking at all of this, one feels that such things should not happen. I do not want it to happen I do not want to single out any person. Taking into consideration the happenings in India, particularly murders, the Sikhs and all other people feel that such things are not in the interest of the country.

Q: Didn't you say in one of your speeches that Operation Bluestar was tantamount to the murder of the Akal Takht, no less significant than Mrs Gandhi's assassination?

A: What I said was that those who say that Mrs Gandhi's assassination was like the felling of a big tree should realise that the destruction of the Akal Takht, which all Sikhs hold sacred and worship, was like the felling of a big tree for the Sikhs and if, after hearing about it, they started this journey towards Amritsar, it was only natural.

Q: If the Akali Party does not condemn the killing of Mrs Gandhi in the strongest terms, don't you think that it will encourage some



Sant Longowal at Delhi airport on his way to Amritsar after his release

Every Sikh asks himself whether he has any place in this country. He nourishes anger, he wonders what status he enjoys and how he can regain respect.

Newspapers reported that Mrs Gandhi met, that Rajiv Gandhi met me (in jail). This is not true. No one met me.

Sikhs to think that the politics of murder is justifiable and further, some might attempt to kill more people?

A: The effect of cruelty (*jabar*) or revenge is not good. Those who indulge in cruelty face similar consequences.

Q: That means there should be no spirit of revenge.

A: There is no spirit of revenge in the Sikh religion.

Q: In that case you should have no hesitation in condemning Mrs Gandhi's assassination.

A: Why are we being forced to condemn (Mrs Gandhi's assassination) when none so far has condemned those who destroyed the Akal Takht and Harimandir Sahib, killed the innocent, burnt children alive, raped women and destroyed hearths and homes. Why is there this emphasis on our condemning Mrs Gandhi's murder?



Sant Longowal (right) with his followers

Q. Could you tell me what happened to you on 5 June or during Operation Bluestar? But before you do that, let me check with you something which has been said repeatedly. The day before Operation Bluestar, did Bhindranwale's men come to you and say that you must announce the birth of Khalistan and did you say 'no' to that?

A: The truth is that two persons I did not know, went to Sant Bhindranwale and asked him to announce the birth of Khalistan through the transmitter they said he possessed. He said he would not announce that, adding that his policy was the same as that of the Akali Dal. He said: 'If you want this to be done go to the Akali Dal chief. He is the only one who can do it. If he does it, I shall also do so.' Later those persons came to us and asked us to announce the birth of Khalistan. They told us they had been to Sant Bhindranwale. We asked them what they had told the Sant. They said that if Sant Longowal were to announce it, he would support it.

Buta Singh once came (to meet me in jail). He entered my room when I was reading the scriptures. He went on saying something. I told him: 'Sardarji, go to the Akal Takht. The *panth* comes first.'

Q: How true is the story of Comrade Surjit (the CPI-M politburo member) that Bhindranwale had asked you to announce on the transmitter, the establishment of Khalistan?

A: Harkishen Singh Surjit was making two attacks with the same sword. On the one hand he would call him (Bhindranwale) a traitor and on the other hand he would praise him. I can say with authority that Bhindranwale had no links with Pakistan, nor with the CIA. My argument is that if he had connections with the CIA or Pakistan—and this was meant to make him fight against the Indian government—he (Surjit Singh) would not have separated me from Bhindranwale; he would have kept us together. The real thing is that the RAW was working there, the government of India had planted some people: they were neither Bhindranwale's men nor ours.

Q. Can you give the sequence of events?

A. On 1 June we complained to the Governor about the firing at the Golden Temple. He said he had no hand in it and that whatever happened, it was at the centre's instance. We told him that he was responsible for Punjab after which he did make efforts—he contacted the local deputy commissioner, superintendent of police, inspector general and deputy inspector general of police and informed us that the firing had been stopped. We told him that the firing was continuing; he said it was from inside. I told him it was my responsibility if it were so and that no firing was taking place from inside, all the firing was from outside. After several hours he was able to have the firing stopped. On 2 June the Sikhs found Harimandir Sahib pockmarked by bullets; it had been hit by 36 bullets fired from three sides and this infuriated every Sikh. On the evening of 2 June Mrs Gandhi made the statement over All India Radio; on 3 June the entire Punjab was sealed off. Till then no one, neither the Punjab government nor the military, had told us that they wanted to arrest anyone; they did not say that if they were not allowed to make arrests, they would fire. The government did not say it wanted to arrest Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. It never said that. On 4 June at four or five in the morning the first bomb fell on the Akal Takht, a big bomb. After that there was continuous firing with machine-guns, sten-guns. The firing was so heavy for three hours that nobody could hear anything. All the people stayed where they were. Many of them had come from outside as that was the day of Guru Purab of Guru Arjun Sahib. The firing continued on the 4th all day long. There was firing on 4 and 5 June at night; there was heavy firing. In the evening I went to Samundri Hall; there were about 500 people, the *satyagrahis* who had come for the *morcha*. After getting them together, I went to Tohra's room. He told me that he was then about to come to my room. There were seven or eight other Sikhs. The sun set at that time. Tohra *sahib* said his prayers. Then there was such heavy firing that no one could move out. On the fifth there was no water, no food, the tank

had been destroyed, no one could go out to fetch anything because there was continuous firing. I think that by 5 June night, by 10 pm, the army had occupied the entire area, tanks were stationed on the middle road, they were continuously firing on the Samundari Hall, Guru Nanak Niwas, Guru Ram Das Sarai, then they went to the Parikrama and by about 3 pm occupied Guru Ram Das Sarai.

Q: When did they arrest you?

A: The same day on the 6th morning. Later they arrested all the volunteers in Samundari Hall. After doing that they came near our room and threw the first bomb. They said: 'You are under arrest and, therefore, offer yourself for arrest.'

Q: Did anyone of Bhindranwale's men tell you at that time not to offer yourself for arrest, otherwise they would kill you?

A: This is not true, no one told us anything like that. In fact, Harminder Singh Sandhu, Mehta and Manjit Singh—Sant Bhindranwale's men—were sitting with our men till the evening. If they had wanted to harm us they could have done it at any time. Really speaking, this was the rumour spread by the RAW; the government wanted to kill us and attribute the killings to them. This propaganda has been done by the government. Tohra Sahib, I and others told the army that we were prepared for the arrest or to face their bullets, and to do whatever they wanted to do.

Then they took us to the "executive's" room—in the process two of our Sikh colleagues were hit by bullets—and posted guards armed with machine-guns. This created an ugly situation. The volunteers, including the women of the *jatha*, stood between us and the armymen, thinking that we were facing a firing squad. It almost came to a fight. We intervened and told them to allow us to offer ourselves for arrest. We said: 'If they want to kill, let it be; everyone has to die After killing us, they will kill you. Now you should not do anything.' They were pacified. After 15 minutes, the leaders of the troops said that the buses had come and all the Sikh *jathas* would be taken out. Tohra Sahib, I and seven or eight others were confined to the room. We were not allowed to go out, nor was anybody allowed to meet us. At that time at least 600 people were there. After half an hour, the troops gave a "fauji sign" that they would throw a bomb. One military man among us told us to lie down because they would be opening fire. He himself lay down but others watched the fight. They opened fire and began to throw bombs. Some people were killed by bullets and some by bombs. Some were arrested and shot while under arrest. And subsequently, it was given out that the boys of the Sikh Students Federation had thrown the bombs from outside but those boys were sitting with us. We did not know the details because we were away from the place of the incident and there was a lot of noise. Then at 11 pm there was a big noise; some people came running to us. We also shouted and told a colonel, who reached the spot that he should be ashamed of himself; if they wanted to kill us, we were all ready; but was the army meant to kill the public, the people of their own country? We said, "You are committing a crime by killing the people after arresting them." This had its effect; the firing stopped Down below in the basement, many *bhaiyas* stay, 2,000 to 3,000 of them; they eat at the langar (free kitchen) and spend the night there. Because of the emergency they stayed there. They too were shot. They were not Akalis, Sikhs or extremists; they were either beggars, labourers or rickshaw pullers. We asked the troops why they were killed; they said that they had to complete their quota. In the evening at five, we were taken to a bungalow at the troops' headquarters and guards were posted there. We were warned not to stir out because their instructions were to kill anyone who came out. We stayed in the room. This was on 6 June; we

When have the Sikhs done anything against the country? Since they have never done it, the question (of pacifying them) does not arise. I can only say that the Sikhs are angry...



Sant Longowal in Amritsar

were kept there also the next day, the seventh. On 8 June, we were told that we would be taken to jail. We asked them where; they said they could not say. They took Tohra Sahib to Jodhpur and I was taken to Udaipur.

Q: Was it in a special plane?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: During those three days, from the 3rd till you left, did you meet Bhindranwale?

A: None of us met Bhindranwale; there was continuous firing all around. If anyone stirred out, he was killed there and then.

***Q**: During the interview you mentioned that no one told you that the authorities wanted to arrest anyone. Suppose the government had asked you to help it in arresting Bhindranwale, would you have done it?*

A: We would have thought what should be done in our interest. Perhaps we would have offered ourselves for martyrdom, while remaining peaceful.

Q: Suppose the government had asked for Bhindranwale's arrest?

A ruler like Mrs Gandhi loves her interests more than those of the people. Mrs Gandhi was in love with her own interests: I, my sons and my grandsons should rule; this sort of attitude.

Why are we being forced to condemn Mrs Gandhi's assassination when none so far has condemned those who destroyed the Akal Takht and the Harimandi r Sahib, killed the innocent, burnt children alive, raped women and destroyed hearths and homes? Why is there this emphasis on our condemning Mrs Gandhi's murder?

A. This was for Sant Bhindranwale to decide.

Q: Was there any contact between you and Bhindranwale in the weeks before the action?

A: Our relationship was such that we spoke very little.

Q It is said that you two were not on speaking terms. Is that true?

A· For six months, there was no conversation between us Sant Bhindranwale did not speak to me for six months. I do not know why. Someone told him something and he took a vow not to speak to me, though he would follow the programme of the Akali Dal. This is common among us village folk, we take a vow not to speak to someone.

I sent people to inquire what our quarrel was about; we were both fighting for the rights of the Sikhs, the rights of Punjab and, hence, there could be no differences between us. He said he was helpless because he had taken a vow not to speak to me.

Q: Why did he take the vow?

A: Someone had poisoned his ears.

Q: Has it not surprised you that there were so many weapons in the Akal Takht and those there could keep on firing for such a long time?

A: Our belief is that so many arms could not have come into the place; there were three barriers, one at the gate, one at Jalianwala Bagh and one before that; there were also other checks. Every person was searched, whether man or woman, so also all suitcases, luggage and all vehicles—this continued for one year. Why could not the government catch even one pilgrim with weapons? If the government could not catch anyone, how can we say that the weapons were found within the premises of the Temple? In reality, to malign us and to create hatred towards our religion, it was the government which brought in army weapons in trucks and dumped them in the gurudwara.

Q: But the fact remains that there was heavy firing from the Akal Takht and many soldiers were killed.



CNS

Indira Gandhi's body being taken out of the hospital

A: I can vouch for those who died in front of me. They did not have any weapons; they would have offered themselves for arrest peacefully.

Q: I am talking of the Akal Takht side where you were not present.

A: Even on that side those who were killed were innocent; they had come on pilgrimage and were stuck.

Q: True, some were pilgrims but there were others, and had they not fortified the Takht and did they not fight from bunkers?

A: If the government had not removed dead bodies after the shooting we could have said that these dead bodies were from the Akal Takht.

Q: At least 400 soldiers were killed.

A. When there is so much firing, who knows whose bullets killed whom?

Q: Do you think that arms should be kept in gurudwaras?

A: Yes, there should be arms in gurudwaras; we worship them. We do it at the Akal Takht, Kesargarh Sahib, and even in gurudwaras in England this is done.

Q: I am not talking about the kirpan *or the sword; I am talking of weapons like sten-guns.*

A: In the old days there were swords; now times have changed; the weapons have been improved. There is nothing wrong in possessing arms; only misusing them is bad.

Q: But once arms are allowed to be kept in gurduwaras, don't you think that they should be allowed to be kept in temples and mosques as well?

A: We received independence in 1947. Why was there no ban on weapons being kept in gurudwaras till 1982-83? This drama has been staged by the government. The people even then had weapons, they had to worship them, the Sikhs used to worship them; they carried five weapons at a time. revolvers, guns etc.; some even carried one and a quarter maunds of iron.

Q: Surely these are irrelevant when you know the type of arms recovered from the Golden Temple and the quantity.

A: Sant Bhindranwale and his escorts used to travel in buses; and they would carry licensed arms. With the same weapons he went to Delhi where he held prayers; many people came to pay their respects. At one *Bhog* ceremony probably Giani Zail Singh also did, though I do not know it for sure and Buta Singh came secretly. The Sant took the same weapons and other things to several parts of India. Why were they not called 'illegal' then, and why are they called 'illegal' now?

Q. And what would happen if the government were to pass a law banning weapons from all religious places, whether the gurudwara, mosque or temple?

A: It is a question for the nation (to decide). The Sikh does not tolerate any restriction on weapons. True, the licence holder will go with a licence; if he violates the rule, he will be arrested. In fact, the government should give arms to everyone in Punjab, especially those living near the border, so that they are strong and if need



A woman relates her woes to Sant Longowal in Amritsar

be, they could defend themselves against Pakistan.

Q: What in your view is the most important question before the Sikhs today?

A: How to regain self-respect.

Q: What are the government's decisions which can help the Sikhs regain their self-respect?

A: Atonement should be made for what has been done against the Sikhs, for killing them the government should show repentance by punishing those guilty of that; the special courts should be abolished, the anti-terrorist act should be withdrawn; all the young men detained should be released—including hijackers and deserters. Thereafter, the Sikhs will decide how they can protect their honour. He will then list the steps to be taken and point out to the government what is left to be rectified.

Q: One is holding an inquiry, the other is releasing the youth under detention—what about those against whom there are charges of violence?

A: You know how the government concocts cases; they do this the same way as the British used to.

Q: You are comparing these cases with those of Bhola Pandey and other similar cases. But these hijackers are secessionists.

A: They expressed their protest to get justice.

Q: Is hijacking justifiable and a part of the Akali agitation to press its demands?

A: In one's own house if you are not happy about something you are justified in protesting peacefully.

Q: Will you send lawyers to Pakistan to defend the hijackers there?

A: I have been inside jail for nine months and after my release I have been touring villages. This question will be considered at the Akali Dal's meeting in Amritsar. It is customary in this world that if a family member commits a mistake, the entire family says that the child is 'innocent'. To prove a child's innocence, the family does all it can. And when the child is proved innocent, he has to be released.

Q: In that case, you think that there should be no action taken against deserters?

A: No, there should be no case against them. They only expressed their protest and if they wanted they could have revolted and done a lot of damage. But all that they did was to start for Harimandir Sahib. The army administers an oath on the basis of religion or the Guru that he would be loyal to the country. If he takes the oath on the basis of religion, how can he then tolerate any violation of his religion?

Q: How can you then maintain discipline in the army?

A: This is the responsibility of the government. It should maintain the country's discipline, give protection to the minorities and not create such feelings. The responsibility is that of the government.

Q: Suppose there is a judicial inquiry and all Sikhs are released, will that create the proper climate for bringing about peace in Punjab?

A: That climate can be noticed; there can be efforts to create that climate.

Q: And when that climate is created?

A: Then the problem of Punjab can be pondered over.

Q: How do you feel now that you have been released from jail?

A: We have felt after coming out that this country for which we have made so many sacrifices, is like the German government which ousted the Jews. It is maligning us in a similar way to turn us out of the country. This is our worry.

Q: Have you come to feel that the Sikhs

This country for which we have made so many sacrifices is like the German government which ousted the Jews. It is maligning us in a similar way to turn us out of the country.



Sant Longowal inside the Golden Temple complex after he was released from jail

cannot live in this country as equal citizens?

A. Every Sikh asks himself whether he has any place in this country. He nourishes anger; he wonders what status he enjoys and how he can regain respect. When he is rebuffed, that will be a dangerous time for the country. All will suffer; the country may be destroyed

Q: The main point in dispute is not the Anandpur Sahib resolution, it is whether a community is a nation.

A: The national flag has three colours and still it is one flag. The Sikhs are a separate nation, so are the Muslims and the Hindus The three nations have one flag for the country. I am a Punjabi, but when I go outside I am a Bharati (an Indian).

Q: If the Sikhs are a separate nation, then does it mean that they should have a separate country?

A: We do not want a separate country; we don't want to separate ourselves from the country The government has one throne, we have five thrones, the Gurus created five thrones. We do not want separatism. But if the government were to force us, then we would think and say, 'Let's settle the price.'

The Sikhs have no quarrel with the Hindus or Muslims or Christians; our fight is against the person who sits on the throne of Delhi, who is trying to finish us.

Q: Persons like Jagjit Singh Chauhan are stoking the fires of communalism. They have launched a propaganda against India. What do you think of them?

A: If you were to look into the record of the last seven years, you would find who was behind him, who encouraged him. Please inquire into this. History will show who made him raise the slogan and who made him do all this. I do not want to say anything but study the record of the Congress for the past seven years.

Q: Do you propose to take some steps which will remove the suspicions of the Hindus?

A: We are already doing it. In India thousands of Sikhs were looted and killed; was there any retaliation in Punjab? The Congress wants to finish the Sikhs; so they (Sikhs) wage a war against the Congress. The Sikhs have no quarrel with the Hindus or Muslims or Christians; our fight is against the person who sits on the throne of Delhi, who is trying to finish us.

Q: Your quarrel was against Mrs Gandhi, not Rajiv Gandhi. I am sure Mrs Gandhi would not have released you because such steps were contrary to her scheme of things.

A: Mrs Gandhi acted from behind the curtains; he (Rajiv Gandhi) publicly killed thousands of Sikhs soon after sitting on the throne. It was done at his instance. He has gone farther than his mother in killing and terrorising Sikhs. Therefore, every Sikh has been forced to be against him.

Q: Don't you think that he stopped the riots quickly because they could have continued for another two weeks? Rajiv Gandhi's explanation is that he acted soon after he brought Mrs Gandhi's body home.

A: According to our source, this thing was to take place at that time. It was not Mrs Gandhi's assassination (which resulted in the riots). This thing was to take place two days later. Therefore, the same types of weapons, firearms and gunpowder were distributed all over the country. Otherwise, how do you explain that the rioting was similar all over? This was pre-planned and it was bound to happen.

Q: You mean to say that Mrs Gandhi had formulated the plan.

A: Her actions showed that. She defamed them (the Sikhs) as extremists and secessionists and said they would disintegrate the country, while the fact is that they have not been able to prove anything against them.

Q: Does the Akali party see any qualitative difference between Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi and does it consider the release of leaders as a gesture towards bringing about a solution in Punjab?

A: Mrs Gandhi accepted the Anandpur Sahib Resolution while he (Rajiv) says that he will not talk about it and he has maligned us throughout the country in the name of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. There is a lot of difference. When we told her that the resolution did not envisage separatism, she told the Hindu leaders at Jalandhar that the Akalis had said that there was nothing in the resolution to suggest separatism. What has been said in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution

is their promise. He cited the resolution on radio, TV and in newspapers to give a bad name to the Sikhs. There is a lot of difference between him and Mrs Gandhi.

Q: Suppose the government were to order an inquiry into the riots, release Sikhs in jails, give Chandigarh to Punjab and set up commissions to consider other issues, then how would you react?

A: Then we shall consider whether the nation (Sikhs) is satisfied.

Q: But these are your demands and if the government were to ultimately announce the acceptance, then what is the hitch?

A: (Barnala interjects: If that happens, then the matter is finished. We are not fighting for the sake of fighting.) Let them accept the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. In fact they have created these recent obstacles. If they were to remove them, there would be no problem.

Q: *At one time you told me that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was primarily meant to define centre-state relations and you wanted it to be referred to a commission. Since then the Sarkaria Commission has been appointed. So is it your stand that the resolution be referred to the Sarkaria Commission?*

A: Our doubts have now become a conviction. Now we are convinced that the government really does not want us, the Sikhs, to stay in the country.

Q: That means that there won't be any solution till the government is changed.

A: Until the government changes its mind, there will be no solution.

Q: Let me be clear. Do you mean to say that your demand on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is not met even if it is referred to the Sarkaria Commission?

A: The Sarkaria Commission is not relevant.

Q: Does it mean that what you said in the past is no longer relevant?

A: These things held good when they had not caught the Sikhs by the hair and thrown them down and when they had not demolished the Akal Takht. They have now greatly disturbed the Sikhs. Between the Sikhs and the government there is a heap of bodies. What has happened is like a picture before us: it will be there as long as the country is there.

Q: Would you be prepared to have an inquiry into what happened in Punjab, from the time of Jagat Narain's murder?

A: This is now an old story. We continued to demand it for many years. There were questions in Parliament. Mrs Gandhi made several statements. That meant that she was guilty, not us. We demanded that she should hold an inquiry through her own agency. She did not do it. She said that it was not necessary. In other words she did not want her guilt to be known to the public.

Q: Does it mean that you are against an inquiry into the happenings in Punjab?

A: Now we have gone quite far from the Punjab inquiry. The government has gone further from that inquiry. That time is long.



Sant Longowal converses with a follower

(Barnala intervened to say that it would now be an exercise in futility).

Q If there were fresh elections in Punjab, would the Akali Dal participate in it?

A: The Akali Dal will see how they want to hold the elections.

Q· Is there the possibility of a boycott?

A: Because of the anger that the Akali Dal and the Sikhs have, one cannot yet say what will be the outcome.

Q· Does that mean that the Akali Dal is becoming as extremist as Bhindranwale?

A: The Akali Dal has never taken any step which divides the people. The Dal has always kept the people's unity and India's unity before it. We have struggled while keeping these things in view. The Sikhs are now so full of anger against the government that one does not know what will be the outcome.

Q: But you cannot equate the country with the government.

A· Governments own the country.

Q: But governments can be thrown out. The country is yours.

A· If the feeling is that it is our country and we have our rights, then this can happen.

Q: Is not that feeling there?

A: No, this is not the feeling today, not after all that has happened to the Sikhs. It must be a very sad experience for them; and you too must be wondering what is in their minds.

Q: What do you think you should do to pacify the Sikhs?

A: When have the Sikhs done anything against the country? Since they have never done it, the other question does not arise. I can only say that the Sikhs are angry and I do not know what shape it will take. The government goes on alienating the Sikhs.

Q: The government at least did one good thing to release you.

A: *(Smiles).*

The national flag has three colours and still it is one flag. The Sikhs are a separate nation, so are the Muslims and the Hindus. The three nations have one flag for the country. I am a Punjabi, but when I go outside I am a Bharati (an Indian).

Punjab: The PM's Maiden Visit

Rajiv Gandhi had not chosen 23 March exclusively for Punjab. First, he flew to Ahmedabad the riot torn city of Gujarat. In the afternoon, the Prime Minister reached Hussainiwala on the Indo-Pak border in the Ferozepur district of Punjab. The Prime Minister spent the evening addressing the convocation of the Lucknow university. Obviously, it was a tight schedule.

But the Prime Minister's first visit to the troubled state of Punjab was a great disappointment for the people. Said a senior moderate Akali leader who did not wish to be named, "Rajiv Gandhi disillusioned Punjab on his first visit. Everyone had great expectations that he would make an important announcement. But he said nothing." To be frank, even Akalis were frustrated by the manner in which Rajiv Gandhi virtually skipped the political issue involved in the Punjab tangle in his Hussainiwala speech. Even the ruling party leaders in Punjab had been very optimistic about the Prime Minister taking a big step in the direction of restoring normalcy in Punjab during his first visit to the state. Commented a senior state Congress(I) leader who would not like to be identified for obvious reasons, "It appears that Rajiv Gandhi is in no great hurry to solve the Punjab tangle. He wants to take his own time. We all were hoping that he might announce an unilateral decision because a delay in resolving the Punjab problem can be more dangerous."

Hussainiwala is the placewhere 54 years ago three Indian martyrs—Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev—were cremated on the banks of the river Ravi after their bodies were brought by the British from the Lahore jail where they were hanged in the early hours of the morning of 23 March. Every year on this date, a *Shahidi Mela* is organised in the memory of Bhagat Singh and his other revolutionary colleagues. Thus the Prime Minister chose a good occasion to visit Punjab. Earlier it was the new Punjab Governor Arjun Singh who was to lay the foundation stone of the memorial at the *Samadhis* of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. But the programme changed two days before the function was to take place when Arjun Singh visited the capital. The Prime Minister and not the Punjab Governor would lay the foundation stone at Hussainiwala.

It was the exceptionally tight security arrangements at the venue which dampened the spirit of the people who had assembled at the *Shahidi Mela*. Said an elderly man, "The number of people present at Rajiv Gandhi's meeting this year was far less than the crowd in the previous years. Not that Rajiv Gandhi is not popular but the fact is that the simple village folks of Punjab are not used to being frisked and made to face a metal detector. Hence, they did not come in large numbers this time."



Rajiv Gandhi: brief speech

The venue of the public meeting at Hussainiwala looked more like a camp of the security forces. Top official sources disclosed that nearly 10,000 policemen were deployed at Hussainiwala at the venue of the meeting.

The Prime Minister was nearly two hours behind schedule when he arrived at Hussainiwala in a helicopter. Clad in a spotless white *kurta*, Mr Gandhi was also wearing a bullet-proof jacket. Immediately after alighting from the helicopter, the PM entered an Ambassador car and drove to the *samadhis* of the three Indian martyrs. A Sikh was driving the Prime Minister's car. Rajiv Gandhi in his usual style sat with the driver on the front seat and kept waving at the cheering crowds.

Other central leaders barring only Arun Singh were trying to keep pace with the PM. Arun Singh could be seen walking ahead after he got down from the car. The PM made a very brief speech. He spoke in Hindi for 14 minutes. He began with a tribute to Bhagat Singh. Said he, "Bhagat Singh raised the voice on India's freedom but he was not alone from Punjab." There were 50 journalists who were covering the PM's first Punjab visit. The PM came close to discussing the Punjab tangle. He said, "Today there are problems in Punjab. There are difficulties. We want to remove them. The problems are both economic and political but I will not dwell on the political problems of Punjab here." That was the end of the PM's speech. Bemoaned an Associated Press (AP) correspondent who had come from Delhi to cover the PM's visit, "The moment he said he would not discuss the political problems, I realised there was no story for me. Imagine I had come all the way from Delhi in the hope that he would make some announcement."

The latter part of Rajiv Gandhi's speech consisted of those routine type of "promises" which his mother also always used to make. An integrated railway coach factory in Punjab, work on the Thein dam would be expedited and a zonal cultural centre to be set up in Punjab for the entire northern India. In order to woo the Punjab farmers, the Prime Minister announced, "We are also thinking of giving you bonus on wheat." Of course, the Prime Minister's remark received loud applause from the crowd. But then the people present at the public meeting had assembled to hear Rajiv Gandhi speak on the Anandpur Sahib resolution, the Akali demands including the return of Chandigarh to Punjab and of course, a judicial probe into the Delhi riots. He did not repeat not even touch the subjects.

After 35 minutes, Rajiv Gandhi left Hussainiwala. Remarked Balbir Singh, a farmer from Nanakpura, a nearby Ferozepur village, who had come to attend Rajiv Gandhi's meeting "To be frank I had come to see the *mela*. I did not understand what he said. His speech was beyond my understanding."

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

Lost: In Delhi Found: In the USA

Russian diplomat Igor Gueja's defection to the USA is announced more than a week after he disappeared from Delhi

Such events normally end up in defection—specially when someone from the Soviet bloc is concerned. While the Delhi police was still busy refuting all defection theories and the Soviets making out a case of abduction, Igor Gueja, third secretary in the formation office of the USSR in New Delhi was happily in the United States, ending formalities to begin a new life. He had not been abducted: he was the one that got away. One of the pleas taken by the police to discount the defection angle was that an announcement to that effect would not have taken such a long time in coming. But Igor Gueja's case, it seems, was slightly special.

The announcement of his surfacing in the United States and requesting for political asylum, when it was made by the ministry of external affairs, was immediately drowned in a downpour of "no comments" from all sides. The external affairs ministry had said that the Soviet ambassador in India V.N. Rykov had met the foreign secretary, Romesh Bhandari, on 23 March and told him that the Soviets had reason to believe that Gueja was already in the United States and had been granted political asylum there. The United States embassy in New Delhi however kept mum on the entire affair, saying nothing more than "no comment." The Soviet side confounded matters by giving contradictory statements on the defection. When contacted by SUNDAY on 24 March, the day the defection was announced, Sergei (he refused to give his full name) at the Soviet department of information said that ambassador Rykov had not met the Indian foreign secretary on the matter. Later, in a telephonic conversation, Soviet ambassador Rykov himself declined to comment on the matter saying, "We are not supposed to tell anything about our meeting with the Indian external affairs ministry to the press." Neither was he prepared to say anything about Gueja's reported defection. The external affairs ministry, nonetheless, categorically confirmed that the Soviet ambassador had met Romesh Bhandari and told him of Gueja's defection.



Igor Gueja

Indeed, there are indications that the Soviets came to know of Gueja's flight to the United States much before the announcement was made in New Delhi. Perhaps the strongest pointer towards that was the departure of Gueja's wife and 10-year-old daughter to Moscow on 23 March. They left by the evening Aeroflot flight along with the body of the slain Soviet diplomat V. Khutichenko. On being asked why she left the country, Sergei at the information department said with a shrug, "What would she have done here? We have an employment programme in Moscow, she can find herself a job there."

The announcement of the defection of Igor Gueja to the United States came exactly one week after the diplomat had been declared missing. The missing report was filed by the first secretary of the Soviet embassy, G. Golkoskyyi late in the evening of 17 March. The report was filed at the Tughlaq Road police station 12 hours after Gueja was last seen at the Lodi Gardens where he had gone for his morning stroll, as was his daily routine. It described Gueja as a slightly built man with wheatish complexion, wearing white shorts and a shirt at the time of his disappearance.

The police immediately launched a massive hunt for the missing diplomat. The large posse of policemen which was present at the India International Centre that evening to ensure the security of the Prime Minister who was to attend a function

The Importance of Igor Gueja

What does Igor Gueja's loss mean to the Soviet Union? Apparently a lot, if diplomatic circles in New Delhi are to be believed. He was not simply a third secretary in the information department of the USSR: he was much more. Western diplomatic sources say Igor Gueja was one of the men coordinating the work of all East Bloc establishments in India and a man worth a lot of information. The Soviets too, it seems, had of late realised the importance (or risks?) of keeping Gueja in Delhi and were planning to send him back to Moscow soon.

There are several indications to the effect that Igor Gueja was much more than he actually made himself out to be. Even after being in the country for about five years his name was not on the diplomatic list. What is more, despite his "low-down" status in USSR's diplomatic hierarchy in India, he was allowed an exceptional freedom of movement. Normally, the staff at the USSR mission requires prior permission to go out of the official premises: most of the time they go out in groups. But Igor Gueja, it seems, had been moving around quite freely and alone. Apparently he had the high security clearance which is given only to a select few.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

there, was diverted to the sprawling Lodi Gardens. The same evening the cabinet committee on political affairs discussed the incident and declared it to be a "possible case of defection." Officials of the Soviet embassy were tightlipped about any possibility of defection and insisted that the police comb the entire city to discover whether there had been any foulplay concerning Gueja. As a consequence, all exit points of the city were blocked and messages flashed to all police stations and a group of Afghan nationals who were holding a demonstration outside the India International Centre were interrogated. As many as a hundred constables were put on the job of tracing the diplomat

The police, however, drew a complete blank in the case and till the day Gueja's defection was announced, had made no headway in the matter They had, in fact, already discredited the possibility of defection since Gueja had not surfaced in any country even seven days after he had disappeared. Said a senior police official a day before the announcement that Gueja had been granted political asylum in the United States, "We have reached a deadend in the case. We have no clue about the diplomat's disappearance." The clearest indication that the police had ruled out the possibility of defection was that they had filed a case of abduction as late as 22 March, five days after the missing report had been filed.

The circumstances of the disappearance of Gueja and the sequence of events that led to the diplomat's defection are intriguing. First the circumstances under which he disappeared left several questions unanswered. How was Gueja in the habit of going for daily jogs alone when Soviet embassy officials have strict instructions not to move out of the office alone? Gueja obviously had security clearance from the embassy. How is it that the name of Gueja did not figure in the diplomatic list of the embassy even though he had been posted in India since 1979? Why did the Soviet officials report the diplomat's disappearance hours after they had discovered it themselves and why had they hampered the progress of the investigation by entering the car driven by Gueja to the Lodi Gardens and removing all personal belongings and papers of Gueja which were lying in the vehicle at that time?

Soviet embassy officials divulged very little information about Gueja and the nature of his assignment in the country to either the Delhi police or the external affairs ministry which would have helped them decide whether Gueja's case could be one of a possible defection. Since Gueja enjoyed diplomatic status the police were not permitted to search his residence at 25 Barakhamba road. The wife of the diplomat, Natasha, was questioned by a policewoman but the questioning did not provide the police with any leads.

Very little is known either about

The Day of the Shoot-out

Is there a connection between the detection of Soviet diplomat, Igor Gueja and the assassination of Soviet official V. Khitzichenko? Khitzichenko was shot dead in broad daylight only five days after he was declared missing and at a time when a massive hunt for him was in progress in the capital. The official, a second engineer in the council of economic affairs at the Soviet embassy would seem like an unlikely target for such an assassination. He had come to India only last year and was working as senior engineer in a Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) project (in the MIG division). He had a friendly disposition, was fond of sports and interacted freely with Indian officials in the embassy. Khitzichenko lived in the residences of the economic division of the embassy with his wife, Nina Alesevna, and his 14-year old son

Minutes before he was murdered, Khitzichenko, accompanied by his wife, had visited the Yashwant Place shopping centre, situated close to the embassy. The couple went to the shopping centre often and were well-known to several shop owners. On the day of the crime the couple visited a chemists shop in the market to purchase medicines for Khitzichenko and also ordered a leather coat at an adjoining shop. According to onlookers at the shopping centre, the couple left the shopping centre in their waiting Volga driven by their driver K. C. George. There was another embassy car in front and a Yezdi motorcycle followed the car as they drove towards the embassy.

There are three eye-witnesses to the crime, including a young girl, all of whom have wished to remain unidentified. By all accounts, Khitzichenko was gunned down with a 7.65 mm Jenko German machine-gun by the pillion rider on the Yezdi motorcycle. The description of the unidentified assailants could either fit Indian or Afghan nationals. The police are now checking lists of all Yezdi motorcycles in the capital and showing the eye-witnesses photographs of Afghan nationals settled in the capital who have had a notorious past. The police have not ruled out the possibility of the crime being committed by Sikh terrorists and have announced a red-alert in the capital to trace the assailants.

The Soviets and officials of their embassy are obviously rattled by the daring assassination of one of their men. Instructions have been issued to all embassy officials to minimise their movements and keep the embassy informed about their whereabouts. The Yashwant Place shopping complex, called a "Russian market," usually thronged with shoppers from the embassy, bears a deserted look. Security around the embassy was immediately tightened and members of the press rudely asked to contact the Delhi police about details of the assassination.

Minutes after the shoot-out, Soviet officials from the embassy took charge of affairs. They have not permitted the Delhi police to either question the deceased official's wife Nina or driver George. The post-mortem could not be conducted on the evening of the crime because of the absence of a Soviet doctor. The post-mortem was conducted the following morning by a panel of doctors of the Maulana Azad Medical College in the presence of a Soviet medical expert. Hours later, a special Aeroflot flight took off from the capital for Moscow with the body of the assassinated official. The Delhi police and the crime branch now have to establish the connection between the sensational murder and the mysterious disappearance of two Soviet embassy officials from the capital in quick succession.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

The Defection Which Embarrassed India

On 6 March 1967, a Russian woman walked into the American embassy in New Delhi and told the Marine guard that she was Stalin's daughter and wanted to go to the USA. The guard took her to an American official who looked at her passport and rushed to the American ambassador. The matter was referred to Washington. Shortly afterwards, the Russian woman was put on a plane to Switzerland, where the world's press was waiting for Svetlana Alliluyeva, Josef Stalin's favourite child.

The defection was sensational: Stalin's daughter was a big 'catch' for the Americans. There was an uproar in the Parliament in New Delhi but for the Indians, there could not have been anything more embarrassing. For the two months prior to Svetlana's defection she was the guest of Dinesh Singh who was minister of state in the ministry of external affairs. Moreover, Indo-Soviet relations were fairly good at the time and it was highly inconvenient for India to have the defection take place on Indian soil. In fact, shortly afterwards, the Indian government informed all missions that India would not allow defections or the granting of asylum.

Svetlana had come to New Delhi in January with the ashes of Brajesh Singh, her companion for the four years prior to his death. Brajesh Singh, whom she had met at an institute at a holiday resort in the Soviet Union was an uncle of Dinesh Singh. Svetlana was soon whisked off to Kalakankar in Uttar Pradesh (Brajesh Singh was the brother of the former ruler of Kalakankar) where she remained, practically incognito for two months: it was election time and she seemed fascinated by the entire electoral process.

Svetlana, who is said to be a rather emotional and impulsive woman, had wanted to remain in India but was told by the Dinesh Singh family that she ought to return home as she could always come back to India. Obviously, Stalin's daughter had security clearance for she was in possession of her own passport and moved about freely.

When Svetlana returned to Delhi from Kalakankar she shifted to the Soviet ambassador's residence. She was supposed to return to Moscow the following evening. In fact, she went shopping with the daughter of Mr T.N. Kaul, former envoy to Moscow, on the eve of her departure. It was during her second sojourn in New Delhi that she suddenly decided to defect to the United States. Until then she apparently kept talking about wanting to stay in India since she loved this country and indeed her keenness to stay on in India must have been fairly evident. Ram Manohar Lohia raised the issue in the Lok Sabha and wanted to know why Svetlana was not given asylum in this country: he had met her during her brief visit to Allahabad when she was returning from Kalakankar.

After Svetlana's defection, the Soviet ambassador to India was shortly transferred from New Delhi. The uproar in Parliament soon died down, but ever since then India has been ambivalent in its attitude towards people seeking asylum. It is reliably learnt that every year nearly half-a-dozen people from the East Bloc countries use India as an exit point when they want to defect.

There have been relatively few cases of diplomats from the East Bloc asking for asylum in India or defecting from here—but there have been mysterious disappearances. In the early Fifties the ambassador from Czechoslovakia defected from New Delhi; in the mid-Sixties there was a spectacular defection: over a dozen engineers and their families (they were working in a public sector undertaking in Ranchi) disappeared from a hotel in New Delhi and surfaced in Canada shortly thereafter, in 1962, a Russian sailor, Vladislav Tarasov, merely changed ships, and thereby countries, at the port in Calcutta: he went from a Soviet ship to an American ship. There have been a few cases in the Seventies in New Delhi. In the early Seventies a Russian working in the information office of the USSR walked out of Plaza cinema hall where he was seeing a night-show with a group of friends. He said he had a headache, but was never seen again. During the Emergency a daily from New Delhi carried a story about the defection of a second secretary in the USSR embassy who ran into the American embassy.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

Igor Gueja the man or the contacts he maintained in India. According to his colleagues at the information centre, he was quite an introvert. He, nevertheless, mixed easily with Indian officials at the information centre and often visited their homes. Gueja also spoke fluent English. According to official reports he was working in the information department and was involved with the publication of *Soviet Land*, a fortnightly published from the information centre. Gueja lived with his wife Natasha, ten-year-old daughter, Olga, and his elderly parents. He was to have been posted back to Moscow in a few weeks' time. When asked about the expected date of the diplomat's departure from the country, officials at the information centre said no official announcement about his transfer had been made and that Gueja could have received an extension in India if he had desired. Soviet embassy officials were unwilling to confirm the fact that Gueja had turned defector and had safely reached the USA. This in spite of the fact that it was the Soviet ambassador, V. N Rykov, who had personally informed the foreign secretary, Romesh Bhandari, that Gueja was either in the US embassy in Delhi or had reached a point outside the country. It was after this disclosure by the Soviet ambassador that the Indian government approached the American embassy and received a confirmation of the fact that Igor Gueja had been granted political asylum there.

It is not yet clear how Gueja obtained his passage from New Delhi to the United States and in which part of the United States he is now living. According to indications, Gueja had contacted the American embassy immediately after he left the Lodi Gardens and was taken away after a few hours. Since the police began their hunt for Gueja only late in the evening of 18 March, there was sufficient time for the diplomat to leave the city unchecked. Records at the Palam airport had no details of his departure, which lends credence to the possibility that Gueja could have travelled on a false name. According to police sources, Gueja could have flown to the United States from Kathmandu after going there from either Varanasi or Patna. Flights for Patna and Varanasi left Delhi after Gueja's disappearance that morning.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

ANALYSIS

A Lot of Boldness But a Bit of a Gamble

Ashok Lahiri of the Delhi School of Economics examines the central budget

Usually during budget time the questions that worry the public are of the nature of: 'Will the price of soap go up or not?' However, this time the concern and interest were far deeper than at other times. Rajiv Gandhi has been generating a lot of speculation about the future course of policies and action that his government would initiate ever since he came to power. His economic, social and political perceptions are different from those of our erstwhile Prime Ministers including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs Indira Gandhi. 'What new direction would the new government give to the country's economic policies?' is a question to which an answer was sought and it was meant to be provided by the budget.



V.P. Singh (right) arrives in Parliament to present the budget

Apart from other important reasons, a good deal of significance is attached to the budget as compared to the frequent pious pronouncements coming out of the officialdom at other times, this is one occasion when the government has to put its money where its mouth is. The government is a major actor in the economic scene of the nation—the central, state and union territories' governments together spend roughly 36 paise out of every rupee that is spent in this country—and the budget, presented before the Parliament, contains how the government spends and finances its money. There are limits to how much government policies and budgetary allocations can be changed over a year or two—there are on-going projects which have to be completed, there are wages and salaries of government employees which cannot be reduced, there is an administrative and legal machinery which cannot be changed overnight. However, given these constraints, the question that was being raised before the budget was: 'How different will it be?'

Direct Taxation

The budget for 1985-86 is indeed quite different from the earlier ones. The most drastic change has come in the area of direct taxation. Direct taxes comprise personal income tax, wealth tax, estate duties and corporate tax on business firms. The rates of all these taxes have been reduced across the board. It is of interest to note that it was Mrs Gandhi who had increased the marginal rate of personal income taxation on the highest slab from 82.5 per cent to 93.5 per cent in 1970. The exemption limit has been going up and the rates applicable to different categories of income groups have been gradually coming down over time—however, in one clean fell swoop the maximum rate has been brought down from roughly 62 per

cent to 50 per cent. Wealth tax, applying to the property of an individual, has been decreased. Estate duty, which used to apply to the property of a person after his death, has been abolished. Corporate taxes, which apply to the profits of companies, have been reduced by 5 per cent.

Direct taxes have two objectives : resource mobilisation and distributive justice. The government needs funds to finance its activities and taxes constitute one of its major sources of revenues. However, personal income tax, estate duty or wealth tax have never been a major source of income for the government. In the last year, for example, the total receipts from these three heads was a paltry sum of Rs 1932 crores compared to a total gross tax revenue of Rs 23702 crores. There are reasons to believe that widespread tax evasion is taking place in the country leading to accumulation of black money and the emergence of a parallel economy. Direct taxes, because of evasion, could not have been playing much of an egalitarian distributive role. A drastic reduction in the tax rates was necessary in view of the widening gulf between individual and social perspectives and the efficiency level of the administrative-legal machinery. Whether the tax payers would consider honesty to be a 'practical principle' in view of the reduced tax rates is the most important question for the next few years. The new government has displayed a lot of courage in admitting the deficiency of its tax administration and in its acceptance of social reality—it is indeed a bold departure from the heady days of populist radicalism.

Economic Climate

The budget is the major instrument through which the government tries to direct economic activity of the nation. The direction has to change from time to time depending on the economic climate and performance. Every year before the presentation of the budget, the ministry of finance circulates the Economic Survey summarising the economic situation, major developments and the problems and prospects.

The Economic Survey presented this year notes the satisfactory average growth rate of 5.2 per cent achieved by the economy during the Sixth Plan Period, the high level of foodgrains output of more than 150 million tonnes and adequate performance by the infrastructural sectors of energy and transport.

However, the government has also voiced its concern about three disturbing features. Firstly, manufacturing activity has behaved rather sluggishly. It is indeed very disconcerting to note that the manufacture of consumer non-durables marginally declined between March and September 1984. Secondly, the price situation has been one of a very fragile equilibrium—demand-supply imbalances in essential commodities such as pulses and edible oils have threatened price stability time and again with speculative action. Thirdly, the government has voiced its concern about the future of the country's balance of payments. Repayments for the SDR 3.9 billion borrowed from the IMF begin this year. Imports of petroleum could be curtailed in the past due to the spectacular rise in the domestic production of crude petroleum—production almost trebled from 10.5 million tonnes in 1984-85. This rate of growth in domestic production is unlikely to be sustained in the future and the balance of payments outlook is not very bright.

Whether the tax payers would consider honesty to be a 'practical principle' in view of the reduced tax rates is the most important question for the next few years. The new government has displayed a lot of courage in admitting the deficiency of its tax administration...

Government Policy Response

How has the new government responded to these developments? The government feels that reduction of costs and improvement in the competitiveness of our industry hold the key to success. It has brought in a series of deregulations such as delicencing, upward revision of asset limit for companies to come under the purview of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act, raising of the ceiling of investment in plant and machinery for the small scale sector. The rate of customs duty has been brought down on project imports, specified machinery used by leather and footwear industry, gem and jewellery industry, raw wool, automobile and computer components. All these measures, the government expects will reduce costs, increase competitiveness and efficiency of Indian industry. This is also expected to improve our export performance.

Why Indian industry has been performing sluggishly is a million dollar question. Inefficiency resulting from inappropriate choice of scale and technology, protection from internal and international competition, infrastructural constraints specially with respect to power, definitely has contributed a lot to the unsatisfactory performance. However, the demand problem has also played a major role in inhibiting industrial growth in India. Insufficient demand for the output of industry has been known to constrain growth in developed countries. However, in developing countries for a long time it was believed that given limited capacity of industry, demand could never fall short of maximum output that industry is capable of producing. There has been some revision of opinion of economists on this score but the government neither in its Economic Survey nor in its budget has given full recognition to this problem. We shall have more about this aspect later.

In the last thirty four years of planning in India, the government has mobilised resources and channelled them into various sectors according to its plan priorities. Between 1950-51 and 1984-85, the total expenditure of the central government has gone up by more than 80 times. In the last five years, on the average total expenditure of the government has gone up at the rate of 18 per cent per annum. The budget this time is the first one for the Seventh Plan and interestingly enough the government is planning for a less than 10 per cent rise in its total disbursements. Given the resource constraints faced by the government in the financing of its Seventh Plan—which is reported to be of the order of Rs 40,000 crores—this budget, which does not try to meet the plan outlays stipulated in the Seventh Plan cannot but entail the following two implications: the government is going to revise its Seventh Plan and it is going to bring about a major change in its previous economic strategy of reaching the commanding heights of the economy. It is not quite clear whether *Yojana Bhavan* feels that the optimum height has already been reached or that it has run out of ideas as to how to mobilise additional resources to go higher up.

Growth of tax revenue has been tardy and barely kept pace with the growth of national income and non-developmental expenditure. This creates a problem of financing de-

velopment expenditure on an increasing scale over time. Expenditure on account of fertilizer and food subsidy, defence and general administration take away a large chunk of the government's revenue. It is not easy to curtail such expenditure just as it is not easy to augment tax revenues from better tax administration Not that there are a lot of ideas floating around about how to get over the resource constraint—however, the government also seems to have thrown its hands up in despair and harped on mobilisation of additional resources through improved working of public sector undertakings and increased contributions from them

The budgeted capital disbursements that is expenditure on acquisition of assets like land, buildings and machinery--in the current year is marginally lower than the actual expenditure incurred last year However, in terms of allocation the emphasis seems to have undergone a change The area of water and power development has been accorded top priority and the allocation has been doubled. This has been achieved mainly at the cost of a reduction in the allocation to telecommunications, industry and minerals Irrigation is perhaps the most crucial requirement of Indian agriculture and this emphasis of the current budget is well conceived

Prices

What has attracted a lot of attention in this budget is the 'uncovered deficit' of Rs 3349 crores The budgeted deficit—which is the gap between estimated expenditure and receipts--is substantially higher than in the previous years. Isn't this budgeted figure too high? Will not the actual deficit be a couple of times higher than the budgeted figure? And when this deficit is indeed covered by additional supply of money will this not lead to inflation? These are questions that worry a lot of people

The association between budgeted deficit and either money supply or prices is a rather complicated one. Firstly, the actual deficit can be different from the budgeted deficit due to unforeseen changes in receipts or expenditures. Secondly, money supply depends on a whole host of factors rather than the deficit in general and on the foreign exchange reserves in particular Nevertheless there is undoubtedly a reason for concern—money supply can indeed grow at a very high rate in the current year unless our imports surpass exports in a drastic way leading to a fall in foreign exchange reserves or severe contractionary measures are initiated in the field of monetary policy. A high growth of money supply can lead to inflation if the rate of growth of output is not large enough.

The international price of petroleum has not gone up in recent times in terms of US dollars. However, the rupee has been depreciating *vis-a-vis* the dollar. Consequently, the government has raised the domestic price of petroleum by as much as 14½ per cent. In the railway budget, the freight rates and fares have been revised upward The higher transportation cost in the economy as a result of these two measures is bound to get reflected in a rise in the level of product prices.

How prices will behave in the economy over the next twelve months depends on the future performance of agriculture and foreign trade and the monetary policy stance of the Reserve Bank of India It will be very gratifying if the inflation rate in the current year does not go well above the rates that have prevailed in the recent past and assume a two digit figure.

The budget is a bold experiment...It contains clear admission of the government about its inability to implement the tax rules that it had inherited from the past. It admits that the government has run out of ideas regarding resource mobilisation. It announces in no uncertain terms that it is unwilling to continue with the old industrial policy framework.

A Bold Experiment

The current budget is a bold experiment If there is one thing that it does not lack it is courage. It contains clear admission of the government about its inability to implement the tax rules that it had inherited from the past. It admits that the government has run out of ideas about resource mobilisation. It announces in no uncertain terms that it is unwilling to continue with the old industrial policy framework. According to the finance minister: "We must now aim at reducing costs and prices and improve the competitiveness of our industry. This process calls for structural changes in the economy and will entail some costs which we should be prepared to pay."

Indian industry has been carefully nurtured by the government in the post-independence period. The government has created the infrastructural facilities, laid out the foundations for core and basic industries, protected it from foreign as well as internal competition, and created an investment climate by a vigorous and sustained programme of public investment. If it slowly withdraws now, will the private sector successfully fend for itself and drive the economy along a satisfactory growth path?

The answer to the above question is not known *a priori*. The demand problem will arise unless private investment displays a lot of buoyant dynamism. It has been our past experience that public investment sets the pace for private investment in the economy. The base of entrepreneurship has grown and the structure of industry has diversified enormously in the last three decades. Nevertheless the growth performance of the private sector has not been glorious enough to repose our complete faith in its leadership.

Investment depends on capital market conditions like the rate of interest, availability of credit, input price and the future market conditions. Since investment fructifies in the future, our assessment of the future is crucial in determining how much we shall invest. Perhaps since the future is soo vague and uncertain, probabilistic calculations of the future profitability of investment outlays are not very meaningful and investment ultimately depends on innate characteristics of the entrepreneurs--on things like creative urge, dynamic optimism—characteristics which have been summed up by the delightful phrase 'animal spirits' by the economist's economist John Maynard Keynes. From this budget it seems that the present government has placed a heavy reliance on the 'animal spirits' of the Indian private entrepreneur.

As far as the public sector goes, the thrust of government policy is towards improvement in efficiency and increases in surpluses. Not much structural change has taken place in the running of public sector undertakings so far—however, the computers are coming and we have to wait for some more time to see what the government has up its sleeve!

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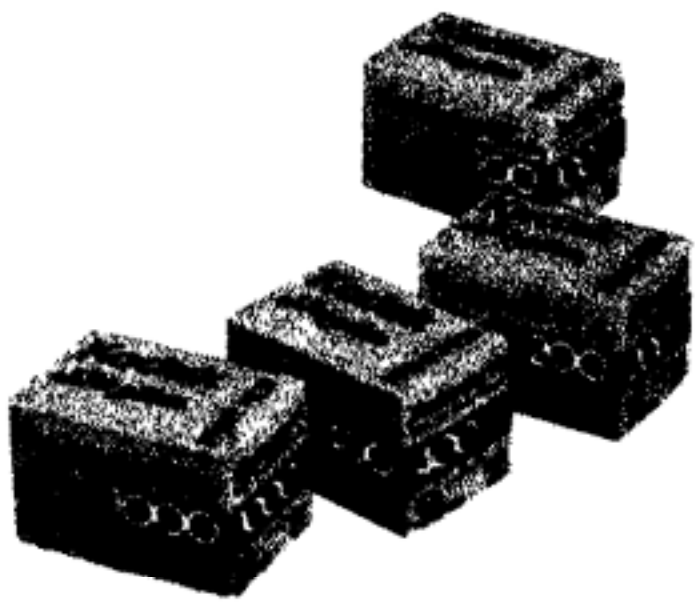
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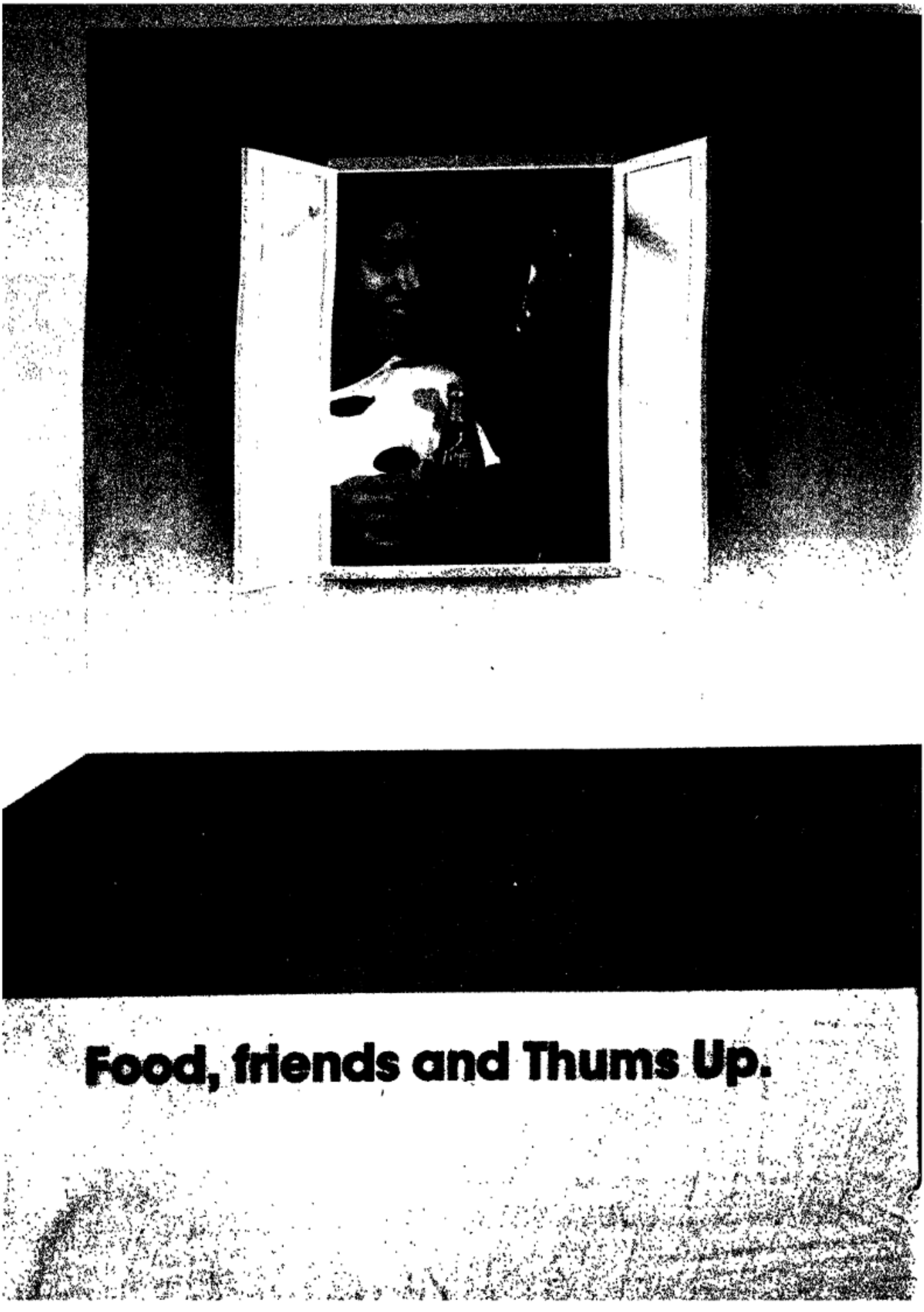
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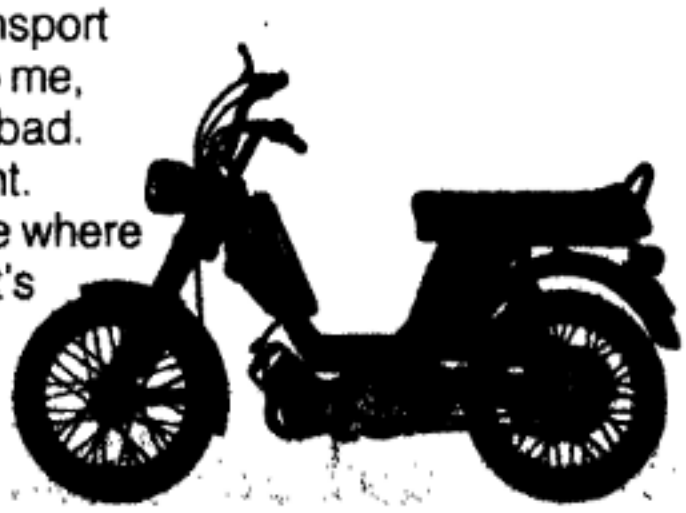


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Are Teachers Destroying Secondary Education in UP?

Education in UP is a victim of three evils: a lack of funds, a lack of sincerity and a lack of morals

Education in Uttar Pradesh is in a sordid mess: official neglect, apathy, mismanagement and indifference have turned books, classes and examinations into a cruel joke on thousands of students who stumble out of school and college every year to swell the ranks of the unemployed. For most of them, education has been a colossal waste, the only lesson it has taught them is that hard work never pays; money does. Those who can afford it, bribe their way through examinations or just 'buy' their degrees. Government-aided institutions are shamefully run, thanks to a chronic shortage of funds. And while the government boasts of a phenomenal enrolment of one crore in primary schools all over the state, most of the children drop out after the first year, even if they go to school at all. enrolment between classes II and V thus falls to 45 per cent of the enrolment in class I. Despite this, hardly anything is spent on improving educational facilities.

For a state with a literacy of 27.38 per cent (well below the national average of 36.2 per cent) and a female literacy of 14.42 per cent, the fourth lowest for any Indian state (according to UNICEF's situation report on children in India, "In UP and Bihar, 87 women out of 100 cannot with understanding both read and write a simple sentence on their everyday life. The lack of education of women limits their awareness of the benefits of learning for their children") this is shocking. But who is to blame for all this, the government, teachers, parents, proprietors of schools and colleges, or all four? The state education department has not even bothered to look into the cause of the malaise; in the confusion, each of the four pillars of the system is blaming the others for its own selfish reasons. Not surprisingly, the symptoms are being mistaken for the cause: the recent campaign against the lakh strong statewide Madhyamik Shikshak Sangh was the latest in a series of attempts by the managers of privately-run schools to blame teachers for the ills of the education system. The reason, the Sangh has long been agitating for the abolition of the private managerial system of education, and its trade union activities have been a thorn in the flesh of the school-proprietors. The latter are all the more peeved because the teachers have a strong legislative lobby—the Sangh claims it had only 25 representatives in the earlier House, 16 MLCs and the rest MLAs, while the managers say they had 50 MLAs and MLCs—that pre-empts all adverse legislation, and ensures that their interests are never harmed.

It was during the time that campaigning was going on for the recent parliamentary and Assembly elections, in which a number of teachers and teacher-legislators had contested, that the Sangh came under severe attack from the Uttar Pradesh Parents' Association (UPPA). The association brought out large newspaper advertisements announcing "the 31 per cent result of the UP Board High School Examination of 1984, out of which about 28 per cent students passed in the third division and that too in most cases with mass copying, cheating and other unfair practices" and listed the results of 20 Lucknow schools which were the worst affected "by the trade union activities and politics of the Madhyamik Shikshak Sangh teachers." The schools with the worst results were Lucknow Inter College, where 85 students took the examination, and 84 failed, Rashtriya Uchtar Madhyamik High School, where 152 appeared and 144 failed, the Railway High School, Charbagh, where 52 appeared and 49 failed; Yogeshwar Rishikul Inter College, where 135 appeared and 126 failed; Technical Higher Secondary School, Vijaya Nagar, where 53 appeared and 49 failed, Harish Chandra Inter College, Sadar Bazar, where 157 appeared and 144 failed, and the Kumhrawan Higher Secondary School where 146 appeared and 133 failed. With the legend "Do not involve teachers in active politics" written above, the advertisement cited "involvement in politics, and worst kind of trade union activities, leading to frequent strikes, pickets, demonstrations, and indiscipline at educational institutions" as the major reason for the fall in the standard and quality of education in Uttar Pradesh.

"To prevent further deterioration in the results of secondary schools and to depoliticise educational in-



The Lucknow Arts College

stitutions," the advertisement went on, "we kindly request your honours (it was addressed to the PM and leaders of major opposition parties) not to give party tickets in the forthcoming Assembly elections to teachers of government-aided schools and colleges who are drawing their salaries and all benefits from the state exchequer and who are appointed and whose services are now governed by the UP Government Education Service Commission, and who are disqualified to stand for election in view of the Supreme Court judgement in the Bihari Lal Dobray case decided on 23 November 1983 as per Article 191(I)(a) of the Constitution of India for holding office of profit under the state government." The advertisement warned that if any party fielded teacher-candidates in the elections, the UPPA would be forced to get their nominations withdrawn by filing objections under Article 191(I)(a) before the returning officers, as it did in the case of 15 teachers whose papers were rejected. The UPPA complained that a ticket to one teacher meant that teachers from "20 other schools in the adjoining districts get involved in the election campaign to ensure their companion's victory." This would paralyse all schools and since the board examinations were next scheduled for March 20, 1985, and not even "ten per cent" of the syllabus had been completed, this would be disastrous.

The advertisement had its impact Parties were wary of giving tickets to teachers, but even so, a number of teachers did get tickets. Some were elected, even made ministers However, the UPPA did manage to get a number of nomination papers of teachers rejected The media campaign also created strong public opinion against the Sangh, a large number of people wrote letters to the editors of local dailies criticising its activities and blaming it squarely for the poor results.

According to spokesmen for the UPPA, a major educational obstacle would be overcome if teachers are not allowed to contest elections because as legislators they throw their weight about, bully school inspectors and board officials, and get away with anything Under the law, a teacher, unless he has submitted his resignation and duly handed over charge to his successor as per the rules governing his service, cannot stand for an election. Article 191(I)(a) of the Constitution says, "A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a state if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State specified in the First Schedule, other than an office declared by the Legislature of the State by law not to disqualify its holder..." In each election a number of teachers manage to circumvent these provisions by saying that they have 'resigned' their jobs; the point is even if they have resigned, they have not done so three months before submitting their nominations to the returning officers or duly handing over charge, which is the legal requirement.

Another allegation against teachers in government-aided institutions is that they hardly ever teach. An example is the K.K. College, Unnao, which barely has 70 teaching days in a year. Gazetted and local holidays in the college add up to 34 days, the summer vacation (May 20 to July 7) is for 48 days, there are 50 Sundays, 44 days of casual, sick and other leave availed of by teachers, 66 days of board and home examinations, ten days of terminal examinations, 37 days of admission work in July and August, and six days of children's rallies and special holidays. The total number of days lost is 295, which leaves just 70 teaching days a year. Even on a teaching day, teachers hold classes for five hours and 20 minutes, while other public servants work for seven hours a day



Protest by Lucknow students

Perhaps because of the tremendous influence they have all along had in the government and Legislature (among the teachers in the present UP cabinet is Mrs Swaroop Kumari Bakshi; the earlier cabinet had Dr Ammar Rizvi and Ram Singh Saini), teachers in Uttar Pradesh are a pampered lot. In fact, as one school-owner in Lucknow referred to them, they are "government servants in all respects but two, that they cannot be punished and they cannot be transferred."

A number of Sangh teachers are also members of the UP High School and Intermediate Board, which has repeatedly come under criticism from parents and students. Among the various irregularities the Sangh members are alleged to commit are misleading students by publishing guess papers, hampering the conduct of examinations, encouraging mass copying in examinations, determining and changing examination centres at will, withholding results of students to settle personal disputes with them, issuing fake marksheets in exchange for huge sums of money, declaring results of students who have paid bribes, and delaying results. Often, it is only after they have taken the matter to court that students have got justice: the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on 28 July 1984 ordered the UP Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad to pay punitive compensation of Rs 200 to each of the 32 City Montessori school students and other students whose UP board high school examination results of 1983 were illegally witheld.

At a primary level, Mr Chaturvedi said, the problem is basically an arithmetical one "Without money it cannot be done. No wonder there is such a mushroom growth of private KG schools." The existing primary schools in villages have no equipment, no buildings, are housed in dilapidated structures; in many cases the buildings have been abandoned and classes are held under a tree. "We are satisfied with mere numbers. If there are one lakh primary schools, it is considered an achievement," Mr Chaturvedi said. Often the teacher student ratio in a primary school was 1:40 or 1:50. As for high schools, Mr Chaturvedi said, those receiving government aid were bound to deposit 85 per cent of the fees collected from arts students, and 80 per cent of the fees collected from science students with the government. This leaves very little to spend on running a school or college, let alone improving or maintaining facilities. "I am myself associated with an intermediate college. About four years back I wrote to the education secretary to increase the share of managements of schools and colleges. Fifteen per cent is inadequate. But the government will not raise the

fees. My argument is why shouldn't fees be raised when there has been so much inflation over the years? Schools and colleges cannot be expected to provide better teaching facilities with so little money. The quality of teaching is poor, hence the poor results." Adult education, too, faces a problem of finances: imposing a fee is the best way to educate an adult, Mr Chaturvedi said. "The adult must feel he is spending money on something he should get out of the teacher." He also suggested a code of conduct for teachers in schools and colleges to ensure that they discharge their duties and abide by rules.

Mr Mandhata Singh, MLC, and leader of the UP Madhyamik Shikshak Sangh defended the practice of teachers standing for election without quitting their jobs ("how can you call a legislator's income a salary?"). He said that the UPPA was a bogus body, unrepresentative of parents; all it stood for was the interests of a string of privately-managed schools which the Sangh had been struggling against "This is being done to eradicate corruption, exploitation, nepotism, favouritism and sectarian ideas like casteism and communalism in the field of education .. Fake organisations like the School Managers Association and UPPA do not represent anybody except a few people who have commercialised education by charging exorbitant fees (City Montessori, he said, charges Rs 200 a month from pupils from classes I to X), and in addition extort money from every child in the name of organising various functions. There is a chain of Montessori schools in Lucknow whose net profit is about Rs six lakhs a month. And the management of the institution publicly announces through the columns of newspapers that it is not prepared to abide by the rules and regulations framed by the state government, like the Salaries Distribution Act and Intermediate Education Act."

But does his organisation own responsibility for the poor results? No. "This has its own deep-rooted reason. Lakhs of students at the higher secondary stage are being taught compulsory sciences, mathematics, social sciences and moral and physical education, etc., for the last three years under the ten plus two scheme, without a single post being created to teach these subjects. Science is taught without science labs and the teacher-pupil ratio, instead of 1:40 has now touched 1:150." Mr Singh said it was "shameful to note that an agreement reached between the Sangh and state government on 16 March 1984 concerning curbs on managements who refuse to abide by the provisions of law is yet to be implemented" and "let not anyone think that it had anything to do with the emoluments of teachers."

Mr Singh denied holding a brief for delinquent teachers but said that they were more an exception than the rule. Asked about an assault by a teacher-legislator on a district inspector of schools in Azamgarh last year, Mr Singh said, "The DIOS in question has to his credit lengthy charges against him submitted in black and white to the CM and this document runs into several pages, listing more than 40 charges of corrupt behaviour." He even agreed that the DIOS was assaulted; what he never said was how an assault on a government official by a teacher-legislator could possibly be justified.

Clearly, education in Uttar Pradesh is a victim of three great evils: a lack of funds, a lack of sincerity and a lack of morals.

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow



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The Varadarajan Tapes

A tape-recorded conversation reveals the collusion between the police and the city's underworld don, Varadarajan Mudaliar

In Bombay a different kind of star war is on As one of the bastions of the underworld empire crumbles from the onslaught of the counterforces, represented by the law, it drags a section of this force which collaborated with it, deeper into the mire. It started on the night of 23 February, when two senior inspectors of police, S L Deshmukh and I. J. Samson, from Matunga and Antop Hill police stations, went to meet Varadarajan Mudaliar, don of Sion-Koliwada and one of the leading lights of Bombay's underworld

The meeting was unfortunate for the policemen. Tapes of their conversation reached every newspaper in town—and some outside Forty minutes of taped conversation revealed the collusion of the city's law-enforcing agency with the underworld. The immediate purpose of the meeting: to reach an out-of-court settlement on cases filed by the don's lieutenants on zonal DCP, Y. C. Pawar.

Along with the tapes which crucified Deshmukh and Samson, who have been suspended since, came an unsigned letter from a reporter, who refused to identify himself for fear of the underworld, claiming that he had taped the conversation. Whether the tapes were planted by the don or not, they have created panic in Bombay's police force How many more heads would roll with the fall of the don is the question which is now being asked. The fear is not unfounded, because the don's henchmen have spread the word that more cassettes of taped conversation with even senior police officers are available with them. For police commissioner Ribeiro, the cassettes are a good opportunity to weed out the elements in his force who have unsavoury links with the underworld.

In the background of the Mafia's answer to Watergate, is the situation prevailing in this well-established network, in the Sion-Koliwada-Matunga belt. It is not merely dissent that has soured unity. It is learnt that a section of the gang has actually broken away. Discontent was brewing in the camp for some time among the Devendrans and Nadars who had been brought to the city from Tamil Nadu Recently a section parted with the don, under the leadership of his erstwhile right-hand man, Parameshwarbhai More than the empire breaking up, his waning power was demonstrated in the recent elections, where the man he campaigned against, Dr V Subramaniam, won from Matunga Subramaniam had earlier appealed to the police for protection from the underworld. This means that his vote banks are no longer delivering the goods, indicating that he is losing his grip on the slumlords, who control the voting in the slum areas under them.

After the suspensions of Samson and Deshmukh, Inspector Kumbhar and one or two others who were asked to replace them, refused. Kumbhar had a valid excuse: he had just fled to the safety of the crime branch from Antop Hill police station after supervising some of the clean-up operations in the area Most of the mess which got cleaned up naturally concerned the don, who controls a sprawling illicit liquor network, a flesh trade run by a eunuch and a chain of video parlours showing blue films in the area. This, in addition to controlling the retail outlets for stolen goods from the docks, where a well-organised Mafia supervised by him was making Rs 40 crores annually till it was smashed last year. The others are fighting shy of these two key police stations, either from fear of getting involved in the mess or having their past links exposed.



Varadarajan

The man representing the law and cynosure of the drama, DCP Y. C. Pawar, was transferred to the zone in 1983. It was only then that the city's most firmly-entrenched criminal bastion received its first shake. Earlier, most policemen from the DCP down to sub-inspectors posted in the police stations in the don's "jurisdiction," were bought over by him. Pawar's intransigence has cost him dearly. When efforts to politically pressurise the concerned authorities to transfer him from the zone failed, four criminal cases were filed against him by the don's henchmen in the Kurla court. In April last year, the Mafia also demanded his suspension in view of these cases pending against him, comparing Pawar to DCP Virk of Pune, who was suspended on the basis of a criminal case against him.

This system of functioning makes the traditional threats and knife-in-the-back method of the Mafia seem ham-handed. Reporters who had the audacity to write about the ramifications of the network and its activities, were treated to varying forms of time-consuming harassment like legal notices and cases being filed against them, after which not many dared to overstep the mark.

In the annals of crime Varadarajan will probably be remembered as the man who brought sophistication into its functioning. An understanding of the power of the media and the legal machinery, the backing of politicians and the need for a public image untainted by a criminal record, helped him function. The best public image was his garb of a social worker: a role he played to perfection. Like his contemporary, Haji Mastan Mirza, he started from rags and worked his way to power and riches.

Sometime in the early Sixties, a big time liquor dealer called Chella Mathu established the illicit trade in the Sion-Koliwada area. Prohibition which was then in force, helped him prosper. He recruited his men from the Nadar and Devendran communities of Tamil Nadu. They were employed for their proficiency in distilling illicit liquor. Equipped with the tools of the trade, they

established themselves in Chunabatti, Mahim and Sion-Koliwada.

They had the knowhow and an ideal location for manufacture—in the surrounding creeks—but a lack of communication often got them into trouble. It was only when Chella Mathu picked up an enterprising youth named Varadarajan Mudaliar, that the liquor-brewers got a spokesman. Acting as a mediator for the community with the police, he was able to consolidate Chella Mathu's powers and cultivate the right connections. He finally became a man the law feared. The trilingual groups dominating the area soon came under his sway. Tamilian loyalties were buttressed by regional affiliations: the Malabaris came in with the induction of Khaja Thomas Kurien alias Khajabhai. But the Punjabis still had to be won over.

Local Punjabi tough, Tillu alias Dharshan Kumar Dhall, was recalcitrant. He was soon won over by methods which have now become legend. The local Matunga police were asked to expel him for indulging in anti-social activities Tillu had the brawn but no police contacts When his externment orders were cancelled after appeals to the home department, he fell in line. And with him swung Punjabi sympathies. The area was now centrally controlled and the empire was established.

Mohinder Singh Vig alias Soma rose from the ranks to become a senior deputy of the don One of his closest henchmen, Parameshwarbhai, who has now broken away, was brought to Koliwada from his ragpicking, extortion trade near Churchgate. Parameshwarbhai introduced Rajan Mahadeo Nair who operated from Tilak Nagar in Chembur. An auto-rickshaw union of over 1,200 members paid him protection moneya on monthly basis. His reign came to an abrupt end when he was gunned down in a shootout at the Esplanade Court in south bombay on 30 September 1983.

Khajabhai besides operating a fleet of 25 vehicles which transport liquor from Dharavi and Koliwada to various ports of the city, has a number of assets. These include the Zenith Restaurant in Koliwada (the joint strangely operated within 100m of a church, violating rules), Beijing Hotel, flats in Sardar Nagar and Matunga, distilleries at Khajawadi and Varajanagar, a rubber plantation at Kalladikode in Palghat and a palatial bungalow at Chandranagar. also in Palghat.

Soma, who was once detainedwith Khaja under the Slumlords and Bootleggers Dangerous Activities Act, has also found fortune in the city. A director of the Punjab and Sind Co-operative Bank, Soma is linked with a fleet of vehicles which are registered in the name of a mechanic, for whom he stood surety for the bank loan. Soma and Tillu, who runs a social welfare group, Jai Bhowani Mandal, on railway land, have both converted two-room residences into flats, by extending them into Maharashtra Housing Board land.

While the empire prospered with impunity, the counterforces and news media looked on silently. There were no criminal records, neither were there any proven offences against the don to write about. The don's henchmen, meanwhile, overstepped the limits and often had brushes with the law, but their problems were sorted out with the best legal aid available.

Fortune, however, did not smile for long. On 27 March 1983, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized contraband video cassettes and textiles worth Rs 46 lakhs at Dhamankhol in Raigad, where smuggling activities had been shifted to, after the police crackdown in suburban Bombay. The arrest of 18 persons including Ulhas Ghosalkar, editor of the *Ratnagiri Times* and the seizure of a van belonging to the Bombay Tamilar Pervai, founded by Varadarajan led the trail to the don. The residences of Khaja, Soma and Varadarajan were simultaneously raided by the DRI. Nearly a month later, Varadarajan was released on bail by the Ratnagiri magistrate while Khaja got a stay order from the Calcutta High Court. With the raid and the arrests, the don's link with crimes was established for the first time.

Though some instances established his powerful links, the citadel was shaking. This, coupled with a determined bid by the police to crush his fiefdom, has further shaken up the crumbling empire. Even officers who had once received his favours were used to raid and demolish his net work. For others on his once-favoured list, judgment day has come and it is anybody's guess when the don will be caught. Meanwhile, white-faced panic, heralded by the summary suspension of the two senior inspectors, has gripped the Bombay police.

Lekha Dhar, Bombay

The Dialogue

It could have been part of the sound track of Govind Nihalani's *Ardh Satya*. Varadarajan Mudaliar in conversation with senior inspectors S.L. Deshmukh and I.J. Samson of the Bombay police, sounds like Nihalani's don, Rama Shetty. Excerpts from the tape recorded conversation:

On the alleged attempt to reach an out-of-court settlement on the cases filed against DCP Pawar.

Inspector Deshmukh: We are conveying the message as directed.

Inspector Samson *(interrupts):* If you withdraw the cases against Pawar, he says he will get himself transferred by 8 or 9 March. (Later they caution him by saying that there is no guarantee that Pawar will not strike again, once the cases are withdrawn.)

Inspector Samson: He (Pawar) cannot be trusted. He is...*(uses an abusive term);* while he wants the cases against him withdrawn, he forces us to detain and harass you (Varadarajan).

Varadarajan: He had not agreed to meet me even for 15 minutes, despite the intervention of senior officers like Gupte (now retired).

Deshmukh: But now he is ready to meet you. Not in his office on your residence, but a third place.

Varadarajan: Yes, okay.

Deshmukh: *(cautioning him)* You can never tell. He might hit you, he is a ...*(abuses)*. If he raises his hand against you, break it.

Varadarajan*: (reacting angrily)* Tell him to get himself transferred first and then I will withdraw the cases against him.

Samson: He (Pawar) gets to know immediately if they (the reference here is to Tillu's *matka* activities) do something. He has his informers. He directs me to act, but I am not such a person. I told Pawar that I cannot hit anybody. I will do paper work, but not hit. I cannot drag you people to the police station. (Referring to Tillu's *matka*. Samson had earlier said that he had tried to inform them to stop after Pawar had questioned him about it.)

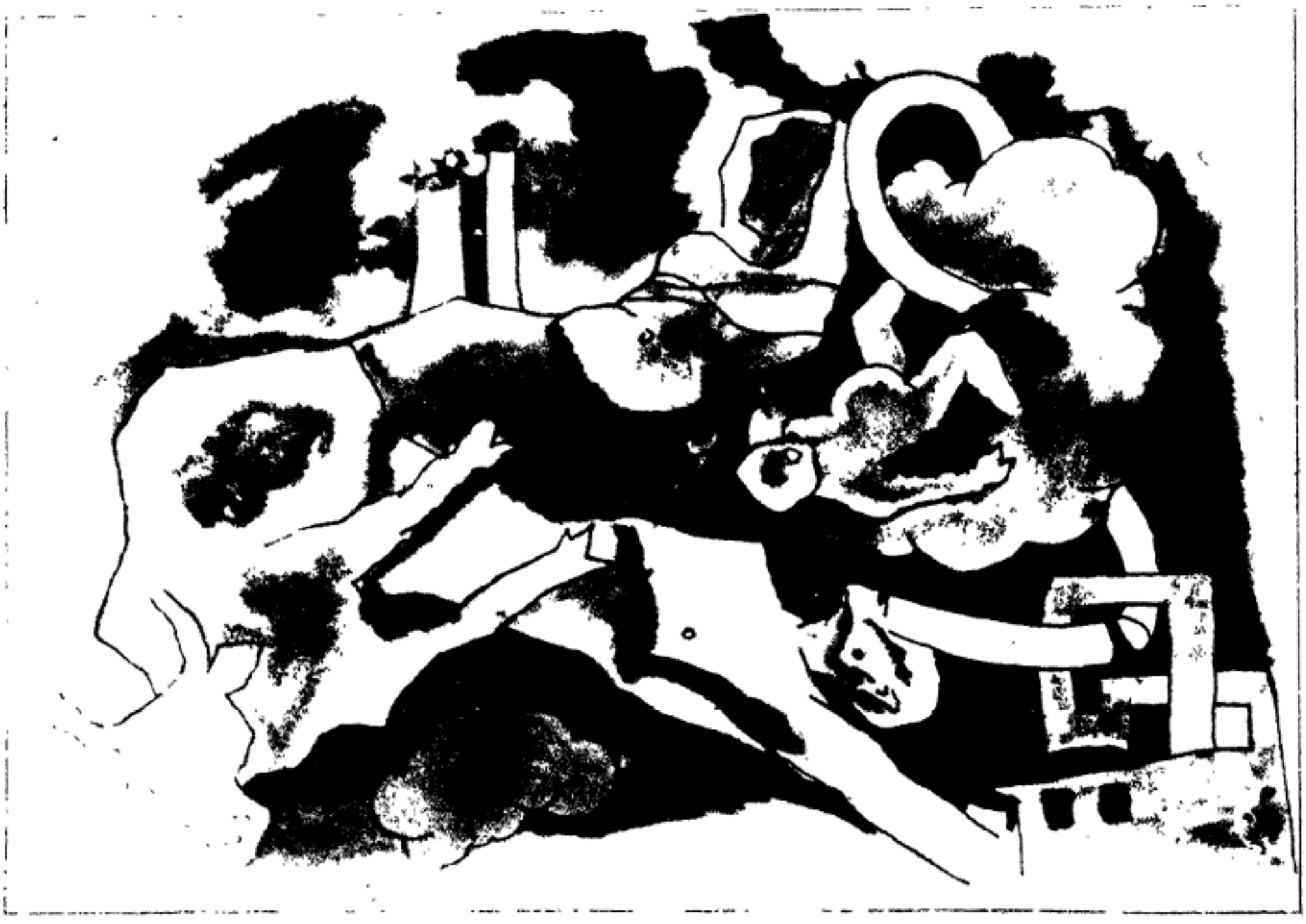
(In the course of the conversation names of other officers who had dropped by to see Varadarajan crop up. Names like Rambhau, Kamat and Gupta are mentioned, but no further indentification is given.)



Mrs Gandhi's assassination: 'Nobody has the right to kill anybody'

Husain: Maqbool and Fida

Assassinations is the theme of the artist 's latest exhibition, and the paintings have created a major stir. A look at the work and the extraordinary man with a brush in his hand, a twinkle in his eyes and a commitment in his heart.



***The Bhopal gas tragedy*:accusing society of its collective guilt**

No endorsement from the artist is needed to say that M. F. Husain's paintings, which were exhibited recently at the Tata Centre in Calcutta, have been an outcome of Mrs Gandhi's death. One can imagine the shock Husain, whose admiration of Mrs Gandhi borders this side of idolatry, must have suffered when she was assassinated. To withstand it what else could he do but give expression to his grief through his medium of painting?

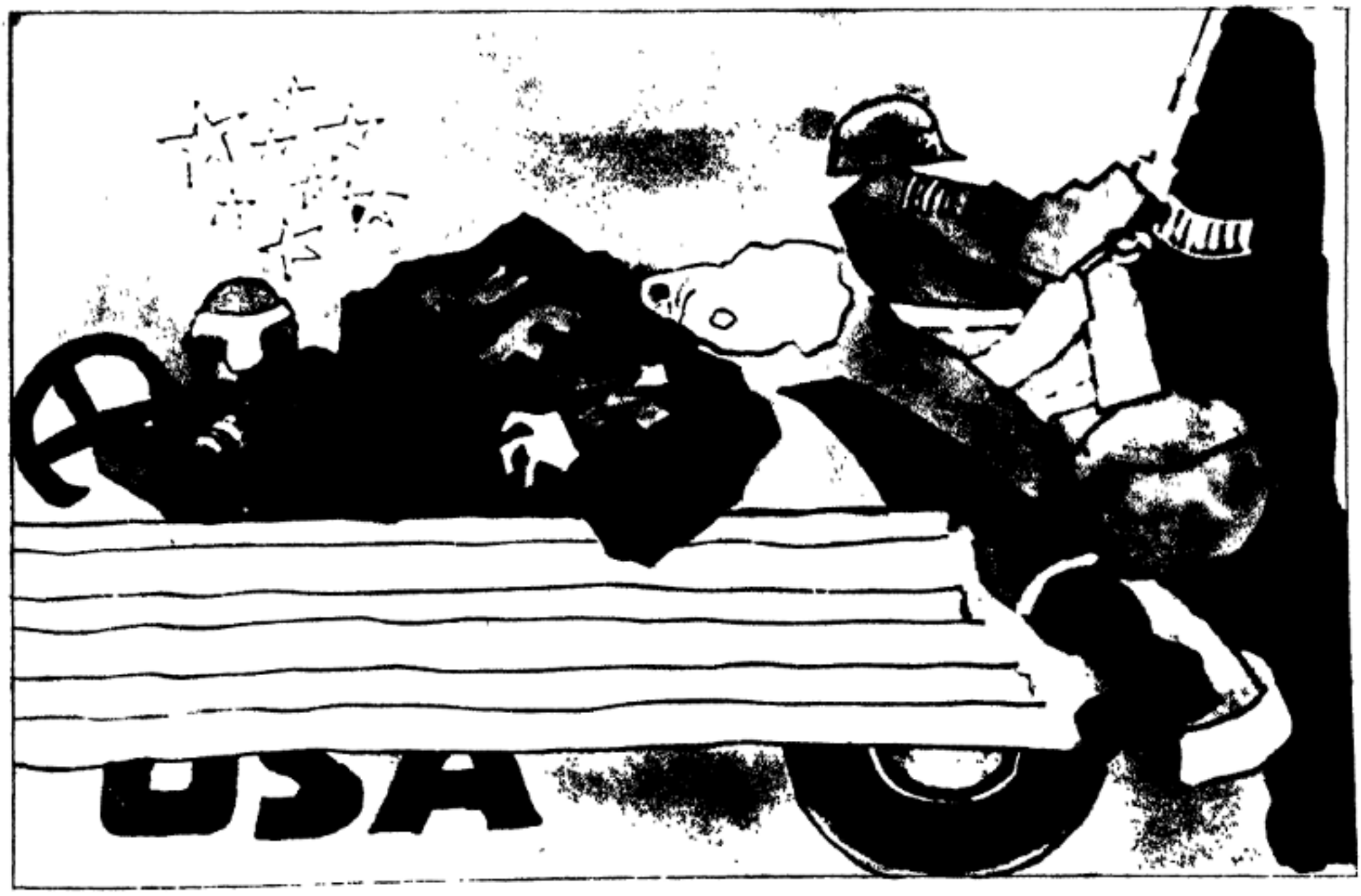
In doing so he has, inevitably perhaps, pondered over other leaders and heroes whose lives have been similarly cut short in this our violent century. The result is a series of paintings drawn on the sombre theme of assassination. Since he has mostly chosen—in fact all except two—political leaders as his subject, the theme becomes a statement with a political overtone. And coming as it does, from one who is regarded as the greatest living Indian painter, it assumes an importance which goes beyond questions of painterly qualities or artistic merit.

Husain has exhibited thematic series of paintings before. In the two exhibited in the past at the Tata Centre itself one was on Mother Teresa and the other entitled "From *Gitanjali* to *Pather Panchali*." The drawings in the first—collages in conception and composition—were depiction of saintly compassion and love. The second series was an artist's tribute to creativity. The paintings on assassination are wholly different in temper and inspiration from both. The immediacy of its relevance to our threatened and insecure existence deserves an appreciation from a wider circle of viewers than art critics and the cognoscenti.



M.F. Husain

A look at the persons Husain has portrayed in death or at the point of dying is revealing. Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Kennedy, Lumumba, Che Guevera, Allende, Mujibur Rahman, Trotsky: political leaders all, assassinated because of their beliefs, actions or preachings. But Husain's treatment of their martyrdom has no



The assassination of John F. Kennedy

political coloration, red or black, no analytical content of cause and consequence. The inclusion of Lorca and John Lennon in this gallery of martyrs underlines his disinterest in the nature and direction of the forces which the assassinated generated and which culminated in what Shaw described as a final and extreme form of censorship. They were heroes who gave some meaning to people's lives and received, in return, love, adoration, trust, hatred and enmity. Their assassination is a mortal wound inflicted not to an individual but to ideals, beliefs and faith. What I found striking, a little disconcerting even, is that while Husain suffers the wound and the pain there is no condemnation. The colours, the lines, the compositions are pulsating and yet unemphatic, even tranquil. Does he not, it seemed to me, want to shame us for the "foul and midnight murders?" Does he not want us to be horrified and in our horror be profoundly concerned and questioning? For so horrendous a theme as assassination of great men, the paintings were strangely calm, almost serene.

Husain is, of course, too great a painter to need the aid of abstraction or rhetoric to express his emotions however intense. I have seen and known how with only a few brush strokes he can light up hidden corners of the mind. But here the subject is too disturbing for easy acceptance of the economy he adopts, or the assurance he conveys in a white surface with two palm imprints and Tagore's words on C.R. Das's death to the effect that dying you gifted away your immortality. For, the dimension that violence has assumed in our times makes assassination a part of a process graver than the taking of an individual life however revered and precious.

This brings me to record another personal reaction. If Husain—as I presume has been the case—was shocked by Mrs Gandhi's assassination into stepping on to a road hitherto untrodden by him then the journey is not likely to end, nor the purgatory be over, with reckoning of the killing of the great and the noble.

Of the thirty-odd paintings in the exhibition, only three are on large canvases in which acrylics and strong hues have been used. One of them is not on the martyred eminent but on the asphyxiating and abrupt ending of lives of unknown men and dumb animals at Bhopal. It is a logical extension of the theme For, what happened at Bhopal was assassination, no less, of thousands of people And here only Husain, almost in spite of himself, evokes our sense of horror and accuses society of its collective guilt If his love and empathy for human beings and his adoration of life and joy have been overwhelmed by Bhopal, can he now shut recall of Auschwitz and Hiroshima?

R. B.

A Portrait of an Artist

For Husain the canvas is not enough

How do you define a man like M. F. Husain who walks out of his home, promising his children he will be back in half-an-hour after a cup of tea at the *dhabha* across the street (in Delhi) and returns more than a month later? He suddenly felt like going to Mahabalipuram and he did. Husain, the wandering—mostly barefoot—painter-poet-lover is like a kite fluttering high in the sky: tug at it a bit hard and it breaks away

This wanderlust has its origins in Husain's childhood. He was born in 1915 at Pandharpur, Maharashtra (Husain himself gives the date of birth as 17 September but then quickly says: "It is an imaginary date, I am a Leo"). When he was six months old his mother died When he was six years old he lost his only emotional anchor his paternal grandfather. His father remarried around that time. Soon after, Husain was sent to Siddhpur in Gujarat, where his maternal grandfather was the head of a religious sect. From there the rolling stone was sent to a *madarsa* in Baroda. Back in Indore, where Husain's father, Fida Husain, had moved some time after Husain's birth and where he worked as an accountant in a group of textile mills, the future painter became, literally, the boy on the streets. He would set out with food and his paints on a bicycle and that lantern (enshrined in some of his works) and paint into the night, often waiting for the dawn which would give his paintings that hazy touch of mystery.

Cinema, spectacle and fancy clothes were his forbidden pleasures. He was allowed to see films twice a year: on the occasion of the two Ids. But Husain followed his father one night to the cinema hall and at the door told him that he should be allowed to see the film. This fascination with the world of celluloid was to lead him to Bombay where he became a billboard painter in 1937.

The other forbidden pleasure was clothes. Husain coveted a pair of red silk socks. But being one of eight children, the red silk socks remained a fantasy until he asked his uncle for money one evening. Husain was beaten up that evening with chains by his father. The Husain of today, antelope skin trousers in winters abroad, *kurtas* or white denims in summers, picks up a pair of costly shoes in Geneva and leaves them behind.

The third forbidden pleasure: the various festivals and Ram Lilas which his family—Sulaimani Bohras—did not exactly approve of. Or, even the spectacle of the magnificent *tazia* processions of the feudal city of Indore. His famous horses and his mythological figures were born in those days. They are part of his ever-expanding encyclopaedia of images.

The boy-in-the-streets metamorphosed not too long afterwards into the billboard painter immortalising the likes of Naseem Banu or Sohrab Modi on cinema hoardings in sweeping baroque images 40 feet above the ground (two cans of paint hanging from his big toes) by day, and sleeping on the footpath of Faras Road junction at night. Those were the romantic days. Husain almost reached the pinnacle of this profession when he was second only to the maestro of billboard painters in the profession, Bhide.

In 1941, he married Fasila, the daughter of the woman who stayed in the building opposite his corner of the footpath. His future mother-in-law had felt sorry for him and asked him to eat with the family. For seven years, Husain worked for a firm which made children's furniture and toys and generally lived the life of a householder. A turning point could have been his trip to Mathura in 1941. On his back-to-the-roots journey to classical art, Husain often says

that the three most important influences on his work are classical sculpture, especially of the Gupta period, the Basholi school of miniature painting for the bold colours and absence of perspective, and the folklore culled from the fiestas and festivals of life.

On the journey from the roots to the gods and goddesses who people myths and legends and who are not too far from the wellsprings of Indian culture, it was not too big a step to becoming a founder-member of the Progressive Artists Group in 1947. The group waged a war for individuality and to remove the shackles of revivalism and British academic art. It was a fight which Husain still seems to be carrying on, especially in his tirades against the arbiters of taste in contemporary India. The assassination series he is currently engaged in painting does not make him see red as readily as present-day managers of art and culture. Husain is at his angry best when talking about the coming festivals of India in France and in the United States. "Pupul Jayakar says that she is an authority. She thinks that only what was done 5,000 years ago is all right and that nothing being done today is worth anything. She reminds me about the story of the owl, the symbol of wisdom. There was a blind owl who would just keep walking straight and everybody thought that the owl was a *giani* and followed it. The owl walked into a ditch, the rest of them followed."

Husain is going to have yet another *salon de refuse*, this time in the home of such *salons*: Paris. There he will hold a "sideshow" of his new *Mahabharata* series which he will paint in Paris, probably a little before the year of India in France begins.

To get back to Husain's life. In 1950, Husain held his first one-man show, one of which was sent to the Salon de mai in Paris. From then on he was not short of patrons and guides: Schlesinger who bought numerous works of the group, especially those in need for Rs 50 or Rs 100, Von Leyden, the art critic of the *Times of India*, and later on Homi Bhabha. There was, of course, Badrivishal Pitti in Hyderabad, who still has some of Husain's classics. In 1953, 15 of his works were shown at the Venice Bienniale. In 1955, he won the Latin Kala Award, in 1959 an award at the Tokyo Bienniale. The Padma Bhushan came in 1973. A high point was in 1971 at the Sao Paulo Bienniale when Husain had a one-man show. Picasso too had an exhibition on at the same time. Picasso never went to Sao Paulo, and the other maestro left in a huff because the Indian Ambassador to Brazil did not go to Sao Paulo. According to Husain, the Ambassador later filed a report stating that he did not attend the inauguration because the painter was "dead drunk." Husain's great vice is drinking endless cups of tea.



Husain painting the ceiling of a church in Bombay designed by Charles Correa

In 1967, Husain won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for his film, *Through the eyes of a painter*. By the Seventies, Husain had become the topic of discussion in many drawing rooms in metropolitan cities. Some would even come up to the painter (who does not know how to say no) with bits of cloth and ask him to paint them a canvas to match their curtains and sofas.

The price of a Husain began to be measured by the number of square inches. Newly-wed couples would total the money received for the wedding present to buy a Husain. Husain became internationally known as well as a household name. Paying rupees one lakh for a Husain was not an impossibility. Even his doodles now sell. And as the name of Husain grew, so did the legend about the artist who never spends more than three weeks in a city. While his work through the various series evolved and accumulated its own vocabulary of images, symbols and metaphors (those horses, he chuckles, are only for the fools who buy them), so did the little myth about his own life: his car, painted with horses or *gopis* and Krishnas, his barefoot perambulations, his striking clothes, the various myths about his lack of punctuality (he never wears a watch), his vanishing habits (he borrowed a new car from Natwar Singh, presently minister of state for steel "for a minute" and returned it after a week; he had gone to Kanpur) his generosity (he gave away an entire collection of paintings to a Czechoslovak woman he fell in love with, Marie Zurkova, in Prague), his performing shows: while the director of a Czech museum delivered his 20-minute speech, Husain had finished a huge canvas, moving from left to right and not going back once, and his speed in painting .his brush moves with the same ease as the hands of the women of Madhuban when they paint their walls).

One could go on and on about this phenomenon called Husain who has variously been described as a charlatan, genius, iconoclast and a gypsy. The lasting image of Husain is of a man more interested in the process of painting than in the finished work itself, too much of a painter in a hurry to not lose the onrush of images than a connoisseur of art. A man for whom the canvas is not enough. Husain is everywhere and only time is going to sift the worthwhile from this magnificent painting machine for whom painting is breathing or life itself. The paint brush is the most faithful companion on his journey.

Madhu Jain

SUNDAY SPECIAL

"The Price of My Paintings Lies in the Eyes of the Beholder"

M.F. Husain told Madhu Jain

Maqbool Fida Husain, 70-going-on-19, has never been considered a political painter. Or even a political person. Rather, this prolific artist who paints in a rush as if there were no tomorrows (he is often called India's Picasso), is occasionally criticised for being comfortably on the right side of the establishment—his playful irreverence in the world of art notwithstanding. Husain's works have always been powerful statements on the human situations, even though they are not overtly political. But during the last decade, his themes have been decidedly political. There was his series on the Emergency, on terrorism in the early Eighties and now, post-31 October 1984, on assassination—whether it be of Mrs Gandhi or the common man (Sikhs in the aftermath of Mrs Gandhi's assassination, Bhopal gas victims, etc). When SUNDAY met Husain, he was between two exhibitions: the assassination series in Calcutta (most of which had been sold) and the coming exhibition in Delhi. He was yet to make most of the paintings. Chances are that the paint will still be wet when the exhibition begins; he paints on a where-is-as-is basis.

Typically, Husain rolled out the eighteen-foot Indira Gandhi assassination painting on the grass outside and sat on the edge. This was Mrs Gandhi in brilliant orange and red; sixteen red petals for the bullet holes. Talking about it, Husain mumbled into his Biblical snow-white beard: "Almost like sleeping beauty, isn't she?" Would she ever wake up, we ask? "There is no prince charming in Indian politics," replied he. And the interview begins, with fits and starts over three days—following the moods and restless bare feet of M.F. Husain.



M.F. Husain: "I am doing too little"

Q *When did you paint Mrs Gandhi's assassination?*

A: The day after. I went to Trimurti House, came home and began to paint. I finished in two to three hours.

Q: Mrs Gandhi does not look as if she is dead...

A: I wanted it to be a suspended image—not dead nor alive—only her presence. As you can see, all I have drawn is her sari, there is no body in between, there are no feet, although there is a face in repose almost like Sleeping Beauty.

Q: There is a watch on her wrist and the time is 9.20. What is the significance of the hand?

A: It is a questioning hand. *Yeh kya hai, kyon hua* (why is this happening)? The hand is important, it is a *mudra*.

Q: The fence at the bottom looks particularly threatening.

A: There is a fence like this near where she fell, I made it more pointed as if they are daggers. And the body which has been torn is a body after torture like the painting I did of Gandhi. There is no blood.

Q: What about the Gandhi painting?

A: The body is like a piece of paper which has been torn and thrown away. The head is drawn away from the rest of the body.

Q: What is the goat doing there?

A: It is the symbol of non-violence. Gandhi even took a goat to London when he went for the Round Table Conference... the stick below is broken, just like a bone. I am particularly satisfied with this painting; it has said all about 20th century assassinations: this was the major one. I had done a painting on the Gandhi assassination during the Gandhi centenary for the Gandhi Peace Foundation, but they refused to take it. They had wanted a portrait, not a Gandhi, falling, his cane falling. This painting is now in a museum in Boston...

Q: Why is it that of all the assassinations during the last few years, Mrs Gandhi's sparked off your series?

A: This was the most dastardly. To kill a woman, and in that treacherous, heinous way. Never has this happened in world history. Indira Gandhi's favourite song was *Ekla chalo re* (I will walk alone) and here she is *ekla*...with nothing else but her hand. A woman's hand which one should protect, not...

Q. Does this mean that you are becoming involved in politics?

A: You have to be involved. Earlier there were political murders: in various kingdoms sons killed fathers. But 20th century murders are different; they have changed the course of history...Stalin had Trotsky killed, JFK was killed by some parties, Allende was killed by the Americans. When I chose this theme I was aware of the fact that I could have painted just Mrs Gandhi but I wanted to

make the series universal. I treated the subject on a human level. Nobody has the right to kill anybody whether he is a tyrant, a leader or a common man in the street.

Q: What about your political affiliations?

A: I do not believe in any political party. I believe in individuals like Gandhi or John Kennedy; they are more effective than parties. Ideologies change. Look at Marxism: the Chinese have said that it has become obsolete and has to be adopted to changing times. Two or three years ago I wanted to paint a portrait of the 20th century: people in literature, music, dance...scientists, but the assassinations came in between...

Q: Perhaps, these are the true portraits of our century. What about Ram Manohar Lohia? You are said to have been close to him?

A: *Zinda dil ke the.* He was interested in art, in eating...we used to eat in Jamma Masjid. Whenever I did a portrait of Pandit Nehru, Lohia never objected. Nor did he ever ask me to sign a petition or participate in any movement, despite our friendship.

Q: Did he influence you in any way?

A: I met him in Hyderabad through Badrivishal Pitti, the first man to help me. One day he told me: 'You paint Birla and Tata, why don't you paint the *Ramayana* not with a halo around it or as folklore.' 'Our culture,' he told me 'was tied to the *Ramayana* or to the villages.' So, I did 100 paintings on the epic...

Q: And your famous horses?

A: I never left the *sawari* of horses-...the horses of imagination run fast and are hard to control. Actually, there is so much material but our minds have been spoiled by western education, especially the artist's. It was, therefore, important to go to the *Ramayana*—to our roots to enrich the imagery with the *Ramayana*. Then there is the *Mahabharata* I wanted to take those images and place them in today's context, not just to illustrate it.

Q: How did you meet Pandit Nehru?

A: Nehru loved art but he did not understand too much about it. His interest was there because of Zakir Hussain. What a man Hussain Sahab was? He came to an exhibition and introduced himself thus: *Mujhe bhi Hussain kehte hain* (they call me Hussain too).

Q: What has influenced you?

A: There are so many. My first portrait from the *Ramayana* was of Ravana doing the golden age dance—all those hands and limbs. I wanted to show the energy. I was always fascinated by the *nautankis*. I was always being told not to go to the *Ram Lila*: *Kya dekh rahe ho* (What are you looking at)? they would say at home. But I loved it: the costumes, the stage... When I did my 40-foot *Shivji ki barat* painting, I put in all the bhooths, witches *bhayanak janwars*. I took all these paintings to a village near Hyderabad and arranged a *mela*. In the city they do not understand but in the villages the children would come for two hours every night. I had put the paintings of Ram Sita and Laxman in a bullock cart and brought them into the village to the accompaniment of music. Nobody asked me why so and so did not have an eye or a mouth. They were spellbound, as if it were all very natural. You see here you can put some orange paint on a stone and people call it Hanuman, the symbol is enough, the *shraddha* is there.

Q: What about Islamic imagery?

A. My horses. Duldul was the name of the horse of the Prophet. All my imagery is from the epics; my roots are there. The epics are alive, even today look at the festivals.

Q: Has your being a Muslim made any difference to your work?

A: In the villages the difference between Hindus and Muslims is not really present, especially in the South.

Q: Did you go through a difficult time during partition? Did it not affect the way you thought or painted?

A: When I was about eleven, I was in an Islamic boarding school in Baroda where we were given religious training...But we wore *khadi* and Gandhi *topis*. Later, in the late 30's and early 40's I was in Bombay. My anger was directed against the *Angrez*. I would see these English inspectors on the road and wonder what these strange Englishmen were doing there. I made a painting of an Englishman with a white hat sitting on a chair in a *gali*. Next to him I painted a sleeping dog—I wanted to show him as a dog.

Q: What about the Quit India movement? You were in Bombay then?

A: I made sketches of the time...of the pandal from where speakers spoke...Our politicians were the stars of the times. What beauty! Jawaharlal Nehru looked like a filmstar. I liked Kamala Devi Chattopadhaya. *Gulab ka phool thi.* Sarojini Naidu. What intellect, what *jaban*.

Q: How did you live through partition?

A: I was in Bombay and I had a beard. I remember walking down the road and people would point to me and say 'Pakistani, Pakistani.' In 1948, I came to Delhi. I walked down Janpath and people would say, "There he goes. It was tense even in Bombay during the riots. But whenever people told me not to go out, I would say why not. *Maar denge tho mar denge. Ab kya kare, jisse mohabat ho gaye.* (if they kill me, they kill me. What can I do now? Now that I love this country). I was never tempted to go to Pakistan. I have no *vasta* (relation) with Pakistan. Some of my relatives went there. I have no contact with them; nor have I ever been to Pakistan. *Khamakha ka shak* (unnecessary doubt) Muslim fanaticism is so dangerous; there is no *jawab* to this. Nor is there any freedom in a country like Pakistan. I am an artist and I want to express myself. In Pakistan an artist cannot make any figures; he has to use



The Maulvi and Brahmin



A tribute to Mother Teresa

calligraphy. Islam never said no to human figures; it is the *mullah's*. The university in Egypt has a record of the Prophet's visit to the Kaaba. When he went there, he found images of many deities. He had all of them taken out, except one image of Mariam. The Prophet said, 'Do not remove this.' So how can people say there can be no images. The Saudi Arabians, the Wahabis, are the ones who are completely against images.

Q: *What about Hindu fanaticism?*

A: Hindu fanatics have learned from Muslims. It is now a worldwide phenomenon; the Christians are waking up now.

Q. Communalism is certainly contagious...

A: It has to do with a loss of faith. People want to cling on to something, some ideology. People have become disillusioned with Marxism. These forces come and sweep away everything—only time can stop these winds. Great civilisations have been wiped out.

Q: Can we talk about your paintings with political themes. What about the series you did on Bangladesh?

A: I made 15 feet by six feet paintings. One was of a tank, I put a flower on it. Another was of a Bengali woman emerging; this was Indira Gandhi in a Bengali sari—an image of Bangladesh. Later, several artists went on a truck collecting money for the widows in Bangladesh.

Q: Well, then you do depict current affairs in your own fashion.

A: When Morarji Desai was chief minister (of Maharashtra), he was a *sakht dushman* (tough enemy). He was against modern art. He felt it was a fad which would go sooner or later. When we went in an artists delegation to ask him to relax rules about the import of colours he told me: "You are worried about your *dhanda* (business) right? Why don't you find something else to sell?"

Q: This was your politically angry outburst?

A: Yes, I made a huge painting of him—I made him a monkey; he does have big ears, doesn't he (*chuckles mischievously*).

Q: When was the second instance?

A: This was against the revivalists—all the heads of art colleges were Bengalis who could not see beyond Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose. These were mediocre painters; the only geniuses at Shantiniketan were Rabindranath Tagore and Ram Kinkar—the rest were midgets. When man is a personality, when he has the total force of expression, there is no need to learn technique.



I feel that only a woman can rule India. Because she has *zid; zid hai, shakti hai*...If she decides to act, she will not be deterred.

Q: What about your Emergency paintings, the ones you were so widely criticised for? V.C. Shukla used them effectively as propaganda to justify Mrs Gandhi's Emergency.

A: Nobody asked me to make them. I was in Madras the day Emergency was declared. That day I began to paint at 8 am and did not stop until 6 pm—when I had finished three six feet by four feet paintings of Durga, Bharat Mata (this was India as a woman) and Sita. I admired Indira Gandhi because she did what Jawaharlal Nehru could not do: she banned the Jamaat-e-Islami and the RSS, two cancerous organisations. She had the courage to do this; she was the real Durga. This was not an act of the Congress. Here was one individual who took a very bold step. The third painting was of Sita. There are four hands pointing accusingly at her; there were four opposition parties then. People accused me of supporting the Emergency. (*Points to the print of the Bharat Mata painting, where Gujarat would logically be located)* See this is shaped like a breast; the most sensitive part... After this I did a series on violence and terrorism, which I signed Mac Bull.

Q: When was this and which subjects did you treat?

A: 1982. I did not focus on any one place; Israel, Falklands, Assam, Punjab. I was inspired by Bunuel's film, *That Obscure Object of Desire*. All this joins up with the assassination series. In one of these I use Amitabh Bachchan as a symbol of violence, all that *dishum, dishum*. In the same series was Phoolan Devi. But I disguised her, made her a bit more sophisticated. She has a gun in her hand but she is standing on a *manch* (platform) and there are microphones.

Q: Could you tell us more about your three faces of Mrs Gandhi, the Emergency paintings?

A: There was a lot of controversy, even in New York, Germany. *Badnami sahi, naam tho hua*... I remember Ezra Pound's poem on Mussolini in which he said that creative people were fascinated by power, evil or otherwise... to defeat an evil force you have to be equally forceful.

Q: Shakti, *in other words?*

A: Yes.

Q: How much do your paintings cost?

A: The worth of my paintings depends... if you like it, rupees five

lakhs is too little; if you do not, rupees five is too much. The price is in the eyes of the beholder.

Q: What is your next series on?

A: On the *raj*. I would like to treat the British *raj* like a comic strip. They became caricatures. I do not want to paint a political history of the British *raj*—what was good or bad—none of that. But I would like to depict the visual aspect... When I was a child in Indore I saw how the Maharaja (of Holkar) would behave in front of the British collector...all these Khan Bahadurs and Rais were traitors. Lohia used to call them 'toady *bachas*.' The British left, but the *angreziat* remained: the *choti hazri* in the mornings, the *badi hazris* are still there.

Q: What else did Lohia impress upon you?

A: When I was given the Padma Bhushan in 1963, he asked me to return it.

Q: Do you believe that we are entering a naya zamana *with Rajiv Gandhi?*

A: Yes. Look what he said in the SUNDAY interview: I have come but I will go back if I cannot manage. The last elections were significant. The course of history has been changed. The values of the 30s, 40s and 50s have become obsolete.

Q: Do you think India is ready for democracy?

A: Is there any democracy in the United States? Yes, in the Constitution. But who killed Allende and Che? What do the secret organisations of powerful countries do to remain in power? I feel that a good man is needed at the helm of affairs, like Gandhiji. He was never power-hungry.

Q: And Pandit Nehru?

A: *Apne nawab the... nayat sharif admi* (He was like a nawab; a very honest man). He had an *angrezi tariqa* (English ways). He was a bit like the member of a royal family, regal in attitude. But he was not a politician, rather a visionary—what hopes he had for the country!

Q: And Indira Gandhi?

A: She is the most powerful woman in the history of the 20th century. When she began, we thought she could do nothing. But look at how she evolved—methodically and not by any chance—there were so many people out to destroy her. But she emerged...*shakti*. Woman power comes in here. Once you have that, nobody can stop you; *Goli maar ke hata diya, par isse kya hota hai* (A bullet might have removed her but what does that do?)

Q: Can India only be ruled by a woman?

A: I feel that only a woman can



Hanuman

rule India.

Q: Why?

A: Because she has *zid, zid hai, shakti hai* (she is stubborn and has strength). If she decides to act, she will not be deterred. Nehru had *sharafat, baat maan lete the*. Indira Gandhi was alone, she thought alone, walked alone... *ekla chalo re*.

Q: In your list of good painters in India, you do not name a single woman. Woman can rule but not paint?

A: The potential is there. Then we did have Amrita Sher-Gill. A woman can become Prime Minister, President, great actress and even Margaret Thatcher. But her biggest role is that of a mother. Man cannot even become a father, he has no part in the birth of a child. There is nothing like a woman. Even the Prophet said that the first person to step into *Jannat* (heaven) would be a woman. I suppose the first step to hell would also be taken by a woman. Everywhere she will be the first, whether it is heaven or hell.

Q: I believe that you are planning to make a full feature film?

A: Yes, in black-and-white and a silent movie...There is no script yet but I have two or three characters related to certain situations.

Q: Have you cast the film yet?

A: No. But I would like to have Smita Patil; she fits my concept of a certain form—slightly rugged and yet sophisticated. She is the ideal image in my mind; not the sweet and pretty kind. I used to see her when she read the news in Bombay. I liked her face from that time, although I have never met her.



I love women from the age of eight to 80...Perhaps my face is such. The fault is with God; he gave me a Casanova face.

Q: So, we come back to the subject of women...

A: Woman is very important, especially in the Indian context; here it is *shakti*. The West had most of its important sculptures of man: Apollo, the various Greek gods. We have our goddesses.

Q: We also have brides being burned. You have not done any work on atrocities on women?

A: No. I have not. But I love women so much...perhaps I should have.

Q: There is this image of a Casanova about you.

A: Well...I love women from the age of eight to eighty...What can I do about this reputation? Perhaps my face is such. The fault is with God; he gave me a Casanova face. But I feel

that even in excess, of love, there should be discipline, with the emotions. Otherwise, there is dissipation. There should be a sort of order. I do not like to treat a woman as an object or as just a companion.

Q: This search—this quest for the woman or women—could this be because you lost your mother when you were a baby?

A: Perhaps. When I was six months, my mother died. There was no other woman at home. Just my *dada* and my *chacha* who was unmarried. When I was six, my father re-married. My step-mother was educated, she was good to me. But psychologically, I never accepted her. For years I lived with my *dada*. I was literally on the streets; I only came home to sleep. This is where I must have got my wandering habit from: who was I to go home to. And this lack of a mother might have been what draws me to women.

Q: You mean an inner loneliness under all your exuberance?

A: Yes, an inside sadness. I have six children—two boys and four girls, but I always stay out. I love my children; but I am detached. My children are all all right. But I never used to worry about them; I always felt that what had to be, would be; they should be allowed to grow naturally... Fortunately my wife is traditional and disciplined. If she had been like me *tho bas khatam* (finished). It is a good combination. She would always ask the children or me where we were going. I told her to put a black board on the door on which any of us could write where we were going. No need to ask *baar, baar* where you are going.

Q: Are you as unconventional in your relations with your family? What about your relationship with your children?

A: My daughter had a very unconventional wedding, it was in a park in Bombay. I sent all the relatives cards on which I had made Shiv and Parvati, both of them nude; Shivji is holding the breast of Parvati in one hand. The Muslims were shocked by the invitation. This daughter is in Madras now. I draw designs, she gets wooden blocks made and prints saris with them.

Q: Husain sahab, don't you feel you are doing too many different things?

A: No. I might work in different mediums, but the basis is the same—whether it be textiles, tapestries, films murals. I still feel that I am doing too little; my capacity is much more, so much more. I feel I should run 20 things simultaneously...One should go beyond the techniques, it should be on the tip of the fingers; the struggle is one of vision that is within. Therefore, it is important to go through experiences. This is the reason why I travel. The important thing is simplification: I imbibe things, make sketches and then simplify; one can get carried away by technique. To eliminate is the most important, to come to the minimum—that is art. If you see my Mother Teresa paintings—there is no face, no body, just the folds of the sari, the loving folds...This was not *achanak* (sudden). I learned this from Italian paintings. Look at Michelangelo: there was no need for a face to say anything: the folds said it. In my series on the Andhra cyclone which I called cyclonic silence, it is all black— there are bodies floating, but I put one white sheep—it was the only element of hope. People came to the exhibition and they would cry. This image had only one or two elements in it.

Q: Like your assassination series?

A: There was no blood, no bullets. But I feel that I have not completed it; they are literary incidents. I want to change the form and simplify it. Gandhi is the only one I am satisfied with—and to some extent Indira Gandhi: the rest are too literal.

Q: To return once again to politics, a subject you keep running away from. This bhakti *cult, or charisma which seems to be very widespread in India, could you say something about this?*

A: This is a worldwide trend. The rightists are coming into power everywhere—rightists for me means fascism. Morarji Desai is a fascist. He says he is a Gandhian—the way he talks. But if power were in his hand for ten years he would change Hindustan. This man has disguised his fascism in the name of Gandhism.

Q: Then, coming back again to Gandhi...

A: Gandhi was not a political thinker. He did, however, identify with the common man. But later, bringing in *bhakti* and prayer was *backwaas* (nonsense)...To become a saint, that is what the effort was towards. This was not politically relevant. But of course, he did do the work he had come to do. He is a major figure in world history because of his concept of non-violence.

Q: You have not been described as a political artist, but your paintings often make digs at the rich. In your drawings of Assam you have written these lines: "She resides in her tattered shroud. As tenderly plucked tea leaves are being cruelly roasted the diamond studded Marwari ladies roll around giggling."

A: Yes, the Marwaris own many plantations. *Chus liya hai* (Marwaris have squeezed Calcutta dry). They are villains, including Mr Birla. The only honest industrialist is Tata. There was a wedding in Hyderabad and Mr Birla asked me: 'Why do you make all our *devis* and *devtas* nude?' Then, he pointed to those marble sculptures made in Jaipur of Radha and Krishna and says: 'Why don't you paint things like this; there is so much *shanti* in them...' After saying this he points to the people present at the wedding and adds: 'How would all these people look if you saw them nude?' What a thing to say!

There must be a taboo about not seeing a body totally nude, even of your wife. Even the Pope has said that you should not look at your wife with lust—then what does one do: *ma baitha diya* (they see the wife as a mother). These people are like the Pope.

Q: You have been quite irreverent about religion as well...

A: In 1956 I did a series on science and religion. One of the paintings was called Mullah and Mariam; I had painted Mariam nude...Then in my series on Sufism, I had painted the Kaaba and near it a donkey. People were furious about my having put a donkey next to the Kaaba; a delegation went to Morarji Desai—he was Prime Minister then.

Q: You don't seem to care too much for maulvis *either?*

A: When I was a child, a *maulvi* used to come home, he used to be given *paranthas*, tea and some "malai" (cream) which we were never given. He used to demand them We were angry



The rightists are coming into power everywhere—rightists for me means fascism. Morarji Desai is a fascist.

GUJARAT

Anti-reservation Stir Turns Communal

Eleven die in violent clashes

The street, Mahajanwada Pole in Ahmedabad's Kalupur area, was strewn with rubble and stones. The area may well have suffered an earthquake. But the disaster was no act of God but the result of communal riots which began on 18 March and left till the time of writing, 11 people dead in its wake.

By 22 March, over 1,000 soldiers and hundreds of policemen from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan along with the local constabulary were patrolling the riot-torn city. The union home minister, Mr S.B. Chavan, airdashed to Ahmedabad on 20 March for an on the spot study as the rioting had brought back memories of the 1969 riots when nearly 800 people died. The violence asserted officials, this time was nowhere like in 1969. But though fewer lives have been lost, the rioting appears to be more systematic and perfectly timed to catch both the police and the new ministry of chief minister Mr Madhavsinh Solanki on the wrong foot. So badly shaken was the government that for three days it did not issue any curfew passes, even to the press. And yet, one could move around the curfew area in a car. Not only did the trouble spread fast but the targets of the mob seemed to be houses, shops and other establishments of people belonging to both communities in congested areas of Dariyapur, Kalupur, Shahpur, Gandhi Road, Fernandes Bridge, Relief Road, Fuvara, Teen Darwaja and Jamalpur. Some of these areas experienced communal violence for the first time in many years. Riots last took place in Teen Darwaja in 1946 and even in 1969, Jamalpur, thickly populated by the poor and lower middle class of both communities had remained calm.

This time hooligans had an active hand in the riots. Looting and burning of houses and shops were the major activities rather than killing people. Till 21 March, as many as 210 incidents of arson and looting were reported in the city. The attacks were clearly well-planned. First, the shops and houses were heavily brick-batted. Then burning rags were thrown inside after which the looters broke in taking away everything that could be carried away. The rest was set on fire. The union home minister, Mr Chavan, was shown some of these "fire-missiles" on 20 March when he went round the riot-torn areas in Dariyapur, Kalupur and Fuvara. Rags were tightly tied or sewn together to form a compact missile which was then dipped into kerosene and set on fire. The burning bundles, called *kakda* were then hurled at the targets. Final figures were still not available as most of the walled city areas were placed under indefinite curfew from 18 March. The loss however is likely to run into lakhs of rupees as scores of shops and houses of both Muslims and Hindus have been gutted.

The opposition parties have demanded a judicial inquiry by a sitting judge of the Gujarat High Court to inquire into the circumstances leading to the communal riots and what should be done to prevent a recurrence. But the home minister, Mr Amarsinh Choudhary has rejected the demand in the Legislative Assembly. The opposition leaders have alleged that there were a large number (about 7,000) of illegally held firearms in Ahmedabad. They allege that during the initial hours of rioting on 18 March one person Gautam Patel, was shot dead but the government has denied this incident.

Besides *kakda*, the rioters used a variety of missiles including acid bulbs, soda water bottles, stones, knives, and even cement balls studded with nails. But how the anti-reservation stir turned into a communal riot remains unanswered. The anti-reservation stir, which began on 17 February in protest against the increase in the number of reservations in jobs and education for the socially and educationally backward classes had been nearly a month old. On 16 March, the Solanki government postponed the implementation of the decision for a year after the agitators threatened a Gujarat *bandh* and a boycott of examinations. Although this was a victory for the agitators wanting a cancellation, they were not happy with just a postponement and decided to go ahead with the *bandh* and the boycott plans.

The All Gujarat Education Reforms Committee (AGERC) of the students supported by their guardians in the cities, had asked people to observe the *bandh* peacefully In an effort to dramatise their protest, a call for "sounding the death knell" of the reservation policy by beating *thalis* at eight pm on 18 March was given to the people. The authorities believing that the agitation would run its ritual course before petering out, failed to take strong preventive measures. Although a police contingent had been mustered, most of the policemen had not been issued firearms lest a constable might fire a round causing a chain reaction. Many of the policemen were armed with only canes or *lathis*.

When the *thalis* were beaten on 18 March, the students protesting the against the reservation policy went on the rooftops to beat their own *thalis*. As soon as this started, brick-batting and throwing of *kakdas* began. Nobody still knows who started

Troops on guard in the riot-torn city of Ahmedabad



Sunday Standard

it all but it appeared to be pre-planned because the trouble quickly spread to close-by areas of Dariyapur and Kalupur. Within an hour, pitched battles were being fought. At 10.30 pm an indefinite curfew was imposed and the police had to open fire a number of times that night killing three people. Another person was stabbed to death.

A top official told SUNDAY that the state administration immediately asked for police reinforcements from neighbouring states and also requested the army for help. By then precious hours were lost and the rioting grew worse. By noon on 19 March, about 400 troops had been deployed and a large police force was on duty. But throughout the day and despite indefinite curfew, looting and arson continued. By seven pm that day the entire walled city was placed under an indefinite curfew and the police told to act firmly and not to spare trouble makers. There are conflicting reports about what happened on the night of 18 March. The police opened fire in Dariyapur when a police party led by an inspector, Mr B.L. Parmar, was attacked with burning rags, acid bulbs, soda water bottles and stones when it tried to intervene in a street battle between two groups. Burning rags were also thrown inside nearby houses by rioters and eight houses set on fire.

The walled city of Ahmedabad, built in 1426 A.D., is an ideal area for hit and run tactics and difficult for the police to patrol and control. The roads are narrow and winding, leading in turn to labyrinthine streets called poles, which are even narrower and branch off into lanes and bylanes. Patrolling the streets are dangerous as one cannot see what is happening all around. A miscreant can run off into any of the innumerable bylanes which join other streets and escape. The police can also be harassed from the rooftops of the narrow streets without the constables getting any wiser as to who was attacking them and precisely from which rooftop. Even the army *jawans* unfamiliar with the area faced problems: getting lost in endless chases.

After the riots began in the city, *goondas* began looting and the mobs followed suit. Newsmen visiting the affected areas saw shops still burning after the looting. Even when Mr Chavan toured the city, shops were still smouldering in the Kalupur area, having been looted and set on fire the previous night. Another feature proving the involvement of a large number of anti-social elements was



Sondeep Shankar

Firemen battling the flames in the old city of Ahmedabad

the systematic looting of shops containing valuables. Shops belonging to both Hindus and Muslims were burnt down.

Several factors contributed to the situation getting out of hand. The new home minister, Mr Choudhary, did not have enough time to familiarise himself with either his subordinates or his new office before disaster struck. His police commissioner in Ahmedabad, Mr Y.B. Jhala, who was to retire just before the elections, had been given an extension and was due to leave in a short while. He did not have time to build up rapport with most of his top police officials which led to more confusion. Shocked by the recent illicit liquor tragedy in Ahmedabad, Mr Choudhary had ordered massive raids on illicit liquor dens in the city which had put almost all of them temporarily out of business. According to the police, the large number of hangers-on in the dens who deliver bottles to customers, or collect money and pay off money were left unemployed. Each den would have had 20 to 25 such people and they are alleged to have begun the arson and looting.

There have been complaints about the police being passive spectators, especially when distress calls were made from the old city on 18 and 19 March. On the other hand, from 20 March when the top brass was told to curb the violence, people accused the police of harsh treatment. Among those who made these complaints was Mr Lalbhai Kundiwala, the Congress(I) MLA from Jamalpur, who claimed that the police were needlessly ruthless in his area. He said that policemen had beaten up people sleeping out on the pavements in Jamalpur where both Muslims and Hindus live. The police wanted them to get indoors and when they did not, they were beaten up, said Mr Kundiwala.

The anti-reservation agitators have denied their involvement in the communal riots and they even suspended their agitation for a few days. Meanwhile, the Congress(I) leaders have been suggesting that the opposition was responsible for the riots. The Jaganmohan Reddy Commission that inquired into the 1969 riots had identified sensitive points in Ahmedabad for specific watch. But since that report was published, a whole new generation of police officials has come up, who have very little idea of the area they are responsible for. By 22 March, four days of arson, looting and violence had left 11 people dead and at least 28 injured. Eight were killed in police firings and one by stabbing. A top official pointed out that the fact that the number of dead in the rioting was low and that most of the killed had died in police firings meant that the forces had intervened in time.

But almost everyone agrees that anti-social elements were responsible for the rioting. The government is now thinking of an Anti-Goondaism Act because the normal police legislation is not adequate to effectively tackle the *goondas*. But more than anti-goondaism legislation would be needed. Ahmedabad, has a population of about 20 lakhs of which around 3.5 to four lakhs are Muslims a majority of whom are poor. Communal riots which began in 1969 have been frequently causing problems. There has also been a rise in the aspirations of the poor. As a sociologist explained, when aspirations are not fulfilled, people look for explanations and the easiest explanation is to blame one section or the other. The latest manifestation of this was the animosity between the upper and lower castes even among Hindus, a feeling which has been aggravated by the reliance of politicians on caste and communal votes in the past years.

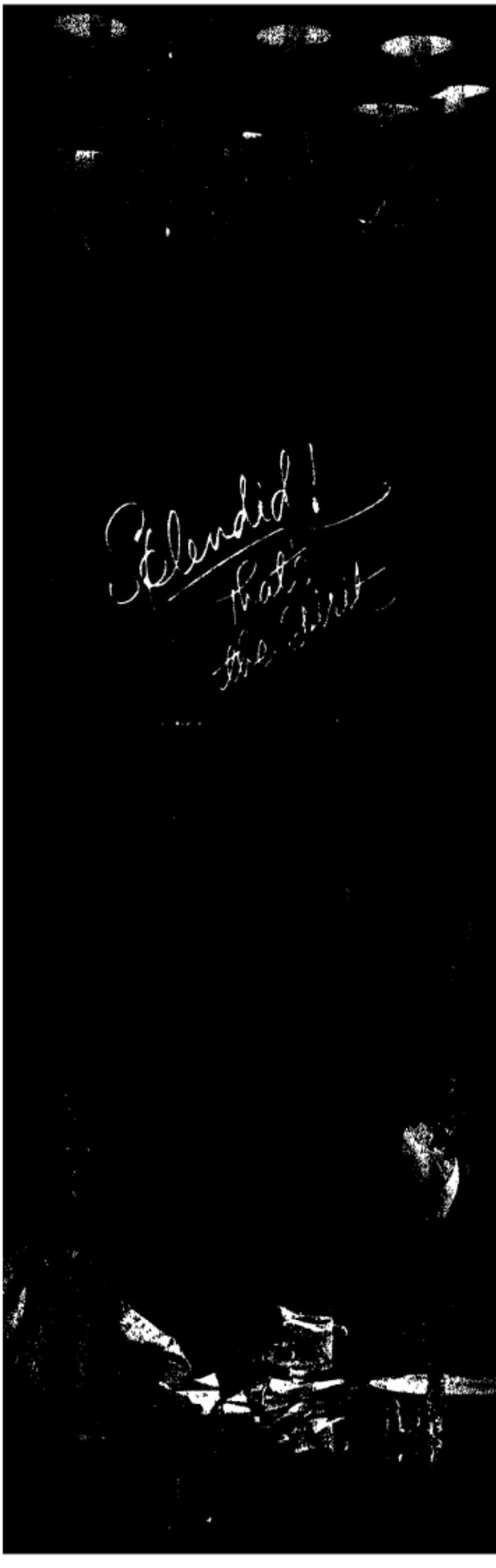
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The Silent Killer

Deaths due to meningitis in Delhi continue to rise

The outbreak of meningitis cases which began this year has reached epidemic proportions. The killer disease has already claimed 261 lives in the capital and the toll continues to rise every day. Figures of deaths from seven large hospitals are alarming. In January, 274 cases of meningitis were reported and 56 patients died. In February, the seven hospitals admitted 997 meningitis cases out of which 134 patients died. In March, the number of deaths rose even further. In the first week, 381 cases were reported, 35 proving fatal and in the second week as many as 436 cases were registered of which 36 persons have died.

What is even more alarming are reports of an increase in meningitis cases from other towns. According to figures available with the National Institute of Communicable Diseases, there has been a definite rise in meningitis cases in parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. Patients from Faridabad, Gurgaon, Panipat and Agra have rushed to New Delhi where treatment is being given to meningitis patients as part of emergency operations. Figures are also pouring in from other parts of the country which have established beyond doubt that the disease has spread outside the capital. At the Calcutta Medical College hospital for example, more meningitis cases have been reported in two months than in the last three years, establishing the fear that incidence of the disease has risen sharply.

The last time meningitis broke out in the country in such epidemic proportions was in 1976 when several hundred people succumbed to the disease. Since then only a few patients had been hospitalised for meningitis. According to Dr G. K. Vishwakarma, medical superintendent of Safdarjang hospital, which recorded the highest number of meningitis deaths this year, there has been an unprecedented rise in meningitis cases and the situation was fast becoming serious. He, however, felt the incidence of meningitis has now been controlled because of the creation of public awareness and the import of meningitis vaccines.

However, according to Prof. O. P. Ghai a noted medical specialist, the threat posed by the increase in meningitis cases is still grave. He felt that the danger arises not so much from those suffering from meningitis but from the carriers of the disease. For every patient of meningitis there are as many as 300 carriers who have the bacteria either in their throats or noses but have not communicated the disease. The meningitis bacteria of any carrier can enter the blood circulation and cause death within 24 hours.

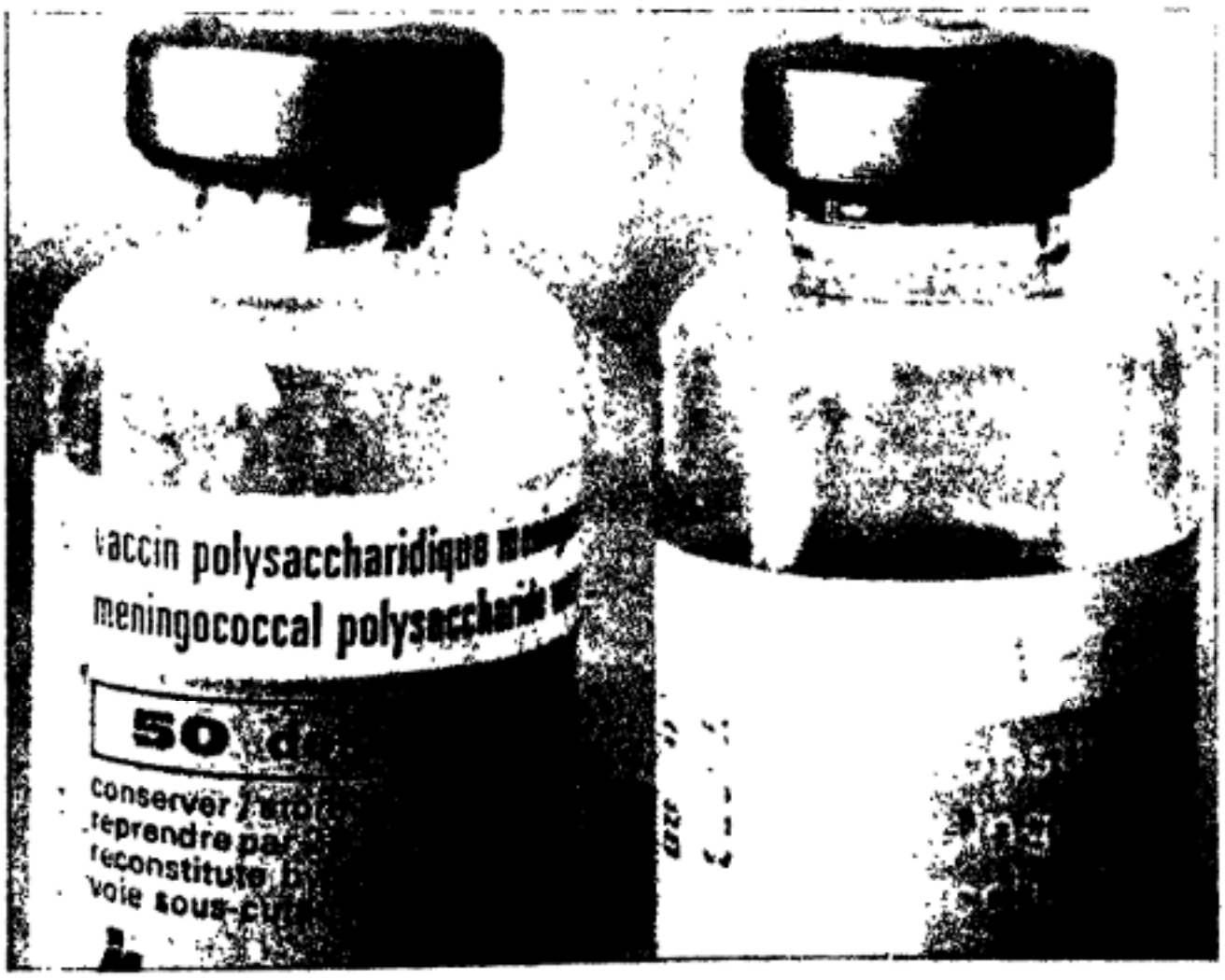
Medical practitioners treating meningitis cases feel that if all symptoms of the disease have to be eradicated from an area or city, at least 70 per cent of the population would have to be vaccinated. At present, the government has imported 98,000 doses of the Meningococcal Meawgitis vaccine which have been distributed to various hospitals in the capital. The vaccine was imported from a leading French pharmaceutical firm through the World Health Organisation (WHO) and has been administered to family members of meningitis victims, doctors and nurses.

The government has spent Rs ten lakhs for the import o. the vaccine which is produced by a few firms in Sweden, Canada and France and is not easily available in the open market. It is apparent that the vaccine was made available to India because of help extended by the WHO and the serious demand for the vaccine, especially in the capital. Now, most of the vaccine imported has been administered and large quantities have been sent to hospitals in other parts of the country where meningitis cases have been reported.

Though there are a large number of vaccines in the Western countries for the prevention of meningitis none of them has been found to be effective against all nine types of meningitis bacterium. It is fortunate that researchers in New Delhi's hospitals were able to identify the bacterial strain in meningitis cases reported as meningococcal A and C to counter which the vaccine imported has been found effective. Otherwise, the vaccine would have had a limited preventive effect since it can protect a patient from attacks by only two of the nine bacterium of the disease.

Despite the import of nearly one lakh doses of the meningitis vaccine from France, the number of cases being reported in New Delhi and elsewhere continue to rise. The question that will soon come up for discussion is whether or not to import more vaccines once the present reserve is used up. The silent killer of the capital has already begun to claim lives in other cities. It should be prevented from reaching epidemic proportions there as well.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi



Used vials of the meningitis vaccine

GUJARAT

The Drink of Death

Illicit liquor kills 27 persons

Mohanlal Vankar, a 40-year-old mason, had just finished his work on the evening of 11 March 1985. Before returning home, in the Gomtipur-Rajpur area of Ahmedabad, Mohanlal visited a bootlegger to buy *lattha* or illicit liquor. (A small bottle known as *pauva* costs around Rs four only). The tired mason was looking for something that would raise his spirits. He quickly finished his drink and went home for dinner. When he woke up the next morning, the mason was suffering from blurred vision, and acute nausea and started vomiting before he was rushed to hospital. About 60 others were also hospitalised and within three days, as many as 27 persons died in Ahmedabad.

The incident led to a controversy about the total prohibition policy in Gandhiji's home state. The Solanki government which has returned to power after a massive victory in the Assembly polls swiftly set up a one-man commission of inquiry, headed by a retired district judge, Mr C.C. Morakhia to go into the tragedy and suggest how such mishaps could be avoided. But, the reaction to the killer brew deaths was familiar. Death by poisonous illicit liquor is common in Gujarat where drinking without a permit is a crime and getting a permit is very difficult. In 1977, a series of illicit liquor deaths occurred in the state and a commission of inquiry was set up.

Then, in the 1980 election manifesto the Congress(I) had promised that the liquor laws would be made more pragmatic (a euphemism to describe a relaxation in the liquor policy as in Maharashtra). But the government got cold feet, largely because of the prospect of stiff opposition from people opposed to any liberalisation. Later, the government appointed the Miyabhoy Commission and received a report which has been gathering dust in Gandhinagar.

Total prohibition which was imposed in Gujarat in 1960 has many supporters in the state. But prohibition also created problems as the liquor law is not stringent. Bootlegging is rampant in the state and bootleggers and police officials are often in close collaboration. Permits are granted only to those who have medical certificates and obtaining a permit, which is a lengthy process enables a person to buy a limited quantity of liquor from one of the few recognised shops in the entire state at a very high price. Inevitably, black marketing in liquor and adulteration are common.

The poor however, have to depend on the local brews, prepared from *mahua* flowers or rotten *gur* or by treating chemicals like methyl alcohol. The brew is made as cheaply as possible and occasionally illicit brew makers use poisonous chemicals. The local brew in Gujarat is called *lattha* and there are stills in many villages and in big cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda and Rajkot. In 1980, bootleggers had fought with each other in Baroda, a battle which led to communal riots in the city. In November 1977, over 100 people died after drinking *lattha* in Ahmedabad, and many more lost their eyesight. Such tragedies occur periodically in different towns in the state. These tragedies hit the headlines only when a number of people are affected. The toll illicit liquor takes among individuals is unknown because these incidents are hardly ever brought to the notice of the authorities.

Illicit liquor, also known as Cologne water, gives an instant "kick," to the drinker. But faulty manufacture or adulteration by mixing dangerous chemicals is common and the victims invariably are the poor. It was no different in Gomtipur-Rajpur. Most of the 60 persons affected by the spurious drink were labourers, including some textile workers. The first victim of the killer brew was reported from Natvar Vakil's *chawl* where the 65-year-old Shankar Karsan died. At first, his relatives thought the old man had died a natural death, but soon the news of poisonous drink victims in the nearby *chawls* began to spread. The civic authorities and the police sent vehicles fitted with loud hailers to tell people to report without hesitation if anybody was suffering from the effects of the killer brew. Soon the hospitals began to overflow with liquor poisoning cases. One of the dead was 38-year-old Dahyabhai, the sole bread winner of his family. He leaves behind five daughters and his 27-year-old widow. In most cases, the story is the same.



A liquor tragedy victim

Initially, the news stunned the government into inactivity. The ruling party had not made any mention of the prohibition policy in the recently concluded Assembly polls, but the demands for a thorough review of the existing policy will come up because the new Legislature was scheduled to meet from 18 March. However, the appointment of the Morakhia Commission and the transfer of five police officers appear to be routine measures. The government is known to have set up such commissions, partly as public relations exercises and partly to defuse a potentially troublesome situation.

Nevertheless, the new home minister, Mr Amarsinh Choudhary, indicated that the report of the Miyabhoy Commission may soon be brought up in the state Assembly. But that would hardly solve the problem because contrary to the expectations of most opponents of the total prohibition policy, the commission is understood to have recommended stiffer treatment for offenders. Other states and countries have faced the same dilemma in the past. Prohibition cannot be successfully implemented simply because dictates on personal habits are invariably flouted and because prohibition is not in force in the states around Gujarat. The state government indicts nearly a lakh people every year but liquor laws are disobeyed more easily than any other law of the land. The rich drink better liquor but the poor can only drink the illicit brew. And until prohibition is lifted or other preventive measures taken, deaths from drinking illicit liquor will continue.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Fighting the Drug Menace

Narcotics peddlers arrested in Srinagar

Eighteen-year-old Abdul Latif suddenly went "mad" recently. Screaming and hurling abuses at everyone, he was taken away by the police. The doctors who examined him later found him sane but a "junkie" or drug-addict addicted to "brown sugar" a pinkish opium derivative similar to heroin. Cheap (only Rs 30 per quarter which is enough for four sessions) and available in even the local cigarette shops in Srinagar, it is one of the most dangerous drugs in Kashmir.

Latif is not an exception. There are thousands of boys and girls (4300, according to the police) who have recently become addicted to drugs in Kashmir. Doctors in Srinagar have attended many patients who have become addicted to "brown sugar" and were suffering from depression, severe pains, nausea, and loss of weight. Only two or three doses of the 'pink coloured powder' are said to be sufficient to get someone "hooked" permanently. "But if the patient is made to feel that you love him and are interested in his personal well-being he may recover," said Dr. Miraj who has successfully treated many patients.

Last month, when the word about the unfamiliar "brown sugar" and the implications its consumption brings with it spread and it became known that the dreaded drug was being commonly used by the younger generation in Kashmir, protests by many social and religious organisations throughout the valley followed and the matter also figured in the state Assembly. The state police department was also severely criticised for having failed to bring those involved in contraband trade to book.

The superintendent of police (crime), Mr Javed Makhdoomi, was asked to conduct the raids and break the drug-connection. The raids on posh hotels, house-boats on Dal Lake and some palatial residential houses in Srinagar which were conducted by Mr Makhdoomi himself led to the arrest of Anwara Begum, a Pakistani national from Abbotabad, her Kashmiri husband, Abdul Samad Guru, and their two pretty young daughters, Dilshada and Suraya, and 30 others. "Brown sugar" and 2,000 US dollars were seized along with other narcotics, foreign currency, blue films and incriminating documents. Anwara Begum, known as the "Queen of narcotics" in certain circles is claimed to have been in the heroin trade for the past three years. Investigations revealed that she and her daughters had been jailed earlier for drug peddling and prostitution but no action was taken after she threatened to name prominent government officials involved in such activities. After she was given bail by a local court she was allowed to continue her activities. It was only after protests by the public and after Mr Makhdoomi was shifted to the crime branch that she and her associates were arrested.

However, Anwara again moved an application in a local court seeking bail but it was rejected when the police pleaded that her release would hamper their investigations. It has been claimed that some foreigners including three Afghan nationals are also involved in the racket. Mr Makhdoomi has sent special teams of police to Delhi and some other parts of the country to arrest these foreign nationals there as well as locals who have fled to escape arrest. The help of the Delhi police, the Narcotics wing of the Central Bureau of Investigation and state police departments has also been sought. Interpol will also be approached, said police sources. One Afghan national Muhammad Aman has been in police custody in Srinagar after the police raided his house in Srinagar and recovered a large quantity of narcotics and foreign currency. Lawyers in Srinagar courts have also refused to defend Anwara when she approached them. "We did this with the intention of discouraging her and the like," said a lawyer. It was only after hiring a lawyer from outside that Anwara could again move her bail application in the court of the chief judicial magistrate in Srinagar. At the time of writing, no decision on the second application has been taken by the court.

According to Mr Makhdoomi, Anwara Begum was caught supplying "brown sugar" to her two agents in a house-boat on Dal Lake on 25 February. Her nearby residence was also raided and "brown sugar" and foreign currency were seized.

Drug addiction among college students, including girls is on the rise. According to reports the drug addicted girls are made to act in blue films and forced into prostitution. Anwara's two daughters were allegedly used to procure young girls. Police sources hoped that the arrests would help to bust the prostitution racket in the city as the flourishing flesh trade in posh hotels, house-boats and guest-houses in Srinagar has triggered off protests in the Valley. Former chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah has blamed the police in a recent statement. It is believed that the police have been taking no action because of the involvement of the son of a leading politician.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar



Anwara Begum (left) with her daughter Dilshada

RAJASTHAN

The Politics of Opportunism

Uproar over Raja Man Singh's death dies down

As the flames from the funeral pyre of Raja Man Singh of Bharatpur killed in a "police encounter" on 21 February leapt into the sky, angry promises to avenge his death were made by those surrounding the pyre. Some of them were made by political aspirants for the Assembly elections who had not been on speaking terms with the Raja for the last 20 years. All of Rajasthan would burn now, they declared. Nobody from the Congress(I) had dared to show his face at the funeral and a few days later the chief minister, Shiv Charan Mathur resigned.

Barely a fortnight afterwards, the Congress(I) won five of the eight Bharatpur Assembly seats, including that of Bharatpur city which the Congress(I) had never managed to win before. The Deeg issue, which cost the Congress(I) many seats in other parts of Rajasthan and in Uttar Pradesh, petered out by the afternoon of 22 March after chief minister Harideo Joshi stated in the House that the case had been transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation and the deputy superintendent of police who allegedly ordered the firing in which Raja Man Singh died, had been suspended. He also said that a judicial enquiry had been set up. Unfortunately, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat of the BJP and leader of the opposition was unable to speak up in the House on that day as he had not taken his oath as an MLA until then. Shekhawat was, however, in the Vidhan Sabha Bhavan. When this correspondent met him, Shekhawat said, "I have not even taken my oath since I have high blood pressure," when he was asked why he had not taken up the Raja Man Singh issue.

While the Deeg incident was practically the only issue the opposition took up during the first three days (interestingly, the Rajasthan Governor, O.P. Mehra did not mention the incident in his address) there seem to be disagreements over the incident within the opposition itself. The death of the Jat prince has begun a series of reactions in Rajasthan politics, with many MLAs wanting to use the incident to further their own image, or tarnish others'. K. Natwar Singh, the minister of state for steel and the Lok Sabha MP from Bharatpur, stands at the centre of this struggle for power. His entry into Rajasthan politics has made many politicians both in the ruling party and the opposition insecure. Some of the opposition MLAs want to politicise the issue and involve Natwar Singh in the Deeg incident—Nathi Singh of the DMKP made a critical statement in the House implying the role of Natwar Singh in the incident.



Jagdish Yadav

Natwar Singh

According to an opposition MLA, there are a few MLAs who want to implicate Natwar Singh and the district officials in Bharatpur because this would place them in a better bargaining position. A few MLAs fear an escalation of tension between the Jats and the Rajputs over the Raja Man Singh incident. The Raja was a Jat, the DSP, K.S. Bhatti, a Rajput. Said Mr Yadhunath Singh of the DMKP, "We are afraid that there could be tension between the Jats and the Rajputs if the matter gets out of hand." He wondered why the guns fired at Raja Man Singh have not been confiscated. To complicate matters further, it is also believed that the Rajput lobby will eventually defend K.S. Bhatti.

Madhu Jain, Jaipur

BOMBAY

Photographers' Appeal Turned Down

Instead of the world champions and their World Cup making the front pages of Sunday's newspapers, the news of photographers boycotting the arrival at Sahar airport hit the headlines. Photographers and journalists went two hours before the one am arrival time of the victorious champions, "because we knew there is always trouble with the airport authorities" said *Daily's* Mukesh Parpiani. "We approached the deputy general manager, operations, International Airport Authority (IAA), Mr Agarwal and asked for permission to go outside the customs enclosure so that we could take pictures of the cricketers as they emerged. We even approached the director-general of the IAA, Mr Tilak, but they would not listen. They said we could take pictures of the cricketers when they came out of the airport and boarded the bus. This was impossible because there was not enough light for this, and the huge crowds that rush towards the cricketers make it impossible for photographers to take pictures.

They allowed TV people outside the customs lounge and we only asked for the same treatment." They finally tried to push photographers and journalists into the terminal manager's office which could accomodate barely 15 people and from where they could see nothing. Once the cricketers arrived, there was total confusion and relatives and friends of the customs and airport officials were seen in the customs enclosure. The photographers and journalists were outside the airport building shouting slogans.

This is a normal feature, said several of the photographers interviewed. "This time we were in a majority so we could protest. The airport authorities would not even listen to the state minister for sports, Mr Nakul Patel," said one of them. What the photographers with the daily newspapers and magazines resent is the way freelancers who work on behalf of ministers get airport passes. Another pampered group is the one which consists of foreign TV and cameramen, who often represent small papers, said the angry photographers.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

Star Attraction



Alokе Mitra

Vasundhara Raje

There are 200 MLAs in the Rajasthan Assembly, and 100 journalists to cover its proceedings; many among the latter can often be found dozing in the room next to the gallery. But during the opening session of the Assembly this time, a near-stampede took place when Vasundhara Raje was sworn in; glamour had at last returned to the Assembly after a long time. The daughter of Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia of Gwalior is the newly-elected MLA from Dholpur on a BJP ticket. She is also the new star attraction in a generally more youthful Vidhan Sabha with her long, lustrous locks and big eyes. Ms Vasundhara Raje who lost the last parliamentary elections when she contested from Bhind, won handsomely in the legislative elections, despite the fact that both her husband and his mother campaigned against her.

Mum's the Word



Jack Taylor

Keeping mum is not easy. Jack Taylor (47), who now heads the Special Projects Team of the *Dallas Times Herald* had the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) chasing him when he refused to divulge the source of his explosive article relating to the defence department of the US government. Taylor and Carol Green (40), a lawyer specialising in the defence of press freedom, were in India recently to address a three-day seminar on investigative journalism organised by the United States Information Services (USIS) in Jaipur in the third week of March with 30 indigenous sleuths. Taylor says that he was cleared of charges of espionage, but if ever he did another story which embarrassed the government, the file could be brought out again.

Director's Debut

The line between theatre and cinema has become increasingly thin. The latest to cross over is Bhanu Bharti, formerly of the National School of Drama which has in the past gifted us Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri and Raj Babbar. Bharti will, in September, direct a film based on two plays of Frederic Garcia Lorca: *Yerma* and *Blood Wedding* which will be set in the deserts of Rajasthan for the local exotica. Starring in the film are Bharti's co-student at the NSD, Naseeruddin Shah, as well as Anupam Kher and a new find, Kiran Thakur Singh. Bharti is at present directing a rather unusual play in Jaipur. It is *Pashu Gayatri* and has been written by the noted Malayalam writer K. Narayanan Pannicker. The actors are a group of Bhil tribals from Udaipur district with whom Bharti has been working for some time. Bharti wants to set up a permanent repertory of tribal actors.

More Than Glamour

Will *Silver Screen* shake off the stardust? Uma Rao who took over *Stardust* from Shobha Kilachand when the latter started *Celebrity* has returned after a break of a few years with her own film magazine, *Silver Screen* which is going to be launched on 1 April. It is going to be a magazine for developing tastes and an audience which has grown up, according to Ms Rao. What is new about this magazine is a section on Hollywood: there will be 20 pages with news from Los Angeles. That does not mean that Bombay and Madras will be edged out: there will be 35 pages for the films produced at home. But here again Ms Rao promises a "fresh approach." Will *Silver Screen* be a pioneer?

Theatre of Nostalgia

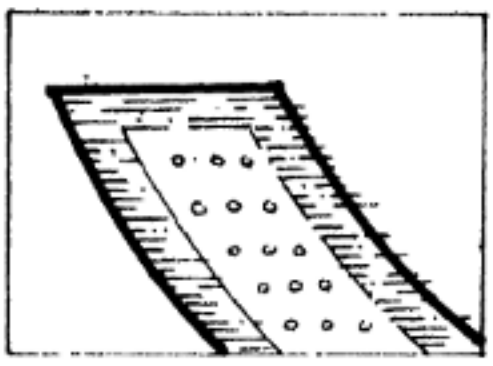


Jayanta Das

Shashi Kapoor with Jennifer Kapoor

The grand old Gaiety Theatre might be given a second life. The former centre of the high life on the Mall in Shimla will probably be bought by Shashi Kapoor who plans to start a repertory company for his Prithvi Theatres. The other place Kapoor has his eyes on—and this for reasons sentimental—is the beautiful opera house where he and his wife, the late Jennifer Kendall, would often meet before they married. Both theatres are anachronisms from days when going to the theatre was an event: they now look sad and dilapidated, and are not even a shadow of their former glamorous selves.

Band-Aid Helps in Psoriasis



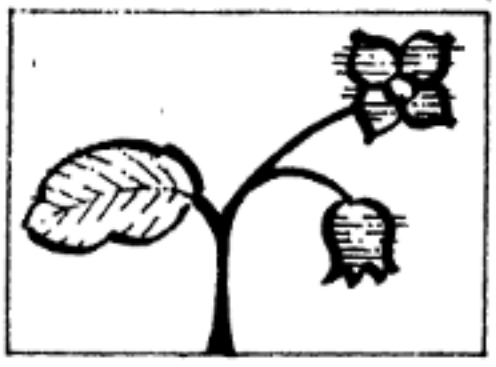
Dr Ronald Shore of Johns Hopkins university in Baltimore, USA, has come upon an interesting discovery: that band-aid can be used in treating psoriasis, a skin disease marked by red patches covered with scales. Dr Shore applied a band-aid after taking a small skin sample from the centre of one psoriatic plaque, and when the band-aid was removed, it was noted that the part of the psoriatic plaque which had been covered by the adhesive portions of the band-aid had cleared totally. The part of the plaque that had been covered by the pad remained unchanged. "Prolonged application of tape will probably prove most beneficial when combined with other therapies," Dr Shore said, "since lesions in a minority of patients clear totally when it is used alone."

The New Factor

A research led by Prof. J. D. Swales at Leicester University in England is investigating the possibility that the composition of the membranes which surround the body cells affects blood pressure. High blood pressure is the most important known risk factor that leads to strokes and heart attacks: two of the major disabling and killing disorders of modern life. In England, for instance, up to 20 per cent of the population suffers from high blood pressure, but approximately half the people who have high blood pressure are unaware of it. While some scientists believe that differences in salt intake lead to high blood pressure, there is proof also that dietary fats influence blood pressure.

Prof. Swales' team believes that changes in the cell membrane could alter the way in which cells handle such substances as sodium, potassium and calcium. These abnormalities can be demonstrated in the white and red blood cells of the blood and it seems likely that there are similar changes in the muscular cells of the blood vessel cells.

True Seed for Healthy Potatoes



Scientists in Britain are working on a project where small farmers in developing countries will be able to grow healthy and abundant crops of potatoes from true seed. The traditional method has been to grow potatoes from seed tubers. In Europe and America sophisticated schemes have been developed over many years to produce high quality seed potatoes. The cost of this seed is relatively low compared to costs of production. In developing countries, the potato is still considered a luxury vegetable, the main reason being the high cost of seed tubers. Only a couple of handfuls of true potato seed are needed to plant one hectare of land, compared to two tons of tubers.

How Do Fish Navigate?

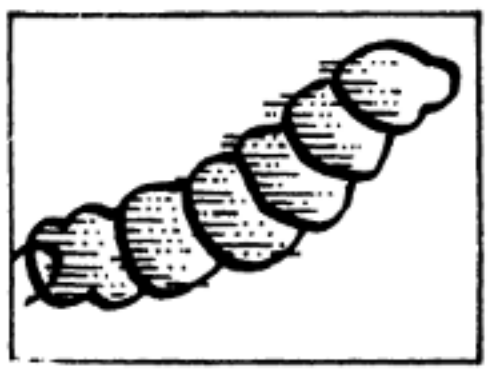


Whales and dolphins can navigate by means of the earth's magnetic field, according to US scientists. Marine mammals tend to beach themselves at places along the Atlantic coast where the strength of the magnetic field is low. The researchers compared the sites of 212 live strandings (those in which animals swim ashore rather than being washed up dead) with the magnetic patterns on the ocean floor. 95 per cent of the strandings occurred where bands of minimum strength intersect the shoreline. Researchers still do not know why whales and dolphins strand themselves. Also, if they have internal compasses, where are they located? In a few animals such as bees, fish and birds, scientists have identified the sensory organs containing crystals of magnetite, an iron oxide. Although magnetite has been found scattered throughout the bodies of several species of dolphins, scientists have yet to determine whether the animals can use it to get their bearings.

WHO's Successful Programmes

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has checked the alarming increase of schistosomiasis, which is a common menace to about 20 million people. Also known as bilharziasis, after the German pathologist Theodor Bilharz, the disease affects one out of 20 people in 74 developing countries but is largely unknown in northern, temperate climates. The disease causes rash, cough and chest pains, cramps, diarrhoea, fever, blood in the urine and enlargement of the spleen and liver. A form of bladding cancer is also linked with the infection. Children under 14 usually contract the disease through swimming, adult men through fishing and farming and women through washing clothes.

A New Cure for Cancer



And now, silkworms for cancer. Japanese scientists are working on a technique where they can make silkworms produce the protein interferon, the prime candidate for a cancer cure. Daiichi Seyaki, a Japanese company, has introduced a new biotechnological method using silkworms to produce alpha-interferon, which is one of several forms of the protein which is produced naturally in human cells as a defence mechanism against infection.

The strategy relies on a virus that commonly attacks the silkworm and infects its cells. Once the virus is inside the cell, it produces large amounts of protein within the silkworm. By isolating the part of the virus gene that controls the production of protein and replacing it with the human gene that makes interferon, interferon may be produced instead.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Devasmita Dutt

TRIPUNITHURA (KERALA): A footloose ram has taken to travelling by bus in this town. He shuttles practically every day, between the temple towns of Chottanikara and Tripunithura, covering a distance of about ten kilometres But a ten kilometre trek can be too tiring even for a quadruped So he hit upon the idea of riding a bus. The private bus operators, known to invite anyone in, did not grudge the new passenger. The ram even has his favourite bus which he takes on its first trip at daybreak He spends the day roaming round the marketplace, fighting off "rivals" encroaching on his "territory" near the bus stop. Come nightfall and he is ready for the return trip. The same bus waits for him every day. The ram steps in through the front door as nonchalantly as any seasoned commuter and occupies his favourite place, the space just behind the driver's seat. The bus crew generously allow him to travel free—*Indian Express* (P Suryanarayana Murthy, Gudivada)

GANGTOK: Two candidates in the Assembly elections in Sikkim got only one vote each: probably their own. One of them was a candidate of the Sikkim Prajatantra Congress and the other an independent. Many of the Prajatantra Congress nominees did not even cross double figures—*The Times of India* (B.B.L. Sharma, New Delhi)

BANGALORE: Mr A.R. Ayajit has created a possible record by registering a grand cipher in Belgaum constituency in the elections to the Karnataka Assembly. He is one of the 296 "protest candidates" put up by the Kannada editors' forum against the alleged "bogus voting" by the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samithi. All the candidates withdrew in favour of the Congress(I), but managed to garner some votes—*Indian Express* (J. Ravishankar, Bangalore)

NEW DELHI: A brave couple foiled a robbery attempt in their house in Jwala Nagar in Shahdara area on 7 February and helped the police arrest three men including an Uttar Pradesh Police constable. The three culprits visited the residence of Mr C. K. Jain and asked his wife if there was a room for rent. The suspicious housewife asked them to meet her husband in his shop in Chotta Bazar in Shahdara area. Within minutes of the three arriving at Mr Jain's shop in Chotta Bazar, his wife telephoned him and warned him about the strangers. Catching the gist of the conversation, the three men tried to escape but were caught by bystanders after Mr Jain raised an alarm—*Indian Express* (J. Trehan, New Delhi)

MOUNT ABU: A polling party travelled 12 km by jeep and trudged through thickly-forested mountain track carrying ballot boxes to help the 23.3 voters of Utraj village exercise their franchise in the Assembly election of Rajasthan. Located 1,700 metres above sea level the village is the highest point between Mount Everest and the Nilgiris—*The Searchlight* (Rajesh Sahay, Jhumri Telaiya, Bihar)

THANJAVUR: Forest officials were keeping a night-long vigil to catch one of the two crocodiles that had strayed into Karumbur village near Kumbakonam recently and taken refuge in a tank People have not been entering the tank. It all started when the villagers were shocked to see two crocodiles, three metres long, crawling on the street, perhaps, in search of prey. The residents caught a crocodile while the other escaped into the tank—*The Hindu* (M. Govindarajan, Madras)

BOMBAY: The calendars of a well-known transport company, found displayed in a locality in north-west Bombay, led to the busting of a two-woman gang involved in several thefts in the western suburbs. The women who were rag-pickers and hailed from Madras, had stolen electrical goods worth Rs 25,000 from the company's godown by breaking open the shutters thrice in a fortnight, the police said. They had also stolen the tell-tale calendars—a bundle of about 1,000—and distributed them in a hutment colony—*Indian Express* (B. Anandi, Bangalore)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Does he not know that he rides a tiger and this tiger is a maneater?—Atal Behari Vajpayee, on Rajiv Gandhi's drive against black money, in *Indian Express*

Indian journalism has got fat, flabby, lazy and mercenary—Rusi Karanjia in *Imprint*

Patriotism is a commodity equated today with the Congress(I) and the majority community—George Fernandes in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

When I have renunciated all my comforts, even the show and glamour, what is this little thing (the Maruti). Service must bring you glamour and not the vehicle you ride. I can even come by bicycle—NTR in *The Telegraph*

The F-16s that they (the US) have sent us are for the generals like little boys playing with toys—Air Marshal Asghar Khan and leader of the Tehriq-i-Istiqlal Party

This is a budget where the union government wants to have its cake and eat it too—Biju Patnaik, on the union budget, in *The Times of India*

I'm afraid it's red like anyone else's—Prince Charles, remarking on his blood, some of which he recently donated, quoted in *Time*



Prabhat Kumar

She (Rekha) is really original. You can't say Rekha is like Madhubala or Meena Kumari, she is totally original, custom made, one piece—Shashi Kapoor in *Star and Style*



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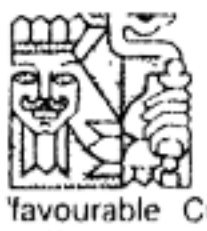
BEGINNING 31 MARCH 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a week of mixed fortunes Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway Creative artists and sportsmen will also prosper At home your children will be a source of inspiration However, your financial prospects are not so bright you may have to borrow money to tide over this lean period This is also a bad phase for marriage negotiations
Good dates: 1, 2 and 3
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South



LEO (15 August—14 September) Do not take hasty decisions regarding your career consult e'ders before finalising plans. Businessmen are likely to benefit from this favourable period On the financial front most of you will gain money through an unexpected source The home front will remain cheerful This is also a favourable week for lovers you can go ahead with marriage plans
Good dates: 1, 3 and 4
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Doctors, politicians and those connected with the security services will find this period extremely favourable Creative artists and sportsmen will receive rare honours However businessmen are advised not to make fresh investments during this phase The home front will add to your worries. This is not a good time for love and marriage
Good dates: 2, 3 and 6
Lucky numbers. 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: South-east



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Try and avoid disputes this week Enemies will be active during this phase. do not take even your close friends and relatives for granted Financially, this is a bleak period On the domestic front, someone close to you may misunderstand you However, this is a bright period for creative artists The phase is also favourable for love and matrimonial alliances
Good dates: 4, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) The stars foretell a bright period for all of you If you are in love and intending to get married, this is the ideal time to do so Legal problems should also be settled during this phase On the financial front, most of you will gain money or property Policemen will receive awards for bravery Your health will also improve but do not neglect your diet
Good dates: 31, 2 and 5
Lucky numbers: 1, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) The time is particularly favourable for sportsmen most of you will come out with flying colours in competitions Professionals and businessmen will also make slow but steady progress The domestic front will add to your joys this week Those above the age of 45 should keep a vigilant eye on their health and diet
Good dates: 1, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is an extremely lucky week for all of you Businessmen are advised to push their efforts to the utmost while professionals should utilise the opportunities that come their way A journey towards the middle of the week will prove financially profitable This is also a good time for lovers you may go ahead with marriage plans.
Good dates: 31, 1 and 2
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 5
Favourable direction. North



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Speculations will yield favourable results and businessmen should not hesitate to take risks On the professional front however, you are likely to face opposition from your colleagues Students are advised not to fritter away precious time At home the health of your wife will cause concern Lovers are advised not to execute adventurous plans
Good dates: 2, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: West



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This is not a good week for most of you The domestic as well as the professional front will bother you throughout this period Your deteriorating health will add to your worries this week You may have to borrow money from friends to tide over this period Avoid risky financial deals A letter will bring good tidings
Good dates. 3, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction. South



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is a favourable week for those in love but guard against misunderstandings The phase is equally good for professionals. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their empire. On the economic front most of you will gain through inheritance The domestic front will remain peaceful. A letter will bring good tidings But do not neglect your health
Good dates: 3, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: South-west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is an ideal week for those in love go ahead with marriage plans You may have to undertake a long journey towards the middle of the week The time is also favourable for politicians. On the financial front, however, you are likely to suffer setbacks The domestic front will add to your worries Your health will deteriorate steadily.
Good dates: 1 3 and 4
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-east



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Your financial prospects will look up and you will be able to repay most of your debts Businessmen should not hesitate to undertake risky deals Professionals will also benefit from this favourable period At home your children will be a source of joy Lovers will find their parents in a compromising mood. However your health will continue to bother you
Good dates: 31 2 and 4
Lucky numbers: 2 5 and 6
Favourable direction West

For those born on the 1st, 2nd or 3rd of any month:

Most of you are extremely shy by nature you always try to keep away from friends and relatives. You spend a lot of time reading books and magazines most of you will make good professors or doctors. You are also very practical in all your dealings. This is why your relatives look upon you for advice. Women born during this period are extremely fair and they make good housewives.

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BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY

The Risks Must Be Publicised



Victims of the MIC leak from the Union Carbide factory

A fact-finding team of four doctors of the Medico Friend Circle (MFC) has expressed serious concern over the manner in which medical research is being conducted on Bhopal gas victims and the callousness of the authorities in not giving proper information and advice to pregnant women exposed to the poison gas. In a report presented to an all-India convention of various health, environment and activist groups—the Zahreeli Gas Kand Sangarsh Morcha—at Bhopal this February, the doctors have raised several specific demands related to these two issues:

- The government should immediately publicise the potential dangers facing pregnant women exposed to the gas during the first trimester, so that these women can still take a timely decision to terminate pregnancy. To facilitate such a decision, adequate facilities for ultrasonagraphy and amniocentesis should be provided without delay. This measure is described as urgent because many pregnant women are now crossing the safe period for termination.
- All exposed couples of reproductive age should be advised to avoid conception until they are totally detoxified. They should have access to contraception through all available public and private channels.
- Details of all medical research projects should be made public and a public debate be allowed on the relevance and propriety of such research.
- All researchers should be required to get the *informed consent* of every individual, or guardian of such an individual, who is the subject of any such research.

During their investigations in Bhopal, the MFC doctors found that a large number of research projects have been launched and that "the research interests of the doctors are tending to take priority over the need to provide service to the people." The team also found that women have suffered from abortions, still births, diminished foetal movements, suppression of lactation, abnormal vaginal discharge, and menstrual disturbances. Pregnant women have *not* been told of the possible risk of birth defects as a result of exposure to the gas.

Vimal Balasubrahmanyan, Secunderabad

Jostling crowds, winding queues



VARIETY

CHESS

The current regulations for awarding international titles are unfair and, strangely enough, the country which suffers most under the system is the Soviet Union.

The essence of the problem is that title norms may only be attained in international competition, while most Soviets play all of their chess internally. The result is that there is a vast shoal of untitled players within the USSR each of whom could knock down the new breed of international masters like ninepins, but has never had the chance.

One such character is Zarub Azmaiparashvilli, an untitled Georgian who beat Karpov in the 1983 Soviet championship. The following game is taken from the tournament in Albena last September in which Azmaiparashvilli shared first place with Tal. His opponent's grandmaster title is made to look like a prime target for the Trade Descriptions Act.

White, Z Azmaiparashvilli Black, I. Farago. Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 P–Q4 N–KB3 2 P–QB4 P–K3
3 N–QB3 B–N5 4 P–K3 0–0
5 B–Q3 P–Q4 6 N–B3 P–B4
7 0–0 PxBP 8 BxBP QN–Q2
9 Q–K2 P–QN3 10 R–Q1 PxP
11 PxP B–N2 12 B–KN5

A move of inferior reputation, but such assessment does not fully explore the consequence of the ensuing pawn sacrifice.

Farago (Black)



Azmaiparashvilli (White) to move

12 . . BxQN 13 PxB Q–B2
14 B–Q3! QxBP 15 N–K5 Q–R4
16 Q–K3 Q–Q4 17 Q–R3 P–KR3?!

A move he lives to regret. Instead 17 . . . KR–B1 18 NxN QxB 19 NxN+ PxN 20 QxP+ K–B1 is very playable.

18 B–QB4 Q–Q3 19 B–B4 Q–K2
20 R–Q3! NxN

The prospect of 21 R–KN3 prompts Black to try to resolve matters.

21 PxN N–K5 DIAGRAM
22 BxRP!

Did Black overlook 22 . . . PxB 23 QxRP Q–N4 24 R–KN3? Certainly his reply smacks of defeat.

22 . . . N–N4 23 Q–R5 PxB
24 QxP P–B3 25 PxP QxP
26 QxQ RxQ 27 R–KN3 R–N3
28 P–KR4 R–QB1 29 RxN Resigns

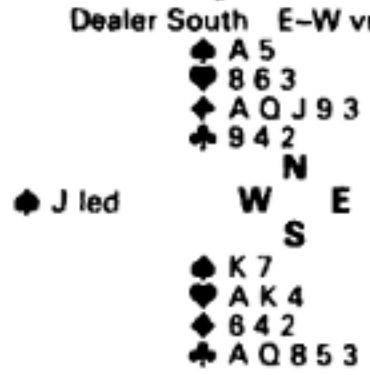
Electing not to fight on two pawns down after 29 RxR 30 BxP+

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

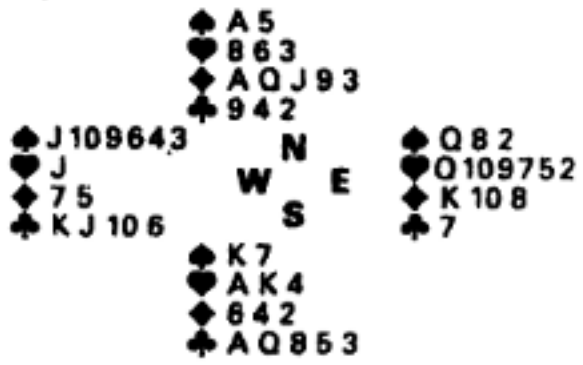
You may think you have seen, or read about, most forms of deceptive play, but this is something new:

Dealer South E–W vulnerable



South is in 3NT and West leads ♠ J. South wins and calculates that four diamond tricks will be enough for game; however, the diamonds may be 4–1 and it must be right to lay down the ace of clubs first, because if West has a singleton king, four tricks in clubs will be available.

West's king of clubs does fall under the ace, so South happily leads a low club, intending to pick up East's J 10 x x. But alas, the full hand is:



West wins the second club and clears the spades. It occurs to South that he might have countered West's brilliant deception: he can lead a diamond to dummy's ace and play a club from the table. When East shows out, South can revert to diamonds.

You hold as South:
♠ 10 6 2 ♥ K 10 4 2 ♦ 3 ♣ A K Q 7 6
1NT on your right, you pass, Two Hearts on your left (transfer), double from partner, Two Spades from the opener. You bid Four Hearts, obviously. In **More Deadly than the Male** (Faber, £8.95 or £3.95) Rixi Markus explains why this bid (which she made) was wrong; it's first-class bridge and first-class writing.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. Name the Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo (Zaire) who was assassinated on 17 January 1961.
2. Spanish is the official language of all South American countries except one, where Portuguese is spoken. Which one?
3. What do the following have in common: Antonio Vivaldi, Nicola Paganini, Yehudi Menuhin and Fritz Kreisler?
4. What is the hardest natural substance found on earth?
5. With which American President do you associate the radio broadcasts to the American people called "fireside chats"?
6. In medicine, what is myelitis?
7. What is gun cotton?
8. What was the Nazi doctrine demanding land from other neighbouring countries as "living space" for Germans called?
9. With which sport do you associate the penholder and the shake-hand grip?
10. Name the bacteriologist who discovered the anti-bacterial enzyme lysozome and penicillin?
11. Name the largest office building in the world?
12. The flag of which country has a dragon on a red and yellow background?
13. How is Lev Davidovich Bronstein better known as?
14. Which international financial organisation was proposed at the Bretton Woods conference and established on 27 December 1945 for the development of world trade?
15. The foil, the epee and the sabre are used in which sport?

ANSWERS

1. Patrice Lumumba.
2. Brazil.
3. They are famous violinists.
4. The diamond.
5. Franklin D. Roosevelt.
6. The inflamation of the spinal cord.
7. An explosive substance, manufactured by saturating cotton with nitric and sulphuric acid.
8. *Lebensraum*.
9. Table-tennis.
10. Alexander Fleming.
11. The Pentagon which houses the US military setup.
12. Bhutan.
13. Leon Trotsky.
14. The International Monetary Fund (IMF).
15. Fencing.

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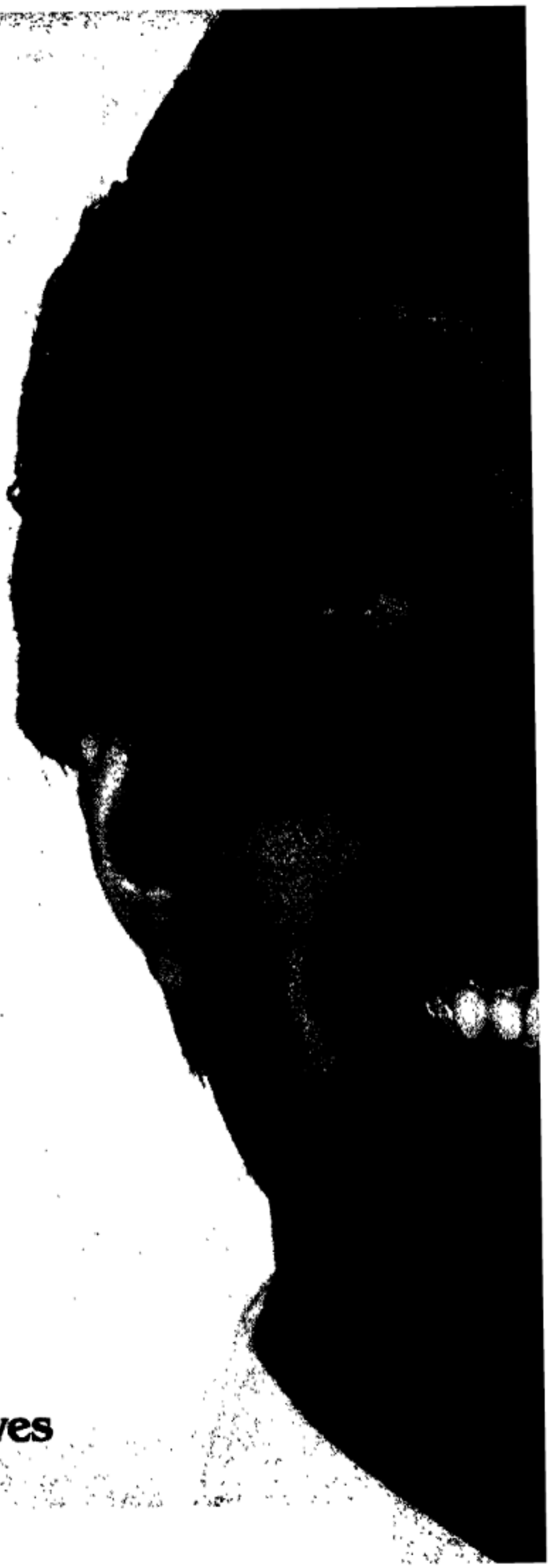
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TEASERS

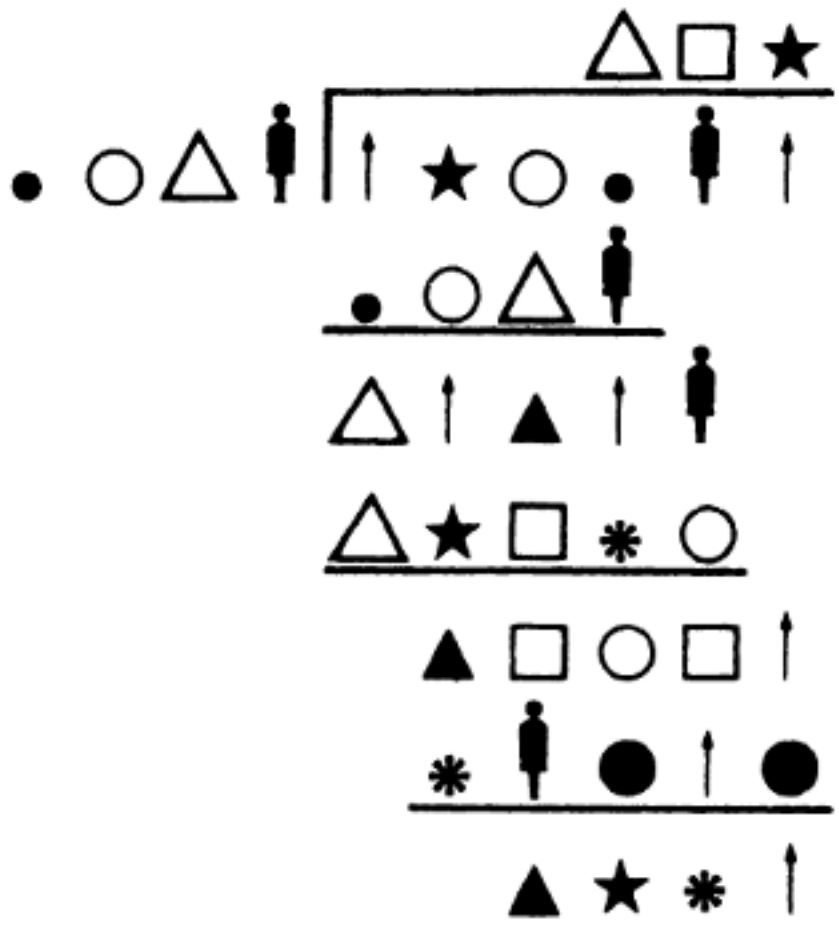
BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Quizzbizz

If!

SYMBOLS	**= 19**
LOGO	**= 15**
ADVERTISING	**= 9**
Then, QUIZZ	**= ?**

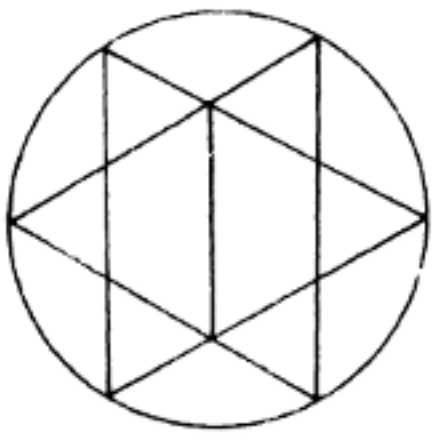
Figure it out



In this division problem digits from 0 to 9 are still represented by symbols.

Can you decipher this symbol division?

Shape Sleuth



Without lifting your pencil and crossing a line, trace the following figure in one single stroke.

Quick Think

How quickly can you form one nine-letter word, first, and then re-arrange the nine letters to form two new words:

AEDDNNOLI

Mind Bender

	9	4	1	1	
6	8	2	2	3	2
0	7	6	3	2	1
7	8	7	4	1	3
8	9	8	5	4	2
1	2	9	7	5	9

In the figure above, interchange rows of numbers in such a manner that in the final position, the top five rows add up to give the new number in the bottom row.

Word Power

Take a six-letter word, change one letter only and shuffle the six letters to form a new word. Now change another, and shuffle the new set of six letters to form a new word again. Do this till you have gone through as many letters of alphabet as possible. Look at the example below: We started with CRAVES.

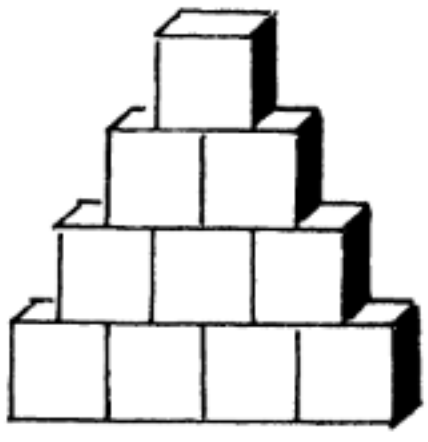
WORD	LETTER SUBSTITUTED
CRAVES	
CRAZES	Z
TRACES	T
TRACKS	K
RACKET	E
CARPET	P
NECTAR	N
GARNET	G
BANTER	B
BARMEN	M

and so on, till all the letters of the alphabet are used up. The score for this chain of words is:

6 (number of letters in the word) X 9 substitutes = 54

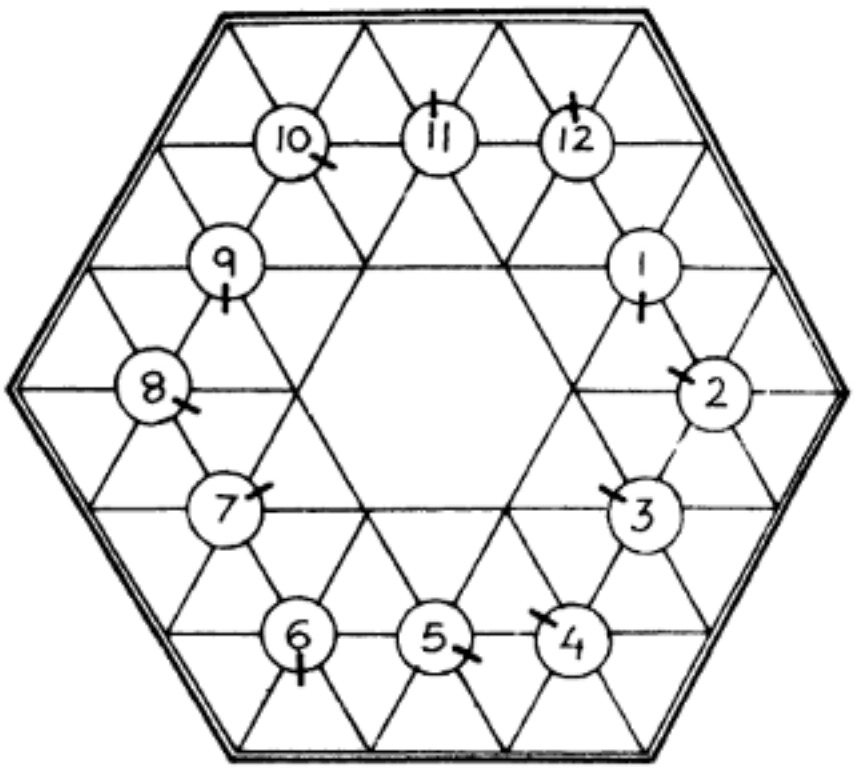
Can you make a chain of 7-letter words, starting with any word of your of your choice, and get a full houses: a score of 7 X 26 substitutes or 182?

Blockbuster



A, C, D, E, I, M, N, S, W, Y

Word Play



This word maze will contain 12 words, when completed, one letter per space, reading in either clockwise or anti-clockwise direction. The clues to the words are given below:
1. Royal females 2. Site of excavation 3. A room next to the kitchen 4. Male goose 5. Caring around 6. Milky acid 7. Not lenient 8. Relating to a tribe 9. More than a laugh 10. Sufficient 11. Mix around, for Zen 12. A male bee.

What's in a Word?

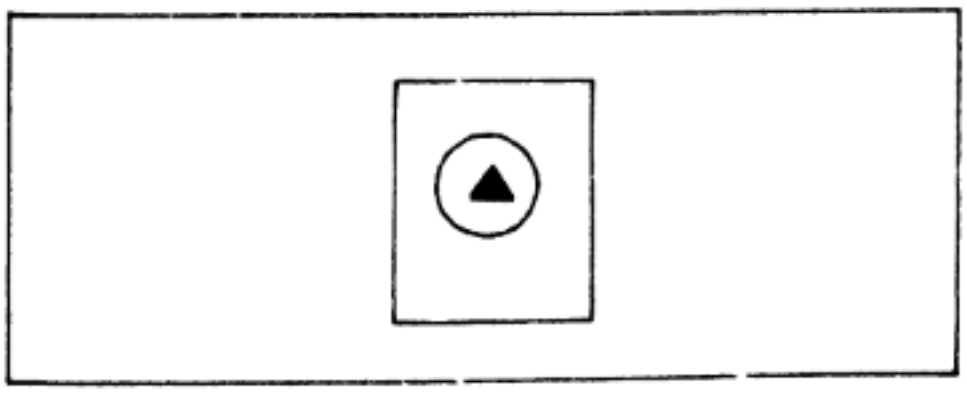
Here is a group of words that have been squashed together. There are two on each line. Can you disentangle them and say what the original words were?
P E B R A N I T U T T L E

C C H O R E C O A L A M T E

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Scrambles: Green, Range, Armed, Slave. Paint and Grasp.
Shape Sleuth: C
Witsharpener (Page 71): History, Contemplate, Pinafore, Mathematic

Mind bender:



Witsharpener: Anu Kumar (1) and her brother Gajendra (3 x 1) get 4; Bina Rajwade (2) and her brother Dev (4 x 2) get 10; Kaveri Sharma (3) and her brother Nandu (3) get 6; Damayanti Lal (4) and her brother Piyare Lal (4 x 2) get 12

Think Tank:

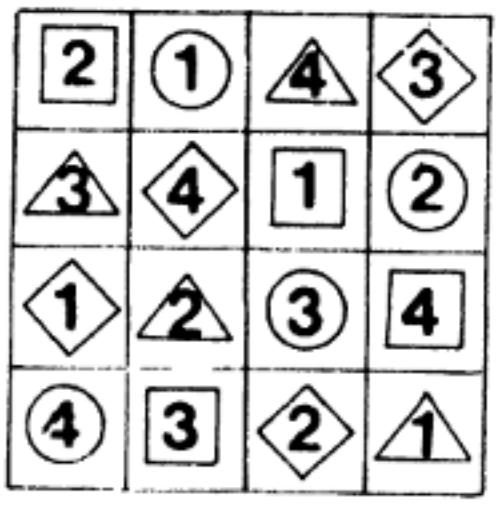
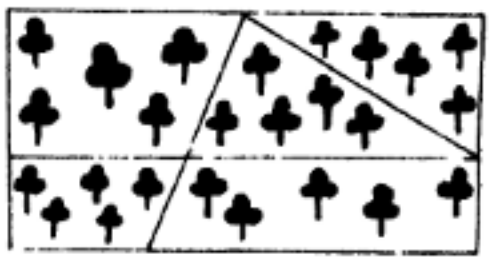
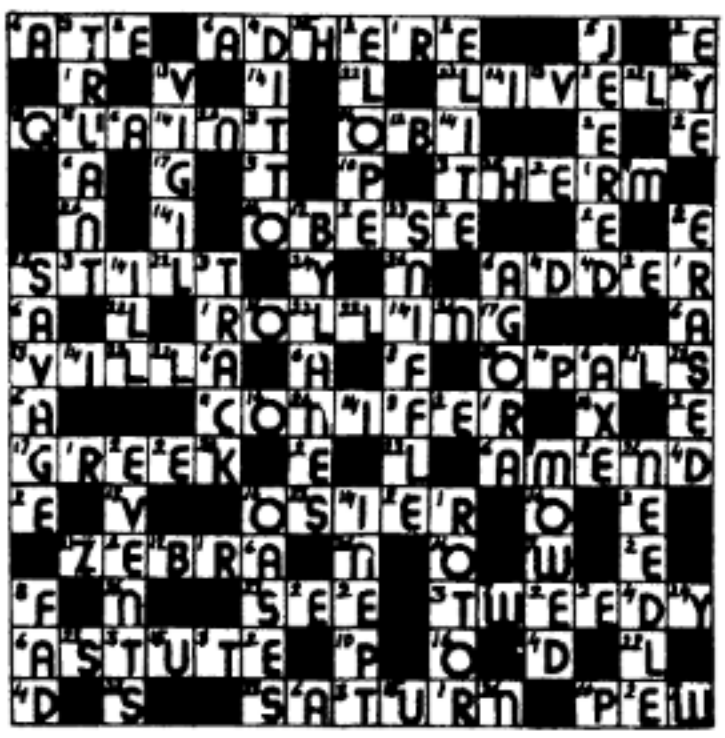


Figure it Out:



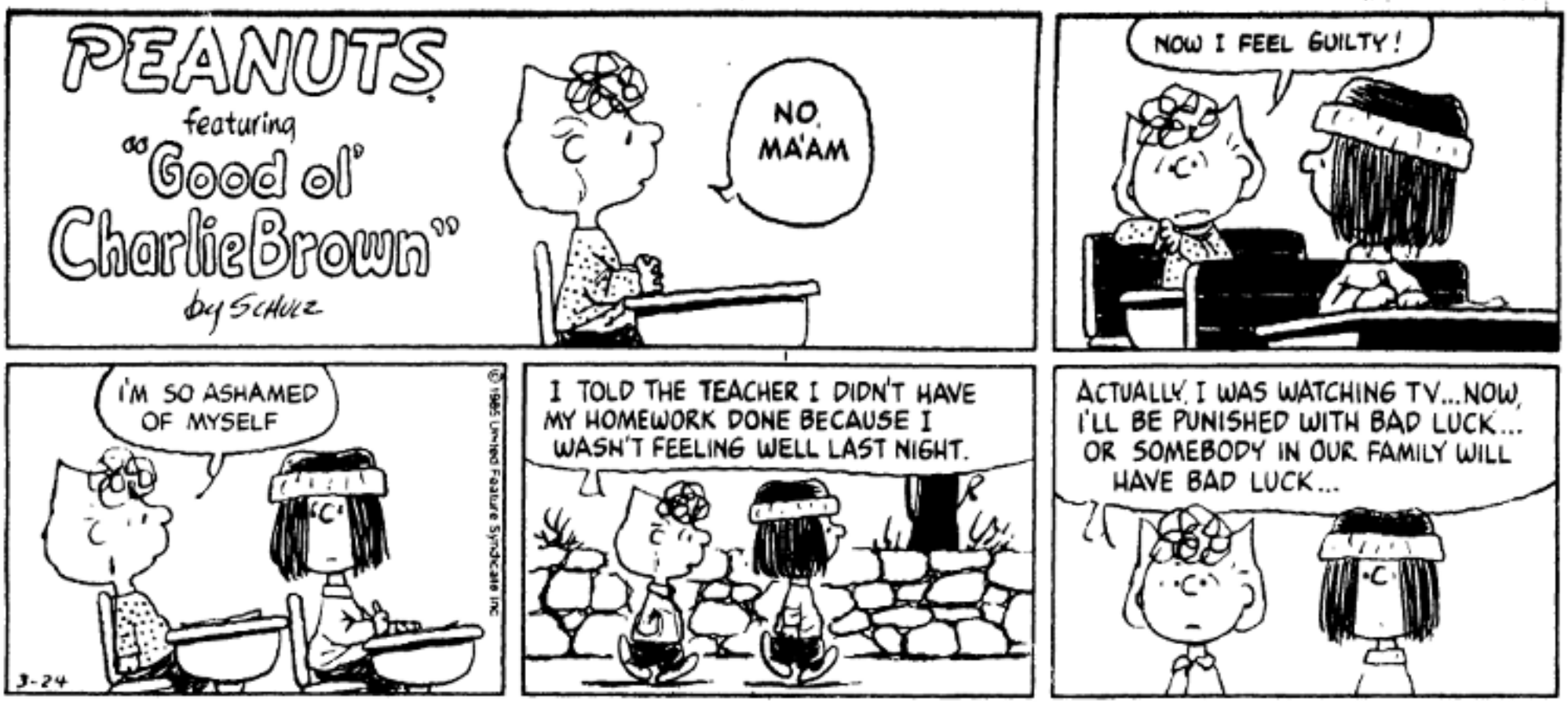
Quick Think: Aunt Gita must be one of my father's sisters. As he has one more brother than he has sisters, there must be two more males than females in his family and Aunt Gita must therefore have three more brothers than sisters. As she has twice as many brothers as sisters, she must have six brothers and three sisters, so that I have five uncles—one of the brothers is my father—and four aunts, including Aunt Gita.

Cryptocross.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R	E	T	D	J	A	W	F	M	P	C	B	Y

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
I	U	O	G	X	Q	K	Z	L	S	Y	H	N



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Durgaprasad

Jayaprada: not friendly

Jayaprada has her share of fans and ardent admirers. Said one who is quite close to her, "I cannot understand Jayaprada. She has everything in her favour. She is good-looking, has a good figure and is a good actress. Then why is she so scared of being friendly. She is so cold and remote always. Why can't she relax and enjoy herself when she can."

Deepti Naval was very disturbed. A gossip magazine carried an item which said that she was married before she married *Prakash Jha*, and had left her husband somewhere in New York before she came to Bombay six years ago. The item also mentioned that Prakash too had a wife tucked away somewhere in Bihar. "How can they be so ridiculous? Don't they know how much they hurt two individuals who are just starting off in life?" Deepti asked with tears in her eyes. Prakash, however, just laughed off the whole thing.

Sarika who is facing bad times is being tempted with lucrative offers to play the vamp in Hindi films. "The day she agrees to do that she will beat all the other vamps and even some of the leading ladies hollow," says director *Subhash Ghai*. But Sarika has not given in to the temptations yet. The man in her life is against the move, it is said.

Shobhan Babu has promised never to act in a film, with two big stars. He did not like what happened to him in *Mahasangramam* where he co-starred with *Krishna*. What happened is that Shobhan was completely over-shadowed by Krishna. Hence, the decision to act in films alone.

Recently a Telugu producer approached *Rajnikanth* to act in a 3-D film. He offered him a large amount of money, in fact, double his normal rate. But Rajnikanth refused bluntly. Apparently he did not take up the lucrative offer as it would clash with his callsheets.

Has *Manoj Kumar* lost his magic touch? This question is being asked in film circles in Bombay these days. In fact, Manoj Kumar has never been the same again after he made *Kranti*, his last successful film. Soon after the film was completed, he went underground and did not come of his hideout for months. At that time, a number of stories came out of the gossip mills. Some said he was seriously sick. Others said he had become an alcoholic specially after the tragic death of his father. To make matters worse he was even rushed to hospital to be treated for a mysterious ailment. A film called *Santosh* which was, till then, in the making for more than five years was further delayed and another film, *Ricky*, which was planned to resurrect his son *Kunal's* sagging career also suffered. The worst is over now. The great actor is trying his best to make a comeback to form. He has completed work on both *Santosh* and *Ricky*, and is busy putting things together to start *Clerk*. *Mohammad Ali* and *Zeb*, the star couple from Pakistan, are acting in the film, while Manoj himself will play the title role. He has approached *Rekha* and *Naseeruddin Shah* but they have yet to sign up.



Jayant Das

Mandakini: exposed

It is not so easy to be a *Raj Kapoor* heroine. Actresses like *Padmini*, *Vyjayantimala*, *Dimple*, *Zeenat Aman* and *Padmini Kolhapure* realised it when they worked with him. He made them expose their bodies under some pretext or the other. The latest to have undergone similar treatment is the youngest Raj Kapoor discovery, *Mandakini*. She is playing a "very different role" in the film and people who have seen the rushes and pictures of the young girl are already talking about her exposing her body without being obscene or vulgar. "For me the female form is God's most beautiful creation and I don't see anything wrong in exposing a beautiful body. What's the use of hiding a body that should be seen and admired?" Raj asks.

The more *Radha* tries to pass on some of her extra films to elder sister *Ambika*, the more the producers turn away from her. Radha is being flooded with Telugu films, too many in fact. So, like a good girl she tries to pass the producer on to Ambika. It is Radha or someone else, certainly not Ambika, say the producers. Asked why this was so, one producer said, "Ambika is the south's *Amrita Singh*. She is not at all feminine and even lacks the glamour that Amrita has."

DELHI DIARY

Unexpected Punctuality

Sonia Gandhi created a stir at the Teen Murti House on 18 February. The auditorium of the Nehru Memorial was booked by an organisation called Development Research Group, for a discourse by vice president R. Venkataraman. The theme was: "Indira Gandhi—eternal woman." A routine invitation had been sent to the Prime Minister's house and the scheduled time given in the invitation was five pm. The vice president had been asked by the organisers to reach the auditorium by 5.30 pm, keeping in mind that functions never start punctually. The Prime Minister's wife, who was not being expected, turned up at the auditorium exactly at five, accompanied by Pupul Jayakar. The organisers were visibly embarrassed. Dhanya Kumar, the secretary of the group, desperately tried to explain to Sonia Gandhi the reason for the delayed arrival of the chief guest. The efficient image of the Rajiv Gandhi administration seems to be receiving able support from Sonia Gandhi.



Sonia Gandhi with her daughter Priyanka

Jinxed Deals?

The Indo-Soviet arms deals seem to jinxed. The ministerial level talks have been postponed twice due to the deaths of VIPs. When Indira Gandhi was assassinated in October, the then defence minister, S. B. Chavan, was in Moscow to negotiate arms purchases. He had to rush back home. The present minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, was leaving for Moscow along with defence secretary S K. Bhatnagar to restart the aborted talks, when the news of Konstantin Chernenko's death was announced. While the Indo-Soviet deals are being delayed due to some jinx, the purchases from France have run into rough weather after the spyring of Coomar Narain (which necessitated the departure of the French envoy and a deputy military attache) was busted. Meanwhile, there are reports from Washington that the Reagan administration has offered to help India in the "modernisation" of the armed forces and expressed its "readiness to give serious consideration" to Indian requests for military equipment. Will India be able to enter a "buy-American" phase? The American offer, however, is not unprecedented. Every time an Indian team plans a visit to Moscow, such "offers" come, which are not followed up by Washington.

TAILPIECE. Which way do important files in the information and broadcasting ministry move these days? The grapevine has it (and it is no rumour) that the movement is from Gill to Gadgil. S. S. Gill is the ministry's secretary, V. N. Gadgil is the minister in charge.

D.E. Nizamuddin

Clean Sweep

For the Janata Party chief, Chandra Shekhar, the Assembly elections have been a boon. Not only has his party won in Karnataka and emerged as the largest national opposition party, in his Lok Sabha constituency, Ballia, the party has won all the five Assembly seats. Chandra Shekhar had lost the Lok Sabha polls by 58,000 votes. The combined lead of the five winning Janata candidates this time was 60,000 votes. This means a swing of around one lakh votes has taken place in Chandra Shekhar's favour within barely ten weeks of the Lok Sabha polls.

There are eight Assembly segments in Ballia district, of which five are in Chandra Shekhar's constituency. Two out of the rest of the three seats have been won by the DMKP. Only one seat in the Ballia region has gone to the Congress(I).



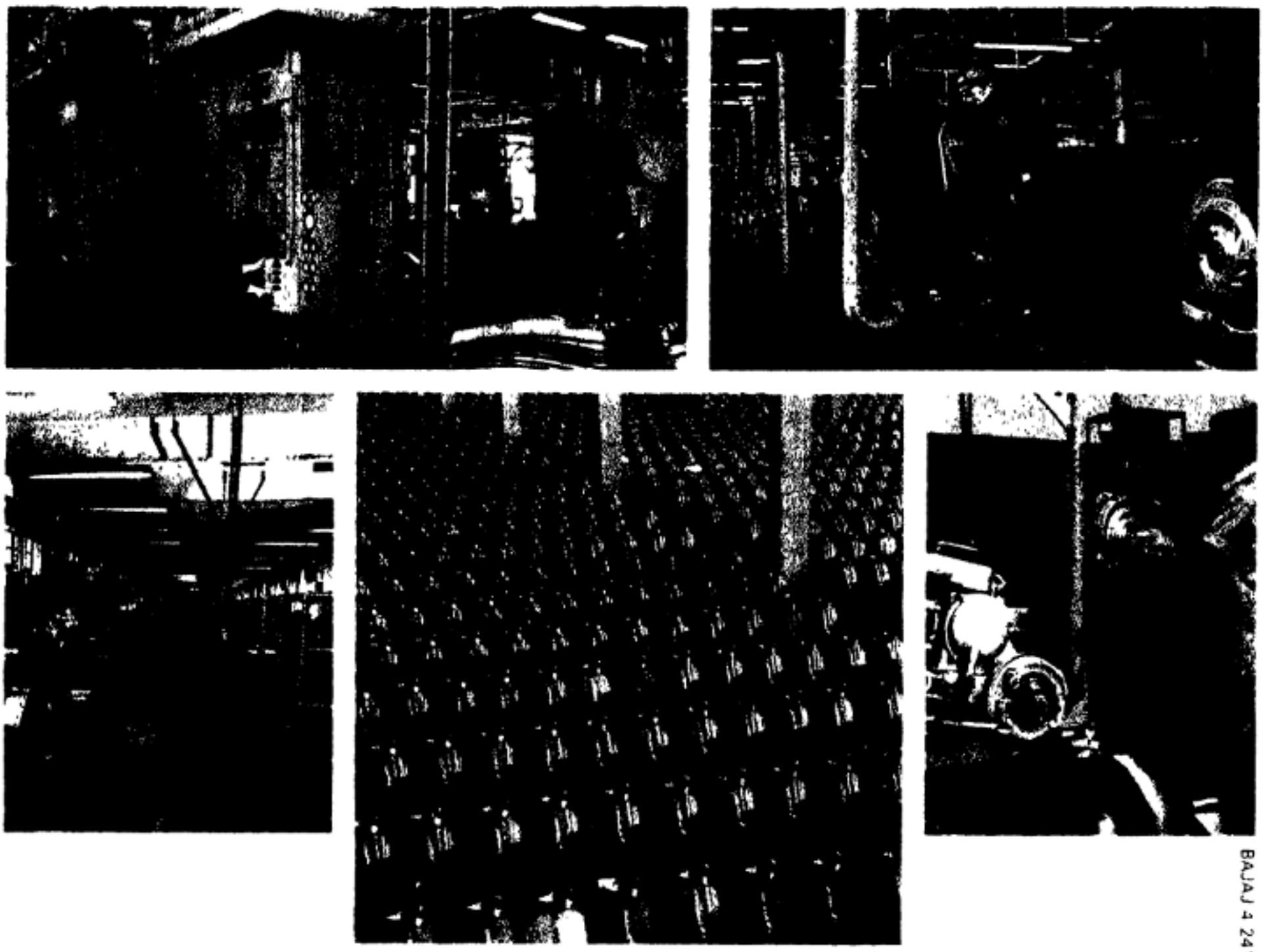
Chandra Shekhar

Governmental Inequality

The young firebrand trade union leader of Delhi, Lalit Maken (who represents South Delhi in the Lok Sabha) has stirred a hornet's nest. While public sector employees have been getting increased wages, government employees are awaiting the award of the fourth Pay Commission. Maken has calculated that a clerk in the public sector gets Rs 457 more than a government clerk (while their inefficiency is similar). Maken, who has led many successful agitations and now commands majority support in most trade unions of Delhi, has demanded that the wages be made at par.


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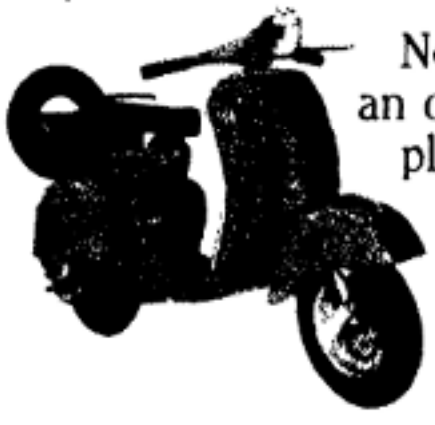
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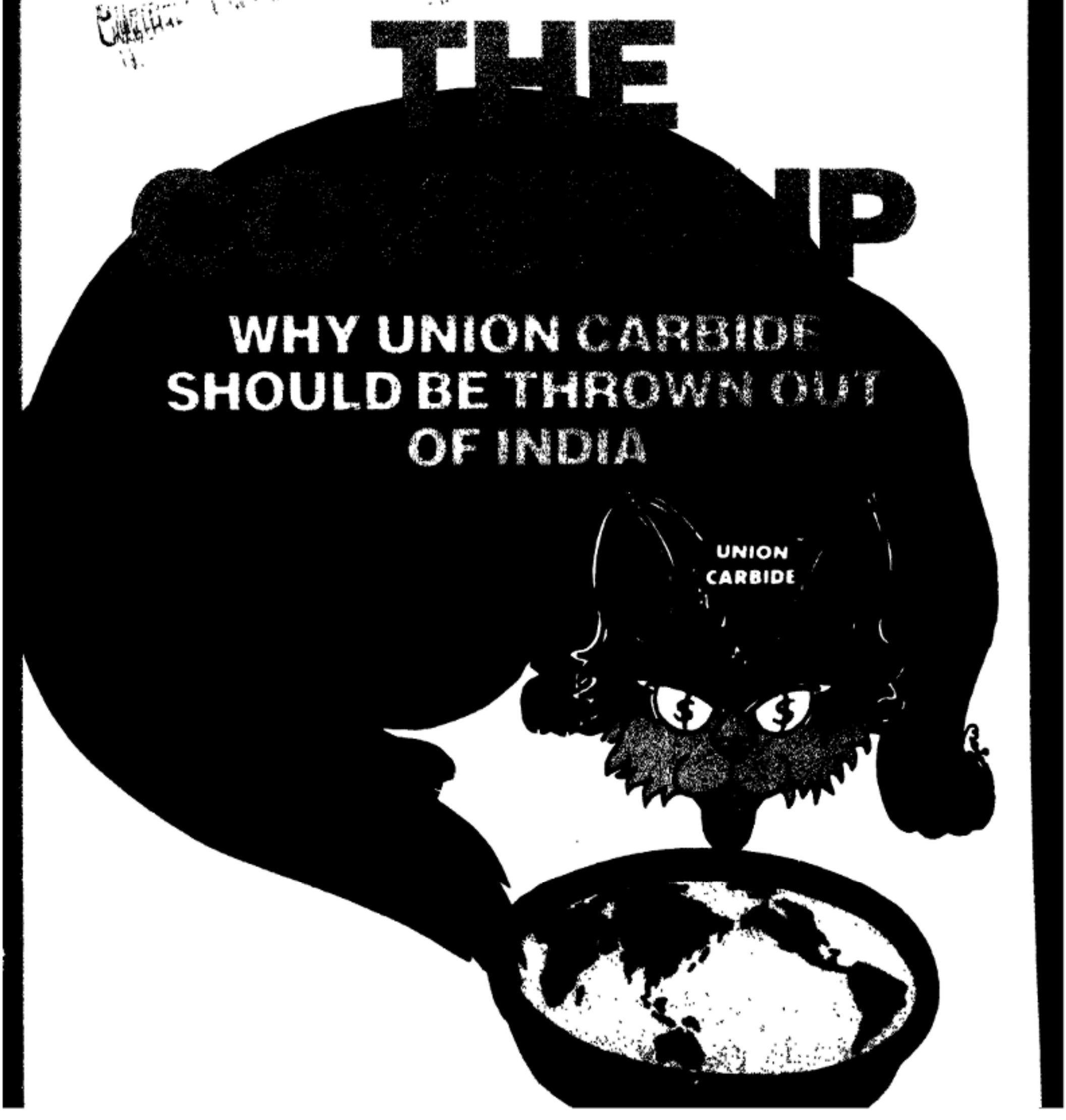
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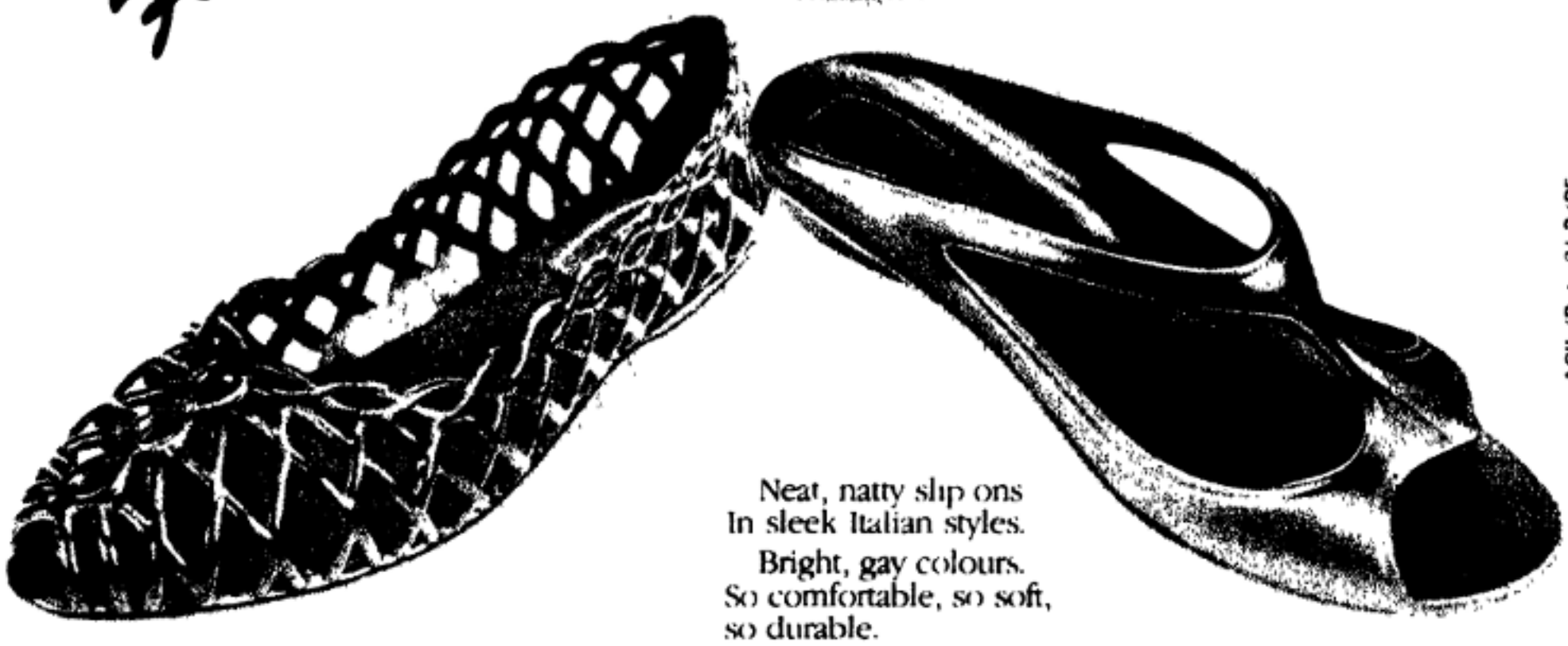
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The Cover-up

Four months after the world's worst environmental disaster struck Bhopal killing 2,500 people and maiming many more, when the deadly MIC gas escaped from Union Carbide (India) Limited's pesticide plant, its parent organisation in USA, Union Carbide Corporation, has come out with a report squarely blaming its Indian subsidiary for the tragedy. SUNDAY correspondents examine the report and analyse how the US multinational is trying to pass the buck on to its Indian subsidiary.

SUNDAY SPORTS **38**

Victory in the Desert

With the victory in the Rothman's Trophy, India has emerged as the undisputed champions in one-day cricket. Zaheer Abbas writes on the Indian team's success in Sharjah.



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CONVERSATION **30**

'I Want to Love Everybody'

Bangladesh President General H. M. Ershad talks to M. J Akbar.

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PUNCHLINE/KUTTY



Cover: A poster from an exhibition on the Bhopal gas tragedy held in Bombay

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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Shantiniketan: You know you have come close to nature when unpredictable things start falling on your head. We had just entered the city when a small, dried, green mango came down sharply, the victim of a child's accurate catapult. With so many trees, catapults and mangoes around, this sort of thing is presumably inevitable. But far be it for city types like me to scoff at the wealth that nature has to offer. And very soon, quite imperceptibly, the serenity of Shantiniketan begins to seep into your consciousness. It is all straight out of the picture book. Beautiful young women and earnest, soft-spoken men sitting under trees, chatting, waiting for the open-air class to begin. Snatches of song in the distance. People from all over the world come to taste the magic of an environment created by a unique genius who became both the voice of a culture and a culture. There is a pride in Bengal and Bengali here, a deep and powerful pride which is not aggressive but which can be touched easily by a fake gesture, a wrong word. When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi comes to Shantiniketan to preside over the convocation, the one mistake he can't afford to make is pass any disparaging judgment on any aspect of Bengal's health. One more remark like the one about Calcutta's terminal condition, and chief minister Jyoti Basu need do nothing more to win the next election.

It is a bit strange that a member of the Nehru family should have fallen out with Calcutta. The family's ties with Calcutta's greats had been strong and affectionate. Motilal and C. R. Das were the greatest of friends, and much of the mythology about the behaviour of the best kind of lawyer owes to them. It is absolutely true that the two would spend the whole day in the sharpest debate, on behalf of their respective clients, set spies on each other to check battle plans, and then split a bottle of the best whisky in the evening. Their friendship took on a political dimension in the creation of the Swaraj Party—they shifted away from Gandhiji in their assessment of the role of the Legislature in the freedom struggle. Both gave their homes to the nation. Motilal's most important hour in Indian politics was also the Calcutta Congress of 1928. Jawaharlal kept up the association, particularly through his great and oft-expressed admiration for Gurudev. It was in recognition of this bond that Gurudev kept a separate room in his house for the Nehrus, near his own bedroom—and this is the room Rajiv Gandhi will occupy when he spends a day at Shantiniketan.

When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi comes to Shantiniketan to preside over the convocation, the one mistake he can't afford to make is pass any disparaging judgment on any aspect of Bengal's health. One more remark like the one about Calcutta's terminal condition, and chief minister Jyoti Basu need do nothing more to win the next election.

It is, like the rest of the house, simple, elegant, without the slightest trace of ostentation or effort. It is a part of a home. On the walls are just three photo-portraits of Gandhiji, Nehru and Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose. A large poster bed takes up space just off-centre, and against one wall is a beautiful low, wooden settee. Beyond the small ante-room is the verandah which overlooks a gravelled courtyard and the exquisite rose gardens. This is the way it once was. This is the way it still is. Thank God some things don't change.

The most lasting impression one brought back from Shantiniketan was the sheer kindness of the people, and their sincere pleasure while helping, whether it was an Ajit Poddar showing one theaudio-visual unit (he needs a new microfilming unit—surely Bengal can provide him that much!), or the manager of the tourist lodge, S. Chakraborty, ensuring that lunch was a pleasurable affair. Or—and most of all—the unknown person who helped my seven-year-old daughter put on her shoes, patted her on the back, and went on. There is time in Shantiniketan for the fellow human being—and if that was the only thing they taught there, the whole institution would still have been worth preserving just for that.

Calcutta may not be dying (cities like Calcutta never die, nor do they fade away), but it is clearly indisposed (both no further than the electricity). But I am truly glad to report that Shantiniketan is in the best of health—apart, incidentally, from the electricity.



Pandit Nehru in Shantiniketan, circa 1952



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Family Planning: Punjab Style

I have before me an advertisement issued by the director, health and family welfare of the Punjab government published in the monthly journal, *Art of Living*. Since the journal is devoted to art and culture, the department took pains to draft a special which would conform to its literary standards. It is hilarious. The heading reads: "The Beautiful Landlady Without Mercy." The writer had obviously read *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* without digesting its message. A landlady without mercy is approached for accommodation by a "school teachress" recently transferred to the village.

"Number of children?" asks the landlady "frowningly." The "teachress" admits to having a three-month-old baby.

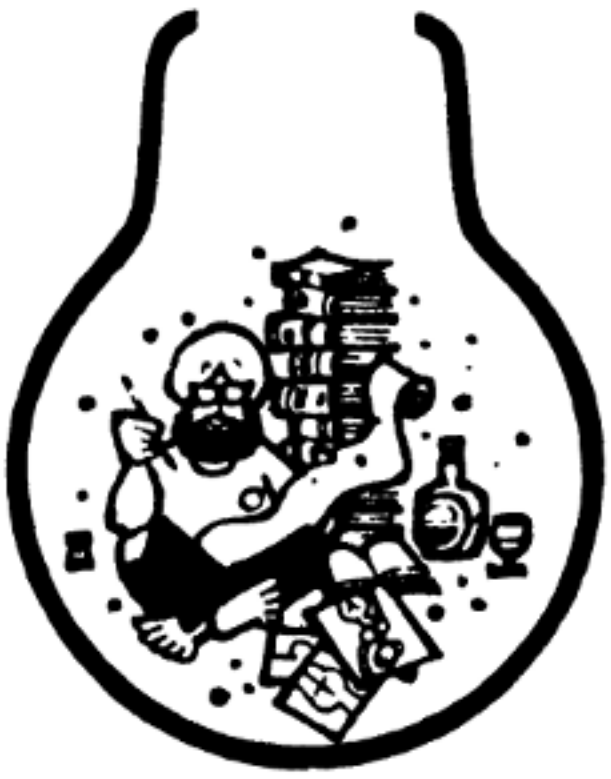
"What is the guarantee that you won't multiply soon? My previous house was anyway spoilt by a football team called family. The helpless parents could not afford to pay the rent even. I forewent two years' rent to get the house vacated!" The poor "teachress" promises to pay rent regularly. The cruel landlady agrees to consider her case favourably provided she has a *tambi* (copper T) inserted and vouches for its "100 per cent efficacy." Apparently the "teachress" has already a second child in her womb. "Then get a *nivaran* (abortion) from the primary health centre near here: Do you agree?"

The "teachress" agrees. She also agrees not to undergo tubectomy. The landlady summons her husband as witness to the fact that ever since she had laparoscopic tubectomy he has become more obedient. Her husband acknowledges his gratitude: "You underwent a major operation after all. I avoided a minor one. So I must respect you. Is this "henpeckedness?" he asks.

Do you get the message? Punjabis apparently do.

Filmstar MPs

Filmstars make winning candidates but very rarely good parliamentarians. In my five years in the Rajya Sabha I have known six of them: Nargis Dutt, Sivaji Ganesan, Amitabh Bachchan, Sunil Dutt, Vyjayanthimala and Jayalalitha. Nargis did not live long enough to prove her worth. Sivaji Ganesan made a dramatic appearance when he came to take the oath. Thereafter he has rarely been seen in the House. Amitabh, Sunil and Vyjayanthimala are new-



comers and haven't yet had the opportunity to contribute anything worthwhile. For one, they are members of the ruling party and the Lok Sabha has so many of them that they will not be given many chances to speak; they would have done better with the opposition. For another, they do not seem to have decided on their priorities. Their shooting and dancing commitments cut into Parliament's sessions: shooting and dancing are evidently more profitable than the Rs 75 per diem given for attendance in the House. Only one, Jayalalitha, seems to have finally opted for politics against continuing stardom. Right now she has the best of all the worlds. With the eclipse of M.G. Ramachandran she has become Tamil Nadu's biggest vote-catcher. She has her feet in both camps: as a member of the AIADMK, she is more than acceptable to the ruling Congress. And being nominally a part of the opposition, she gets more opportunities and more time to speak. She exploits them to the full. She is a rare combination of beauty, brain and talent, tenacity and ambition. I heard her speak twice on the budget. The last time she followed Prof. Nirmal Chatterjee and ex-finance minister Pranab Mukherjee. After these formidable exponents of budgetary problems, I feared Jayalalitha would come a very poor third. She was the picture of self-confidence. Her good looks assured her of undivided attention, her mellifluous voice and the solid stuff in her speech commanded respect for over half-an-hour. She smiled her way through topics like abolition of excise on soap and relief for fishermen of Rameshwaram.

This lovely lass has taken her place in the centre of India's political stage and, being a Hindi-speaking Tamilian, is assured of a central role for many years to come.

Solar Eccentricities

At the time I am writing this piece, New Delhi is a veritable paradise on the earth. By the time you get to read it, the same paradise will have turned into a hell of heat and dust. Right now it is the season of leaf-shedding and new leaf. Neems, peepuls, banyans, mahuas cast off their withered garments to don fresh, pink and green foliage. Semuls, corals, flame-a-bauhenias are in flower; bougainvillaeas blaze away in crimson, scarlet red, mauve and pink overflowing walls and hedges. Gardens are full of flox, anterrhinums, carnations and marigolds. The city is a riot of colour. Whichever way ye turn there is the face of Allah.

Over the years I have kept a diary to record phenomena of nature: the day the mulberry tree facing my window began to turn green; when the dry as dead-wood vine overhanging my balcony suddenly sprouted into life; when flies, ants, midges and wasps began to make nuisances of themselves; the courtship of Bengal Tree Pies, nesting of kites and vultures and lapwings calling on moonlit nights. I even record temperature and times of sunrise and sunset. I compare notes taken on previous years with the present. I detect a few minor variations which do not seem to have much significance. But one phenomenon for which I rely on reports issued by our observatories and are published by most newspapers on their front pages makes me somewhat uneasy, *viz* the length of days and nights over the year. My records reveal that over the years our observatories have been issuing exactly the same time for sunrise and sunset. I have no doubt that staff do not base these timings on personal observation but issue carbon copies of data they have in their files. Perhaps they are right and over millions of years the sun has risen and set at precisely the same time on a particular day.

However, will they or some reader more knowledgeable than I, explain to me why when days begin to lengthen or shorten it should not be by the same time at both ends?

According to observatory handouts while the sun continued to rise at 7.15 am for the first fortnight of this year and once, on the 8th even a minute later, to go back to 7.15 for another week in the same period, its time of setting changed from 5.37 pm to 5.49 pm. Similar solar eccentricities will be noticed by those who can scan weather reports. Does the earth wobble as it turns? Or are our weathermen drunk?

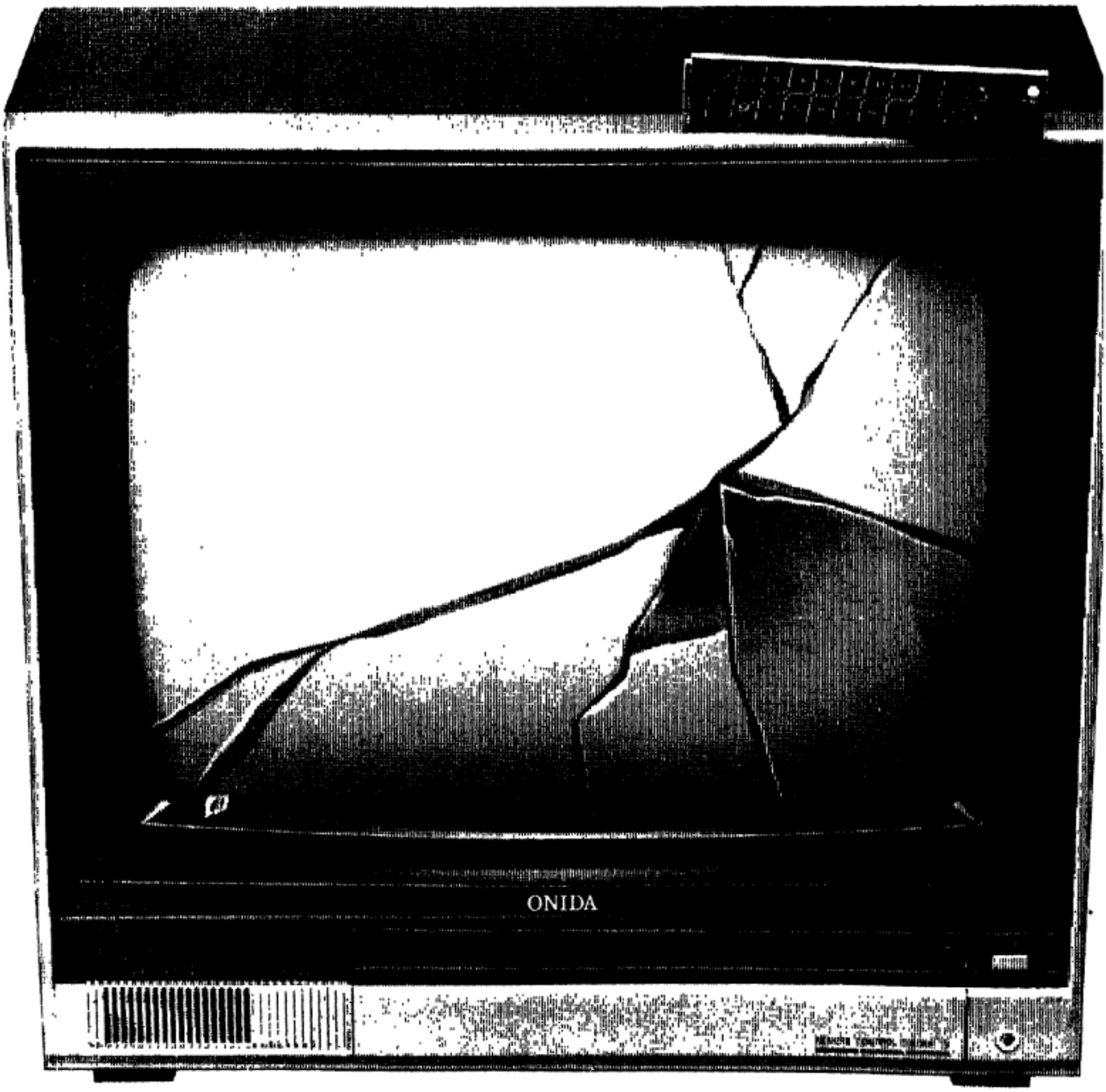
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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Join the Government, See the World

"Join the Navy and see the world," the old slogan the Navy uses to attract recruits, can now be put out by all segments of government service, civil or military. Though there is an order—by no means the first one—that public servants should go abroad only when they must and that any file containing a proposal for a visit abroad should go up to the top for approval, no one seems deterred by it

How many officers do go abroad on duty every year and for what purpose? These are questions which go unanswered, and no amount of badgering elicits replies from officers. The information is probably more 'classified' than anything else. But a few months ago I tried collecting information on foreign jaunts, department-wise. I met with some success The figures are not really up to date and are far from complete. But they still afford some idea of how anxious our civil servants are to travel to distant lands to 'serve the country better.'

In nearly 18 months between January 1980 and July 1981 as many as 3,853 officers went abroad and spent Rs 38 crores of public money on air passage, boarding and lodging. Of these, 454 officers were from the ministry of defence. But perhaps this is understandable. The purpose of their visits has not been divulged for obvious reasons. The rest includes 344 officers from the department of atomic energy and 241 from the department of electronics. Again, these are 'high technology' departments, and India does need to know more about technological advancement abroad. This leaves more than 2,800 officers of non-technical ministries who went abroad during this period. Of them, 200 were from the department of economic affairs. And one should realise that the finance ministry is one of the authorities which are meant to sanction such trips.

More than 2,800 officers of non-technical ministries...went abroad during this period (January 1980—July 1981). Of them, 200 were from the department of economic affairs. And one should realise that the finance ministry is one of the authorities meant to sanction such trips.

One explanation for so many officers of the economic affairs department going abroad, I was told, is that they are required to attend Aid-India Club meetings. But then the Aid-India Club meets only once a year. What the officer who forwarded this explanation seems to have forgotten is that there is hardly a senior officer of the economic affairs department who has not landed himself on a lucrative World Bank job.

On checking their destinations I found that most of the officers who had gone abroad went to the USA, UK, France and West Germany, in that order. Only a handful went to neighbouring countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka—perhaps because these countries are not 'phoren' enough. Strangely, no government department was willing to answer questions about the number of times a cabinet minister or a minister of state in charge of that department had gone abroad. Even when I asked questions on trips reported in newspapers, the stock reply was, "Details cannot be divulged." As for trips within India, both ministers and officials tend to use any pretext to go out of Delhi. When the Rajiv Gandhi government assumed office, the general instruction issued was that officers should be available at their headquarters and should avoid travelling as far as possible. I do not know if it still holds good.

Ministers, however, show little hesitation in travelling without purpose. Work is 'created' if there is none to be done And the old line between official trips and private jaunts was blurred many years ago. The number of times ministers visit their home states or home towns could work out to an astounding figure. There are sojourns of this kind practically every weekend. The other day a minister complained to me that the use of railway saloons had been unnecessarily stopped. His justification for the complaint: he did not get to see his family members because of 'heavy work'; travel by rail-car saloon would provide him with an opportunity to meet them

The extent to which state governments misuse aircraft is scandalous. Ministers are almost always using them Today there is nothing unusual about a central minister assigning a state-owned aircraft for party work—conveniently shown as 'official' for the records. In the past Sanjay Gandhi always had these aircraft at his command and also Rajiv Gandhi, when he was the Congress (I) general secretary made use of the facility In the recent elections, the election commission did not want the chief ministers to use state-owned aircraft during the polls. Some CMs were reluctant to abide by the instructions. The chief election commissioner had to write to the chief secretaries to ensure that planes were kept 'guarded' during the campaign period. But Bhajan Lal, the Haryana chief minister, used his state plane on the plea that it would be available to the opposition leaders if they wanted to hire it. Naturally, the opportunity 'to hire it' never came. N. D. Tewari of Uttar Pradesh and Arjun Singh of Madhya Pradesh, now Governor of Punjab, have also used their planes all the time, unofficially.

India can draw consolation from the fact that it is only ministers and not officials who misuse state aircraft.. Or, am I wrong?

OPINION

Bright Star

SUNDAY had rightly described Ramakrishna Hegde as the *Star of the Future* (17—23 March). Unlike many others, he is a chief minister with overwhelming popular support. He heads a government in Karnataka which actually works. However, I think that his services would be more useful at the national level.
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

•The people of Karnataka should be congratulated for voting Ramakrishna Hegde back to power. The new lease of life given to the Janata Party should be fully utilised by its leaders at the national level.
V. N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

•Though the people of Karnataka voted for the Congress(I) in the last Lok Sabha elections, it was in no way a vote of no-confidence against the Hegde government. In the Assembly elections the people snubbed Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's call for the same party rule at the centre and the state. Mr Hegde won because of his administrative ability and his clean image compared to the infamous leaders of the Congress(I) in the state. If only we had a leader of the stature of Ramakrishna Hegde at the national level, the opposition would have given the Congress(I) a tough fight in the last Lok Sabha elections.
Smita Narang, New Delhi

•I am sure that Ramakrishna Hegde will play a meaningful role in national politics. His resounding victory at the polls only proves how popular he is in his state.
N. Pichaipillai, Trichy

•R. K. Hegde had played his cards well. The way he came back to power shows how shrewd a politician he is. My congratulations to the people of Karnataka for making the right choice.
M. Mohanty, Rairangpur (Orissa)

•In keeping with true democratic spirits, Ramakrishna Hegde resigned from the chief ministership of Karnataka after his party's debacle in the Lok Sabha elections. The people rewarded his honesty and sincerity by voting him back to power with an overwhelming majority. Other politicians should emulate his example.
S. V. Subba Rao, Bangalore

•The voters of Karnataka deserve to be congratulated for making the right choice.
Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Bargarh (Orissa)



• The mandate in favour of Ramakrishna Hegde was a mandate in favour of value-based politics. It has also exposed the hollowness of populist slogans like one-party rule. The Indian electorate is extremely mature and Rajiv Gandhi should not take it for granted. The euphoria generated by the historic mandate in the Lok Sabha elections has subsided and the Congress(I) must produce tangible results to remain in power.
P. Govind, New Delhi

• The people of Karnataka voted for value-based politics as against the money-based politics of the Congress(I). The people reposed faith in the political principles followed by Mr Hegde and the Janata Party.
A. Baruah, Dibrugarh

• Ramakrishan Hegde is a rising star. He should now extend his vision beyond Karnataka and unite the disillusioned opposition.
Anwar Alam Qumaispuri, Patna

• Ramakrishna Hegde is indeed a bright star on India's political horizon. Hegde's dramatic triumph has proved that India possesses a mature electorate capable of differentiating between the good and the bad. He can now form a viable opposition to the Congress(I) at the national level.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• The cover story was well conceived but I did not appreciate a cigarette-puffing Hegde on the cover.
P. Padmanabhan, Somanur (TN)

• Hegde's political maturity paved the way for his stunning victory in the Assembly elections.
Sabuj Sen, Calcutta

Shocking Racket

Tirthankar Ghosh's investigation, *Innocents in Bihar Jails* (10—16 March) shocked me. What was disturbing was the fact that court officials were also involved in the racket of fake warrants. The victims are usually very poor and they sell their meagre belongings to evade arrest by the police.
Shankerlal Lahoti, Gulbara

•The racket in fake warrants does not exist in Bihar alone. Wherever people are poor and ignorant, the police find a way to bully them.
Biraj Patro, Madras

•In a state where "the CM, ministers and vice-chancellors are accused of selling jobs," according to journalist Janardhan Thakur, "where illegal trade in liquor is carried out from the bungalow of a minister, where a police officer indicted by the Supreme Court for defrauding buys the post of an IG for a couple of lakhs and then goes on to pile a couple of crores during his term" the racket in fake warrants is hardly surprising.
C. B. Sahai, New Delhi

Factual Error

A statement made by D.E. Nizamuddin in *Audit Blues (Delhi Diary*, 24 February—2 March) is not true. Referring to the appointment of T.N. Chaturvedi as the comptroller and auditor general of India the author writes: "Before him (T.N. Chaturvedi) no civil servant, including those of the prestigous ICS had held this post. Why was this top audit post given to an IAS bureaucrat and not to a seasoned auditor?" The fact is that the post of auditor general of India was always held by an ICS officer during the British rule and even after independence the post was held by an ICS officer, Mr Ranganathan. Mr Chaturvedi's immediate predecessor was also an IAS officer. The functions of the comptrol ler and auditor general require vast administrative experience and hence the choice of IAS officers for that post.
B.G. Murdeshwar, Bangalore

• D.E. Nizamuddin is not correct when he wrote that the post of the comptroller and auditor general is traditionally manned by IAAS officers. In fact, Mr Chaturvedi's predecessor, Gian Prakash, was an IAS officer while a former CAG, A.K. Chanda was an IRS officer.
M.A. Ahad, Bhubaneswar

A Rare Dialogue

An interview becomes absorbing only when the interviewer and the interviewee match each other's wits. Readers had the rare opportunity of going through one such interview when M. J. Akbar spoke to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi ('*The Assassination was Done Not to Kill Mrs Gandhi, it was Done for the Reaction*', 10—16 March). But I think that some of the PM's answers were very sketchy as, for example, on the Kashmir issue. However, I agree with Mr Akbar that Rajiv Gandhi has generated much hope in the public mind after assuming office. Everybody feels that he possesses the key to solve all the problems. I hope he does not let his countrymen down.
B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur

•The dialogue with the Prime Minister was informative. I felt as if I was a silent participant at a dinner attended by Rajiv Gandhi and M. J. Akbar. I specially enjoyed the section on Kashmir.
Aijaz Chishti, Srinagar

•The interview contained many memorable quotes. One was the PM's assertion that he "never sought revenge against the Sikhs."
Nirjhar Das Gupta, Calcutta

•SUNDAY took the right decision to carry the full interview in one issue.



Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv Gandhi's replies to M.J. Akbar's tricky questions were frank and illuminating. I am eagerly waiting to see how the PM tackles the Punjab problem. He has taken a step in the right direction by releasing the Akali leaders.
Snehasis Bagchi, Durgapur

•The PM's ability to take quick decisions were evident from some of the answers.
Pramod Sahoo, Chirimiri (MP)

•It was a wise decision to publish the interview in a single issue. The comprehensive interview was illuminating.
Surinder Sahni, Pune

•Rajiv Gandhi is just a few years old in politics and yet he faced M. J. Akbar like a seasoned politician. I appreciated his confession that morality in politics is a forgotten word.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan

•The interview-based cover story on Rajiv Gandhi was timely and absorbing.
Nazmul Siddiqui, Khustia (Bangladesh)

•I was impressed by Rajiv Gandhi's frank admission that the speech delivered by him to the nation on the first day was not entirely his own. For that matter even an orator like John Kennedy had his speeches prepared by experts.
S. Jayaraj, Coimbatore

• The interview with the PM was exhaustive. A speedy solution to the Assam and Punjab problems is what we expect from him.
Priyabrata Sen, Dibrugarh

Publisher's Plight

M. J. Akbar's brief write-up on the dedication with which publishers carry on their vocation, has come as a breath of fresh air (*Date line*, 3—9 February). It is easier to swim with the current and run down the often-maligned publishing community. Therefore, your bold initiative in presenting an objective assessment of the actual position is to be highly appreciated.

Publishers, as rightly pointed out by you, are indeed a devoted lot who have chosen their profession more out of commitment than the lure of making quick profits. Most people are not even aware that, in India, financial institutions do not offer credit facilities to the publishing industry since books are not considered sufficient guarantee for the security of their loans. Publishers have, thus, to fall back entirely upon their personal resources for all their activities.

Further, the state enjoys monopoly over the publication of text-books for government-run schools throughout the country. This constitutes almost 70 per cent of the total publishing activity in India and accounts for a business of over Rs 1,000 crores. (In fact, 85 per cent of publishing is in the hands of the state.) This has deprived publishers of a strong and stable financial base. As a result, publishers unlike their counterparts in other democratic countries, are generally not in a position to undertake academic publishing which, quite often, is not economically viable but is necessary to fulfil social obligations and project India's great cultural heritage in other parts of the world.

The phenomenal rise in the prices of paper during the last decade has dealt a crippling blow to the publishing industry. Since paper accounts for nearly 70 per cent of the cost of production of books, the abnormal increase in the cost of paper has pushed up prices of books beyond the reach of average readers. The number of potential buyers, too, has unfortunately not increased because of various factors including low literacy rate, general lack of reading habit and progressive decrease of purchasing power in the country. Add to that, the peculiar nature of our marketing operations, slow-moving nature of our product, and the consequent uncertainty and irregularity of returns, and the picture of a publisher's plight is complete.

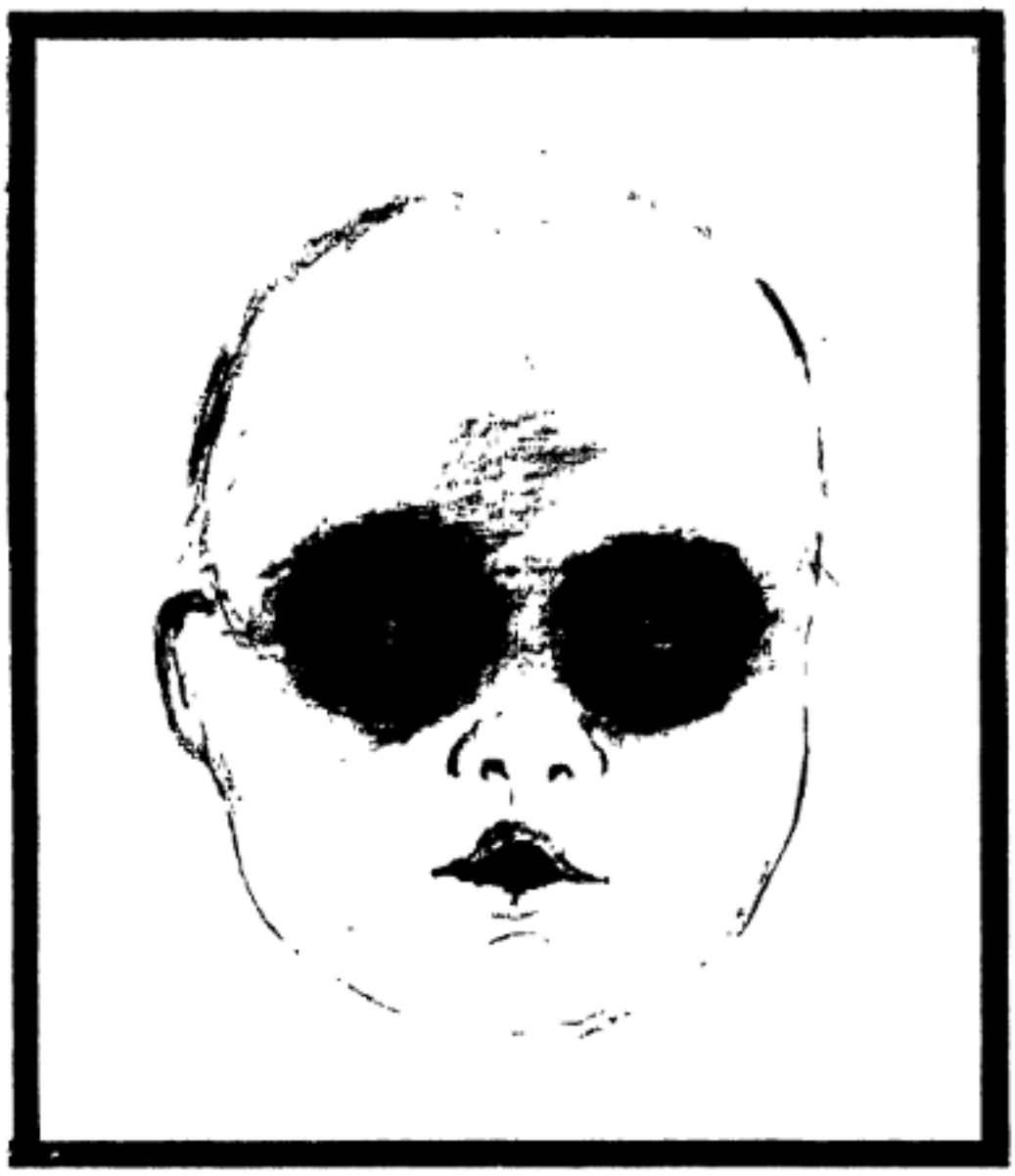
It would be relevant to add that it goes to the abiding credit of Indian publishers that the prices of books have not increased in league with the rising costs of raw materials. Profit margin of publishers has thus correspondingly decreased. Unmindful of this situation and other factors mentioned above, publishers continue to carry on their vocation with dedication and commitment to the higher cause of a reading society.

Notwithstanding all this, if some persons, out of ignorance or prejudice, continue maligning publishers, I believe they are being far more sinned against than sinning!
Narendra Kumar, Managing Director, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi

COVER STORY

THE COVER-UP

WHY UNION CARBIDE SHOULD BE THROWN OUT OF INDIA



The injury has been enormous. The insult is even greater. Death, disease, deformity continue their havoc in Bhopal, with even foetuses and newly-borns falling prey to the deadly MIC gas which leaked from the factory. But Union Carbide Corporation, USA, anxious to save the dollars of its shareholders, is trying to wriggle out of its responsibility for this unthinkable crime by passing on the blame to "Indians" and quietly exonerating the parent company. The Indian employees were to blame for negligence; the Indian government did not keep a strict enough check on the safety measures at the Bhopal plant. This, to say the least, is astonishing, particularly since this great multinational called Union Carbide has more than fifty per cent holding in the Bhopal plant and the management was under its direct control. The government of India has now discovered that faulty design by the parent company may have been the main culprit. Can we allow multinationals like Union Carbide to get away with what is literally much, much more horrible than murder? We examine the whole array of the Bhopal fallout: Who is to blame? What is the state of the legal battle? What health hazards does MIC poisoning still pose to the survivors?

Illustration: Bulbul Sharma

COVER STORY

Carbide Chairman Anderson is Lying

Although Union Carbide Corporation chairman Warren M. Anderson is denying responsibility for the Bhopal gas tragedy, facts state otherwise



It is a game that some multinationals specialise in. Following a public outcry against Tylenol deaths, Johnson & Johnson, which marketed the drug, mounted a massive public relations campaign disowning responsibility for the deaths. Another multinational, Manville, claimed bankruptcy when thousands of shipyard workers exposed to the asbestos it was manufacturing developed lung diseases and cancer and sued for damages. With claims for damages worth $200bn piling up against it in US courts, Union Carbide Corporation, which would be completing 100 years in business next year, could have gone the Manville way—and yet be in business. It would have been safely protected by bankruptcy laws which offer immunity against legal claims.

But the Carbide Corporation has chosen a daring but simple course: to pass the buck to its Indian subsidiary. Ever since the poison gas leak in its Bhopal pesticide plant killed more than 2,500 people, Union Carbide had been insisting that there was nothing wrong with the plant; it was something of an act of God that the gas leaked out of an underground storage tank. It even hired an expensive public relations firm to sell this idea.

But now Union Carbide has adopted a different ploy. it is actually saying that the plant was dangerously unsafe. It took seven of its top scientists and engineers more than two months and over 200 laboratory experiments to find this out. The study released last month by Carbide chairman Warren M Anderson presents Union Carbide's excuse and possible defence against impending legal battles. The defence is, the safety standards in the Bhopal plant were very poor but the blame lies with the Indian managers who were running it. The disaster could have been avoided had the plant been properly maintained. This was announced by the same William Anderson who had been claiming all these months that "our safety standards in the USA are identical to those in India. Same equipment, same design, same everything." Mr Anderson has clearly got caught in his first lie.

The report states that the scrubber which would have neutralised toxic methyl isocyanate (MIC), the poison gas, by treating it with caustic soda was inoperative for more than two months; the circulating pump for the scrubber did not function properly, the flare tower where escaping gas would have burnt itself out was not operating on the night of the disaster, the cooling device designed to keep the highly volatile MIC gas safely stored in liquid form was not functioning properly for more than five months, the temperature alarm which should have been set off automatically with the rise in temperature inside the tank did not sound.

However, the most sinister part of the Carbide team's study is the suggestion that local managers of its Indian subsidiary were not only callous about the plant's safety but may have even deliberately caused the world's worst industrial disaster by

A victim of MIC gas shields her burning eyes from light



introducing water into the storage tank. The study team's scenario for the disaster is: either by design or accident some 240 gallons of water went into one of the MIC storage tanks setting off a runaway reaction, heating the chemicals up to a temperature of 200 degrees C. The chemical vapourised at that temperature and escaped into the air as safety devices failed. UCC chief Anderson has declared rather pompously that "the question of sabotage will have to be answered over in India."

Mr Anderson has given his verdict on very scant evidence. By its own admission the study team's investigation suffered from limited access to information and its report cannot therefore be considered sufficient for arriving at any definite conclusion. The team was in India for only 24 days, of which it spent about 14 days in assisting the Indian experts engaged in neutralising leftover toxic gas. In the nine or ten days the team had to itself to study the problem, it met only two persons—the works manager and the production manager of the plant—who could be of any help to the investigators. The team was neither permitted to interview any of the Bhopal plant employees who witnessed the incident nor could it inspect relevant documents. The government of India has already dismissed the team's study as "speculative, unwarranted, unjustified and motivated" to establish the guilt of the parent Carbide Corporation for the Bhopal disaster beyond any doubt.

Already Indian experts have challenged some of Carbide's findings. For instance, the director general of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, S. Varadarajan, who not only supervised the neutralisation of stored MIC gas after the disaster but also has more access to information, insists that only a small amount of water triggered off the reaction, aided by an improper mixture of the MIC. The Carbide study also acknowledges that some amount of carbon steel entered the MIC mixture and sped up the reaction. Normally carbon steel should not have been present in the MIC mixture. How then did it get into the mixture? The Carbide team's guess is that the answer lies in some of the valves and tubes made of carbon steel.

The use of carbon steel is explicitly forbidden in a plant handling MIC gas. The Union Carbide handbook on MIC published in 1976 says: "Storage of commercial MIC in carbon steel, tin or copper containers must be avoided since catalysts are formed from these metals on standing." Since carbon steel is cheaper than stainless steel, Union Carbide overruled objections from Humperies and Glasgow, which had built the Bhopal plant, regarding the use of carbon steel. Cutting costs in other areas too compounded the tragedy.

Admittedly, Union Carbide's Bhopal plant was not doing well. The plant was operating at less than one-third of its capacity and losing heavily on profits. To make up for the losses Union Carbide opted to take the easiest option: reducing its personnel. In 1983 the number of operators in the MIC production unit was scaled down from 12 to five. The maintenance engineer was dispensed with. Many senior technicians were shifted to other Union Carbide facilities. Indeed, Union Carbide was keen on closing down the Bhopal plant and was ready to pay up to Rs 30,000 to anyone willing to resign.

But the fact remains that Union Carbide Corporation (USA) holds 50.9 per cent of the stocks in its Indian subsidiary which makes it the majority shareholder and thus legally and morally responsible for acts of omissions and commissions of its local managers. It is after all Union Carbide, USA, which took all major decisions including the choice of staff to man its Indian subsidiary. Thus, it was the parent company in the USA which had been flouting the safety measures at the Bhopal plant. In a sworn affidavit a former head of the Indian subsidiary, Edward Munoz, has claimed that despite objections from its Indian subsidiary Carbide, USA, insisted on storing large quantities of toxic MIC in Bhopal.

There is also no reason for Union Carbide to now act surprised at the security lapses in the Bhopal plant. Its inspectors had reported as far back as 1982 that if corrective steps were not taken soon, the Bhopal plant had the "potential for a serious incident or more serious consequences should an incident occur." Union Carbide Corporation just ignored the warning and did nothing to rectify the flaws and the faults in its Bhopal plant which ultimately led to the disaster. Even six months before the catastrophic poison gas leak in Bhopal an internal company memorandum had warned the US Carbide Corporation about a possible runaway reaction in its chemical storage tanks. This warning too went unheeded.

From the beginning, Union Carbide officials had been acting strangely. First, they tried to minimise the damages that the MIC gas could bring about by saying that the gas was not as lethal as it was being made out to be. A dose of oxygen would put the victims on their feet again. Even after the whole world, including US President Ronald Reagan, expressed shock and grief at the tragedy, there was not a word of regret or sorrow from the Union Carbide Corporation of USA. Neither did they volunteer any information on the effects of MIC either on animals or on human beings: nor did they state which drugs could bring relief. Union Carbide Corporation is known to have carried out extensive tests on animals to find out the effects of MIC gas but the government of India, despite numerous requests for the test results, has failed to secure them from the giant multinational.

Mr Anderson and his senior colleagues in the USA are now trying to disown responsibility for the gas leak in Bhopal, but it may not be very easy for Union Carbide Corporation to get away with it. The evidence is too overwhelming for such a cover-up to succeed. Like its share prices, Union Carbide Corporation's credibility too has taken a nose-dive. The chairman of the US House of Representatives' Health and Environment Committee, Henry Waxman, succinctly summed up why Union Carbide's ploy could not succeed: "I have come to a point where I do not think we can take Union Carbide's word for what happened in India." Only recently the US Union Carbide Corporation was fined $3.9 million by the US Environment Protection Agency for supplying doctored information.

Evidently, Union Carbide of USA is prepared to go to any length to save its investments. Since the issue of responsibility is directly connected to the quantum of compensation that Carbide Corporation of USA would have to pay to the victims, it was perhaps inevitable that it would try to shift the blame to its Indian subsidiary. In the process the facts the Corporation is trying to ignore are that its Bhopal plant was a poor imitation of its Virginia plant and its safety standards were incapable of coping with emergency situations like the one that led to the world's worst environmental disaster. How then are the local managers of the Indian subsidiary to blame for the catastrophe? Obviously, Mr Anderson looks at the matter differently.

Tooshar Pandit

Carbide Blames Carbide

Desperate to save itself, Union Carbide Corporation is now blaming its Indian subsidiary for the world's worst industrial mishap



For beleaguered Union Carbide, after the long journey through specious arguments, justifications and pleas, it seems to be the end of the road: While at Danbury, Connecticut, the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) chairman Warren Anderson was clearly hinting at sabotage or negligence as the cause of the Bhopal disaster, those in charge of the Indian subsidiary found their blood pressure mounting. Were their American bosses trying to pin responsibility on them? Although top officials of Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) have been maintaining a studied silence on Anderson's statements, the buck has definitely travelled down to the American multinational's Indian subsidiary.

Speaking to SUNDAY in what was his first meeting with the press after detention for the accident, UCIL managing director V.P. Gokhale said about the UCC's report: "It would be premature to comment on the investigating team's report until the findings are confirmed." He also declined to comment on Anderson's statements, putting the blame squarely on the Indian subsidiary, in view of the "legal problems and constraints." While the "legal problems" continue and the government argues with Carbide over the compensation amount for the 2,500 victims, their dependants and relatives are likely to face a long drawn war over technicalities.

The Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims): Ordinance 1985 came into being in February. The ordinance empowers the central government "to ensure claims arising out of, or connected with the Bhopal gas leak disaster are dealt with speedily, effectively, equitably and to the best advantage of the claimants and for matters incidental thereto." It is learnt, however, that the government is likely to reach an out-of-court settlement with the company. A UCIL official here estimated that the amount paid by the company would be around 100 million dollars. However, a company spokesman ruled this out as "highly speculative and motivated."

Commenting on the likelihood of an out-of court settlement, advocate Indira Jaisingh, a member of the Lawyer's Collective who was recently in Bhopal to represent the victims, said this would be the best choice. Litigation in India would take too long and it would prove too expensive. Even though the courts were not allowing contingency fees, lawyers would have to be paid on an hourly basis.

Keeping in line with his chief in the USA, Mr Gokhale also argued in favour of an out-of-court settlement as litigation would delay compensation. But, he added, "The public is misled into believing that compensation is the only answer. The need of the hour is rehabilitation." And he has a suggestion: "I am willing to let part of the Bhopal plant be used as rehabilitation centres for the survivors." He conceded that Carbide's rehabilitation work has been limited so far and that "nothing really suffices in the light of such a tragedy."

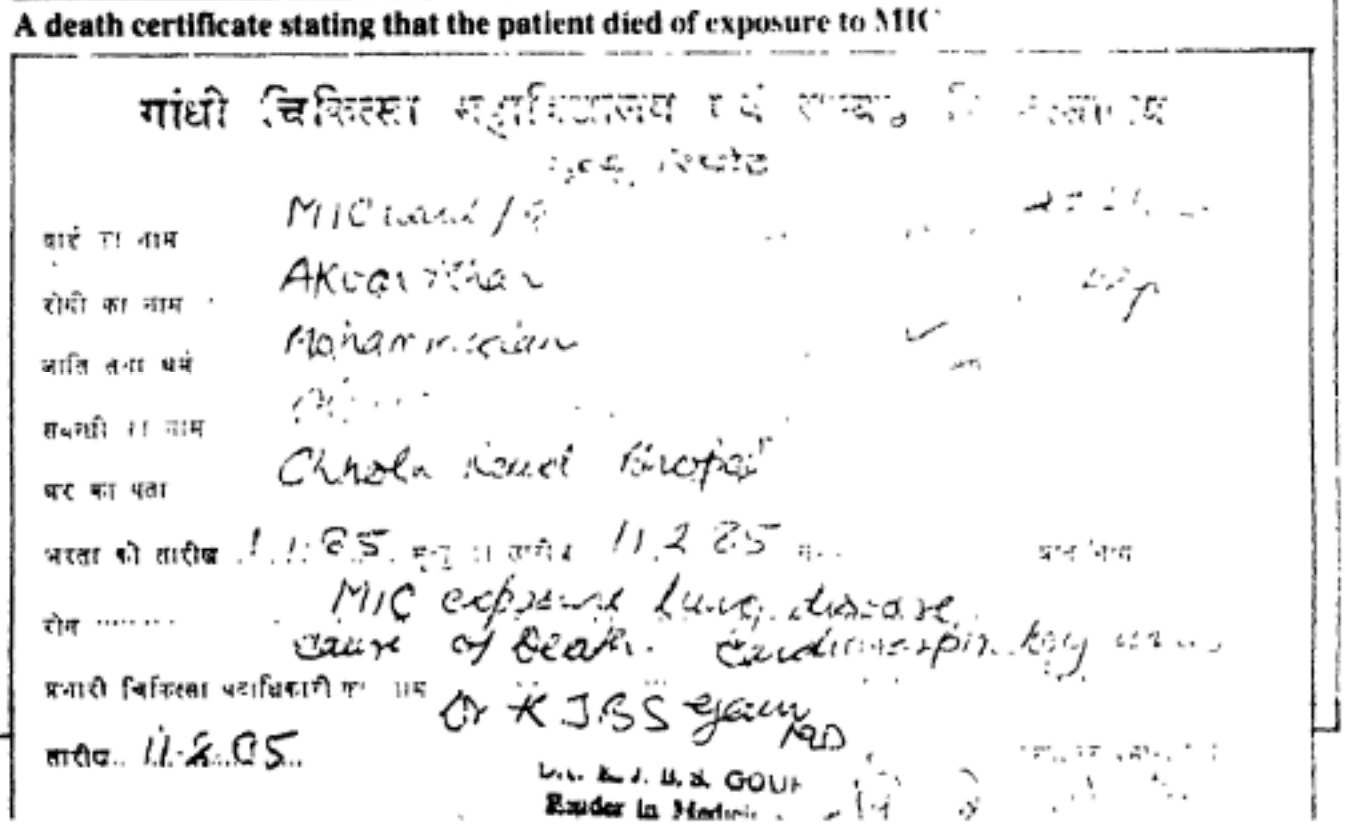
Suffice it certainly does not. So far the only rehabilitation work has been by way of setting up *papad*, hand glove and *agarbatti*-making centres. And this from about Rs 3 lakhs collected by the Carbide employees' relief trust. Thirty per cent of this amount is to be used for relief immediately while the rest of the money will be saved for long-term programmes, according to Dr Chakravarty of UCIL, who is one of the trustees. In short, the company has hardly had to trouble itself about relief measures as "the government has refused all aid in view that it might affect the case."

The crucial question now is: Where does the blame lie? With the world's 27th largest multinational corporation or its Indian subsidiary? Who will foist the blame on whom? Or will the Indian government also be dragged in "for contributory negligence" to split the kitty? In an apparent bid to "find out the answer," UCC assigned seven of its civil engineers and scientists headed by Ron Van Mynen, corporate director of health and safety, to investigate the case and determine the probable cause.

After spending 24 days in India and collecting a residue from the fateful MIC tank No 610, the team simulated possible conditions leading to the gas release and subsequent formation of the elements found in the residue, in their US laboratories. By its own admission, the team could not present a single scenario to fit the accident, since "sufficient critical information was missing in each case due to restrictions placed on the team by the Central Bureau of Investigation." The team examined many possibilities, "including those deemed remote or unlikely" and arrived at a hypothesis to explain the accident in which it has a "high degree of confidence." "The incident was the result of a unique combination of unusual events," the report says. One such "unusual" phenomenon is an abnormally high level of water in the MIC tank which is believed to have reacted with the lethal gas aided by equally high levels of chloroform.

Interestingly the report fails to

A death certificate stating that the patient died of exposure to MIC



trace the source of the water which UCIL experts here say is not available so abundantly at the site. It is clear while reading the report that everything subtly points to sabotage or gross negligence. The report observes: "The exact source of the water is not known, but laboratory work demonstrated that the 1,000-2,000 pounds (120-240 gallons) would have accounted for the chemistry of the residue. Water could have been introduced inadvertently or deliberately, directly into the tank through the process vent line, nitrogen line or other piping." A UCIL official here who wished to remain unidentified corroborated this view and even said "disgruntled workers" had a hand in this. The sabotage theory clears the air for UCIL: What better story than 'union rivalry' or 'workers out to wreck the company' for a clean defence?

But for UCIL the clouds are gathering again as the UCC report brings in the negligence theory strongly, squarely shifting the blame to its Indian subsidiary. Check:

"The vent gas scrubber had been removed from an operating mode to a standby mode on October 23, 1984, after the MIC unit was shut down with a total MIC inventory of 183,000 pounds in tanks 610 and 611. The return to an operating mode was dependent upon the operator being alerted to a problem and taking prompt action to activate the circulating pump. The flow meter did not indicate that caustic circulation had been started. The operator did not go into the unit and check the pump and verify a flow. Prior to the incident, the flare had been removed from service from maintenance work and was not operating at the time of the incident.

"The temperature of MIC in tank 610 before the incident was at 15 to 20 degrees centigrade as compared to the requirement of zero degrees centigrade. The lower temperature would have retarded the reaction rates and considerably extended the time available for corrective action. The refrigeration system provided to cool the MIC in the storage tanks had been made non-operational in June 1984."

These observations lose their gravity when reports about the fault in the plant's structural design (by the parent company), strangely overlooked by UCC, USA, investigators, say that vent gas scrubber (VGS) is designed to operate only at low temperatures and pressures, while the gas is released at a high temperature and pressure. The flare tower which burns up gas not neutralised in the VGS is meant to handle only small quantities of the gas. In this case it was 40,000 kilos. The refrigeration system, according to a report by the Delhi Science Forum (DSF), "was switched off as an economy measure." The report adds that many vent lines, feed lines etc. are in poor condition and items that should be replaced every six months have been used for two years. Such conditions could lead to the entry of chemicals, whose presence even in minor quantities can trigger runaway reactions, the report says.

Besides this, it is pointed out that the design of the MIC storage tank itself was faulty. Buried and encased in cement it is difficult to inspect or repair. Also, MIC should not be stored in such vast quantities and it was also not adequately cooled in view of the very hot summer in the area. The DSF report also states the difference between the UCC plant in West Virginia and the plant in Bhopal, as substantial evidence that multinationals, while transferring technology to Third World countries, forget to transfer the quality and safeguards used at home. The pressure gauge which indicates pressure when the RD (rupture disc) in tank 610 ruptures, is manually monitored and not linked with the autowarning alarm or control room as it is in West Virginia.

The plant in West Virginia is provided with a computerised monitoring and control system, which the Bhopal plant lacks. Countering this observation, Mr Gokhale said that the computer installed at West Virginia was for logging production operating data and was not a part of the safety system. This was so at least until 3 December last year. They could have made changes after the tragedy, he said, adding that the Bhopal plant was also the first of the UCIL plants to get a computer (in June 1984), but was unrelated to safety measures.

Having allayed fears of a repeat performance in the US, the report was made public, subtly nailing UCIL with sabotage or negligence. There were obviously no reactions to the report here. As one official put it: "I have four options. In can agree with the report, in which case I am agreeing with its deduction, which looks bad for us. I can refute its findings, in which case I am openly going against the findings of UCC, our parent company. I can offer no comments. Or I can wait till the CBI and Indian scientists come out with their findings, before voicing my opinion."

Even if the conclusions lead to gross negligence, the fact remains that all senior personnel were trained in America. Works manager J. Mukund was educated and trained in USA by UCC, assistant works manager Dr Roy Chaudhari and the manager, MIC production, were also trained at West Virginia. And UCC did exercise control over the working of the plant and hiring of personnel.

Commenting on the possible evasion of responsiblity by UCC on the issue of negligence, a lawyer said that unless it was proved by audit reports that UCC was directly monitoring the controls of the company, it would be hard to pin the blame on them. They might even be able to evade the responsiblity of structural design faults, if they could prove that the original plans had been altered or modified in some way. A representative of Carbide's legal department, when asked whether the cause of the accident (negligence or sabotage) would affect the compensation, said, "The out-of-court settlement is for civil damages (compensation to claimants) and it has nothing to do with criminal proceedings. The government has to decide about continuing with criminal proceeding. But in the interest of the victims, compensation has to be paid."

It is left to be seen whether Union Carbide will bear the burden of the entire settlement, which would cover the victims, retrenched employees of the Bhopal plant, numbering around 900, and others directly affected by the tragedy. There is a possibility, as a section of lawyers here feel, that Carbide might drag the government in for contributory negligence, pointing out that had it cared to duly carry out inspections of the plant, and strictly enforced various acts governing industry, pollution control and environmental safety—which are its duties—this would not have happened. The division of blame would also ease the burden of compensation on the multinational and its subsidiary. If Carbide has to part with a sizable sum of money by settling the matter out of court, sharing the blame would be helpful. This would mean both the company and the government would have to share the penalty.

The emerging view seems to be that UCC will try its best to shrug off most of the blame. The report, if anything, substantiates this. Right now, UCIL seems to be virtually "sitting on the fence," letting the government and UCC sort out the matter between themselves. How long this will last remains to be seen. The ball might well roll into UCIL's courts, holding it responsible for history's worst industrial accident, along with the government.

Lalita Dhar, Bombay

COVER STORY

The Case Against Carbide

A CBI report finds enough damaging evidence for the Indian government to sue Union Carbide



The legal battery of the government of India is finally ready to zero in on the Union Carbide Corporation, Connecticut, USA. Armed with the powers to be the sole representative of the Bhopal gas victims in court, the government has appointed as their attorneys, Robins, Zelle, Larson and Kaplan, a Minnesota-based firm to prepare the case against the corporation. Going by the "technical report" released by the multinational at Danbury on 20 March and subsequent statements by the Union Carbide chairman, Warren Anderson, the firm is going to fight tooth and nail to disclaim any responsibility for the disaster.

The vital question today is: Have the 16-week long investigations come up with enough evidence to establish the culpability of the parent company in court? This was obviously the question debated at the first meeting between the visiting attorneys from Minnesota: Ms Roberta B. Walburn, Mr Michael V. Ciresi, Mr Bruce Afinzen and Ms Ann Barcelow (legal assistant) and the CBI investigating team at the office of the joint director, Central Bureau of Investigation, in the capital on 29 March. After months of painstaking probe, the CBI officials are confident of providing enough gunpowder to the legal blow. The documents and records seized from the Carbide factory have come up with startling disclosures that establish without a doubt that the parent company was well aware of the malfunctioning of the Bhopal plant. Not only that, they were also partners in crime in sanctioning short-sighted design changes in the plant which finally led to the entry of water into the MIC storage tank

According to CBI investigations, in May 1984—hardly six months before the tragedy—the Union Carbide Corporation approved of a design change in the pipelines leading to the MIC storage tanks which was directly responsible for the water entering tank No. 610 on the fatal night. It was decided then to interconnect the relief valve vent header (RVVH) line with the process vent header (PVH) line which led out of the storage tanks to the vent gas scrubber. The reason given for the design change was "to provide a route for toxic gases to the scrubber which neutralises the gas in case any one of the vent headers was undergoing repairs." It was this interconnection which provided the route for the water which came from the plant via the RVVH line into the tank.

At 8.30 pm on 2 December, the workers on night shift began flushing four filter pressure safety valves located at ground level far from the storage tanks. The washing continued until 9.30 and then was resumed after an hour's break around 10.30 pm. The CBI officials have found that two of the filter valves being washed were choked. This led to the accumulation of water and the continued pressure of water being forced into the pipe helped the water level to rise through the isolation valve at a height of eight feet into the main header which is at a height of nearly 20 feet. From here the water got siphoned off into the lower RVVH line with the gravitational pull and finally via the interconnection into the MIC tank. According to reports, the nitrogen pressurisation of the tank was also not effective and the water freely poured into the tank, triggering off the runaway reaction.

The CBI officials, who had disconnected the pipeline from the storage tanks on the morning after the leak, drained out as much as 27 litres of water from the structurals on 14 February. This totally refutes the theory of sabotage—with water deliberately poured into the tank—being floated by certain company officials. The water was found in almost all connecting pipelines tracing the entire route from the point of washing to the RVVH line.

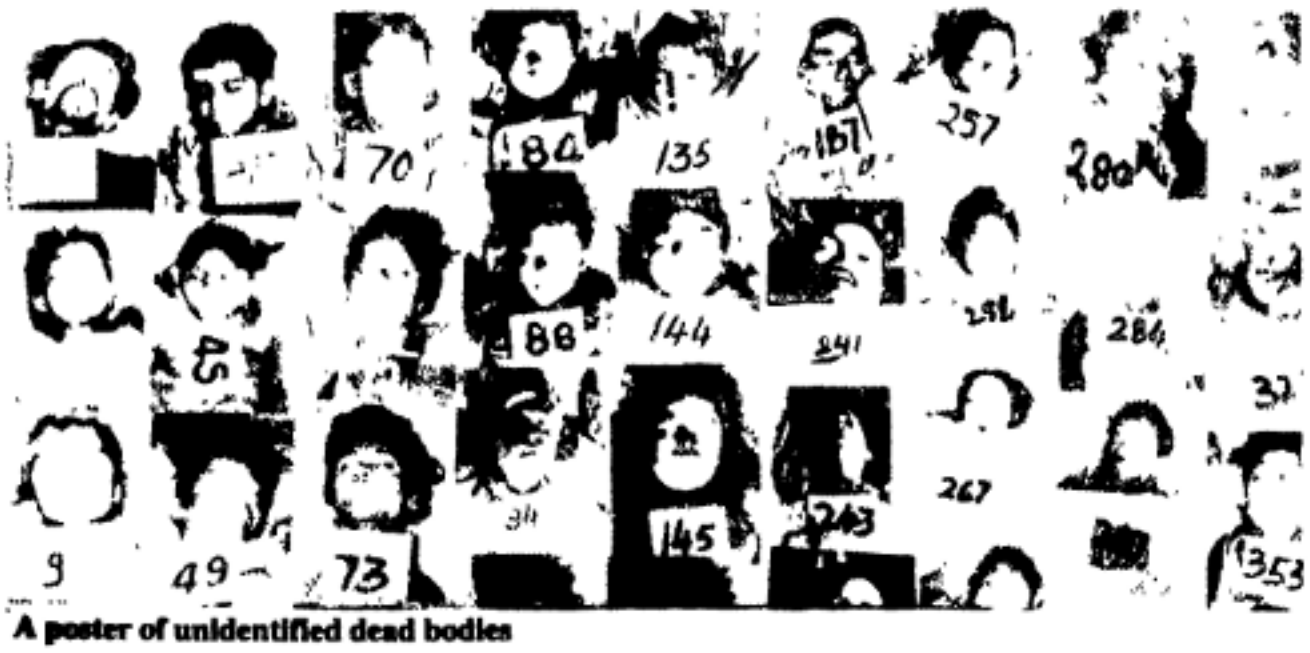
The CBI team has also found a document from the parent company to the Bhopal plant drafted only a week before the gas leak which indicates plans to shift the plant to another country. While they would not disclose the name of the country or the particulars of the document, officials said that this decision was also being taken in the light of the malfunctioning of the plant. Further evidence of the negligence of the parent company is provided in the Paulson Safety Survey Report 1982. The report which is full of praise for the working of the plant in the covering letter, later confesses that not a single valve of the plant was found to be in working order, the CBI officials said. There was, however, no remedial action, and the valves which gave way in the 2 December leakage were all these faulty original ones installed in 1979.

The CBI investigation also indicts the Union Carbide Corporation for reasons other than design defects. According to reports seized from the research and development centre of the plant at Bhopal as well as documents traced from other offices of the firm, the corporation had conducted a number of experiments on animals and plants and was well aware of the effects of MIC. According to one investigating official, the firm used to get piecemeal research done at the various laboratories and then put the results together to arrive at an overall con-

Tank No. 610 which has been dug up for investigation by the CBI



गैस दुर्घटना में लापता मृतक



A poster of unidentified dead bodies

clusion. The Bhopal R and D centre too had been used for finding out some of the efects of MIC on animals and plants. The firm, however, denied any knowledge of long-term or medium-term effects of the toxic gas following the tragedy.

Reports seized also show that the parent company was fully aware of the possible danger of cyanide poisoning through MIC, and the antidotes required as early as 1978-79. Does this mean that the knowledge was wilfully suppressed by the firm when the doctors at Bhopal were floundering in the dark? Apart from establishing the responsibility of the parent company, the accusing finger of the CBI also points at the local workers and management. The immediate attack against them is the fact that the pipelines being washed were not "blinded," that is the tanks were not disconnected from the lines.



As for the neglect of the management, there is no dearth of pointers. The temperature and pressure indicators, both vital instruments in such an eventuality, were not in working order The well-reported dismantling of the flare tower and non-functioning of the vent scrubber are glaring examples of callous disregard of the potential hazards in their production process. Further design defects located indicate that even if the two were functioning, they were not equipped to handle the magnitude of such a leakage. While the capacity of the vent scrubber is only 86 kg of gas per hour at 35 degrees Celsius the amount that pased through was well over a hundred times that quantity at more than 200 degrees Celsius. The flare tower in turn is even less equipped to handle such large amounts and CBI officials maintain that instead of helping it would have caused an explosion to add to the damage. No attention was paid to these in-builts defect at any stage despite small accidents earlier. The style of functioning, moreover, of the plant was even more casual. During "Operation Faith," it was found that a certain amount of MIC was present in the third storage tank which was supposed to be kept empty.

Later investigations revealed that a little over one tonne of MIC had been transferred to this tank on 17 October after which plant officials had forgotten about it altogether. The CBI investigations are also dwelling on the culpability of the government of Madhya Pradesh in granting the licence without adequate checks regarding the safety measures provided. It also puts the blame on the government for allowing the residential colonies to grow around the plant despite being fully aware of the hazardous chemicals being produced.

A report by an engineer of the state pollution control board in 1981, when the plant had applied for an augmentation of capacity, clearly states: "Now that the factory is running, we can do little about it. But no further settlement should be allowed around the plant." However, just weeks before the disaster, the then Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Mr Arjun Singh, had personally distributed *pattas* granting land rights to the hutment dwellers around the factory. The role of the politicians and bureaucrats in concealing the facts about the firm is also being investigated. In this connection, the role of Mr M.N. Nagu, director, health services, Madhya Pradesh government, following the tragedy is reported to be suspect. Mr Nagu's brother, Mr R.N. Nagu, who was a former inspector-general of police had the contract for security arrangements of the plant, CBI officials pointed out.

The CBI's own investigations are more or less complete. But they are still awaiting the findings of the scientists and chemical experts to finalise their reports. Storage tank No 610 has been dug out (contrary to press reports, the tank is not underground but on surface level). It was, however, covered with a three-ft deep earth mound with a further foot deep concrete coating. The cracking of the cement coating following the leakage had earlier been attributed to heat generated estimated to be as high as 400 degrees Celsius. But it has now been found on uncovering the tank, that the shell of the tank itself had bulged out to such an extent with the pressure created by the reaction that the cement surrounding it had cracked.

The tank is scheduled to be cut open on 6 April. At first only video cameras will be lowered into the tank to photograph the remnants. Only then will samples of the polymers, if any remain inside, be taken to analyse the exact nature of the reaction. This would mark the last stage of the investigations and the final report is expected around the end of May. But the CBI officials point out, even as the formal report is being prepared, there is enough ready evidence against both Union Carbide Corporation and Union Carbide (India) Limited to proceed against them in court. The attorneys from Minnesota—who, incidentally, according to the official spokesman of the American Centre did not even inform the American embassy here of their visit—are being allowed access to all the evidence collected by the Bureau. They were flown to Bhopal for three days to conduct an on-the-spot study of the plant.

The team returned in the first fortnight of April armed with all the evidence to take Warren Anderson and his men to court. The case is expected to be filed within a fortnight. The government is also going to appeal to all the private suits lodged in the US courts for a joinder. Although the quantum of relief to be demanded is yet to be disclosed, according to reliable estimates, Union Carbide is heading for a billion dollar suit.

Tarun Mishra, New Delhi

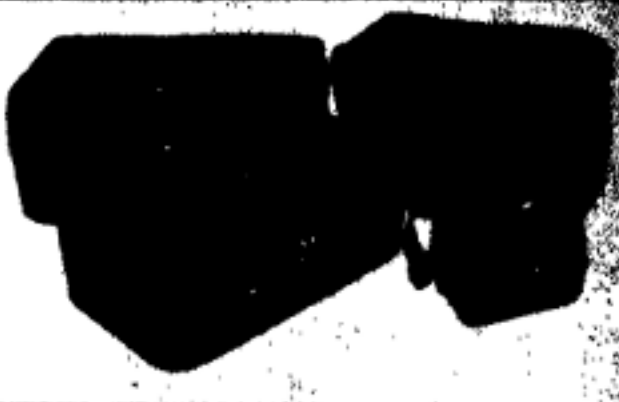
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Simpsons

The Crime Continues

On an average at least two deaths due to MIC exposure are being reported everyday in Bhopal. Many who have survived are diseased or dying. Even foetuses have been affected; one child was born with holes where his eyes should have been.



Bhopal has become a laboratory of human guinea pigs. Everyone who was exposed to the 50,000 pounds of deadly methyl isocyanate which floated out of a leaking Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) plant on the fateful night of 3 December 1984, leaving 2,500 dead, 50,000 maimed and 1,500 severely affected, is now a hapless victim of medical experiments and selfish political designs. The situation threatens to take a turn for the worse as reports of fresh cases of MIC poisoning pour in. On an average, two MIC-affected residents of Bhopal die every day—either adults who were exposed to the gas, or deformed newly-borns or children born prematurely. Even foetuses have been affected, today doctors are advising every woman who was pregnant at the time of the tragedy to undergo an abortion. Clearly, the catastrophic gas leak has converted Bhopal into a mini Hiroshima, and the brutal effects will be felt by the generations to come.

Medical experts in Bhopal today are waging a losing battle against an unknown disease and an unidentified poison. With their backs to the wall, the authorities in Bhopal have embarked on a cover-up operation. No results of the medical experiments being carried out on the affected persons have been made public. As a result, the victims of gas inhalation, relief workers and doctors themselves are confused about the repercussions of the tragedy. Only the sufferers among the survivors speak the truth.

Out of the total population of eight lakhs, nearly two lakh people in Bhopal are "MIC-affected." They are suffering from diseases like pulmonary tuberculosis, respiratory burns and disorders of the lung, the eyes, the liver, the kidney and the brain. Many ailing survivors may perish in the coming months. And that is not all. There are other effects of syndromes caused by exposure to the deadly toxic gas that are cause for further alarm and shock. Soon after 3 December, the effect of the gas on about 1,000 pregnant women living in the 16 areas of Bhopal which had been declared as "gas-affected" was feared. Doctors opined that negative effects of MIC gas on pregnant women would be most apparent in children born around May-June-July, since formation of the child is nearly complete after the first trimester (three months).

Records of births and deaths of infants in Bhopal have proved otherwise. The first case of deformed birth (suspected because of MIC exposure) was of a child born in Bilaspur's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Hospital. The mother of the child had been near the Union Carbide factory at the time of leakage and had been exposed to MIC. The child born to her by a Caesarean operation weighed 4.5 kg and had two gaping holes instead of eyes. The baby had no fingers and toes and the skin looked scorched. The birth of the "freak baby" was widely published though doctors and gynaecologists in Bhopal declared it a normal case of retarded growth. The Sultania Janana Hospital is among the largest women's hospitals in Bhopal. Between 20 and 30 infants are born in the hospital every day. According to junior gynaecologists and midwives at the hospital's maternity ward, the cases of premature or retarded birth among children being born are abnormally high in number. As many



Krishna Bai, a MIC gas victim, gave birth to a dead baby in Bhopal

as 50 per cent of the children being born are either underweight, premature or have some physical deformity. Many of the children born have not survived. And, where the baby does survive it is in a precarious condition and has to be sent for emergency treatment to either the Hamidia Hospital or the Medical College Hospital. Sushila, aged 20, gave birth to a stillborn child on 29 March. A resident of Shahjahanabad Colony, Sushila had a difficult pregnancy ever since she was exposed to the MIC gas. She complained of restlessness, fatigue and breathlessness. After a prolonged labour a frail baby girl was born to Sushila. Before the baby's birth, senior gynaecologists had examined the mother with ultrasound equipment. The child that was born had a deformed head formation. The back of the child's head was an extended cyst-like formation and part of the skull was missing. This child too had scars and burn-marks all over its body. The baby died the day it was born. Said Sushila: "It is the gas that has killed my child. Ever since the time I inhaled the gas, the progress of the child was not normal. But the doctors told me nothing. They simply gave me medicines and injections."

Records of such abnormal births at the Sultania hospital or any other large hospital in Bhopal are not available. In this case though the case papers were not with the doctors on duty or with the parents, the gynae register recorded the birth as a case of "anencaphaly," that is when the head of the child is not formed. Entry No. 1335-465 states that the child was born at 7.05 am to Sushila, resident of Shahjahanabad Police Lines, Bhopal. The record also states the child was born after 36 weeks of pregnancy after an abnormally long labour. The mother of the child is "MIC-exposed." A look at the register reveals many more abnormal births to MIC exposed women in the past three months.

There are confirmed reports of births of other deformed children at Sultania Hospital. On 20 February, for example, three unnatural births took place in the maternity wards. One child was born without a skull, another with unformed limbs, while the third was born two months before completion of pregnancy. The last child had patches of blue skin and was born without hands. No record of any of these births is available. One such child born the same day is still surviving at the Railway Colony. The baby is covered with blue and black spots and senior doctors are believed to be visiting the house and monitoring the progress of the baby.

Reports of stillborn or abnormal births have also been received from private nursing homes and maternity clinics in Bhopal. Nurses at the Ghoois Nursing Home and Termination of Pregnancy Centre, Kalbala Road hesitantly disclosed details of such births. There was a high percentage of premature births and in the past two weeks at least three children had died because of deformities. Nurses also disclosed that a biochemistry team was presently undertaking research of all births and deaths at the centre. The team had been removing placentas of new born babies from the clinic for experiments.



Though no official announcement has been made in Bhopal about abnormal births after MIC exposure in mothers, gynaecologists have been advising pregnant women to have their pregnancies terminated if in an advanced stage. While doctors dealing with MIC cases are disinclined to establish a high percentage of unnatural births because of MIC exposure, a report published by the Indian Council of Medical Research on the "Health effects of toxic gas exposures at Bhopal" in January had clearly stated this. The report mentions: "During the acute period 36 pregnant women were hospitalised for symptoms of respiratory distress. Five of them aborted, of whom three were definitely attributable to MIC effect. Two expectant mothers died due to MIC effect. Of the 30 antenatal cases, ten were seriously affected and four of them had normal deliveries." It was suggested in the ICMR report that "a five year follow-up study be undertaken to find out morbidity referable to CVS and respiratory systems. There is a need to identify abortion rate among MIC-exposed women, the intrauterine growth retardation among the next generation of children..." It is obvious that the ICMR scientists suspect long-term effects of MIC gas on pregnant women and infants.

Why then are pregnant women not being cautioned against the odds they face in childbirth after being exposed to the MIC gas? Simple administration of serious and heavy doses of medicines to ailing and expectant mothers has only worsened the plight of pregnant women. What is worse, women who had inhaled the gas have been showing other symptoms. Clinics and dispensaries situated close to the Union Carbide factory, alongside Jayaprakash Nagar, Chhola Kenchi and Railway Colony, which were the worst-hit localities, have an increased number of women patients. Thousands of women exposed to MIC and under-



An underweight baby born to a MIC gas victim in Bhopal

going treatment for exposure have complained of variation in menstrual cycles. Some women have complained of menstruation five times in the course of one month. Lactating mothers have repeatedly informed doctors about a reduction in milk and a change in the taste of the milk. On the other hand, MIC-affected men have together with general fatigue and poor body health complained of impotency.

Many victims are being treated at the new 30-bed hospital set up to meet the unprecedented rise in cases of MIC exposure. Though the hospital (once the residence of the police DIG, Bhopal) is equipped with respirators and provides facilities in skinagraphy and pathological tests, prevailing conditions at the hospital are appalling. Over 500 cases of MIC exposure are being attended to by the small team of doctors at the hospital. In the last week of March the 30-bed hospital recorded a rise in the number of patients treated: more cases of MIC afflictions were reported. On 29 March, the hospital treated 900 cases of MIC-exposed victims, the highest so far.

The medical specialist treating MIC cases at the hospital Dr (Mrs) S. P. Verma said that treatment was being given to victims for respiratory disorders, fatigue, loss of appetite and pulmonary complications. Serious cases were being given regular doses of sodium thiosulphate, of which they had limited stocks. She also explained that a large number of the gas-affected victims coming from areas close to the Union Carbide factory were suffering from serious mental disorders. "Many of the patients seen by us have got severe mental disbalance. They are being given psychiatric treatment here," she said. Jaan Mohammed, a railway porter suffering from severe pulmonary complications and mental strain was cited as one such case. Said he: "How do we know what is going to happen the next time? This is the third time the factory has caused death. The next time the gas will kill all of us." The old porter, who had nearly been blinded by the gas and was witness to a previous gas leakage and a major fire at the Union Carbide plant close to his home, is in a state of mental trauma. Incapacitated and unwell, he sees the Union Carbide factory as a monster that has wrecked his life.



Of the two lakh Bhopal gas leakage victims undergoing treatment, 10 to 12 per cent have psychiatric complaints or are suffering from acute mental depression. This means 20,000 victims are on the point of mental derangement if they are not provided psychiatric treatment immediately. But, strangely, such treatment has not been started at all. This despite the fact that a team of

Scant Relief



Within hours of the gas leak in Bhopal, the government of Madhya Pradesh had announced relief for the victims of the gas tragedy. Rs 10,000 would be given to the family of each person dead, and 1,500 for each person who had suffered physically due to MIC poisoning. However, four months later, the relief given to the number of victims does not tally with the figures of those affected or killed. While the number of dead has been declared as 2,500, only in 900 cases has monetary relief been given. A list of 1,320 persons had been made after verification from hospital records and identification by the dead person's family. A second list of 123 persons is now ready. When will the victims left out in the first list receive their dues?

Take the case of Bihari Lal, a casual labourer, who has not received any payment from the government after the tragic death of his wife. "Nobody listens to us. I have tried to meet the chief minister for my money, but the government has killed us without poison." The wife of Bihari Lal, Halki Bai, was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition after inhaling the gas and died soon after she was discharged. The death certificate with Bihari Lal clearly states his wife was killed because of MIC poisoning. Though details of his wife's death have been taken from him, on enquiry he was told the file had been sent from the collector's office where his name had been listed, to the local police station for further verification. At the police station the file was declared missing. Bihari Lal is himself suffering from severe effects of MIC exposure and is one of the hundreds of poverty-stricken victims of MIC exposure who have been ignored by the authorities during distribution of relief.

There are reports that the payment of relief money has been handled in a careless manner. Dozens of victims have not received the full amount of relief and there are others who, impersonating as relatives of dead persons, have received payments instead. Officers at the collector's office, however, claimed that all relief payments had been done in an orderly fashion and there had been no scope for irregular payments since all victims had been given crossed cheques for Rs 10,000.

The role of the various voluntary relief organisations in providing rehabilitation of MIC-affected victims has caused some amount of confusion and controversy. There are very few associations and organisations which have done substantial amount of work among the gas victims. One such active group which has been working in Bhopal is the Nagarik Rahat Punarwas Committee headed by Tapan Bose, the famous producer of the documentary film on the Bhagalpur blindings, *An Indian Story*. The committee has been very active in relief operations and Tapan Bose has succeeded in filming the entire sequence of the tragedy from the time of 'Operation Faith.' The film was shown to thousands of victims on 12 March, the 100th day of the disaster. The 80-minute film has the commentary of noted film actor, Naseeruddin Shah, and is a poignant recapitulation of the horror that is evident in Bhopal today.

The Kishore Bharati and its president, noted researcher and scholar, Anil Sadgopal, is the other active social service group. Members of the Kishore Bharati have been advocating the use of sodium thiosulphate on MIC victims without exception. Only recently, activists of the Kishore Bharati staged a *dharna* at the hospitals where MIC victims were being treated, demanding administration of sodium thiosulphate. Similar demonstrations and protest rallies have been organised by other relief organisations, namely the Zaharili Gas Kand Morcha, the Medico Friends Circle and Saheli for whom Bhopal has become a fertile ground for fighting injustice and oppression.

Ritu Sarin, Bhopal

psychiatrics had visited Bhopal in December and had made important observations about the mental health of the victims. The team included Prof. D. B. Sethi, chief psychiatrist at the K.G. Medical College, Lucknow and Dr D. Shrinivasa Moor of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore. The report of the team had concluded with these words: "Symptoms of anxiety and depression are foremost among the patients but it is difficult to say if these are just emotional reactions on the effect of the character."

Instances of mental disability among gas victims are rising. In the orphanage set up by the government, two children had received early psychiatric treatment. The children are still in a state of deep shock. They were separated from their families in the night of 3 December and now are on the point of lunacy. One of the young boys' speech has been impaired since the day the gas escaped. No psychiatric or neurological treatment is now being given to either of them, or in fact to any of the thousands for whom the events following the leakage have become a continuing nightmare and who have lost their near and dear ones.

The tragedy of Bhopal's victims is that having fallen prey to MIC, they have become targets of medical experiments and haphazard treatment. As Dr Arya Lohia, medical officer of UCIL, explained, at the time of the tragedy not a single death had occurred in any part of the world because of MIC exposure before. The Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) in the USA has evidence of treatment given to 86 MIC-affected persons over the years, but none of the persons exposed to the gas had either died or been seriously affected.

Soon after 3 December, the main point of contention was whether the victims should be administered sodium thiosulphate, an antidote for cyanide poisoning, or not. This controversy has not been sorted out till date even though sodium thiosulphate is being administered to some victims. The remote possibility of there being cyanide poisoning in MIC-affected persons was first discovered by Dr H. Chandra, head of the forensic department, Hamidia hospital, where autopsies of all persons killed by MIC exposure were conducted. The prognosis of Dr Chandra was that the blood of those persons killed was cherry-red, as in the case of cyanide poisoning. (In the 1976 report on methyl isocynate, printed by the Union Carbide, it is stated that thermal decomposition of MIC may produce hydrogen cyanide.)

Immediate administration of sodium thiosulphate to all victims was recommended if cyanide poisoning had taken place. The chairman of UCC, Warren Anderson, who visited Bhopal hours after the gas escaped brought with him sufficient supplies of this drug. A German toxicologist, Dr Max Daunderer arrived in Bhopal on 7 December with large supplies of sodium thiosulphate. Still the antidote was not given to the victims. A few days later, when news of suspected cyanide poisoning in Bhopal was known internationally, a representative of UCC himself recommended the use of sodium thiosulphate. Within a week of the tragedy, Dr Bipin Avashia, an Indian working as medical director of the Charlson plant of Union Carbide, USA, sent a telex message to the Bombay, Delhi and Bhopal offices of the company: "If cyanide poisoning is suspected use amly nitrite. If no effect use sodium nitrite 0.3 gms and sodium thiosulphate 12.5 gms." Says Dr Chandra, "The telex message was a clear admission that the Union Carbide's parent company itself suspected MIC to have decomposed into cyanide, the reason for the cherry-red blood in the dead persons' bodies."

The "miraculous antidote" was eventually administered to critical MIC cases on 14 February, more than two months after thousands had died an instant death. (80 per cent of the deaths in Bhopal following the gas leak took place outside hospitals; only 438 deaths are recorded in the various hospitals on 3 and 4 December.) Hundreds of lives could have been saved if the injections had been administered to victims at an earlier stage. But what is more surprising is that even after the reaction of sodium thiosulphate on at least 50 per cent of the victims has been found to be satisfactory, the intravenous injection is not being administered in a regulated manner. Instead of the stipulated dose of 12.5 gms, some victims are being given doses of only 1.5 gms of the antidote. At least 1,000 persons who are among the worst affected should have been given sodium thiosulphate regularly. However, not more than 500 victims are reported to have received it. With limited stocks available (20,000 vials were received in January), there are allegations that only very critical cases or influential patients are being given the injection. Panna Lal, 55, a resident of Chhola Mandi, one of the worst hit areas, complained bitterly about not receiving adequate medical attention. He showed the prescription he received from the Hamidia Hospital and records of previous treatment given to him. "Ever since the gas escaped it has become a living death for me. I reach the hospital with great difficulty every day and after waiting for hours the doctors simply say the injections are over. But I can see that they are giving the injections to other people," he moaned.



A mother who had been exposed to MIC with her new-born child at a hospital

'A Special Court is Needed to Deal With the Bhopal Tragedy'

Hans Raj Bhardwaj, union minister of state for law, told SUNDAY

Q: Precious time has been lost in sorting out the issue of compensation for the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy. Has the law ministry any plans to expedite relief for the victims?

A: The government has been keen to tackle this problem and soon after I came to the ministry, the attorney general K. Parasan and Justice P.N. Bhagwati of the Supreme Court and I went to Bhopal to assess the situation. We wanted to make sure that the best legal aid and advice is rendered to the victims of this tragedy. There was a suggestion made to us that we will get better compensation in the United States as compared to India because the law of torts and damages in India is not strong in the matter of quantity of compensation. Keeping that in view, we sent the attorney general to the United States and wanted him to report back to us on these issues. He has since come back to India and on 31 January submitted his report. In the confidential report presented to the government he has made certain suggestions.

I have my own views on this case and the government has to take a decision on the matter. We have studied in detail the report submitted by the attorney general and have also looked into various representations that have come to us from American and Indian lawyers regarding this case.

Q: Is it not true that for several weeks after the tragedy, victims and public at large were confused and misled about the legalities of the case. This was specially so when several American lawyers descended upon Bhopal and promised the victims fantastic sums of money as compensation. The victims did not know what their role was going to be if they appointed an American lawyer, what the lawyer's cut from the compensation would be and in fact, some victims who have appointed American lawyers do not even have the lawyer's names and addresses. Why didn't the government take steps to stop such exploitation and create an awareness among the victims?

A: You are correct that there was some confusion. I do not know what ensued before the new ministry took over, but I know that when we took office, our first priority was to attend to this case and to solve the legal tangle. Earlier, of course, Bhopal was flooded by American lawyers and they created an impression among the victims that they will get them huge amounts as compensation. Under the impact of tragedy, the victims, mostly simple people gave the American lawyers "*wakalatnama*" and power of attorney without ascertaining what they were going to do for them. It is a fact that American lawyers came to Bhopal to earn their briefs. So the moment we learnt about all this, we took notice, went to Bhopal, discussed matters with the state government there. We said that if the law of the land is inadequate why cannot we legislate the law for our own people? We should solve our own problems and if the law falls short of the challenge, we should amend it and legislate a new law. Also, if Parliament is not in session, we can issue an ordinance. So at present, I want to have an ordinance promulgated for setting up special courts, vested with special powers to deal with this exigency and I am sure that very soon we will set up a court in India where a claim will be filed for and on behalf of the victims by the state itself and we will see to it that Union Carbide responds to it and submits to the jurisdiction of Indian courts. I find it difficult to reconcile to a situation where we submit to a foreign court and leave everything in the hands of foreigners. I feel very concerned about the plight of the victims.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin



The government, in spite of such complaints, has not created sufficient public awareness of the deteriorating medical state of MIC victims. On 27 March, the chief minister, Motilal Vora, made a detailed statement in the Vidhan Sabha about the tragedy, listing the various relief measures adopted by the government for the victims: "The state government has laid out about Rs 10 crore for providing relief and treatment. A sum of Rs 1.87 crore has been received from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to help those affected by the gas tragedy." The statement also claims it is the responsibility of the government to "the present generation and the coming generation that all possible compensation be given for whatever unfortunate has happened."

The developments in Bhopal, now on the world map of disasters, are being closely watched. Physical effects of methyl isocyanate on human beings are being analysed in laboratories in India and abroad. Children born with physical signs of gas exposure are being kept under strict observation. Though authorities are not willing to admit daily deaths by MIC exposure, records at the cremation grounds near the affected areas disclose that a high percentage of deaths taking place in Bhopal are a result of MIC exposure. At the Shri Vishwa Ghat, the largest cremation ground near the Union Carbide factory, out of 73 persons cremated in March, the death register records 20 deaths due to "MIC gas exposure." At least four of these cases are of stillborn children, with visible signs of gas exposure. Is this not proof enough that the death and disease syndrome at Bhopal is continuing?

There is soon to be an explosion of literature and writings on the catastrophe at Bhopal. One hundred different books are being authored by eminent environmentalists, scientists and toxicologists who landed in Bhopal in the weeks following the disaster. One of the first such literary works examining the genesis and consequences of the tragedy is to be released soon. The book, *The Cloud Over Bhopal—Causes, Consequences and Constructive Solutions* has been authored by eminent environmentalist Dr Alfred Degrazia, who has written ten books on international disasters. Dr Degrazia described the Bhopal tragedy as a "treachery on the people of Bhopal, a disaster which is feared to have worse consequences than the Hiroshima bomb blast." According to him if the quantity of gas which leaked would have been sprayed over Bhopal, the entire population could have been eliminated. Now, he says, Bhopal has become a testing ground for experiments. The victims, he felt, are being treated as if they have an existence without spirits or souls.

Ritu Sarin, Bhopal

COVER STORY

Bhopal: The Dangers Ahead

Studies done by independent organisations reveal the grave health problems which Bhopal's population has to face in the future



Contrary to the assurances given in Parliament by the government about the state of health of the people in Bhopal after the gas leak from the Union Carbide factory, studies done by independent medical sources reveal grave problems for the population, living primarily in slum areas. A group of doctors from the Bangalore based Medico Friends Circle which visited Bhopal two months after the tragedy found the most shocking state of neglect. For instance, in spite of clear evidence of cyanide poisoning from 2 December, the administration of the known specific antidote, sodium thiosulfate was banned. Only after a fatal lapse of two months has this decision been officially reversed and even today clear guidelines for its administration to patients have not been issued, nor is the injection yet being made available in the quantity required for massive detoxification of the affected population.

Union Carbide (India) or Union Carbide (USA), should have immediately airlifted sodium thiosulfate to India because it is not manufactured here. But whether deliberately or not, they failed to do so. Even today, according to Dr Hiresh Chandra of Bhopal, who did the autopsy on the dead, there is not enough of this antidote available. The question that remains unanswered is why Union Carbide officials in the USA did not acknowledge immediately that it was cyanide poisoning, when they were aware of it. Why had they repeatedly claimed that the gas was harmless and not a killer?

On 15 March, full three months after the tragedy Union Carbide announced an in-depth programme to study the toxicological effects of over-exposure to methyl isocynate (MIC). The Carbide vice-president for health, safety and environmental affairs, Mr Jackson Browning, said that the corporation plans to expand on previous research programmes on the effects of MIC on animals and it will take six months to complete it. While announcing this he admitted that the corporation did have a good deal of information available on the acute and short-term exposure to toxicological properties of MIC. He said this information, previously made available to the US regulatory authorities, has also been communicated to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The point here is. If the previous studies were available, why did the Union Carbide authorities not fly down the only antidote for cyanide poisoning? Surely these studies revealed the possibility of cyanide poisoning in the event of such a leak. Mr Browning seems to be on the trail of a big cover-up operation, saying that Union Carbide will now sponsor a metabolism study in animals to evaluate whether a single large exposure to MIC can, for example, lead to the generation of cyanide. They claim that there is no known biological mechanism by which MIC inhalation could result in cyanide poisoning within the animal or human body. Browning brazenly expresses doubts about the reports "from India that a number of deaths did not appear to be associated with MIC over-exposures but rather were suggestive of cyanide poisoning among other possibilities."

Another grievous complaint is that crucial information about the nature of the gas as well as the findings of the autopsy were withheld from the medical community as well as the public by both Union Carbide and the government, incapacitating the attending doctors and creating unnecessary fear among the people. Even more devious was the information fed by medical officers of Union Carbide, Dr Jaeger of the World Health Organisation and the Ishwardas Committee of the government of Madhya Pradesh, in the form of statements to the press like, "There is no evidence of cyanide poisoning" and, "Only lungs and eyes have been affected."

Two months after the tragedy, according to the Medico Friends Circle, the following complaints persisted:

- A large number continued to suffer from blurring of vision and intolerance to bright light, preventing them from pursuing their occupations.
- Thousands of people have developed chronic lung diseases as a sequel to the gas exposure and it seems that they will be permanently handicapped. Records of selected patients subjected to sensitive lung function tests show definite abnormalities suggesting both 'obstructive' (where air passages are obstructed) and 'restrictive' (where the lungs are unable to expand due to fibrosis) lesions. X-ray evidence of fibrosis is also now becoming apparent.
- People also suffer on a large scale from gastritis, fever and psychological stress of varying severity.

Most disturbing, however, is the study done on the epidemic of gynaecological diseases by Dr Rani Bang and Dr Mira Sadgopal. According to them, while a lot of attention is being devoted to the ill-effects of the Bhopal gas leak on the general population, silence is being maintained in the area of women's health. Women have been complaining of a variety of problems, but not much notice is being taken either by the government or the medical teams. The two doctors say there is an urgent need to inform pregnant women about the possible risk of deformed babies and make available to them the choice of medical termination of pregnancy (MTP).

A study was made on 24 women in Kazi camp and 31 from Jayaprakash Nagar who registered during the first hour with the clinic voluntarily. Pelvic examination was done in 33 women only as the remaining 22 did not want to be examined for various reasons like unmarried status, advanced pregnancy, etc. Their findings were:

- White vaginal discharge in 37 women of which 33 had this symptom since exposure to the gas.
- Excessive menstrual bleeding in 19 women out of which 17 had it since the gas exposure.
- Pain in lower abdomen in 16

women, all since the gas exposure.
• In two cases, husbands were rendered impotent since the gas exposure.

The most consistent abnormal findings were:

• Discharge from the vagina which was typically profuse, thick, whitish yellow without any foul smell or local irritation. This was unlike any commonly found vaginal discharge of infective origin.
• Retroverted (backward bending) position of the uterus with severely restricted mobility for 21 out of 33 (64 per cent) women who allowed vaginal examination. Normally retroverted uterus is found in 10 to 25 per cent of women and a normal uterus is mobile.
• Adnexae (structures around uterus like tubes, ovary, etc.) palpable in 25, impalpable in eight, tender in 25 (painful on examination) and non-tender in eight. Normally adnexae is not palpable and tender
• Cervical erosion (ulcer on the cervix) and/or endocervicitis in 22 women.
• The uterus was of normal size in all the non-pregnant women except in the case of one woman who had a doubtful fibroid uterus.

Among the women examined two had abortions and two had still births following the gas exposure. Sixteen were pregnant of whom one had an incomplete infected abortion and two had clinical suspicion of intrauterine growth and retardation of the foetus. What was criminal on the part of the government and the medical relief teams was the fact that none of them told the pregnant women of the possibility of the risk of deformed babies or was given the option of MTP. The total number of lactating women at the time of gas exposure was 14, of which eight suffered from suppression of lactation by a degree of 50 to 75 per cent, while six were unaffected.

The two doctors found that even attending gynaecologists seemed ignorant of the connection of gas with pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). They argued that it was the result of pre-existing tuberculosis in the slum women. However, Doctors Bang and Sadgopal say that tuberculosis pelvic inflammatory disease usually constitutes only five per cent of the cases. It is non-tender and is usually associated with infertility and reduced menstruation. Absence of all these features in the women examined ruled out this, PID being of tuberculosis origin.

The women, particularly in the slum areas, have a major problem but no one seems to be sympathetic towards them. They tend to dismiss them as fake complaints.



A weak,deformed child born after the gas tragedy, with her mother at a hospital in Bhopal

While the government and even the ICMR have been accused of keeping the findings to themselves, Union Carbide (India) and its parent company in the USA have played a more devious role. Its crowning act of criminality against the poor people of Bhopal is that three months after the tragedy and only after exposure by the Indian press about its deliberate neglect and ineptitude, the American giant multinational announces studies on the effects of MIC and even doubts the issues raised in the Indian press. Among the so-called studies announced by Browning is one on: "Evaluating the condition of animals at various points in time after a single, large exposure to methyl isocynate with specific emphasis on the respiratory function. This should answer questions raised in India as to whether or how long any irritation from MIC exposure exists, whether there is any likelihood of delayed effects and provide information from which physicians can decide the most appropriate treatment."

For whose benefit is this? Was this not thought of earlier? Are they planning another leak at the Bhopal factory so they can use the findings of their belated study? Or, are they planning some leaks from the old factory of Union Carbide in Bombay which is being bought by Mr Dhirubhai Ambani of Reliance Textiles. Can we rely on Union Carbide any more—whether it is in Bombay or in Bhopal?

Olga Tellis, Bombay

CONVERSATION



"I WANT TO LOVE EVERYBODY"

General H.M. Ershad talks to M.J. Akbar

If sincerity was enough to solve problems, Bangladesh would be much better off today that is, both in terms of economic development and political evolution. General Husain Muhammad Ershad tells anyone who will listen that he wants to leave behind a Bangladesh richer than he inherited and a political system rid of coups, unstable governments and a nervous shouting match with democracy. Does a man whose power devolves essentially from the colour of his uniform mean it? Anyone who is a poet can't really be a Machiavelli, can he? You may or may not like the general's poetry, but he does concentrate on love, peace, and a new world freed of hunger and oppression. However, the opposition parties of Bangladesh are less than impressed. The difficult dialogue between the government and the political parties has been continuing for a while now, but the search for a mutually acceptable political system seems as far from success as ever. General Ershad wants to guarantee a place for the armed forces in the power structure: that is the only way to stop coups, he insists. The political parties will not accept any conditional version of democracy. They are demanding elections without any interference from the army, and the assurance that power will be handed over without any qualifications to the party which gets a majority. When the talks broke down, General Ershad decided to circumvent the political parties and go directly to the people through the tried method of a referendum. It was an exercise in the quest for legitimacy: the opposition answer was to boycott the poll held on 21 March. The official results showed an overwhelming victory for General Ershad, but its credibility was in doubt. General Ershad spoke to **M.J. Akbar** *just after the results had been declared, in the drawing room of his residence in the cantonment area of Dhaka.*



President H.M. Ershad talking to Mark Fineman, South Asia Correspondent of the *Philadelphia Enquirer* at the golf course in Dhaka

***Q** It seems, Mr President, that the most significant thing that has happened since we last met is that you have become totally disillusioned with your country's politicians. Is that a correct assessment?*

A: I shouldn't say disillusioned, I would rather say disappointed. Many of them are old politicians, many of them took part in the liberation war, and I am sure all of them love the country. But in the last year-and-a-half or so we expected a little more from them. We thought that the political process which we had started will culminate in general elections, we will have an elected Parliament. Unfortunately, though I have been meeting their demands one after another, they refused to come to elections. I fail to understand why. The military rule? What I have not done for them! The concessions I gave to the political parties—you will not find such an example anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, they thought it my weakness, and they kept on pressing harder and harder. And they have brought the country to a state where, I should say, the law and order situation deteriorated so much that no government worth the name could stand it any more. Therefore, the whole process we started, which we thought will end in elections, was frustrated.

Q: Why do you think the civilians refused the option of proving that they were stronger than you through an election?

A: First, these politicians should have understood that this military government is not a foreign military government. This military government had to come because they failed. And you must be knowing that when we assumed the responsibility in 1982, the whole country welcomed us. The whole country. And we actually received a lot of congratulatory messages thanking the armed forces for saving the country.

Q: But that is only an assumption on your part.

A: No. There was no opposition (to the takeover). All political activity is open. The political parties were very much there. But I do not think anywhere in Bangladesh that day anybody opposed the takeover. Therefore, the country was at such a stage when I took over that people appreciated (the coup). After that, more than three years have passed. I have taken a lot of measures and by those measures I think the country has benefited. Now, I keep on telling them (the political parties), that we are one of you. We are not a foreign army, we are not a Pakistani army or any other army. We fought for the liberation of this country. And you forced us to takeover. Now let us sit down and decide the future course of action. Let us see what can be done for the creation of an elected government, an elected Parliament. Therefore, whatever they do to oust the military government: where will the military government go? We cannot sit on a ship and go to Pakistan and Karachi. We have to stay here. This is our country. Therefore, their very assumption was not correct.



President Ershad at a Dhaka orphanage

Q: Maybe they thought the military had become very unpopular and any deal with the military would affect their credibility with the people.

A: They just assumed that the military government is unpopular. See how contradictory they are. They say, 'You are very unpopular, your government is very unpopular.' At the same time they say, 'You cannot preach for any candidate.' So I said, if I am unpopular, and my government is unpopular, then if I support somebody he should also be unpopular. The political parties are telling two things. That means the military is not unpopular

Q: You know, in some of your recent statements there is almost a quality of contempt for politicians.

A: As a man I want to respect everybody. I want to love everybody. And we have grown up in a society where elders are respected and we still maintain that, I especially, because those values are very important for us. We may not be rich otherwise, but we are very rich from that point of view. But the way they (the political parties) behaved, the way they destroyed public peace, property, and the good name of the country—I do not just understand why they did it. Is it only power? Is it only position? Or is it something else? Therefore, I feel that when they should have shown leadership, and convinced all political parties to come to an understanding for election, they failed to do so. And if as a political leader you cannot assume the leadership and convince others who were against

I don't want to have any enemy. I never suffered because of this philosophy. Many people said many things against me, but ultimately they came to me again. So that's the way I think we should live. I believe in that way. And ultimately, by love you win over everybody...

I think I am the greatest friend of India.

the election, then what sort of leader are you? That is why I feel they failed in their task. Of course, whatever they wanted I did.

Q: Now, if they are so bad, so harmful to the country, why do you want them back in the government?

A: They failed at one time, they may not fail the next time. But, they should be told that they failed. They must also understand that they must come up to the expectations of the people. They must rise.

Q: Your nation has had two spells of really civilian government—under Sheikh Mujib and later on in the post-Zia period, and both



Teeing off: Ershad golfing at the Kurmitola Club

As a man, Rajiv Gandhi seems to be very nice: more or less same nature as mine. And I thought that he will be able to solve this (problems)...

times the experience was curtailed by military intervention. How do you feel about civilian rule in Bangladesh?

A: We are a new country. Trials, tribulations, ups and downs, will always be there. We are a country of a hundred million people, a country without resources. And then we are born of a bloody revolution, of a bloody liberation war. You can't expect that the country will be running very smoothly. And you can't expect the leader to leave everything to the people. It is difficult. There are many aspirations of the people which cannot be fully fulfilled. But even then they tried their best. And we were making progress. Many things happened; probably some of the things could not be helped. For example, in 1974 during Sheikh Mujib's regime there were floods, and maybe they had no resources to combat it. Maybe they failed to do so. But it does not mean that he did not want to do it. That is how it was.

Q: Now one of the first things that you did when you came to power was launch a campaign against corruption. Do you think that among Bangladesh politicians, the idealism of the liberation war is now over and they have become purchasable?

A: I do not want to blame my predecessors. But I think that is ample proof that politicians can be bought. But of course I did not do that; otherwise I wouldn't have had this trouble. Anyway, this is not an aspersion on them. The question is that in a society like this where resources are limited and so many people ask for more and more—naturally that element of corruption creeps into the society. I shouldn't say, I cannot make a general statement that the politicians are corrupt, but in a developing nation some elements of corruption are there in society. You cannot eliminate it.

Q: There are rumours in Dhaka, and I say that there are rumours, that there was a deal on the anvil between you and the Awami League, a deal which was based on the Awami League demanding Taka four crores in order to come to terms with you.

A: Please do not insult a political party like that.

Q: I said they are rumours.

A: They are an old political party, and this is very unfortunate. I do not accept these things. You can blame me. You should not blame a political party like that. We had contacted all political parties, and we thought they will come to elections. Naturally, we are in communication with them, and we have been asking them, what do you need to participate in elections? They said, we need this, we need that; you do this, you do that. And we tried to fulfil all their demands one after another. At any time if the Awami League or the BNP were very near to participating in elections, that did not mean that they were to be paid money. No question about it.

Q: Was there talk about the number of seats that would be allotted to the political parties?

A: These are the crooked minds which work to spread these rumours, just to undermine some political party which was talking to the government. Or any political party or any persons talking to the government for a better understanding or relations. These are unfounded rumours. These are not true. It is very unfortunate that some people are so vicious as to spread this sort of rumour. Political parties have honour and dignity.

Q: One of the realities of democratic politics, since we are on this subject, is that when political parties prepare for elections, they need a certain amount of financing in

order to put up 300 candidates or 400 candidates. And one of the needs of political parties, which you were talking about, is money. How can such money ever come to a political party without some form of corruption?

A: (*Laughs*) I do not run a political party. But you are right. To fight elections, you need money. And therefore when I took over in the beginning I proposed that we all should sit down and decide how many political parties will be there in the country, and whether these political parties can be financed by the government or not. A definite budget every year, so that they do not have to resort to any corruption, or go door-to-door to collect money. But that of course can only happen after a Parliament is elected. Now, we have something like 72 political parties. Why can't we have three or four political parties like other countries? And then the government can say, okay, you have a one crore budget, and spend this money to organise your party, and fight future elections. And thus we can make the whole thing very civilised. But you are right. They all need money. Every political party needs money, and this is not a good practice.

Q: You too have a political party. How do you finance your political party?

A: I do not have a political party. I said, any political party that supports me has my support.

Q: But how is that financed?

A: I do not know. You ask the secretary general of the party. (*Laughs*).

Q: Now, one of the charges made against civilian governments is that discipline collapses. You said that progress is hampered and you have done more in three years.

A: No, I was talking about the recent political activities. They (turned freedom into) licence. The way the students were behaving, the way the other political parties and workers were behaving—you know they made life miserable. Totally. So this sort of thing we don't expect from political parties. There are norms within which they should function, but they really went beyond it. That's what I mentioned. Not about the past discipline of the society. Where there is politics there is always some indiscipline. Look what is happening in India and all nations. But we are a developing nation—we thought that at least they would function keeping everything to a certain limit. Things really went beyond. People got really scared in this country. Their lives and property were not secure.

Q: One of the charges that has been made or one of the suspicions that certainly exists, is that foreign powers are trying to finance or control some Bangladesh political parties. Do you find evidence of that?

A: I cannot emphatically say 'yes', but I cannot also say 'no'. That's the problem in this country. If we have three or four political parties, then we can see into it. I tried to control it. I said that any foreign money coming to this country has to be deposited in the ERD first, and distributed. Not only political parties ...

Q: ERD?

A: External Resources Division. Not only political parties, there are many voluntary organisations who get money from outside and we do not know how they spend this money. But the money to political parties, if it is at all coming, comes through the back door. And I said that I have no evidence, but at the same time I can say, from the way the political parties spend, they are being financed from outside. This is very unfortunate. But it does happen.

Q: Do you suspect India of giving money to any political party?

I am making roads for villagers... If that is corruption, I will do that corruption throughout my life.



General Ershad visiting a flood-affected area in Comilla district

A: They should give it to me if at all they give it (*laughs heartily*). Because I think I am the greatest friend of India, so they don't have to give it to somebody else (*continues laughing*).

Q: (After the laughter is over) But seriously do you suspect India or USA or China of having a role in this?

A: I would not say that. It is too direct.

Q: The opposition parties have accused you of making too many liberal offers in your speeches—that roads will be built, of giving handouts, of creating a political base for yourself by using state resources How do

What I have not done for them (the country's politicians)! The concessions I gave to the political parties—you will not find such an example anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, they thought it was my weakness...

you react to that charge?

A: I am not making a road in my house; I am making roads for villagers which they need very badly. If that is corruption, I will do that corruption throughout my life. Building a road, poor chaps they are asking for roads. Why the hell didn't you do it? Asking for a bridge, asking for a school, asking for a college, asking for a hospital—what's wrong in it? If as a President I cannot do it, why should I remain President of this country? That is development, isn't it?

Q: Would you describe yourself as a soft dictator?

A: I was never a dictator. I am the most democratic-minded man. I don't think anybody who has been here from 1972 to 1982—I don't think any political party enjoyed more democratic rights than it has enjoyed during my time. Press freedom, elections.

Q: *Do you think there is press freedom in the country?*

A: Press freedom! There is press licence, not only freedom. They could write anything and everything. You just look at the papers before the first of March, go through it. From top to bottom in some of the papers, there was just abuse of the government, nothing else. Including me. We thought gradually things will settle down. You know, I tell you with great pride, it is settling down. Initially they (the press) were very hostile. I said, write anything you like. And then they really saw reason and gradually settled down, and things were improving. But even then, a few newspapers, few means very few—they were printing provocative news, inciting people. One example I can give you. One student was killed, late at night. Nobody knew who had killed whom. The newspaper next day accused a party which has a leaning towards the government. Result? The students went and burnt the hall. This was news which was inciting the students, inciting the public. This is very destructive. This is not proper journalism. And then giving a verdict—you can't give a verdict in a newspaper. Someone is murdered in Kaligunge and the newspaper gives a verdict that so and so is murdered and so-and-so should be hanged. Even the police is not sure of the murderer, but the newspaper knows. There is a procedure. Somebody is to be arrested, interrogated, FIR lodged, case has to go to the court and the judges will give the verdict. Here, a newspaper gives the verdict. This is not correct.

Q: But, honestly, looking at the Dhaka press, it does not seem as if it has too much freedom.

A: Now, yes; after first of March we said, 'No.' I will gradually release the restrictions. And they will write anything. I don't mind criticism. I tell them, please tell me what I am doing wrong. Yes, criticise my government, my policies, my actions; constructive criticism is always welcome because that helps the government. When I sit in the cabinet, for the first one hour I look at the newspaper cuttings. For the first one hour, we discuss the newspaper clippings and then I tell the ministers, 'You please correct this or that.' After that we begin the normal cabinet work. I give a lot of weightage to newspaper reports. Lot of weightage.

Q: I am sure journalists will be quite delighted to learn that.

A: They know it. Every day, the first one hour I discuss the newspaper cuttings. Because, every fact cannot come to my notice. That is very difficult. The other day, there was a letter to the editor in *Bangladesh Times*: In Dhaka contractors used to supply bricks, now the government is supplying them. Here the complaint was that the bricks had been supplied by the government from the old stocks, and a contractor got the money—a major share. I straightaway started an enquiry.

Q: Of the main leaders opposed to you, the ladies Hasina and Khaleda, who do you think is stronger politically?

A: (*Laughs*) It is for you to decide, how can I say?

Q: I am only a visitor for a few days. You have been dealing with them, you know your country better.

A: To me they are both political leaders and I should not say somebody is better, somebody is worse.

Q: But you had experience in dealing with both. Who do you think has more political support?

A: Political support can only be known



President talks to an old woman during his tour of the Bangladesh countryside

through an election, isn't it? Only people can say who has more support. I cannot say so.

Q: The opposition, however, does seem to have a point when it says that democracy is really not possible until the army decides, in principle, to leave power. And you have not accepted that point.

A: Leave power to whom?

Q: Leave power to a civilian government, whoever the people might elect.

A: How do I do that?

Q: By an election outside the bounds of a martial law.

A: There is no question of martial law: (let us have) elected everything. But martial law has to be there, till the results are out. Nobody wanted that martial law should be withdrawn And I also declared that me and my government is going to be neutral in the elections. But the election has to be held under martial law, because there is no Constitution.

Q: But are you personally ready to surrender power?

A: Can I give you an example?

Q: Yes, please.

A: The first thing is that there is no power in Bangladesh, just all responsibility. Totally. From morning six o'clock to next morning six o'clock, only responsibility. And the whole responsibility is the President's.

Number two: when I declared the first election, it was a special election. They said, no, they would not allow a special election because if the President is elected he can always influence the Parliament So I said, let us have the presidential and parliamentary elections together when nobody will influence anyone else. This was on 27th of May 1984. At that time there was no political party supporting me. So, the President offering a parliamentary election, without a political party's support—doesn't it amply show that he had no intention of clinging to power?

Q: No, but you have always kept a rider that the army has to have a role in the future structure of power.

A: Army will have no role.

Q: That itself negates democracy?

A: No, it doesn't You are talking like a colonial. The Bangladesh army and the Indian army is not the same army. It is a different army in a small country. The question is, that the army has a role in government; why? There have been 18 mutinies in the army. Have you tried to analyse why these 18 mutinies have taken place?

Q: Why?

A: Because our army fought for independence. We broke our oath and fought for our country's liberation. We cannot stand by and watch the country we helped create slide down. We want to build the nation too; give us a place.

Q: One of the ideological shifts that have taken place after the army took over is the stress on Islamisation. Are you taking the country towards fundamentalism? And is that a problem in better relations with India?



President Ershad addressing a public meeting on the outskirts of Dhaka

A: No, not at all. You must understand Islam in our country's context. It is quite different. We are not radical, we are not asking for any fundamentalist sort of a thing. What do we want? We want Islamic teaching to go down to our young people, so that the vices of our society, which are now gradually increasing, can be checked. And this, you yourself would know, Islam is a code of life, and we try to preach it and implement it. There is nothing more than that. That does not come in the way of good relations with India; not at all

Q: Would you call Bangladesh an Islamic state?

A: No. Bangladesh is not an Islamic state. Bangladesh is a country where a majority of the people are Muslims, and the way of life of this majority is Islam. From that point of view we are a Muslim state But there are other religions also. And we really enjoy complete communal harmony. There are very, very good relations among the people

Q: But this suspicion of India as a kind of threat: what is the reason for that?

A: We have certain problems, and these problems are not being solved by India. Why? These problems cannot remain unresolved so long. What is reason? Why do Indians do it?

Q: What do you think? What is your view?

A: That's what we fail to understand. Do they want that we should be a vassal state of India? Do they want that they should have a say in our affairs? That is the suspicion in the minds of the people. Otherwise in the

When I sit in the cabinet, for the first one hour, I look at newspaper cuttings. For the first one hour, we discuss the newspaper clippings and then I tell the ministers, 'You please correct this or that...' I give a lot of weightage to newspaper reports.

I was never a dictator. I am the most democratic-minded man. I don't think anybody who has been here from 1972 to 1982—I don't think any political party enjoyed more democratic rights than it has enjoyed during my time.

last 14 years, since the question of reversion, water sharing could not be done. Why? The water belongs to Bangladesh since the creation of the earth. Why today because different states have been created, should we be deprived of this water? It is a very big question in the minds of our people. What is there? We are not saying, give all the water to us. As a matter of fact it is our right. We are lower riparian, we should get the water. Even then, we said let's share it. You are not even ready to share it. So what will people think about you?

Q: But despite the fact that the agreement has not been renewed, the supply of water has not been stopped by India in the dry season.

A: Yes, by your mercy. An independent nation cannot be at somebody's mercy. It must be a basis of sovereign equality. We may be a small country, but we are a nation This is an insult to us. Okay, we are giving you water? That is not correct. The water belongs to us also.

Q: Do you think the people of Delhi—after all, equations are built up very much in terms of gestures also—do you think Delhi is very happy when it hears anti-India rhetoric emanating from the Dhaka press?

A: Dhaka press? Anti-India rhetoric? The press is very free. I didn't see anything of this sort. Your papers also write such things. But all the press is not like that. Perhaps some radical press, or some fundamentalist may write against India. But that is not the view of the Bangladesh people.

Q: But Bangladesh Times? *They wrote that Indian behaviour is uncivilised.*

A: Indian behaviour is not uncivilised; Indian behaviour is just very unkind *(laughs)*... (In Tinbigha) there are three bighas. We have 12,000 people living there. I



An official inspects a ballot box during the referendum: the box meant for the 'yes' vote had a picture of General Ershad on it

as the President could not go to see them! How unfortunate it is! A signed agreement. A High Court judgement. Still you are not giving it. And we have given our portion of the land to you. How will people feel? There is drought, we need to reach food. We can't do it.

Q: I think the problem is the creation of an overbridge.

A: Nothing like that. This is a problem of intention.

Q: Do you see any change after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has come to power?

A: We are yet to see. But I met him and I liked him also. I met him before also during Mrs Gandhi's time. As a man he seems to be very nice: more or less same nature as mine. And I thought that he will be able to solve this. But he must be very busy now, with general elections, state elections. But really I have high expectations from him.

Q: Do you think there has been a reduction in the rhetoric of confrontation in India?

A: I think so And even in Bangladesh.

Q: Now one of the things that still has a potential of becoming an issue is the creation of a fence across Assam. Do you accept the Indian position that there is a lot of illegal migration?

A: Not at all. Not at all.

Q: But you know, I can tell you that I have personally seen this illegal migration: Bangladeshis moving into Assam or elsewhere.

A: Moving into Assam? Now why will Bangladeshis go to Assam? Tell me. There is uncertainty, there were communal riots the other day, in which thousands of people were killed. If a Bangladeshi is living here, at least he is living in peace. I don't think there is any famine in Bangladesh that people will leave their hearths and homes and cross to Assam. Somehow or the other, this does not sound very logical to me. Yes, people may be trickling into Assam to go elsewhere; or some Biharis may be trickling out from Bangladesh to go to Pakistan. That is quite different But a settled person, a Bangladeshi, going from here and settling in Assam is just not possible. Maybe you will say Hindus. I don't think Hindus are leaving; they are not so uncomfortable that they will leave Bangladesh and go to Assam. But the question is, if anybody is leaving our country and illegal migration is taking place, there are consular services. We should know from the diplomatic sources. Our government should be informed that this is happening. We have not received any communication from India that this has happened. Suddenly one fine morning I find a border fencing coming up across the border. A bolt from the blue. How has this happened? The whole idea seems to be very insulting to us.

Q: That I can accept, but the fact remains that Muslims are going over into Hindu majority Assam. Maybe the Muslims do not accept that this will necessarily lead to riots. Maybe they are destroying the whole theory behind partition.

A: No. I am not going to go deep into the

matter—you can't expect simple villagers to deliberately negate the two-nation theory. The problem is similar to Hindus coming to Bangladesh. Many people are coming to Bangladesh. People who left their homes and are now trying to settle down here for few months. And this traffic will keep on going. But that does not mean that a border fence will stop it. Who can stop a human being? It is not possible. In any case, they will cross if they want to (*laughs*)...

Q: Do you sense a rise in a pro-Pakistan attitude in Bangladesh, as evidenced from the hockey match behaviour?

A: It is not one incident alone which can be a yardstick. You can hear this if the Indian leadership, or the Indian High Commissioners here correctly inform Delhi about the sentiments of the people here. Why has it happened? They must analyse this. You helped us during liberation. You have been extending help and cooperation and assistance through trade agreements. Then why should this happen? Because of the small irritants. India does not want to give us water; India wants us to starve to death. That becomes the impression. These are the very small points. Nothing else. We have no animosity with India. Not at all. There are very small, one or two points here and there. If they can be removed, I can tell you we would be best of friends. You have gone round the country. Have you noticed anywhere anybody talking against India? Anything, anybody? Have you seen anybody expressing any feelings against India?

Q: In fact after Mrs Gandhi's assassination there were large crowds which went to see the exhibition on her.

A: Yes. The anti-India feeling is just not there. But these are the things, the political issues, which, if not resolved, will keep our relation strained. I know Mr Gandhi has some difficulty. And at the same time, my difficulties he must understand. And then we should come to a solution. And once it is done, I tell you these two countries can live in great friendship and peace.

Q: Would you, as a part of the exercise, allow greater exchange of cultural groups? For example, why not send 'Chayanot' to India?

A: Why not? At times, because of resource constraints, we may not be able to send them. But many people are going every day. Many students are now studying in various Indian universities. That has not stopped. But you know, internally, we feel very hurt.

Q: You said you have problems: I quite appreciate that. One of the things that happens if somebody tries to become friendly with India is that he is immediately labelled an Indian stooge by some of the extremist parties here. Are you willing to take that kind of pressure?

A: Me? For the greater growth of Bangladesh, I am ready to extend my hand of friendship to anybody. Why not? If by saying India is my friend, I get the water problem solved, why should not India be my friend? No difficulty. And you know my attitude, and you know the Indian leadership's attitude towards me. If you do not know, you must know that. For instance, the SARC concept. It was initiated by us and we are really following it. We are going to hold the summit in Dhaka; we hope we can do it.

Q: I hope SARC succeeds.

A: It will succeed. India just can't get out of it! (*Laughs*).

Q: The Bihari-Pakistani refugee problem has been going on for a whole generation. Do you see any solution in sight?

A: Only Allah knows. The problem is, they are Pakistanis and they don't want to stay here. They have to go to their own state. And the sooner they go, the better for us. Because they are living in misery; we can't look after ourselves. Whatever resources we have, we try and help with that. The Pakistan government should really try to do something about them. We have had talks with them. We are asking for money from all sorts of sources. It is a major problem for us. Another profession is going on (there, in the camps) which we can't look after. And they don't want to remain in Bangladesh. If they decide, once and for all that they want to be Bangladeshi citizens, we can look into this. But they don't want to stay. And so Pakistan has to do something about this.

Q: Finally, how's your son?

A: (*Laughs.*) My son is grown up now—two years old. (*Checks whether his son, named Shaad, has woken up. He is still sleeping.*) He keeps my office hours. Goes to bed at one at night, like me.

Q: What do you want him to be—a soldier, a politician, or a poet?

A: I think he will decide his own future. But the chap is of a very good nature, very friendly—like his father (*laughs*)... His father has a personal love for the people of the country. I want to love everybody. That's my nature. I don't want to have any enemy. And I never suffered because of this philosophy. Many people said many things against me, but ultimately they came to me again. So that's the way I think we should live. I believe in that way. And ultimately, by love you win over everybody. I will win over these political parties.

Ershad: Poet-President

A poem from his book of verse, Light the Golden Lamp

Only One Road to Freedom

There is only one road
To freedom
And against oppression
And life's many inequities
For our bare survival
We have set aside fear,
We have taken an oath
To fight for our right,
The long night of sorrow
Will come to an end,
And we will build
A new Bangladesh



Why will Bangladeshis go to Assam?...There is uncertainty, there were communal riots the other day, in which thousands of people were killed. If a Bangladeshi is living here, at least he is living in peace. I don't think there is any famine in Bangladesh that people will leave their hearths and homes and cross to Assam.

'India Has Qualifie Champion of C

Pakistani cricketer Zaheer Abbas on t

India deserved to win the Roth mans trophy—and 45 thousand dollars—for their performance in Sharjah. They were the most tenacious team in view, and it was this virtue more than any other that won them the day against both Pakistan and Australia.

With this victory, India now qualify for the accolade of undisputed champions of one-day cricket But while this may be a time for celebrations in India, I would put in a word of caution. The wins here and in Australia prove that India are a very good team, but I would not say they are necessarily the best team in the world.

This may sound like sour grapes, because Pakistan has lost thrice to India in the last one month. But I sincerely say that most of the world's top teams—the West Indies, India Australia and Pakistan—are very much at the same level, and it all depends on which side is playing better on a particular day. India have been having an incredible patch of good fortune, and I rejoice with them for it However, I would say that it has been a great amount of team work that has brought the Indians their wins in Sharjah. No one man stood out among the eleven, but all of them put their efforts together for the common goal. I think that is why the judges had to debate for such a long time in selecting the man-of-the-series.

Kapil Dev: victorious captain



Sunil Gavaskar deserves this award more than anyone else. Apart from the sensible innings he played against Australia, it has been his fielding in many different positions in the field that has earned him the prize. It is not easy to be so fit and sprightly when you are over 35 years of age. Ask me, I should know. Those little aches and pains take longer to go away. But Sunny has kept himself very fit. And for that, hats off to him.

I wish some of the other members of the Indian side would take a lesson from Sunny. He stays away from vices and spends time on his fitness training. In fact, he has toned up the fielding of this team. Azharuddin, I am glad to note, is following his example by staying away from the three Ws, but I cannot say the same thing for one or two of the other team members whom I do not wish to mention by name.

I also wish the Pakistani team would take a lesson from the Indians. I thought that for sheer talent, the Pakistanis were even better than the Indians. But they did not quite play together as a team. I found it hard to believe that a batting line-up like they have on paper could not have got the 125 runs they needed for a win in the first match. They were 35 for one, so it meant they needed just 90 runs with nine wickets in hand. But they could not make it. While I would give the credit to the Indian bowling and fielding in some measure, I would blame the Pakistani batsmen more for not concentrating. I would agree that the pitch was difficult, because it was turning a lot and the ball was not quite coming onto the bat. But the batsmen should have stayed and made the runs in

' as the Undisputed ne-day Cricket'

Rothmans Cup tournament at Sharjah

singles and twos, instead of trying to go for big hits, like, say Imran did.

A lot of praise is due to England for that fight they put up against Australia, though they were later outclassed by Pakistan. In that team also, another 'old man' played the starring role. Norman Gifford may be 44, but he is still as fit as any one else. If this direct throw off the last ball of their match against Australia had run out Steve Rixon, England would have been in the final. And considering that the English side was a pale replica of the team that toured India, it was a great achievement, indeed. I single out Robert Bailey from that bunch for big things in the future. He is a very sound batsman, technically, and is also useful as a change bowler. He is doing great things for Northamptonshire in county cricket. I think the day is not far when he will play for a full-strength England squad that includes the rebels who had toured South Africa three years ago.

I was somewhat disappointed with Australia's performance, though they had the potential to play much better. Their left-handers really bothered the Indians and can be a thorn in the side on any world-level team. But none of the other players came up with worthwhile batting displays. Craig McDermott is a fine prospect for Australia. He is very quick, and brings the ball in most of the time. He may be only a shade slower than Imran Khan. He will mature as a bowler on Australia's tour of England, a month from now. Greg Matthews is a good find by Australia. He is very enthusiastic, and is useful in all three departments. The wicket was helpful to him, and so he made the ball do quite a few tricks. He fully deserved the special prize of 1,000 dollars that was given to him for an outstanding performance in this tournament.

The competition produced low scores because of the state of the wicket. In previous years it was plumb and true and batsmen would have a good time on it. But now it has suddenly started taking quite an amazing amount of turn. It is an encouraging sign for spinners who may play on it in future.

And future matches there most certainly will be. Mr Abdul Rahman Bukhtiar has cricket blood running in his vein, and now that ventures like the Asia Cup and the Rothmans Trophy have proved resounding success stories, he is likely to bring in at least three or four of the world's top cricketing nations here every year. I think Pakistan and India will be permanent invitees, and be glad to accept the invitation because of the lavish hospitality. Also because there is so much response from their countrymen settled here.

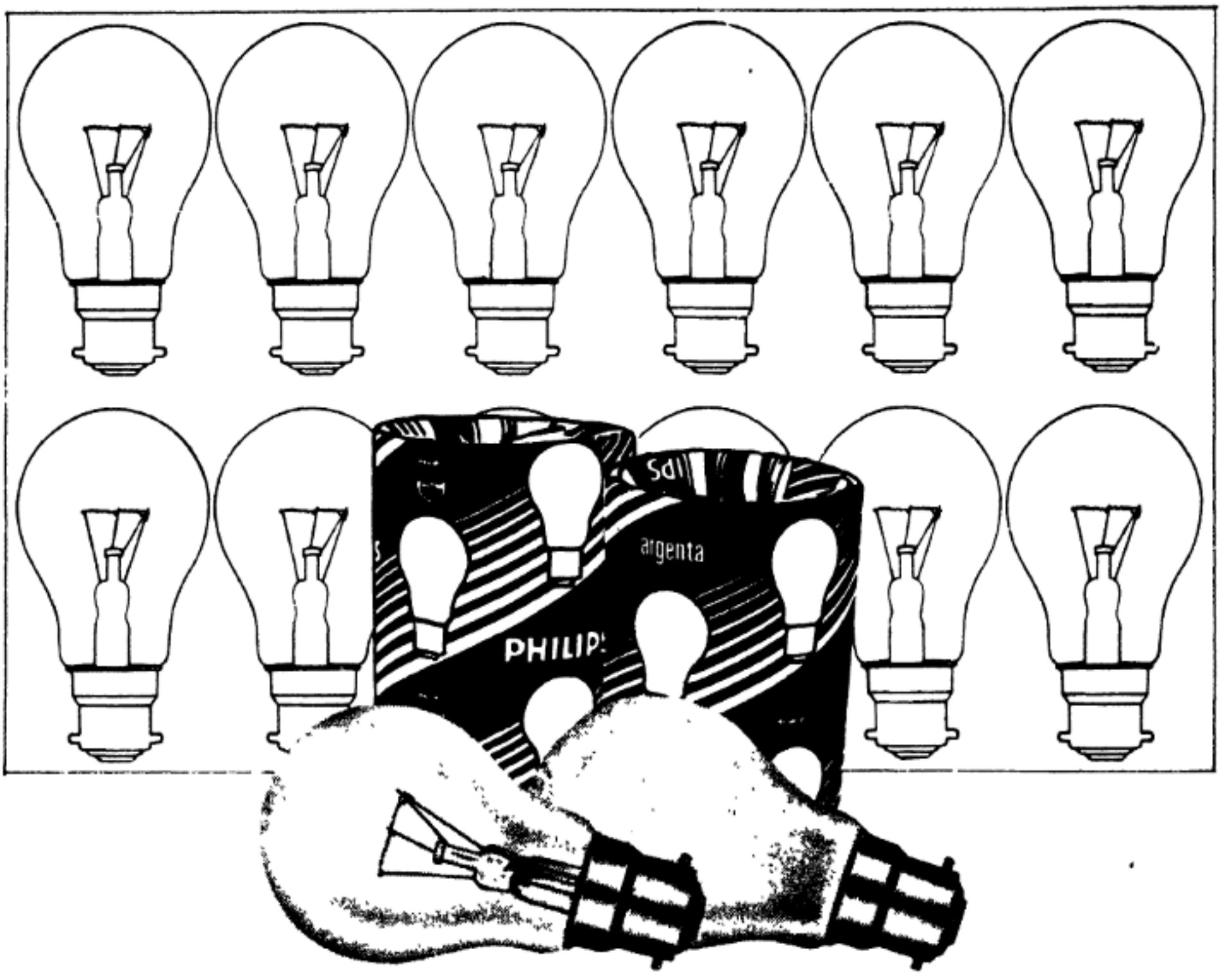
Finally, congratulations to Javed Miandad and Dilip Vengsarkar for getting their benefit matches here next year, when Vijay Hazare and Nazar Mohammad (Mudassar's father) will be the minor beneficiaries. It is good to know that the services to cricket of outstanding Indians and Pakistanis are being finally recognised and rewarded.

Gavaskar: superb fielding



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Mohinder Amarnath: Mr Consistent

It took two knocks on the head to turn Mohinder Amarnath from a good, gutsy batsman to one of the finest in the world. The first, a Richard Hadlee bouncer split his skull during Indian tourists' match with Nottinghamshire during the 1979 tour of England. The other from a Rodney Hogg lifter in Bombay a few months later, floored him and sent his father's old *sola topee* flying. As he returned to the pavilion, hit-wicket bowled Hogg, his test playing days appeared to be over.

But a change of stance, hours of net-practice, a word or two of advice from his father, the redoubtable Lala Amarnath and a mountain of runs in local first class cricket and "Jimmy" was back. A "controversial" selection on the Indian tour of Pakistan in 1982, he justified the selectors' faith in him by staging a remarkable comeback. While the rest of the Indian batting surrendered meekly to Imran Khan and Co, only Mohinder held firm scoring nearly six hundred runs in the six tests including three hundreds. Imran, at his fieriest best, acknowledged that he was the best player of fast bowling in the world. Then, against the rampaging West Indian battery of Holding, Garner and Marshall in the next series, Mohinder was the man of the series hitting over 500 runs in the four tests. In the Prudential World Cup in England, months later, his consistent batting and his accurate slow medium pace bowling won him the man of the match awards in the semi-finals and finals

What followed when the Carribeans came to India that winter was not only a nightmare for Amarnath but also bewildering for cricket fans all over the world. Illness, loss of confidence and bad luck led to a ghastly patch of five ducks in six test innings. In the pressure cooker atmosphere of the Indian cricket ground, a career resurrected with so much patience and perseverance was left in a shambles.

Pakistan is no place to pick up the pieces of a shattered career. And Amarnath's selection after such a disastrous domestic season raised eyebrows. Again, the Indian batting collapsed, but Amarnath stood firm fighting off some hostile Pakistani bowling and rather tricky umpiring. In the following series against Gower's Englishmen last winter, Jimmy Amarnath was one of the most consistent rungetters.



Mohinder Amarnath: vital role

In Australia, during the World Championship Cricket he had little to do with the bat being pushed down the order to fulfil the demands of limited over cricket, but his bowling on pitches which had little for him was as usual accurate and difficult to score off. Always a man for a crisis, it was Amarnath's stodgy knock in the match against Australia when India was 120 for 7 and the Kangaroos beginning to sense an upset win, which led to the Rothmans Cup victory. At 37, with 3,241 runs and 29 wickets in 49 tests behind him, he is one of the fittest members in the side, and still has a few seasons of international cricket left in him.

Srinjoy Chowdhury

AMETHI

Election With a Difference

How Sanjay Singh 'worked' for his record-shattering victory in the Assembly poll

Is it a genuine case of popularity or the case of a man consumed by the passion of being popular? Dr Sanjay Singh, MLA and minister for transport in the Uttar Pradesh cabinet won the recent Assembly elections from Amethi with a record-shattering count of votes. (He acquired a doctorate in Hindi literature last year.) Sanjay Singh polled 1,24,017 votes, the highest by anyone ever in an Assembly poll in the country, defeating his nearest rival, B.C. Mishra of the BJP by over 1.22 lakh votes and what is more, extracted 27,292 more votes than what Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had got in the Amethi Assembly segment in the December 1984 Lok Sabha elections. Rajiv Gandhi had only polled 95,060 votes. The basis of this phenomenal feat lay in another phenomenal statistic—Singh's candidature had prompted 95 per cent of Amethi's electorate to line up at the polling booths. Nothing wrong with that high turnout—even a hundred per cent poll is normal according to the Election Commission, only a sign of what a healthy, conscious democracy India is becoming, perhaps. But circumstances before, during and after the poll indicate otherwise. Was Sanjay Singh's popularity stage-managed? The pre-poll scenario first.

It is somehow intriguing that of all the opposition parties who claim to have a presence in the area, only two—the DMKP and the BJP—were in the fray Several people from the Janata Party, it is said, had filed their nominations but one after another, they all withdrew their papers. Maneka Gandhi's Rashtriya Sanjay Manch, a much paraded party in Amethi, could not find a single candidate worth his weight. Then a strange thing happened to the can-



Sanjay Singh walking behind Rajiv Gandhi in Amethi

didature of Rambahal Roy, the DMKP man in the field. A few days before the last date for withdrawing the nominations, the election officer in Amethi was presented a "request" that Rambahal Roy wanted to withdraw from the contest. The request was immediately entertained and Roy's name scratched out from the list of contestants even though Rambahal Roy did not himself make the request. The DMKP candidate made several last-ditch efforts to convince the election officer that the "request" for withdrawal was fake and that he intended to contest the elections but he would hear none of it. The DMKP, whose candidate, Haricharan, had polled nearly 14,000 votes in the 1980 Assembly election and had, thus, the potential of shattering Dr Singh's dreams, was taken care of.

Left in the field were B.C. Mishra of the BJP and five other "independent" candidates, all of whom are said to have been "set-up" by "doctorsaheb" as a matter of electoral strategy. Most in Amethi insist they were all dummies who were used by Sanjay Singh in order to complete his design. The number of votes that these "independent" candidates got is itself quite an indication. Lal Bahadur got 41 votes, Ram Das 79, Raj Kumar 87, Ram Shiromani 103 and Jagat Pal 178!



Sanjay Singh



Sanjeev Premi

As for B.C.Mishra of the BJP, he wasn't even allowed to enter Amethi for his campaign. When he did try to do so, he burnt his fingers. On 14 February, Mishra was accosted by a group of hoodlums outside the Amethi tehsil headquarters and warned that if he tried to campaign in the area he would pay with his life. Mishra registered his complaint at the local police station against Nandkumar and Harishankar Pathak, known to be confidants of Dr Sanjay Singh, and 15 other persons. No action was taken. A series of attacks followed. On 20 February, Mishra's election office was ransacked and for a second time threatened that he would be killed. Two days later, his car was stoned while he was campaigning. Mishra had been registering a complaint almost everyday in vain. Letters and telegrams sent to the election commissioner were also ignored while terror continued in Amethi.

Dr Sanjay Singh, however, does not admit that terror-tactics had played a role in his historic victory; Mishra's performance was abysmal, he says, because he is a man who does not have any base in Amethi, for whom even the local BJP cadres did not care to work enthusiastically. But how did he manage to poll more votes than the Prime Minister himself? Singh, known in the area as "Rajkumar"—he is the adopted son of Rananjay Singh, the feudal lord of Amethi—has several reasons. He credits the popularity of Rajiv Gandhi for his unprecedented victory. But surely he has not become more popular than the Prime Minister. Or has he? He would rather not speak on that but he does give an interesting twist to the suggestion. Rajiv Gandhi, he says, got fewer votes than him because Maneka Gandhi was opposing him. "This was not so in my case...There is no opposition party left now in Amethi." Sanjay Singh has wiped them all out, and is rather proud about his feat.

The poll-percentage statistics of Amethi, while astonishing in themselves, become more unbelievable when one talks to the voter of Amethi. You run into a man who has not voted, more often than one who has. Several of them, when they went to cast their votes, found their names had already been ticked, a common happening in elections in India. It is the scale on which the entire operation was mounted that is of interest. In about 70 booths the polling was 80 per cent. In booth numbers 11, 31, 32, 39, 42, 48, 78 and 128 the poll percentage went as high as 89. Booth numbers 16, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41, 54, 55, 59, 76, 77, 114, 136 and 161 registered a rate of 90 to 100 per cent polling! Is Dr Sanjay Singh really such an attractive personality?

Rigging was a more probable explanation. The tools used were ingenious. One of them was the group of five "independent" candidates. According to electoral laws of the land each candidate is allowed two polling agents per booth. Taking the polling agents of the Congress(I) and the five independent candidates into account, Sanjay Singh had a total of 12 men at each booth, far outnumbering those of the BJP's B.C.Mishra who had only two at each. To back Sanjay Singh's lobby was the entire Amethi administration, already in the pocket of the ruling party. The job was fairly simple. But these agents, it seems, proved more loyal than the king himself. The voting percentage, when it goes higher than 90 is always subject to suspicion and Sanjay Singh had reportedly given express instructions to all his men not to "let it" exceed 89 per cent. But their zeal to please him won over. Now, it is learnt, Dr Singh is taking all those men to task in whose booths over 90 per cent polling was registered. A thankless task, indeed.

A Special Correspondent, Amethi

CONVERSATION

"Our Federations Are Not Taking Interest in Sports"

Union sports minister Rajkumar Jaichandra Singh tells SUNDAY

Rajkumar Jaichandra Singh, the minister of state for sports and youth affairs, perhaps has all the credentials for being a part of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's scheme of things. He is a new face in national politics, has an unstinted record of loyalty to the Gandhi family—as a professional lawyer he even argued a case for Mrs Gandhi during her days out of power—and at 43, he is of the right age. Besides, he talks in Rajiv Gandhi's tongue. He likes to deal with younger people, is not afraid of criticising the previous administration, sounds more professional and has his eyes on the 21st century

Jaichandra Singh joined the Indian National Congress in 1964, much before he had completed his education, and rose up the rungs of the Manipur Pradesh Committee of the party to become its general secretary in 1980. Four years later he came to Delhi as a member of the Rajya Sabha and almost immediately after, became part of the new government formed by Rajiv Gandhi on 31 December 1984. He spoke to SUNDAY *about his new job and the plans he has for the future of Indian sport. Excerpts:*

Q: This is your first stint in the Union government and in a ministry that is fairly new...

A: Yes, the tasks ahead of us are very challenging and I am happy I was given this job. We hope to be able to do something for Indian sport in the time to come.

Q: You've been a sportsman yourself?

A: I have, yes. As a student I played hockey and football. I have always been interested in sports. To this day I follow events closely even in games that I did not play Cricket, tennis, swimming. People can't hoodwink me on sport anyway, I know the technicalities.

Q: Why do you think we have failed thus far to become a major sporting nation?

A: It is because we have not been broad-basing our sports. Rural sectors have been completely, I would not say neglected, but you know, those areas have not been explored at all. We have to go down to them. Take the example of P.T. Usha. She comes from a village and a very poor family and I think many of our good players today are there waiting in the rural areas. We have been concentrating only on the major towns and metropolitan cities. So, if we go lower down to the villages and provide them with some infrastructure, create some interest and awareness in them and give them a bit of an incentive at a certain level, we should be able to produce some good sportsmen. I think there is a lot of potential in this country and if we get the right policy and have enough funds we should be able to produce international players, even in the individual events.

Q. Are you doing anything new about this?

A: We are. During the course of the next plan we are thinking of providing at least a mini-stadium in each district. We have about 420 odd districts in the country and not more than a hundred and twenty are having infrastructural facilities at the moment. So we must give the minimum requirements to the remaining districts like a stadium that will have a track, a football field or a hockey field, even a basketball court. Not everything can be provided at that level but some basic requirements which may not be very costly and which are popular to some areas. Like football grounds all over West Bengal, Kerala and even the North-East. We are also encouraging the National Rural Sports event that we have been holding.



Rajkumar Jaichandra Singh

Q: But how much of actual talent-search is going on?

A: We have not done much here but we are starting...We have asked the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to organise sporting events at that level and concentrate on the younger age groups, say between 7 and 12 years and 13 and 16 years of age. This will be the main job of the SAI. We are also keeping in touch with the state governments and the various sports federations so that we could organise sports at the grassroots' level.

Q: What is the main role of SAI?

A: The main thrust is of course to broad-base sports in India which is the most important thing. We will be setting up some sports hostels, I think in each state, within the next five years. This plan will no doubt depend on the funds that we get from the Planning Commission but if we do get sufficient money we would make these hostels with at least a 100 beds in each for sportspeople to come and stay while they are being coached so that we can keep up the standard. Even if each state in this country has one hostel exclusively for sportsmen we will have done quite a lot. Then we are also going to adopt a few schools. The plan is to begin with the central and sainik schools where they already have good facilities for sports. We can capitalise on this by giving them some extra coaching facilities.

Q: What are your future plans?

A: There are too many....

Q: No, just the major ones. There are plans for initiating a national



Asian Games 1982: India's Shaheed beats Bangladesh goalkeeper Adil Khan to score one of the dozen goals for his hockey team

games event on a regular basis, aren't there?

A: That's right. Though nothing has been finalised as yet, I can tell you that we are thinking of having a national games event every two years. This will be on the model of the Olympics and the Asiad. I have asked the department to examine the proposal a little more in detail.

Q: When will they begin?

A: We should be able to start the first this year itself. Perhaps, by the end of the year, or maybe early next year. But positively by then. It is not far away.

***Q**: A lot was said after the Asian Games. Earlier the excuse was that we don't have the facilities for sport to develop. But that changed after the Asiad. Even officially it was claimed that Indian sport was receiving a big boost: all these stadia and the equipment. But results thereafter have not been very encouraging either.*

A: That was only in Delhi. Sports is a long-term investment. Just giving them a stadium will not do. The interest has to be created. We have to make sports more popular in schools, colleges and universities. In fact, it is quite painful that the standards at the university level have been steadily going down instead of improving. Something will have to be done about this. The state governments also have a lot to do. Our federations will have to take interest. Most of our federations are not taking interest in sports. Just some of us sitting here in Delhi cannot do everything. The federations have to keep on organising events at every level so that talent can be spotted. But they are just not interested.

Q: What are you doing about this?

A: I have been calling up each one of those federations one by one. I have already met the basketball people, the equestrian federation officials and only recently some officials from the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF). Some of these federations will have to be sternly told to be serious (in their work). They are not. I am not at all satisfied with their work. They will have to be disciplined. Elections will have to be held on time and only those people who are genuinely interested in sports should be brought in. But then again we have limitations because the government cannot interfere directly because they are all autonomous bodies and even if we do interfere, the press will kick up a row (*laughs*). So, we are slightly at a disadvantage. But if they don't function properly we will have to put our foot down somewhere. You know, selectors themselves are sometimes absent from matches...not once but several times in a row. It happened recently with two hockey selectors. If selectors themselves are not present...I think the IHF should have some action. It is not the job of the minister or the ministry to remind them. But now I have taken some steps. I have told the IHF to hold the elections by April. I have also issued some guidelines. I would go in for younger coaches, not someone who has become outdated. I would like to have people who have one foot in this century and the other in the 21st. Someone who can work today on what's going to happen in the future.

Q: How satisfied are you with the use the Asiad infrastructure is being put to?

A: We are working out something on that too. The SAI is trying to open up the facilities more for the public. As it is they have opened up but there are a whole lot of stadia in Delhi and some proper device will have to be worked out.

Q: If you remember, sports goods worth nearly four crore rupees were imported during the Asian Games. What is happening to them?

A: I wouldn't know really. You see, some are in the SAI but I am trying to work out something on how to use them. The moment the broad-based programme of the SAI starts functioning we will start using the equipment too. We can give some to the state federations also. I will be looking into it.

Q: An obvious question; What's happening to the Olympics, are we getting it?

A: I have asked the department to examine this. We have made a bid for it but unless we are sincere and serious about it, unless the department is prepared for it we can't hold them successfully. Then the finance ministry will have to be consulted because it involves a lot of money but we are working it out.

Q: Do you think we can hold it?

A: Finance is the main constraint. And that's what we are working out now.

Q: But given the time span, do you think we can have the infrastructure ready?

A: Oh yes. Most of the things are here; a new Olympic village will have to be constructed and some more things. Television will have to play a major role because the Olympics can be profitable as shown by the Los Angeles Olympics, if the television coverage is wide.

Interviewed by Sunkersetan Thakur

PARLIAMENT

Misinformed Minister?

Khurshed Alam Khan's reply in Parliament is misleading

Is the minister of state for external affairs, Khurshed Alam Khan, being misled by officers? The written reply to a Parliament question tabled by him on 21 March suggests so. A treasury member, Ratan Kumari, had asked in unstarred question number 560 in the Rajya Sabha the names of the Indian missions abroad where the posts of ambassadors or high commissioners were lying vacant. The question was addressed to the Prime Minister, who is also the minister for external affairs. Khurshed Alam Khan replied on the Prime Minister's behalf. The answer given to the Parliament was misleading. The minister must have relied on the material prepared by the foreign office, but the responsibility to the Parliament being that of the minister, the wrong reply certainly puts Khurshed Alam Khan in an embarrassing position.

According to the minister's reply, the missions at Beirut (Lebanon), Bogota (Colombia), Lilongwe (Malawi) and London (United Kingdom) did not have heads of mission. While this is true, the whole truth is that on 21 March, some more missions did not have ambassadors and high commissioners. The Indian High Commissioner to Canada, R. Shivaramakrishnan, died of cancer last year. His post is still lying vacant. And Canada is an important posting—but somehow this was ignored while compiling the Parliament answer. The Indian ambassador to Bulgaria, B. Devarao, retired on 28 February. His replacement has not been sent. Considering the importance which India attaches to its friendship with the Soviet bloc, the vacancy at Sofia should normally not have escaped the attention of the minister. The decision of the governments of India and New Zealand to upgrade the level of representation to the High Commissioner's rank (the Kiwis had downgraded the post due to an economy drive some years back) has made the mission in New Zealand also technically headless. The Kiwis have appointed the conqueror of Everest, Sir Edmund Hillary as their envoy to India. New Delhi is yet to decide about Sir Edmund's counterpart. Nearer home, the Indian mission in Rangoon (Burma) was rendered headless when the last envoy, G.G. Swell, a career politician, decided to come back and contest the Parliament elections. Dr I.P. Singh, Indian ambassador to Spain, has been named as his successor, but till someone is appointed in Dr Singh's place at Madrid, he is unable to take up his assignment in Burma. So, on 21 March, apart from the four missions mentioned by Khurshed Alam Khan in his reply, there were some other Indian missions abroad which did not have ambassadors or high commissioners. Who misled the minister, which in turn resulted in wrong information being furnished to the Parliament?

The administrative setup of the foreign office has been under strain in the last few months. Not many decisions regarding the posting of senior officers have been taken. While senior officers of the rank of joint secretary and above have been reporting back to the headquarters after assignments abroad or training stints, there is no machinery active which can utilise their services. As a result, there are around half a dozen senior officers in the ministry of external affairs today who are not assigned due work. In place of the normal strength of three additional secretaries, there are four posted in the foreign office now. New posts have been created to tide over the flood of senior officers in South Bloc. The coordination division, which is the heart of the foreign office, has been split up into "coordination" and "special coordination," so as to accommodate an extra joint secretary. Two officers of the rank of joint secretary have been on extended leave due to lack of work in the past few months.

Apart from the missions listed above, where the heads of mission are either to be appointed or stationed, the posts in Brazil, Zaire, Afghanistan, Argentina, Egypt, Spain, Finland, Panama, Senegal, Ghana and Fiji are due for change of guard in the next few months (due to the expiry of the envoys' terms). No filework has been initiated in the foreign office to fill up these posts. Normally, it takes at least four months to station a new envoy: after the name is decided, an agreement (as per international law) has to be obtained from the host country, the envoy designate has to be briefed by the foreign office and the allied agencies and only then be can be sent to his assignment. Considering the average four-month period taken for such a process, nearly 20 Indian missions will remain headless in the months to come.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi



Khurshed Alam Khan

Uttarpara Jaikrishna Public Library
Uttarpara – Pin-712258, Hooghly

GUJARAT

The Stir Continues

Anti-reservationists intensify their campaign

Despite the communal turn to the agitation that left 13 persons dead in the riots which took place from 18 March to 22 March, the anti-reservation stir in Ahmedabad does not show any signs of subsiding. The students who had suspended their agitation when communal riots rocked the city, have taken their fight to other areas of the state, notably Saurashtra. With the spread of the stir, the scope of the demands too seemed to go up. The stir was launched originally against the 18 per cent proposed increase in the quota of reservations in jobs and education for the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC), but the stir leaders are now calling for "re-establishment of meritocracy and the right to pursue excellence."

The stir, launched in mid-February, has entered its sixth week and the appeals of central leaders like Mr S. B. Chavan, union home minister, to students to call the agitation off seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. In fact, the leaders of the stir appeared to have drawn strength from the fact that the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has proposed the evolving of a national consensus on the reservation policy. CM Madhavsinh Solanki has already given in to the original demand of the anti-reservationists by postponing the proposed quota hike by a year.

The communal riot in Ahmedabad has been subtly linked up with the anti-reservation agitation by the government. Although the All Gujarat Education Reforms Committee which has been leading the anti-reservation stir has disclaimed responsibility for the communal turn of the events, the state home minister, Mr Amarsinh Choudhary, said in the Assembly that the violence in the state had taken a toll of 18 lives and left behind damage worth Rs one and a half crores. The toll includes 13 killed in Ahmedabad.

The government has refused to institute a judicial probe into the communal rioting in Ahmedabad, though it has blamed the opposition parties for it. The Prime Minister, after a two hour tour of the riot-torn areas, on 23 March, blamed the opposition who, he said, had lost in the elections and still did not want to abide by the verdict of the people. Mr Chandulal Chandrakar, union minister of state sent by Mr Gandhi to Ahmedabad, accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of engineering the riots.

Mr Gandhi's remarks incensed the opposition. Mr Chandra Shekhar, the Janata Party chief who had also gone round the strife-torn areas in Ahmedabad, acidly pointed out that the Prime Minister was trading in human misery. Curiously, neither the ruling party nor the BJP named the people involved in the rioting. Nor did they offer proof. The BJP leader, Mr L.K. Advani, who visited Ahmedabad after the riot, claimed he had heard people saying that a former minister and a former legislator of the Congress(I) were responsible for the rioting, but he did not name anyone specifically. It appears that there will be no judicial probe and the political parties will be satisfied with accusing each other. While almost everyone claims that the communal flare up was a pre-planned affair in which *goondas* played a vital role, it would probably never be known who triggered the anti-social elements into action.

About 1,108 persons have been rounded up in Ahmedabad in connection with the disturbances, including 767 curfew offenders. The rioting has left 52 injured. The police registered 114 cases of arson and looting as over 150 houses and shops were set on fire. However, only 11 persons have been detained under the National Security Act. But the state government has referred to the riots as just "disturbances." In all announcements made by the state, the word "communal" has been carefully deleted.

The anti-reservation agitators who had suspended their stir for a few days have resumed their activities. The reason was the arrest on 23 March of three student leaders, Mr Vivek Patel, Mr Kanu Patel and Mr Amit Desai, when they went to the circuit house annexe in Ahmedabad to submit a memorandum against the reservation policy to the Prime Minister. On 25 March, a magistrate ordered their release on personal bond but they were immediately taken into custody under the National Security Act. The All Gujarat Education Reforms Committee, has accused the state government of making scapegoats of the students and on 26 March, some 400 junior doctors at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital went on an indefinite strike, protesting against the arrests of the student leaders. That day, *bandhs* were observed by anti-reservationists in a number of towns in Saurashtra such as Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagadh and Surendranagar. A leader of the All Gujarat Parents Association, which has joined the students, said that groups of students and others would mobilise people throughout the state against "the evils of the reservation system."

The students committee called the

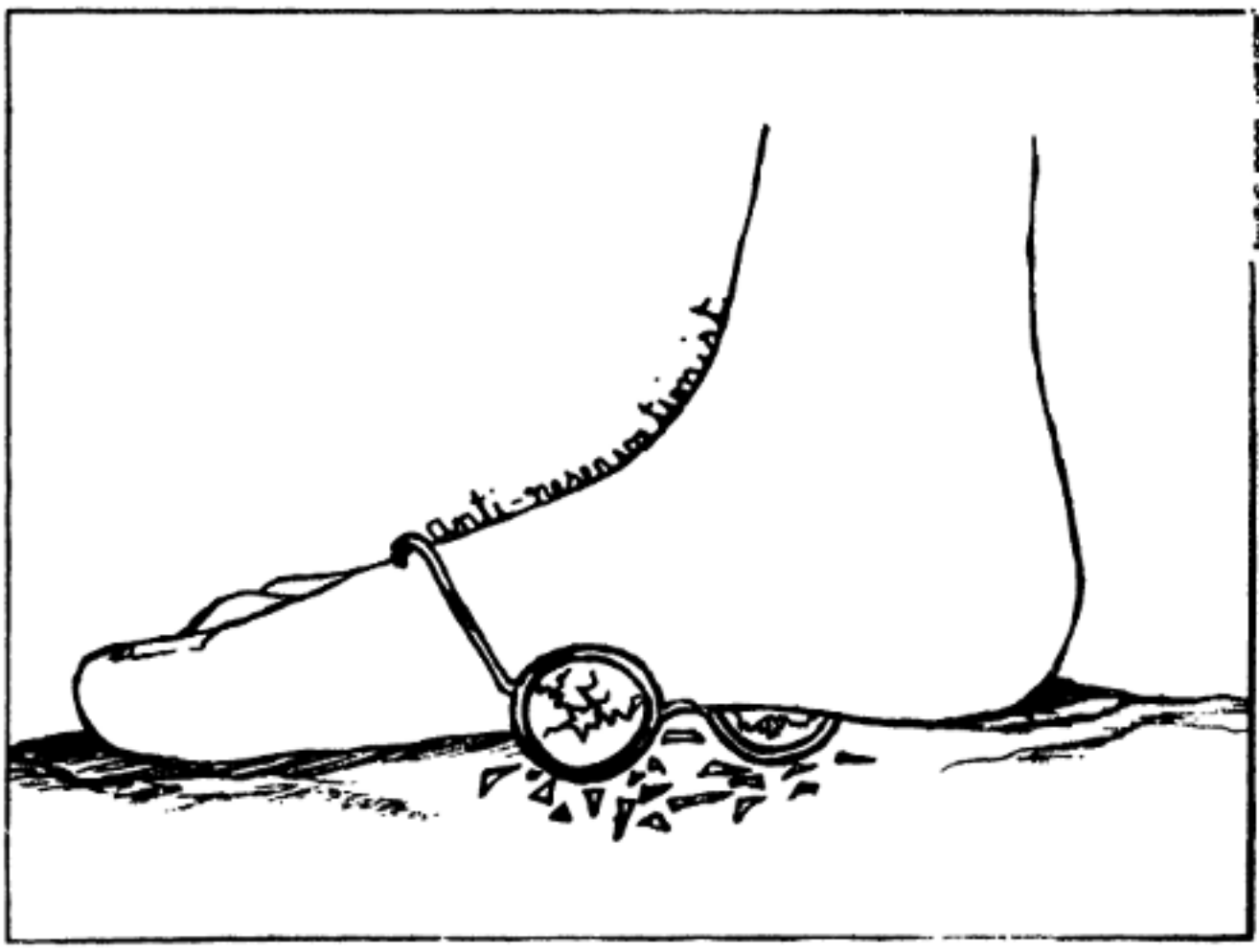


Illustration Rahul Sharma

Akhil Gujarat Navrachna Samiti, sent a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister, listing a ten point charter of demands which goes much beyond the original demand against the quota hike for the SEBC. The main demands are: 70 per cent of students admitted in any college should be on merit. Reservations should be phased out gradually in a predetermined manner. A system should be established where a person could get the benefit of a special reservation only once in his life. The difference in marks between an open merit admission and reserved candidate should not be more than ten per cent. The benefit of the reservation should not extend to the third child in any family. Economic criteria should be adopted for identifying backward sections instead of caste criteria and until the reservations were phased out, a system of supernumerary seats for meritorious students should be adopted, which means one merit seat against one reserved seat.

The committee said that its agitation "is a last ditch effort by the students and people of Gujarat to save meritocracy." However, the stir would be conducted only on peaceful Gandhian lines, it said and disowned responsibility for the communal riots. "We have nothing to do with these unfortunate events," it said. The stance of the students committee, reinforced by the parents association, has unnerved organisations and leaders of the backward classes. Mr Himat Charan, convenor of one such organisation, has warned that the backward classes would not take it lying down if the anti-reservationists persisted in their activities. "A volunteer force of the backward people would have to be created soon," he said.

Meanwhile, the government has appealed to the anti-reservationists to give up their stir promising them justice when a review of the policy took place. The government has also pleaded with the opposition to clarify its stand on the anti reservation stir. Even as the stir continues, the fate of some 4.75 lakh students due to sit in HSC and SSC examinations continue to hang in the balance. Their examinations due to begin on 18 March were put off to 25 March and then postponed indefinitely. If they are not held soon and results declared before the next academic year begins in June, their future would be affected.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

PUNJAB

A Time for Action

Khushwant Singh urges PM to solve the crisis

The mood in Punjab is one of anger. As the Akali leadership—even the moderates—tread the hard line, simmering discontent is beginning to surface in the form of "*kesari patkas* and *dupattas*." That is the colour signifying preparedness to sacrifice for religion. The eminent journalist, Khushwant Singh, a nominated Rajya Sabha MP and one who thought that Operation Bluestar was a serious error of judgement, feels that the situation in Punjab is extremely dangerous and unpleasant. About a month ago, he wrote a detailed two-page letter to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, urging him to take certain steps to retrieve the consistently deteriorating state of affairs in the state. "I was very disturbed at some recent trends," writes Mr Singh, "the large-scale migration of Sikhs to Punjab from different parts of the country, the training of terrorist units, the appearance of saffron all around in Punjab. So I thought of writing to the Prime Minister. We must realise, after all, that Punjab is the only land-link we have with Jammu and Kashmir."

Mr Singh has made several suggestions in his letter to Rajiv Gandhi on decisions that he must take preparatory to a solution of the continuing crisis in Punjab. He has demanded the institution of a high-power judicial enquiry into the killing of Sikhs during the riots that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and an unilateral announcement from the government on what demands, being made by the Akali leaders, it is prepared to concede. His suggestion is that the Prime Minister himself make this announcement from the Golden Temple. "He should be talking directly to the people," says Khushwant Singh.

Although Khushwant Singh takes no credit for it, just sometime after he had written the letter, the government released nine Akali leaders including Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, Jagdev Singh Talwandi and Surjit Singh Barnala. Several others, however, were detained. Khushwant Singh describes this move as "mischievous." "It will create more discord. The government will ultimately be left with no one to talk to. Who will be left if the government tries to create divisions this way?" Mr Singh asks. He also asserts that all talk of government having "secret talks" with the Sikhs is not true. Such moves as this one are only shrinking up the avenues for a dialogue on Punjab.

Another point that Khushwant Singh had made in his letter was about the economic situation in Punjab. One of the reasons, he feels, for the success of the terrorists in influencing the youth of Punjab was the lack of better opportunities for them. While on the one hand the green revolution has reached a plateau stage and opportunities abroad have dried up, industry is almost non-existent in the state. There is a great deal of frustration in the educated youth of Punjab today. With this backdrop in mind, he had demanded the announcement of an economic package for the state too.

What is going to happen in Punjab now? Khushwant Singh does not have a clue. "In any case, the atmosphere is very unpleasant. The colour of vengeance spreading all around, tapes supporting Satwant Singh and Beant Singh being played everywhere...I don't know where things are going." Does he think the government is going to do anything about Punjab. "I don't know," he says, "a few days after I sent the letter to the Prime Minister I got a letter thanking me for it and saying that it was being passed on to the cabinet subcommittee on Punjab and today when I raise a question in Parliament Rajiv Gandhi himself gets up to answer but he is always contradicting himself...at the moment it is just crystal-gazing, I don't know what the government is prepared to do. It is certainly not communicating with the Sikh people. Is it even big enough to say that the army operation in June last year was a grave error?"

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

Khushwant Singh



RAJASTHAN

SP Accused of Rape

Wife of senior police officer allegedly molested

Though rape by uniformed men is not a new phenomenon in Rajasthan, the recent incident at Bikaner involving the highest police official of the district, the Superintendent of Police (SP), has rocked the whole state. What is more is that the SP attempted to rape the wife of his seniormost colleague in the district: the additional SP, Mr R.D. Goyal. Mr Rohtas Kumar the SP of Bikaner is a controversial figure. Before his posting in Bikaner, he was SP of Bharatpur from where he was transferred for inciting caste conflicts in the police and the public. But this time he appears to have landed in greater trouble. His additional SP, Mr R.D. Goyal has charged him of molesting and attempting to rape his wife.

According to the two identical complaints by Mr Goyal with the DIG Bikaner Range, Mr Samarvir Singh Pawar, and later with the director-general of police, Mr Raghunath Singh Kapoor, Rohtas Kumar came to the residence of the additional SP in the evening of 23 March. Though the SP had informed Mr Goyal on telephone that he was dropping in that evening with his wife, he came alone. Goyal says in his complaint that the SP was drunk and explained that since Mrs Rohtas Kumar was not well, she could not accompany him.

In the complaint Mr Goyal says that some time later, some persons came to the Goyals' residence to meet the SP. The SP asked Goyal to speak to them as he was in no shape to meet them. He also requested Goyal for some *paan*. Goyal left the room to meet the visitors leaving his wife and the SP in the drawing room. After sending away the visitors, Goyal was coming back to the room when he saw Rohtas Kumar coming out. When asked why he was leaving without having *paan* he replied that he was in a hurry and had to leave. Goyal returned to the room to find his wife in tears and in a state of shock.

Goyal claims his wife could not speak to him for about ten minutes and continued sobbing. Later she admitted that the SP had misbehaved with her and molested her. Only after this did Goyal realize why Rohtas Kumar had left in such a hurry. Finding no trace of the SP, Goyal met the DIG Bikaner Range, Mr Samarvir Singh and narrated the whole story. The DIG asked him to write out the complaint which he did immediately. Despite the DIG's desperate efforts to find Rohtas Kumar, the SP remained untraceable throughout the night.

Meanwhile, Mr Singh spoke to the district collector and also consulted Mr O.P. Behari, the area development commissioner and the seniormost IAS officer at Bikaner. After consultations between the three, the DIG informed the director general of police (DGP) at Jaipur the next morning. The DIG also sent a wireless message ordering the transfer of Rohtas Kumar with immediate effect and ordered that he be relieved of his charge and sent to Jaipur. Intriguingly, the order of relieving the SP of his duties was later revoked and he was asked to proceed to Jaipur to explain his case to the DGP. Goyal was also called to Jaipur.

Why did the DGP revoke his order? It is believe that it was done at the behest of an ex-MLA who was Congress(I) candidate for the Vidhan Sabha in Bikaner district this year. After leaving Goyal's house on 23 March, Rohtas Kumar is reported to have spent the whole night at the residence of the same ex-MLA at Bikaner, who is believed to be close to CM Harideo Joshi.

Despite all the efforts to keep the incident a secret, the news was given coverage by the *Rajasthan Patrika* on 26 March. The matter was raised in the Vidhan Sabha and agitated MLAs demanded the immediate suspension and arrest of the SP and the registration of a case of attempted rape against him. The chief minister's announcement of a departmental enquiry in the matter did not pacify the MLAs who demanded prosecution of the SP. A number of MLAs also alleged the in the house that he was a habitual offender. Miss Pushpa Jain of the BJP expressed her anguish that the government was having a dialogue with the culprit since he is a high police official. "Had there been an ordinary citizen involved in this case, would the government have adopted the same course?" she asked and demanded the immediate arrest of the SP. Mr Devi Singh Bhati, Janata MLA, stunned the House by alleging that, "Rohtas Kumar molested the wife of a magistrate in Chittorgarh, misbehaved with a lady teacher in Bharatpur and raped a lady advocate in Bikaner. In yet another case, a lady government employee had beaten him up for his indecent behaviour." The list is unending and distressing, he claimed. Mrs Vidya Pathak, BJP, described him as a sex maniac and said that the proper place for Rohtas Kumar was a lunatic asylum.



Rohtas Kumar

Chief minister Joshi's repeated assertion that he will not spare the guilty and was awaiting the enquiry report by the inspector general of police, Mr V.K. Kaul, who had gone to Bikaner for investigation of the facts, did not pacify the members and under pressure from the House, he had to announce that an FIR would be registered against the SP. He also promised to transfer the SP from Bikaner and the order transferring Rohtas Kumar to the Police Academy, Jaipur was issued two days later.

During the past couple of years, the number of cases of rape have gone up in the state. Altogether 15 cases were registered against police officials ranging from constables to inspectors in the last two years. In Kotputli, two policemen raped a woman which sparked off an agitation in January last year and led to a police firing, killing three persons. In yet another case, a 45-year-old woman Sundri was called to the Nasirabad police station in connection with an investigation. She was then raped and murdered by the station staff. Incidents of rape by policemen in the Police Academy compound were also reported last year. Mr Rohtas Kumar has now been posted to the same police academy. Meanwhile, the Rajasthan Police Service (RPS) Officers Association has condemned the shameful act and has unanimously demanded severe punishment for the SP.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

UTTAR PRADESH

School for Vandals

Students of Lucknow College of Arts protest against crime

Until a month back Lucknow University's College of Arts and Crafts could boast of a set of unusual extra-curriculars—hooliganism, violence and crime. For the more serious of the college's 250 boys and girls, the campus was a scene of terror. Toughs enrolled as students freely flashed knives and guns to threaten the boys, or 'impress' the girls with their bravado. Resistance, even from the authorities, could mean violence. Now the man allegedly promoting the culprits—none other than the college's own physical training instructor, Shiv Singh—has become the target of a determined hunger-strike by a group of students who are sick of it all and want him and his proteges out.

The strikers, who claim to have the support of the rest of the students, have paralysed the college since 24 January Despite repeated requests by the principal and vice-chancellor to call off their agitation and allow classes to resume, the students have not relented. They will break their strike, they say, only after their demands are met. The authorities have set up a three member committee to enquire into the charges, but say that no action can be taken unless the inquiry is complete So the strike continues.

The trouble began on 23 January when two students, Mamoon Noomani and Mukesh Pandey—a protege of the P.T. instructor were involved in a fight outside the college gates. According to the students, Noomani, who was on his motorcycle, was suddenly attacked by Pandey and an "outsider" who stopped him, and beat him up. A teacher, Prof. Satish Chandra, who had rushed to mediate was also heckled. In a statement the professor made later, he said, "The outsider had caught hold of my collar."

A number of students. Sushil Kumar, Imtiaz Ahmed, Bhim Sain, Satish Srivastava, Sukhvinder Singh and four others, who happened to be watching, raised an alarm. "Our principal, Prof. R. S. Bisht was with us at the time," said Sushil Kumar. "He was told to go to the police, but he didn't. Later, we phoned the police from his office, and the police arrived." The students also allege that Shiv Singh, who was conducting a cricket match on the playground alongside the road, "had prior knowledge of the attack" but did nothing "perhaps because he had planned it himself."



Students of the Lucknow College of Arts and Crafts on strike

The strikers complained about a number of other incidents involving Shiv Singh and his "band of rowdies," more serious than the one on 23 January. Sometime back a student, Anil Kumar Shukla, was attacked by another student Rajendra Yadav, Singh's own nephew, who had a *tamancha* (countrymade pistol) in his hand at Shiv Singh's instance." Said Shukla, "I was coming through the rear gate with my bicycle... I had just returned from hospital when Shiv Singh spotted me and shouted, '*Pakro sale ko mardeo.*' Thankfully the proctor, B.N. Adiga was attracted by the commotion. He came and asked what the matter was. I could see Shiv Singh warning Yadav immediately to hide the gun. Yadav then gave it to Gajendra Kushwaha, who was standing nearby. He hid it. Later the rowdies walked away, growling, *Yahan goliya chalegi, aur jo rukawat bana sabko ura dengey.* The words were meant for Adiga. The principal was hardly any help. When I went to complain about the incidents to him, he only pushed me aside and said, '*Bahut bura hoga*' and asked me to go away."

The students had earlier lodged a complaint against two of Shiv Singh's proteges, Rajiv Katiyar and Vijay Handa, alleging that they were not entitled to take admission in the arts college as they had enrolled themselves in the National Degree College. After checking up with the college concerned, the principal had ordered their expulsion under the university rules which prohibit double courses. "A number of Shiv Singh's boys keep enrolling themselves for different courses only to stay on," said a striker. Among them are Rajendra Yadav Singh's nephew who has already done his three year woodwork course and has now got admitted in first year clay modelling. "He beats up anyone he has a dislike for," said a striker. Also in the college are Avadesh Yadav Singh's sister's son; Singh's wife Rekha Yadav, Singh's niece, Seema Yadav and proteges like Arun Kumar who has already completed his BA pass course and is also doing the master of social work course.

The present hostel warden, Bhairon Nath Shukla, has already submitted his resignation to the principal after what happened on 23 January, the climax to the series of exchanges between the rowdies and the students. Even the teachers, it appears, have formed two camps, one pro-Shiv Singh, the other against him. Said the proctor informally, "I have been here since 1982. So many reports have been sent to the police. If there are fights between two groups of students, I can settle the matter. But when a staff member is involved and has support from other quarters, I cannot do anything." The proctor admitted that countrymade weapons were brought into the college sometimes.

According to the agitating students, Shiv Singh has been a menace

having served as hostel warden for five years before he was forced to quit that post in 1981, following a similar agitation. "Even now, he is in-charge of the National Service Scheme, and games, and pockets a lot of the funds."

Shiv Singh himself denied these charges. "The trouble started when, after resigning from the post of warden in 1981, I said in my letter that as long as the inquiry into the charges against me are pending, those who were agitating against me should not be given hostel seats. But despite giving this in writing, they were given hostel accommodation. So, those boys kept plotting, bringing in outsiders, terrorising..." Singh alleged that a number of those who had agitated against him in 1981, and were involved in the present strike were rowdies themselves. "As a games teacher, I feel, that if there is discipline, there should be complete discipline. Unlike the other teachers, I am strict. And because of this I am unpopular." Singh also alleged that the fight between Pandey and Noomani was actually over a girl's attention.

The boys had accused him of threatening them, even while they were on strike: "He told one of us that his body would be found outside the college if we took our agitation too far." He even taunts us, saying "you'll get tired of running around," one of the boys said. "That's not true," said Singh answering the charge. What about his gang of toughs? "The people around me, I assure you, are from very good families, IAS etc. and it is these elements in the strike who tease and pester them.

Said the principal. Prof. Bisht, who claimed that each and every complaint submitted by the students to the proctor had been passed on dutifully to the police, and action had always been taken promptly. "the students have two demands. The first concerns students. The second, a teacher. Action against the students involved in the incident on 23 January 1985 can only be taken after a thorough investigation. As for the second demand, the vice-chancellor is the only authority who can take a decision regarding a teacher, according to rules." For the students, this is not enough. The VC continues to tell them to withdraw the agitation, and allow classes to begin. But the students have refused to budge. "Our future's involved," they argue. "We have to decide once and for all whether to have people in the college who are interested in art, or those interested in violence."

Nirmal Mitra, Lucknow

KERALA

Back to Ayurveda

Programme to increase production of medicinal plants

It is perhaps unfortunate that Indians require the west to make them appreciate their own scientific heritage. Yoga, traditionally practised by *rishis*, and a small segment of the population in the country has become fashionable in India only after it became popular in the West. Similarly, ayurveda, thanks to the Westerners, particularly the West Germans who have even begun commercial production of ayurvedic substitutes of chemicals in the drugs manufactured by the multinational pharmaceutical firms,is beginning to gain popularity.

Kerala is universally considered to be the home of ayurveda. The Kottakkal Arya Vaidyashala in Kerala has not won just national, but international acclaim. From eczema to mental retardation, the Vaidyashala has its own ayurvedic medicines which are slow-acting, but effective. The legion of patients who swear by the Vaidyashala is increasing and despite the advances made by allopathy, small specialised ayurveda practitioners in Kerala still successfully deal with snake-bites, stomach ailments or bone diseases. The recipe of the formulations is a family secret passed on only from father to son.

Ayurveda is not a very refined form of medication through which the part of the medicinal plant, be it the leaf or root, is isolated by distillation. Ayurvedic formulations are invariably in the form of tonics. The extraction process in allopathy is so advanced that only the active ingredient or the organic compound required for the particular ailment is isolated. It is the most concentrated form which explains why the same amount of relief provided by a single allopathic tablet may be provided by a bottle of ayurvedic tonic. This also explains why allopathy offers quick relief (and is therefore popular) while ayurveda is slow-acting. But today, despite the giant strides taken by allopathy, there is a tendency to popularise ayurveda. This is because unlike allopathic drugs, the ayurveda formulations have no side effects. Secondly, though allopathy is "quick-acting" often just the symptoms of the ailment are cured but not the ailment itself whereas the ayurveda formulations cure the disease itself.



The medicinal plants garden of the Kerala Agricultural University

The research programme launched by the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) at Trichur attempts to evolve a low cost technology for the production of medicinal plants for ayurvedic purposes. Plans for commercial cultivation of plants to cope with the demands of the pharmaceutical industry are being made.Of the wide range of medicinal plants that grow in Kerala, about 200 species of herbs have been collected, identified and transplanted in the KAU. In charge of this project is the department of plantation crops and

spices headed by Prof. Sreekandan Nair. Out of this 200, there are about 160 plants which are considered to be ayurvedically important.

Some of the important plants found in the "germ plasm" or "gene bank' of the KAU are *Rauwolfia Serpentina*. From the root of this plant, the alkaloid called Reserpine is extracted which is widely used for reducing blood pressure. This is a commercially viable plant because it is used by pharmaceutical firms as its chemical substitutes have often been found to have serious side effects. *Catheranthus Roseus*, popularly called *Shavam Nari* in Malayalam (probably because it is commonly found in graveyards) is used for treating leucaemia.

Another herb, *Centella Asiatica* is used for treating nervous problems and skin diseases including leprosy. The *Aloe Barbadensis* being cultivated in the KAU, is good for hair growth and for curing boils. Kerala is supposed to have the largest area under cultivation of lemon grass in the world which is a base for Vitamin A and all over the country, medicinal properties of *Juss Meliaceae* or *neem* are well known. Out of the oil extracted from *neem*, the Trivandrum Ayurvedic Research Centre has developed "Nimbidin", which is said to be very good for psoriasis (a kind of skin disease).

Other important herbs are *Alorus Calamus* which is used for treating stomach ailments *Diascoria Floribunda* (also known as Diasgenin), which is essential for contraceptive pills, and *Nuxvomica* which is very good for rheumatism.

Due to the indiscriminate collection of these herbs there is today a threat of extinction of some of these species. The project hopes to begin the replantation of some of these species by passing on the cuttings of the plants to the *Aushadhis* and *Vaidyans* (ayurveda clinics and practitioners) free of cost, so that they can cultivate it for themselves. The project also has an experimental section. It has been found that Kerala is suitable for the commercial cultivation of medicinal plants like *Rauwolfia Serpentina*, medicinal yam and *Catharanthus Roseus*. To reduce costs, the project is concentrating on the possibilities of introducing these plants in the multi-species cropping system. For instance, research has shown that certain medicinal plants grow very well when cultivated as an intercrop in rubber and other plantations. Such inter-cropping will go a long way in popularising the cultivation of medicinal plants. Experiments are also being conducted to increase yields. In addition, the experiments are geared to evolving low cost technology for the cultivation of these plants. Another aim of the project is to popularise home remedies.

An additional project is therapeutic horticulture. In the west, horticulture has been found to have immense value to a gamut of patients, particularly the aged, the physically and mentally retarded children. The department is supplying plants to two institutions for handicapped children, one of which is based in Trichur. The department not only supplies plants but provides guidance on how to cultivate the plants. Constant supervision is maintained by the department on the progress of the growth of the plants.

Anita Pratap, Trichur

RAJASTHAN

The Dam of Doom

Investigations by experts vindicate report by SUNDAY

The investigative story, "The Sorrow of Rajasthan" (published in SUNDAY 15 April 1984), had revealed that people staying in a number of villages adjoining the Panchna dam, barely ten kilometres from Karauli, a town in the Sawai Madhopur district of Rajasthan, were panic-stricken. It said, "The cause of their anxiety is the massive Panchna dam on the river Gambhir, which, constructed with the least regard for safety rules and within a record time of six months, is as vulnerable as a sand dune. The dam meant to irrigate vast areas of land and thereby bring prosperity to the poor villagers will, in actuality, bring misery to these people"

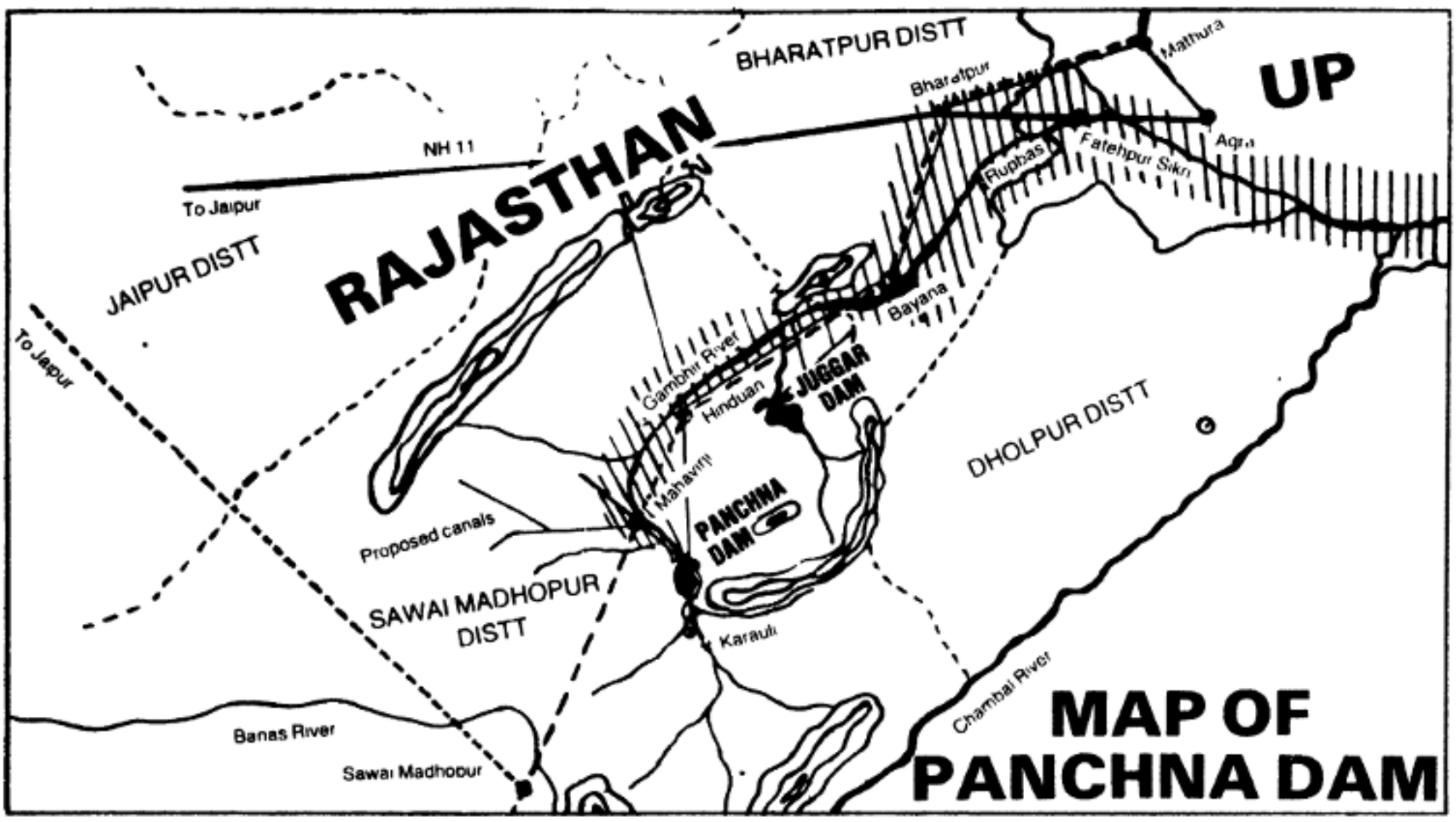
In the original plan approved by the Planning Commission and the Central Water Commission (CWC), the Panchna dam was slated to store only 700 million cubic feet (cft) of water but at the construction stage, the original plan was revised to raise the storage capacity of the dam to 2,100 million cft by the then superintending engineer Devendra Nath Dhandha without obtaining an approval from the appropriate authorities.



Scientists taking soil samples at Panchna Dam

The original plan approved by the Planning Commission and CWC entailed an outlay of Rs 1.03 crores for a 45 feet high earthen dam, but its height was arbitrarily raised to 85 feet and Rs 6.5 crores were spent on the construction of the earthen dam. The total cost estimates have gone up to Rs 21 crores. Though the dam is still far from being completed, Mr Dhandha was honoured at a state function on 15 August 1982 by the State Governor for his "extraordinary skill in completing the Panchna dam in a record time."

SUNDAY had said that "the dam is in actuality a potential killer threatening to wash away the areas surrounding it...the Panchna dam is like a sand dune. It will burst the moment it is filled to capacity. In the event of such a happening, the worst affected will be the famous Jain pilgrimage centre, Shri Mahaviriji. The waters of the dam would also engulf towns like Hindaun, Bayana, Bharatpur and Fatehpur Sikri in addition to scores of villages up to Agra. The tragedy which might occur would surely be more horrifying than the one experi-



A map of the Panchna Dam: the shaded area along the river Gambhir shows the areas likely to be affected

enced a couple of years ago in Morvi, Gujarat."

After the article was published, the government of India ordered the CWC and the Central Soils & Materials Research Station (CSMRS) to investigate the Panchna dam and to suggest remedial measures for improving it. The field investigation by the CSMRS scientists continued for a couple of months and included soil sampling from various places at varying depths to test the quality. The director ERDD-II, CWC, Mr Z. Hasan inspected the site along with deputy directors of CWC and CSMRS, and the superintending engineer and executive engineers in charge of the dam. The CSMRS and Mr Hasan have already submitted an interim report about the test results vindicating SUNDAY's stand.

The interim test report says that the Panchna dam is a mound of sand. It says, "the soil obtained in the sample checking had negligible effective cohesion value." Test reports indicate that the earth used for the construction of the embankment was either silt or fine sand. The CSMRS report says that in-situ permeability in the soil samples ranges from $1.77\times10-5$ to $8.85\times10-3$ cm/sec. which in a silt predominant soil calls for special protective measures to avoid erosion and piping due to high seepage gradient. Down-stream protection by means of filter drainage, pitching and turfing, are no doubt very important."

The investigating team collected two samples of soil from the area where clay is said to have been used in the construction of the dam. The samples contained 11 to 14 per cent clay. The report however says that whether the same soil has been used cannot be ascertained as the information on the soil characteristics of the core of dam is not available. "This can only be verified by tests on the samples collected from the core." But the fact that the materials used in the core were non-plastic has already been established by a few laboratory tests conducted earlier by the director (designs), Rajasthan. This has been mentioned by Mr Z. Hasan, director, ERDD-II, CWC in his letter dated 1 September 1984, addressed to the superintending engineer, Panchna Dam.

In his inspection report Mr Z. Hasan categorically states that materials used in the dam consist of fine sand and silt. "These materials offer little resistance against erosion and get scoured easily due to rain. Deep gullies and rain cuts were noticed on both up-stream and down-stream slopes." He says, "There is some seepage through the dam which is also seen on the down-stream...this seepage indicates that the material in the foundation and embankment are not impervious and the core of the dam is not effective, though the water level at the times of inspection was 2.06 metres below the excavated level of the spill cut."

Mr Hasan writes, "On the down-stream where the seepage has been noticed, rockfill has been dumped over a filter of gravel. The work of dumping the rockfill is being done on an ad hoc basis as the design for the dam is yet to be finalised based on the investigations undertaken." The director has stated that the dam was constructed before the design was approved, and without drawings of the cross sections

Mr Hasan in his inspection report has observed that the finalisation of the proposals for strengthening of the dam will be possible only after receiving the report of investigations carried out by CSMRS, but he is making certain suggestions to be implemented without delay "in order to avoid any deterioration in the present condition of the dam."

The CWC director has suggested that the top of the dam should be completed and proper drainage provided so that rain water is carried through surface drains. He also said that immediate action ought to be taken to repair the gullies formed by filling them with suitable materials.

With the SUNDAY article vindicated by the reports of the authorities, will the government take suitable action against the guilty engineers, contractors and their political protectors? Or will the government allow the Panchna dam to join the line of killer projects like Union Carbide Plant and allow tragedy to hit lakhs of people in Rajasthan?

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR

Research on the Rhesus

A lady's study on the monkeys of Tughlaqabad

At one time during her pregnancy she was so obsessed by monkeys that she actually feared she would give birth to one. People warned her that if she read and wrote so much about apes, her child would at least look like one, if not be one. Then came Dev Kabir, her son. "And I was so relieved," says Mrs Iqbal Malik. Her research on monkeys went ahead She kept visiting the Rhesus monkeys in the ruins of the Tughlaqabad fort near Delhi and did the first doctoral thesis done in the country on the subject.

Monkeys at the Tughlaqabad fort and perhaps even the people around must have wondered why the lady wandered in the ruins the whole day, taking notes, playing little games with the monkeys or, at times, just sitting and watching. It was difficult initially, breaking into the monkey-domain. They attacked her, scared her and drove her away. But then it was all a matter of patience and understanding and few understand the monkeys of Tughlaqabad as well as Mrs Iqbal Malik, reader of Zoology at the Institute of Home Sciences, University of Delhi. She has studied them regularly since 1980 and continues doing it even after receiving her doctorate. "I have devoted my life to learning more about them," she says.



Iqbal Malik

It began as a childhood hobby. Mrs Malik was always curious about the animal world and specially about monkeys. That is why, she maintains, she studied Zoology—and incidentally got a first class first in her M.A.—but the interest remained latent till she met Dr Southwick, a renowned primatologist from the University of Colorado, on one of her trips abroad. Dr Southwick had already done some research on monkeys and he encouraged Mrs Malik to do it in India She did and produced a work that has been read and appreciated all over the world.

According to Mrs Malik the monkeys "are more organised than human beings." They live in well balanced societies with a rigid hierarchical system, have fixed habits and a daily activity pattern that is remarkably regular. What is more, it changes according to the season—siestas in the summer, long afternoons out in the winters. "Their behaviour is so organised, at any time I could tell where a particular monkey would be. They even have fixed sleeping places," she added

Male chauvinism too is an essential instinct among the monkeys. The group leader is always a robust male who walks with its tail up The females do the bulk of the work, but remain in the background and are paid little attention. One remarkable thing that Mrs Malik has noticed about this particular tribe in Tughlaqabad is the steep rise in the number of male monkeys over the last four or five years. When she had first gone to the area the male-female ratio had been at a normal 1.2.5. Today the males have made it up to bring the sex ratio to 1:1. One of the reasons for this might be the sudden rise in the monkey population in the fort from 120 in 1980, to 480 in 1985. And with this proliferation has come to surface another important characteristic of the Rhesus. The researcher found that the monkeys cannot withstand a boom in their population and once their number exceeds a certain limit there has to be a split. A group breaks away and establishes its own area of influence under a new leader. In the case of Tughlaqabad it was found that whenever the population touched 100, a fission occurred. Between 1980 and 1985 there have been five such fissions in the population.

But how will it help? In several ways, thinks Iqbal Malik who has now begun work on the evolutionary processes of natural selection and adaptation among the Rhesus monkeys. Over the years she has come to believe that the Tughlaqabad fort is the ideal habitat for the Rhesus and a deeper study of the environs here could help conservationists. Besides, these monkeys have one very important thing in common with human beings—the RH factor. Says she, "Various inferences about human behaviour can be drawn from Rhesus monkeys For example, the physiological reactions of the human body to a drought. One cannot experiment human beings for this, one certainly can on the Rhesus. "Man can be grateful to monkeys for more things than one."

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

NEW DELHI

What's in a Name?

At the behest of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the proposal to rename Willingdon Crescent after Mrs Gandhi has been dropped. Soon after her assassination, the New Delhi Municipal Committee decided to name one of the capital's best known roads after Mrs Gandhi and the huge cement plaque on Willingdon Crescent bearing the road sign was rubbed off.

Till 25 February, the road remained nameless before Willingdon Crescent was again repainted on the plaque. It is believed that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had expressed his "displeasure" at the municipality's haste in taking such a decision. The NDMC's proposal to rename Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital as Mrs Indira Gandhi Hospital was also turned down by the PM, who it is believed, does not like the idea of renaming public institutions with every change in government.

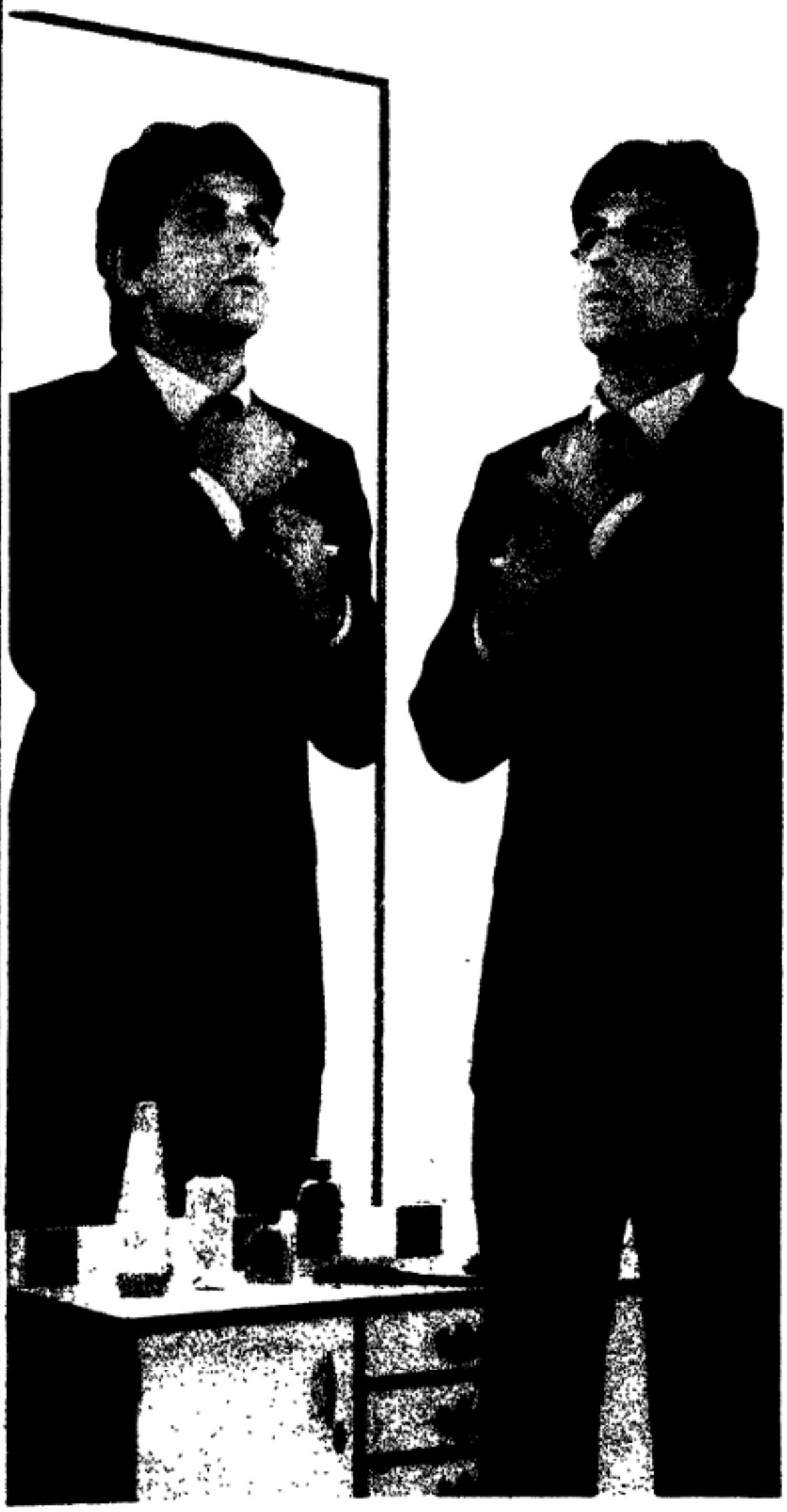
Lohia hospital used to be known as Lady Willingdon Hospital, after the wife of one of India's viceroys, although the word "Lady" was seldom used while referring to it. The name was changed after the Janata government came to power in 1977. Mr Gandhi is understood to have told civil and other government officials that they should put up proposals for the construction of new hospitals and other public institutions and desist from the practice of renaming old ones.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

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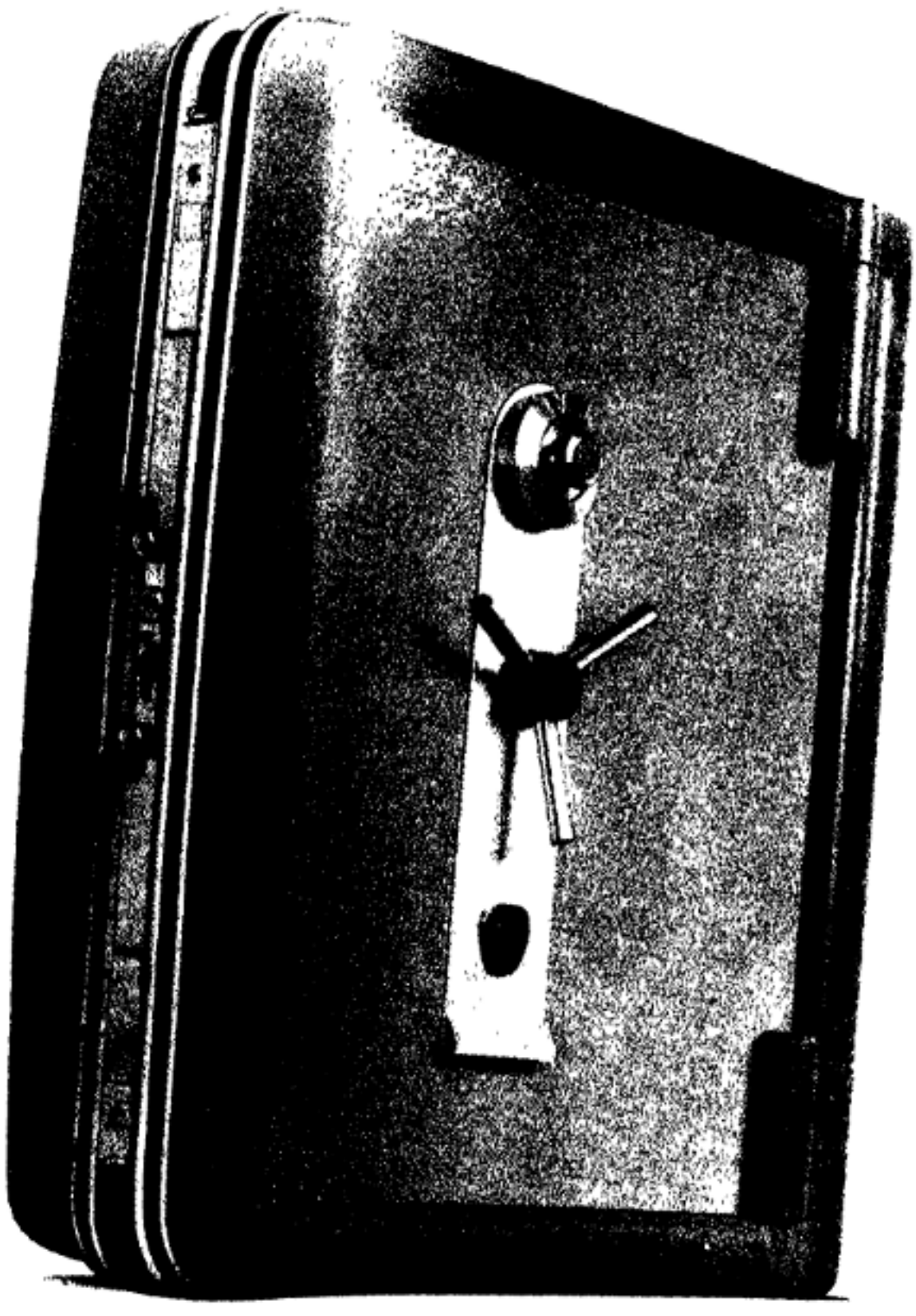
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AIADMK

P.U. Shunmugam : Accused

Old charges brought up again

Fickle fate seems to enjoy playing games with senior AIADMK partyman P.U. Shunmugam. The former general-secretary of the AIADMK wielded immense clout during MGR's hospitalisation only to be eclipsed immediately after the CM's triumphant return. He received a boost when MGR made him the pro-tem speaker of the Assembly but then after he served his purpose he was discarded, not to be heard of till 18 March when he was inducted into the cabinet as minister for local administration Ever since he joined the AIADMK, Shunmugam had been nurturing hopes of becoming a minister one day. Unfortunately for him, his euphoria about becoming a minister was ruined by two nasty controversies, both taking place in rapid succession.

The first related to his alleged involvement in the sensational "attempt to murder Indira Gandhi" in 1978. When Mrs Gandhi had visited Madras in October 1978, the DMK had organised a black flag demonstration in protest against the arbitrary dismissal of the Karunanidhi government in 1976. The demonstration turned violent and a case was filed against the DMK chief M. Karunanidhi, DMK MLA Rahman Khan and P.U. Shunmugam (then in the DMK) by the state government charging them for making an attempt on Mrs Gandhi's life. The case is still pending in the court.

The Assembly witnessed heated exchanges on 25 March when the DMK objected to Mr Shunmugam's inclusion in the cabinet. Mr Rahman Khan (DMK) co-accused in the case, questioned the legitimacy of Mr Shunmugam becoming a minister when the case was still pending in court. He demanded to know how the prosecution could, without fear and interference, pursue the case against Mr Shunmugam who had now become a minister and, therefore, an integral part of the prosecuting government. He felt it was highly immoral for the AIADMK to have included Mr Shunmugam in the council of ministers during the pendency of the criminal case and drew attention to a number of examples when the minister concerned resigned his post when he figured in a criminal case. He cited the example of Goa's minister for education who resigned when he faced charges for exercising improper influence to secure a pass in an examination for his daughter A minister in Nagaland was asked to resign by the CM when it was learnt that he had misbehaved with a woman On the other hand, in Tamil Nadu a person who was implicated in a serious case of conspiracy and attempt to murder had been honoured by the same government, observed, Mr Khan In a bid to defend Mr Shunmugam's ministership, Mr K.P. Ramalingam (AIADMK) said that the Janata government at the



P.U. Shunmugam

centre had made George Fernandes a minister even though he was accused in the Baroda dynamite case. Mr Rahman Khan jumped up immediately to assert that Fernandes was included in the central cabinet only after the Janata government had withdrawn the entire Baroda dynamite case on the ground that it was a conspiracy to frame the opposition leaders.

The result of the fiery salvoes fired by the AIADMK and the DMK in the Assembly was that Mr Shunmugam was forced to offer his resignation from the minister's post if he was found guilty by the court. That, ironically was his first statement in the house as minister The incident was undoubtedly a stormy start for the new minister but two days later he got embroiled in a nastier controversy. Damaging reports appeared in a section of the Tamil press the day after the incident in the Assembly According to the reports, the house of Mr Selvam (Mr Shunmugam's son) was raided by the Central Enforcement Directorate for FERA violations. Incidentally, Mr Shunmugam and his son stay together in the same house. The reports added that unaccounted wealth and foreign currency had been seized from Mr Selvam's possession. On 26 March attempts by Mr V.P Chintan (CPI-M) and Rahman Khan to raise the issue of the raid in the Assembly was quashed by the speaker P.H Pandian. The next day he disallowed an adjournment motion tabled by Mr Rahman Khan on the premise that the activities of a central government agency involving an individual did not concern the state government The entire opposition sans the Congress(I), staged a walkout.

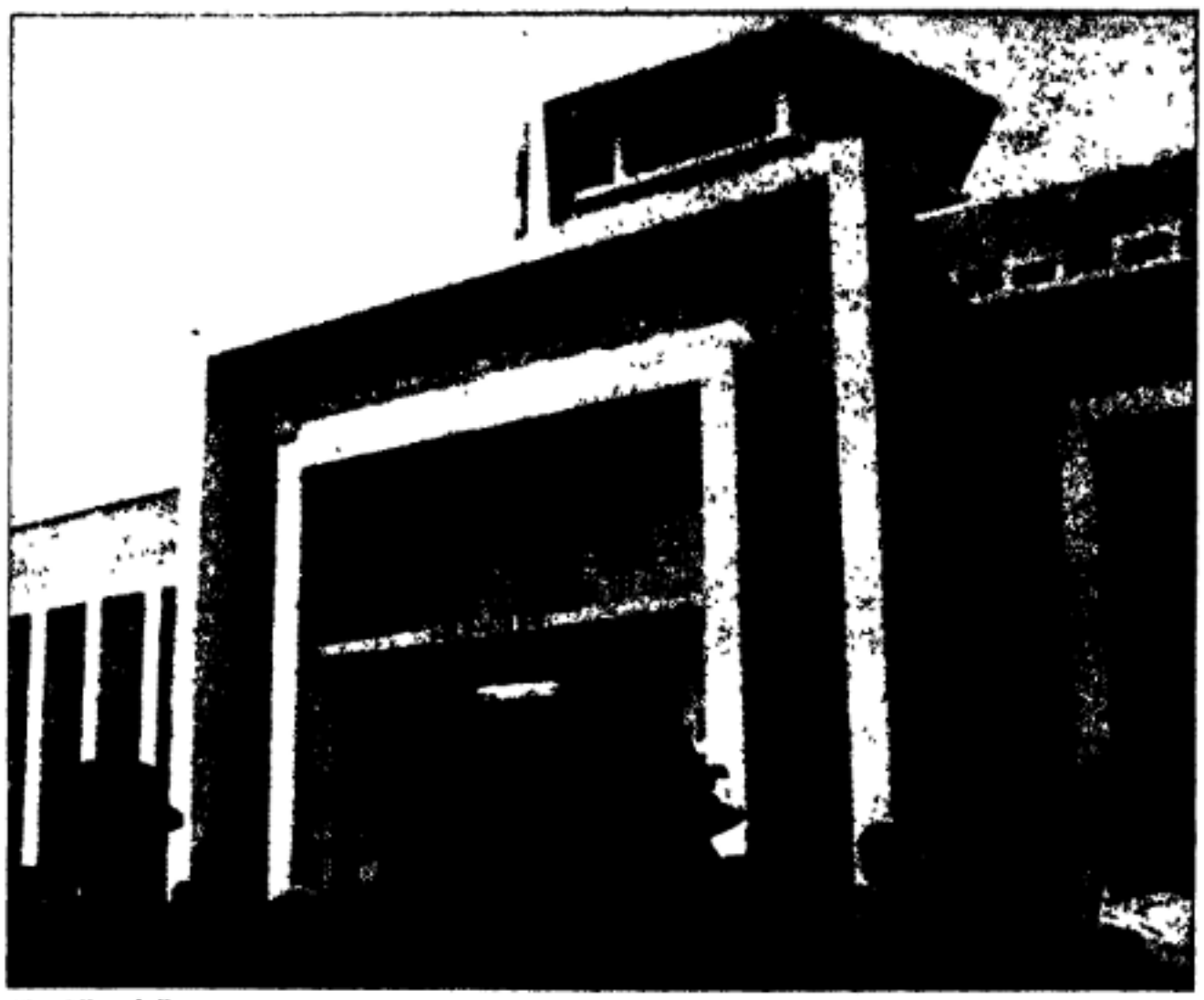
Mr Shunmugam sought to defuse the situation by making a personal statement in the house. He categorically denied that there had been a raid on his house by the Enforcement Directorate. He condemned the press reports as being baseless and scurrilous. According to Mr Shunmugam, his son Selvam had gone to Malaysia recently. On his return he had been gifted with a video camera for which necessary customs duty had also been paid. On 11 March, an official from the foreign exchange department had come to inquire about the video camera. He returned satisfied after the necessary documents were shown. Mr Shunmugam's explanatory statement might have succeeded in settling the issue in the Assembly on that day but it has failed to quell the growing doubts and suspicious in the minds of the public, notwithstanding the official denials from the enforcement directorate. When contacted by this correspondent, officials of the enforcement directorate chose to be remain tight-lipped giving one the distinct impression that there was more to the case than met the eye The grapevine has it that the central government agency suspects Mr Selvam's alleged involvement in gold smuggling. In any case it is a little difficult to believe that an official would make an inquiry about a mere video camera, particularly if the customs authorities had issued the necessary documents.

Anita Pratap, Madras

PRISONS

A New Jail for Delhi

Tihar jail unable to handle increase in convicts



The Tihar jail

A 78-acre plot of land has been acquired by the Delhi Administration in the Trans-Yamuna area of Mandoli in Delhi for the construction of a modern and sophisticated jail. The idea for the new jail was first mooted in 1981 and a set of proposals was handed over to the government last year. According to the proposal, the new jail would cost Rs 27 crores and would be constructed by the year 1990.

Once the blueprint for the jail is approved by the home ministry and allocations made in the Seventh Five Year Plan, a committee of experts would be appointed to make a survey of the world's best jails. Said R.S. Sethi, inspector general (prisons), "We are planning to construct one of the most modern and secure jails in Asia. Experts in the field will be involved in the execution of the prestigious project." He added that various concepts in jail construction are presently being examined. One of the jails being studied as an ideal model for the Mandoli jail is the Talson prison in Houston, USA. Whether the basic design of the jail should be triangular, circular or multi-storeyed as is the trend in most Western countries will also be decided soon.

The need to construct a new jail for the capital has been felt for some time. The capital's Tihar Central jail constructed in 1958 does not have enough capacity to house the swelling population of criminals of the capital. The maximum capacity of the Tihar jail is 1,200 and because of the shortage of cells at Tihar, a camp jail meant for agitation prisoners has been constructed near Tihar. The camp jail is now called the Tihar District jail and houses about 800 convicts. The central jail has been divided into three independent units last year and separate sections have been marked for convicts, undertrials and women and juvenile prisoners.

When the Mandoli jail is constructed, the number of prisoners who can be lodged in prisons will double. The Mandoli jail is proposed to have a capacity to house 1,500 convicts and undertrials. It has also been suggested to the government that the jail have an independent unit for lodging women and juvenile prisoners and a separate jail to house mentally retarded prisoners. For prisoners who are convicted for less than a year, a borstal or an open jail (like the Hissar jail) will be constructed. There will also be a training institute, hospital, fire-fighting unit and school within the jail complex. To ensure tight security, a special police force will be trained and close-circuit television and metal detectors installed.

It had previously been suggested to the government that more than one new jail be constructed for the capital because of the growing crime rate and difficulty of transporting prisoners from courts situated at long distances. The idea was to construct five new jails, one for each district for the five district courts. But according to the inspector general, the only jail to be constructed for the capital shortly is the jail at Mandoli. There is, however, the likelihood of a third jail being constructed in North Delhi in a few years time. The Delhi Development Authority has already handed over the possession of the 78-acre plot at Mandoli for the new jail. The land has cost the Delhi administration Rs eight lakhs. Once the project is cleared by the government and the allocation of funds made, the construction of the most modern jail in India will commence.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

ANDHRA PRADESH

Mysterious Murder

Local businessman's death embarrassing for Telugu Desam

The new Telugu Desam government faced its first major embarrassing moment in the state Legislative Assembly over the mysterious death of a local businessman Amar Singh of Dhoolpet in Hyderabad. The liquor dealer's death raised a number of questions on whether he died as a result of a brutal beating by excisemen or due to a feud with rival excise contractors. Despite the state excise minister exonerating the officials of his department in the Assembly, the excise department's role in the circumstances leading to the death of Amar Singh is not clear. The

most disturbing allegation is that Amar Singh was beaten to death in the presence of excise officials who had arrested him by *goondas* employed by excise contractors.

By all accounts, the 50-year-old Amar Singh, his son Anand Singh and nephew Prakash Singh were taken into custody from their home in Sitaphalmandi by an excise raiding party on 17 March at 7 am. Anand Singh and Prakash Singh were released after some time but Amar Singh was declared dead at the Osmania General Hospital later that day. Replying to a call attention motion in the Legislative Assembly, excise minister Mudragadda Padmanabhan described Amar Singh as a "notorious rowdy." "Even the excise department officials would be afraid to use force against such a person," the minister said. The arrests were made "with great difficulty" he added. The early morning raid on Sunday led to the recovery of 160 litres of illicit alcohol from his residence at Sitaphalmandi in Secunderabad. However the excise minister withdrew his description of Amar Singh as a rowdy after MLAs demanded that the minister provide proof of his allegation. Finally, home minister Vasanth Nageshwar Rao cut short the heated discussion when he announced that the government would order a thorough investigation into the affair by a crime branch CID team.

According to Anand Singh, the excise party which raided their house on 17 March was accompanied by musclemen of some excise contractors. He was taken with his father and cousin to the arrack depot at Narayanguda. His father, Amar Singh, was taken to another room and beaten mercilessly by the *goondas* of the contractors. Anand Singh and his cousin Prakash Singh were then brought to the Narayanguda police station but the excise officials told them that they were being merciful because they were young and told them to run away. They were told by the excisemen that Amar Singh was at Osmania Hospital. When they rushed to the hospital, they learnt that Amar Singh had died. Anand Singh said that the hospital authorities informed him that his father was brought to the hospital by a constable who fled after leaving the body without identifying either himself or the body. The two boys then lodged a police complaint.

As the news of Amar Singh's death spread in Dhoolpet a crowd of about 100 persons turned violent attacking arrack shops at Jumerat Bazar, Kolsawadi and Seetharambagh. In a letter to the chief minister, Mr N.T. Rama Rao, Anand Singh alleged that the excise men were in collusion with the contractors and had arrested them without a warrant and that it was the contractors' *goondas* and the excise men who were responsible for his father's death. According to a liquor dealer, Amar Singh had once been the kingpin in the city liquor business till he began concentrating on other business activities about four years ago. It is Amar Singh's son Anand Singh who has entered the liquor trade and many of the contractors are against it.

According to an excise department complaint made on 17 March at Narayanguda police station, three persons were arrested on that day and Anand Singh and Prakash Singh were lodged in the excise offices at Narayanguda but they escaped and Amar Singh was sent to hospital. The newly appointed excise minister's attempt to save his department's officials by saying that his department did not have a hand in the death-in-custody of the former bootlegger only created a greater furore. However, as a lot of heat has been generated during the discussion, the government decided to order a CID inquiry about the alleged death in excise custody.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

CRIME

Britain Seeks Sethia's Extradition

The British have sought the extradition of Rajendra Sethia. A request was made to the ministry of external affairs on 5 March, listing nine criminal charges faced by the Indian-born businessman in London, including one case against him by the Arab Allied Bank. The British High Commission has informed the foreign office that there is a warrant of arrest against Sethia for a case registered at London's Marlborough police station on 8 February 1984.

According to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials handling the investigation of the case, no progress has been made as yet on the extradition case. They feel, the request would be processed only after Sethia is free of the criminal charges in India. A CBI team will also be leaving for London. Though no date has been fixed for the team's departure, the CBI is already in touch with Scotland Yard, Interpol and the Fraud Squad, London regarding transactions entered into by Sethia and his company, Esal Commodities in London.



Rajendra Sethia

Till 13 March 1985, the day when Sethia was remanded to judicial custody by Delhi's metropolitan magistrate K.C. Lohia, the CBI had received documents of the case from only one of the three Indian banks: The Punjab National Bank. All files of transactions with Esal and confidential reports of the bank on the case have been handed over to the CBI. This evidence is being examined and Sethia is being interrogated in his cell at the Tihar jail. However, documents from the two other banks, the Central Bank of India and the Union Bank of India, are still to reach the CBI.

A day before he was remanded to judicial custody, the CBI filed their first criminal case against Sethia. The case (No. RC 185) was registered with the chief metropolitan magistrate, Calcutta. It charges Sethia with forging a false passport under the name of Raj Kumar Dugar and also accuses him of attempting to flee the country under a false name on 2 March. Now, before the maximum period of 90 days when the judicial remand will expire, the CBI will have to examine all evidence against Sethia and file cases in Indian courts, before the legal process in Britain can begin.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi.

KERALA

Tug of War in the UDF

Infighting in the UDF hampers administration

The contradictory claims of the coalition partners of the United Democratic Front (UDF) ministry is stalling the smooth functioning of the administration and forcing the government to eat humble pie at every stage. The latest political stunt comes from the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the four-member National Democratic Party of the high caste Nair Hindus. The IUML claimed a Rajya Sabha seat from the two which were represented by UDF partners, Congress(I) and the Kerala Congress. They had no claim whatsoever on the seat but it was part of the by-now-common ruse adopted by all the parties in the UDF, to get "benefits." As "reward" for withdrawing their claim to the seat, the IUML forced the government to withdraw two important measures.

The Governor P. Ramachandran had announced in his speech before the budget session that the Public Works Department would be split for administrative convenience. The PWD portfolio is handed by deputy chief minister and IUML leader, Avukaderkutty Naha, who gave the green signal to the proposal thus paving the way for part of the department to go to Congress(I) irrigation minister, M.P. Gangadharan. But the IUML rank and file, however, was not willing to yield a "profitable" part of their ministry. Another Bill which the IUML forced the government to withdraw is the Kerala Private Forests (vesting and assignment) Amendment Bill 1984 which aims to reopen cases against North Kerala landowners (mainly Muslims) who had, through court cases, reclaimed forest land taken over by the state government. The Achuta Menon government through the Kerala Private Forests (vesting and assignment) Act 1971 had taken over nearly two lakh hectares of forest land in North Kerala to be given to the landless but the Muslim landowners struck back through the courts and got back nearly 60,000 hectares of the land. The new Bill would help the government to fight these cases again with foolproof evidence but the chief minister capitulated before Muslim landowners' interest and has promised to withdraw the Amendment Bill. The landless will have to wait while the UDF changes its attitude.

Three legislators of the National Democratic Party recently wanted their ministerial nominee to be dropped and threatened to quit the party. After efforts for a reconciliation failed, the chief minister asked the NDP health minister, Ramachandran Nair to go on leave to avoid a showdown. The minister's faction has threatened dire consequences if he is dismissed. Meanwhile, in an interesting development, the Marxist MLA Varkala Radhakrishnan gave notice for a privilege motion in the House alleging that the health minister "has been wilfully prevented from presenting himself before the House."

Binoo John, Trivandrum

BUSINESS

Deeper in the Red

Disastrous performance by state-government owned firms

Mismanagement, negligence and callousness by the state-owned companies in Kerala has resulted in a disastrous performance in 1983-84 with only one of the seven major companies showing a profit. These seven companies, under the Kerala State Industrial Enterprises Limited suffered a total loss of Rs 473.79 lakhs compared to a loss of Rs 227.93 lakhs the previous year.

That the state government industries department lacks proper management techniques is evident from the fact that most union government enterprises in Kerala have performed well. The Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited, for instance, showed a significant improvement by transforming a loss of Rs 711 lakhs in 1982-83 to a marginal profit of Rs 10.54 lakhs. Hindusthan Latex Limited, manufacturers of Nirodh contraceptives earned a profit of Rs 82.97 lakhs last year and capacity utilisation reached an all time high of 98.3 per cent. Instrumentation Limited which manufactures control valves, safety relief valves and other equipment recorded a growth rate of 13 per cent and the sales turnover increased from Rs 1260.63 lakhs to Rs 1485.85 lakhs in 1983-84. The unit's net profit before taxation was Rs 298.72 lakhs. Another union government venture, Modern Food Industries, is also operating with a profit of over Rs 73 lakhs this year.

The Kerala government's industrial plans are evidently bogged down by red tape as in the case of the Small Industries Service Institute. The institute prepares about 100 reports on reserved industries, ten industry prospect sheets and 14 all-India reports. The technical consultancy service of the institute organised three seminars and one open house discussion on "non-destructive testing of castings." Officers of the institute took part in 14 plant-level committee meetings and visited 20 units to "explore the possibilities of further ancillarisation." Yet, in one year, the institute has identified only nine new items for ancillary development at a considerable expense.

The coir industry which employs 4.30 lakh workers is facing a shortage of coconut husks and the decline in demand of coir products. Coconut husks procured last year was about Rs six crores less in value in 1983 and in a desperate effort to better the plight of coir workers, cooperative societies including manufacturing societies have been formed, bringing about 52 per cent of the work force under its wing.

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation is also facing numerous problems. Recently, the government announced the division of the corporation into five sections, but the plans had to be withdrawn a week after the announcement due to a strike threat by transport unions. Successive governments in Kerala have made it a "habit" to nationalise routes without having buses to run on them. In fact, the city transport system in Trivandrum, the state's capital, is so poor that commuters have to wait over two hours each day to reach destinations less than ten kilometres away. However, the novel suggestion by the Congress(I) MLA M.M. Hassan in the Assembly recently to float cooperatives for the unemployed for running buses in the city was not accepted by transport minister Sunderesan Nadar.

Binoo K. John, Trivandrum

STOCK MARKETS

A Post-budget Boom

Bullish trend in share prices

While economists were lauding V.P. Singh for his innovative budget and the chief minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu denouncing it as 'anti-people,' the stock markets all over the country were gearing up for one of the biggest *tijis* seen in recent times. V.P. Singh's budget may have been to the inconvenience of the common man, with the rise in petrol prices but the industrial sector of the country couldn't have hoped for a better budget.

The finance minister's carrot for the industries included an increase in the assets limit for MRTP companies from Rs 20 crores to Rs 100 crores, an increase in the wealth tax exemption limit from Rs one-and-a-half lakhs to Rs two-and a-half lakhs as a cut in the top rate to two per cent, and a reduction by five per cent in the structure of corporate taxation in the country. To top it all, the minister announced that corporate tax the following year would be further reduced by five per cent, while in the third year he proposed to do away with surcharge on income tax payable by companies. Among the other direct incentives, the estate duty and the Compulsory Deposit Scheme (CDS) were abolished.

The budget, in addition, delicensed 25 broad sectors of the industry so that procedural delays were cut to the minimum in sectors where maximum capacity was required. This included electronic equipment, machine tools, leather goods, steel structurals, drugs and drug intermediaries. For the tea industry, the companies concerned were permitted to plough back 20 per cent of their profits for replantation. All these factors were directed at making the Indian industry more competitive and sensing the veering of the economy towards the laissez faire system, the stock markets in the country boomed. The word boom, however, would be an understatement. Most values recorded a rise seldom seen in the life of the market.

What was initially regarded as a budget which "did not carry a thing to promote investment in equity shares of companies and a sore disappointment to marketmen" resulted in an extraordinary strengthening of values. Among the first to respond to the relief accorded to the tea industry—marketmen had anticipated just the reverse—was Tata Tea. Having touched Rs 68.75 at its lowest limit on the eve of the budget on nervous bull liquidation and short selling, the scrip soared to Rs 76 on the very evening the budget was announced. Pivotals were mainly traded in Calcutta that evening and with the exception of Peico Electronics, which climbed from Rs 50 to around Rs 55 within a few hours, few scrip recorded sizable gains immediately.

On 17 March, most scrip began to shake off their lethargy. Tata Tea had by now lifted to Rs 80 on kerb trading, Assam Frontier changed hands around Rs 52, a rise of Rs four, Doom Dooma improved from Rs 67 to Rs 78, while George Williamson strengthened by Rs eight to Rs 84. By the end of the week, more precisely 21 March, the stock markets in Bombay and Calcutta had recorded unprecedented gains. ACC, Rs 411 on the day of the budget, had touched Rs 440, Colgate from Rs 197.50 moved to Rs 244, Indian Organic had advanced from Rs 62 to Rs 71, Ingersoll Rand had progressed from Rs 189 to Rs 221, Reliance Textiles had moved ahead from Rs 143.50 to Rs 165.50, SPIC had climbed from Rs 55.25 to Rs 63.25 and Indrol had shot up from Rs 120 to Rs 161!

In Calcutta, Tata Tea went ahead to touch Rs 90, George Williamson firmed up to Rs 92, Warren Tea shot up from Rs 45 to Rs 66, Peico Electronics touched Rs 64, Lipton India from Rs 29 touched Rs 39, while Hind Motors, denounced previously by speculators, soared from Rs 38.50 to Rs 46 in the post-budget trading. "I have never seen the market move like this," said Shashikant Doshi. 'Thestock market always works in anticipation of the future. The market had responded to the five per cent corporate tax cut of this year and the next year as well. The future of most industries is bright " Doshi felt that the rest of the year would also be bullish.



Hectic activity after the budget

The speculative splurge both in Bombay and Calcutta prompted the stock exchange authorities to modify conditions to curb the runaway rise in values. Initially, the Calcutta Stock Exchange (CSE) authorities forbade speculative transactions in Tata Tea, asking brokers to square up transactions and submit daily accounts of purchases and sales. As a result, the rise in Tata Tea was restrained to Rs 90. Next, the authorities in Calcutta halted trading in 11 other scrip an ' finally froze the entire hand delivery section, asking the brokers to wait before the payments were finally made.

Mr S.L. Bardhan, president of the CSE felt that this runaway trend poses a threat to the technical position of the market. Most marketmen felt that with the entire year's progression being concentrated in a single clearing, most scrip had soared by Rs 10 and 20. Short sellers were reduced to hectic short covering. Coupled with bull support, the market stretched all limits As a result, short sellers yielded some Rs 13 crores (unofficial source) in the process.

Mr Bardhan was of the opinion that this boom was basically due to certain operators from the commodity market who had made quick gains there and capitalised on the stocks boom. Moreover, the bullish interpretation of the budget along with higher advice from Dalal Street lifted pivotals. As a result, the *Business Standard* share price index which was 189.3 on 30 July last year, 192.3 on 28 December and 209 before the budget, shot up to almost 220 on 29 March. 'The market sentiment is exceptionally strong," said Shailesh Bhansali of Stewart and Company in Calcutta. "The extent of speculation is so vast that operators will readily buy 1000 shares of a particular scrip in forward trading but will not venture to pick up delivery of even 100 shares!"

Mudar Patherya, Calcutta

TIBET

A Chinese Takeover

Tibetans are becoming a minority in their own land

Since May 1984, over 60,000 Chinese workers have been brought into Tibet under the new economic programme, a fact that is worrying the 110,000 Tibetan refugees in India, and their emigre-government based in Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh, as it means the reversal of the Chinese policy of 1980. That year Hu Yaobang, the secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had toured Tibet and publicly apologised for its economic backwardness and failure of the Chinese policies. He also promised to withdraw 85 per cent of the Chinese cadres from Tibet. During 1981 and 1982, some Chinese were sent back, but now, the flow appears to have been reversed.

According to sources in China, the new arrivals have replaced about 30,000 Tibetan workers employed by the Lhasa municipality's 16 labour units and the Tibetan workers have been advised to find jobs in villages. About 20,000 Tibetans in other towns like Gartok, Xigatsay and Gyantsey have also been replaced. The Chinese claim that the new arrivals are "technical experts" and "semi-skilled workers" who have come to complete developmental projects in Tibet for which local people are not available. But the refugees do not think so. "How come these new arrivals have dislodged manual Tibetan workers from jobs," ask Tibetan youths.

Refugee sources add that the new settlers are young males who have been promised higher living standards and permanent stay in Tibet by the Chinese authorities if they marry Tibetan women. Tibet watchers feel that it is a part of an overall strategy by Beijing to make Tibetans a minority in their own land. To substantiate their argument, they cite the example of four principal minority groups in China, including the Manchus of Manchuria and the Mongols of Inner Mongolia, who have now been swamped by Chinese Hans in their own lands. In 1950, Chinese settlers formed four per cent of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Now they form 54 per cent of the population.

Till 1950, Tibet an independent country did not have any Han population. The severely cold and dry climate and the absence of roads connecting China to Tibet had made Tibet a remote and difficult land for the Hans. But after the People's Liberation Army (PLA) moved into Tibet in 1950, Beijing began its policy of colonisation of Tibet. First, they divided Tibet into the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and eleven autonomous districts and two autonomous counties severing two-thirds of Tibet. These areas were then merged with Chinese provinces. "The bulk of Tibet has statistically vanished, making the remainder (TAR) seem small and insignificant," says Tenzin Lhundup, an expert on Tibetan affairs.

During the last 30 years, the erstwhile south-eastern and north-eastern districts of Tibet which have



Dalai Lama

been merged into the provinces of Sichuan and Chinghai, are being repopulated by Hans. So is TAR (U-Tsang, as the refugees call it), where about half a million Chinese civilians (three times the number of Tibetans) now live There are also half a million PLA troops stationed in Tibet.

The refugees are alarmed at the large scale arrests of Tibetans in TAR. Even Amnesty International (AI) in its September 1984 report has discussed the prisoners of conscience detained in Tibet. These include: "Tibetan nationals detained on religious grounds or accused of supporting regional independence, people arrested at various times for showing loyalty to the exiled spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, the Dalai Lama, and other peaceful activities" in Tibet. Refugee sources say that over 100,000 Tibetan political prisoners are incarcerated in 17 major and numerous lesser or district level prisons. Tenzin Lhundup claims that Amdo (now Chinghai) houses China's largest network of prison camps, with over ten million inmates.

While the Chinese are going about with the colonisation of Tibet, they have also initiated a dialogue with 50-year-old Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatsho, about his return and also of the Tibetan refugees to Tibet. Besides three fact-finding missions from Dharamsala to Tibet in 1979 and 1980, two delegations of the Dalai Lama also visited Beijing in 1982 and 1984 for talks. Both of them have met with no success. In fact, the 1984 delegation was humiliated in Beijing because the Chinese publicised to the press the five conditions they have set for the Dalai Lama's return, before discussing them with it. The Chinese said that the Dalai Lama was welcome to visit Tibet or settle down in China "to promote unity between the Han and Tibetan nationalities." But he would have to accept Chinese rule over Tibet, live in Beijing except for occasional visits. In return, he would be nominated as one of the 22 vice-chairmen of the National People's Congress, (the Parliament of China) like the Panchen Lama, who has been staying in Beijing since 1979.

The Dalai Lama says that Tibet is geographically, racially, culturally and historically different from China and has never been an integral part of China. However, the Chinese leaders disagree. "It will never do for anyone to play with the idea of an independent Tibet," told Yang Jingren, head of the United Front Work Department of the CCP, to the Dalai Lama's 1984 delegation. The Tibetan refugees are genuinely worried about the deliberate attempts by the Chinese to settle Han people in Tibet. The refugees fear that if colonisation goes on unchecked for another two or three decades, the Tibetans would not only become a minority but also politically insignificant.

The only thing which may slow down the colonisation of Tibet, is the harsh climate to which Hans adjust with great difficulty. The high cost of living and lack of modern facilities, especially in rural areas are other discouraging factors. The worst problem is the hostile attitude of Tibetans towards Hans. Despite 30 years of Chinese presence in Tibet, the local population rarely mix with the Hans.

A.J. Singh, Dharamsala

MALAYSIA

On the Road to Prosperity

But racial tensions are causing problems

Prime Minister Datuk Mahathir Mohammed may not have the overpowering magnetism of Tunku Abdul Rahaman, the builder of modern Malaysia, but he does have a certain amount of charisma. Malaysians fondly remember him to be the man who led the Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition to a runaway victory in the 1982 general elections and brought economic prosperity to the country.

The Mahathir government has kept the economy afloat by increasing the exports of its rich natural resources like tin, rubber, palm oil, timber and by producing enough petroleum to meet its internal requirements. With its per capita income of $2,000, Malaysia's standard of living is higher than any other South or South-East Asian country apart from Singapore. According to economists, the standard of living in Malaysia has not only been rising but also rising equably. There are indications that by the time the fourth Malaysian economic plan is complete, the economy will register a growth rate of 6.7 per cent and will be poised for a great leap forward.

But the government continues to face a number of problems. It is imperative that the country should have peace and stability in order to continue the economic revival and for that close cooperation between the three major constituents of the ruling coalition—the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), Malay Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malay Indian Congress (MIC)—is necessary. Unless this can be ensured, emphasises Mahathir, who is also the president of the UMNO, the dominant partner in the ruling front, the ambitious development plans of the government will not succeed.

But the UMNO's allies, notably the MCA, have been affected by inner-party bickerings which have prompted the deputy Prime Minister Musa Hitam to state that the MCA would do well to "opt out of the Barisan (the ruling national front)" for a while and utilise the time to clear its internal problems. The national front leadership feel that if the MCA fails to come to terms with itself, it is likely to affect the ruling alliance and help the opposition parties—the fundamentalist Islam Sa-Malaysia



Datuk Mahathir Mohammed

(Pas) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP). The DAP enjoys the support of a large portion of the ethnic Chinese who comprise 36 per cent of the country's population of 15.2 million.

The suggestion by the deputy Prime Minister reflects the government's concern for maintaining the country's delicately balanced multi-racial political structure. The government has obviously not forgotten the lesson Malaysia had of the communist insurgency supported by the Chinese or the 1969 race-riots, the worst in the country's history. The Malaysian Communist Party (MCP) remains active, particularly along the Thailand-Malaysia border areas and ethnic tensions in the country though below the surface, continue to simmer.

What has alarmed the Malaysian government is China's financial assistance to the MCP. As the Prime Minister said during his visit to Australia last August, "China has failed to withdraw its political support to the various insurgent movements in South-East Asia including the Malaysian Communist Party whose membership is predominantly ethnic Chinese." This explains why the government is concerned about the MCA's continued infighting as every supporter the MCA loses to the DAP and the MCP could be a potential source of trouble.

Bhola Chatterjee, Calcutta

UNITED KINGDOM

A Plot to Kill Rajiv Gandhi?

Jagjit Singh Chauhan denies the Blitz report

Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the self styled "President" of the "Republic of Khalistan" emerged recently in the garb of a man of peace. In a specially summoned press conference in London he gave a clear message of "peace and brotherhood" to "my people." But the literature he distributed at the press conference left no doubt of his intentions to carry on anti-Indian propaganda in this country, thanks to the licence given to him for the purpose by the British government.

The immediate purpose of the press conference was Dr Chauhan's intention to refute an article in *Blitz* on 9 March which warned of an alleged plot to kill Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in Paris. Dr Chauhan said, "The report in *Blitz* on 9 March is a total fabrication. I stand for the sovereign entity of the Sikh nation which the Indian government finds inconvenient. Therefore I am branded a terrorist...It is well known that I am a pacifist and disapprove of violence. I want to place on record a categorical denial that there is any plot hatched in Khalistan House to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi during his tour or at any other time or for that matter to assassinate anybody else."

Jagjit Singh Chauhan



Observers present at the press conference felt that Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan had called the meeting, only because of the pressure put on him by the British government.

Peter Pandey, London

Kapoor's Latest Dimension

Nothing about the Raj Kapoor clan, the girth included, can be one-dimensional. Ritu Nanda of Niky Tasha fame does not go in for simple televisions. The one she launched, with Papa Kapoor, looking like a benign godfather at her side, in late March is 3-D, priced at Rs 9,300 with four pairs of glasses, one lens green, the other red. The 3-D television was duly garlanded and a *tilak* was put on it. Raj Kapoor said in his vote of thanks that India had two sacred rivers: the Ganga and the Jamuna and that he hoped the tributary of his family, his Ritu, would flow on smoothly and do good work. Kapoor has obviously forgotten his *Sangam*.



Ritu Nanda (centre), managing director of Niky Tasha with her father Raj Kapoor (left) and Hasso Hoffman (right), at the launching of the company's 3-D television in New Delhi

Ritu's new television requires a third angle—the 3-D technology has been provided by a West German firm, Abdy, whose chairman Hasso Hoffman was present at the launching. India is the first country outside West Germany to acquire this technology.

Media Watcher Extraordinary

The death of Iqbal Malik, 64, the noted media critic will create quite a vacuum in the critics' circle. A former deputy director general of Doordarshan, Malik kept the official dispensers of information and entertainment on their toes with his incisive pen. Seldom one to mince words, Malik had recently become quite a severe critic of Doordarshan, knowing as he did the scene from inside that red brick building in New Delhi. He set up the first TV training school in the country. His demise will be a loss to his wife, Amita Malik, herself a noted critic.

Dance of Life

Chandralekha with her startling white hair and her haunting, beautiful face is herself a celebration of life. The danseuse extraordinary who captivated Europe with partner Adonis—like partner Kama Dev some years ago—stunned audiences in Bombay with her 'Angika' recently. Conceived, choreographed and directed by her, 'Angika' puts the body and innovation back into the centre of the dance. Since her return to the dance stage last year, after dabbling in various things in the meantime, Chandralekha has in the world of dance created quite a stir by stripping Bharatnatyam of the merely decorative or ornamental and zeroing in on the essence and the essential. It is, as she says, "dance divested of esoteric, idealised, sublimated, exclusive notions of origin and reinterpreted in terms of the poetry and power in the bodies of men and women." Chandralekha gives us the traditions of dance and the body language in India—and a song of the self in all the Whitmanesque sweep and verve.


Chandralekha

Understanding India

Playing Holi in Vrindavan can lead to colourful encounters. Moira Moynihan, the effervescent daughter of former US envoy to India, Daniel Patrick Moynihan was like a giggling rainbow in Vrindavan during Holi when she came across Rajiv Sethi, the festival man who has exported movable *melas* in the past. Mrs Moynihan is now the special assistant to Sethi for the Folk-Life Festival which will be held in the foyer outside the venerable Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC this fall. Inside, there will be Aditi, a celebration of life *a la Indienne*. There is even an organisation called Friends of Aditi Society in the US which has as its members Mrs Moynihan and Mrs Shankar Bajpai, wife of the Indian envoy to Washington DC.

Another Ascent

New Zealand could not have sent a better man than Sir Edmund Hillary to New Delhi to break the ice: New Zealand closed down its High Commission in India three years ago for reasons said to be economic. Muldoon, the previous Prime Minister, blew hot and cold and Sir Edmund will be the first High Commissioner after the interlude. This man of the mountains who was the first along with Tenzing Norgay to scale the summit of the Everest is a familiar and well-loved face in the country having returned a number of times—whether it is to lead expeditions down the Ganga on rafts or visit friends or one of his favourite cities, Calcutta.


Edmund Hillary

This is also the mountaineer diplomat's first regular job, beekeeping and farming were previous preoccupations. Among Hillary's priorities is to increase the trade between the two countries, not forgetting the human factor.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA

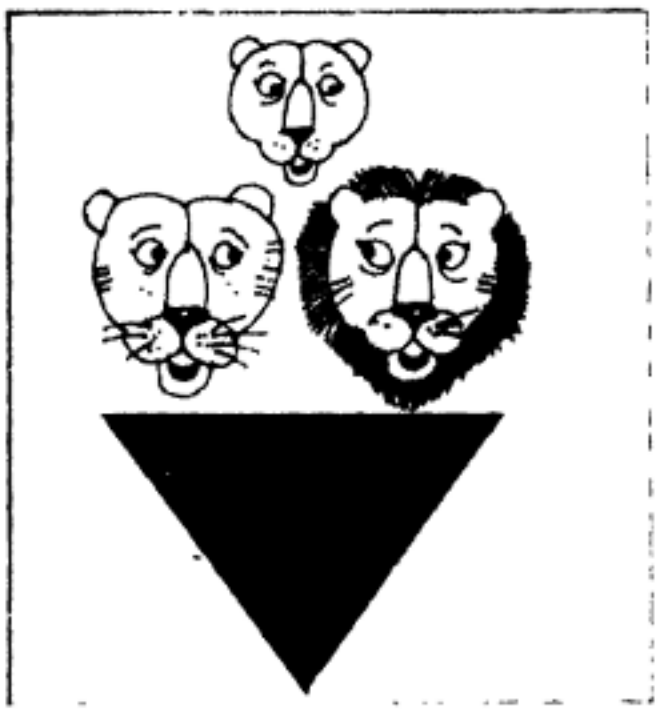


Illustration: Debashis Deb

BANGALORE: Lions at the Banerghatta National Park near here will undergo vasectomy to prevent deformities in the progeny caused in breeding. According to Mr K.M.K. Appayya, chief wildlife warden, the park had obtained nine lions from the Mysore zoo of which three died. Inbreeding among the lions—a mixture of African and Indian breeds—had caused deformities and some cubs were born crippled, he said. Attempts to secure other lions from zoos in exchange for those at the park also proved futile—*The Searchlight* (K.P. Roy, Patna)

JAMMU: Jagdish Chander of Aligarh has chosen an unusual way of pilgrimage to Vaishnodevi. He crawls his way to the holy shrine. By the time he entered this holy city on 9 March, he had crawled 1,400 km, taking 15 months to do it—*The Times of India* (Hardeep Singh Gill, Chandigarh)

TIRUPATI: A Hyderabad-based Muslim business magnate recently offered to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams 108 flowers made of gold foils worth over Rs five lakhs with a request to use them for Lord Venkateswara at the time of *archana*. Accordingly the temple authorities are using them every Tuesday at the time of the *Ashtoththara Nama Archana*, an early morning ritual—*The Hindu* (S. Jayaraman, Thanjavur)

RAMANATHAPURAM: The Ramanathapuram district collector, S. Gurumurthi, who has been confronted with the problems created by the unprecedented influx of the Sri Lankan Tamils, has been called upon to perform the functions of a "marriage broker." Talking to newsmen here on 8 March, he said he had received a letter recently from a young Malaysian businessman, expressing his desire to marry any one of the refugee girls who had reached India. The 28-year old businessman, Mohan, had left the selection of a bride to Mr Gurumurthi's choice—*The Times of India* (D.N Rajan, Kalwa)

BOMBAY: If the business of insurance is all about protecting man from the acts of God, the Indian insurance industry is one up on its counterparts elsewhere: it is indemnifying the Lord's property against the acts of man. The temple of Lord Venkateswara atop the hill at Tirumalai in Andhra Pradesh is fully insured for a "few crores" of rupees by the United India Assurance Company. The Tirumalai Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) which administers the temple property, has also insured the jewellery on the idols against theft—*Business Standard* (R. K. Jaisansaria, Calcutta).

RAJKOT: Not a single vote was cast at Ribda booth of Gondal Assembly constituency in Rajkot district. The district collector, Mr Devendra Kumar Sikri, said that no one exercised his franchise—*Indian Express* (Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, Dehra Dun)

CALCUTTA: After nearly 26 years a suit, filed in Calcutta High Court on 28 May 1959, came up for hearing on 12 March. The plaintiff, Mr Dhiraj Ghosh, prayed for a declaration that he was still in class I service of the central government and that the order of termination of his services was illegal. Mr Ghosh was the regional tourist officer, posted in Calcutta, when his services were terminated on 26 September 1955. He was to have retired from the service in March 1967—*The Statesman* (Arun Gupta, Calcutta)

NAGPUR: A former Class IV employee and a minister's chauffeur will be among the new legislators taking oath as members of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly later this month (March). Mr Harish More (Cong-S), who was elected from the Tiroda (reserved) constituency in Bhandara district, was until recently a Class IV government servant filling overhead water tanks at the MLA hostels here. A warm welcome awaits him from his former colleagues when he comes to stay in that hostel as an MLA. Mr Ramdas Gaikwad (Cong), who won from Akola, was a chauffeur of the state minister, Mr Ajhar Hussain, who did not get the party ticket this time. Mr Hussain not only proposed Mr Gaikwad's name in the nomination papers but sat in the driver's seat to campaign for his former driver—*The Times of India* (S. K. Sinha, Delhi)

WITHOUT COMMENT

I feel the finance minister is like a punching bag. At the first sight, there is an instinctive desire to give him a punch—V.P. Singh, union finance minister, in *The Telegraph*

I don't understand his English. Possibly he (Rajiv Gandhi) knows better since he had studied in Cambridge—Jyoti Basu, on Rajiv Gandhi's statement that the CPI(M) was exploiting Calcutta

I tell you, it's a good competition, healthy competition Whoever wins, will have no grouse but the competition should continue—Ramakrishna Hegde, on the competition between the two 'Mr Cleans,' Rajiv Gandhi and himself, in *Current*

Opposition politics is a hard thing. It requires great patience and endurance—Chandra Shekhar in *Asiaweek*

Comrades, this man (Gorbachev) has a nice smile, but he's got iron teeth—Andrei Gromyko, speaking to members of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee on 11 March, in *The International Herald Tribune*

It's only in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh that elections tend to be noisy affairs. Maybe because we are such noisy people—Zia-ul Haq in *Probe India*



As First Lady I'm an accident—an accident of being married to the President—Imelda Marcos, wife of President Marcos of the Phillipines, in *Asiaweek*

How shall I compare my experience in Calcutta...it is like Saul's journey through Damascus. My eyes opened in India and I realised in what terrible, frightful circumstances we are living—Gunter Grass in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

BEGINNING 7 APRIL 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a lucky week for most of you Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress Sportsmen and creative artists will also prosper during this phase The domestic front will remain peaceful. The phase is also favourable for marriage negotiations However, your financial prospects are not so bright Your health will add to your worries this week Legal problems pertaining to property will bother you

Good dates: 8, 10 and 12
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Those above the age of 35 years should keep a vigilant eye on their health. Businessmen should be wary of deception while professionals should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Your financial prospects, however, will brighten but avoid extravagance Social engagements will keep you busy during the weekend. Those above the age of 45 should be careful of their health and diet.

Good dates: 7, 9 and 4
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a week of mixed fortunes. At home someone close to you may misunderstand you Students are advised not to fritter away precious time Financially this is not a good week and businessmen in particular should avoid risky financial deals However, this is a favourable phase for professionals: a promotion or a posting to a place of your choice cannot be ruled out. Your health will improve

Good dates: 9, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Success in all your ventures is a certainty for most of you this week. A job is in the offing for those unemployed. A promotion cannot be ruled out for those employed Businessmen should make the most out of this lucky period. This is also the ideal time to get married. Parties will keep you busy during the weekend but do not overstrain yourself Your health will also improve markedly A pleasant surprise is in store for most of you this week.

Good dates: 7, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North



LEO (15 August—14 September) Professionals are advised to refrain from taking hasty decisions regarding their career. Do not lose your temper and deal with those at home sympathetically Social engagements will keep you busy during the weekend but do not mix business with pleasure. Lovers will find this period favourable Your health will also improve markedly but do not neglect your diet Your financial prospects will look up this week.

Good dates: 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Friends and relatives will be very helpful to you. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business Those unemployed are likely to get jobs. A promotion cannot be ruled out for those employed in the public sector This is also a good period for marriage negotiations A letter will bring good tidings But do not neglect your health or diet Avoid unnecessary arguments with those at home.

Good dates: 9, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is an excellent week for those in love go ahead with marriage plans Creative artists will also find this period favourable Your financial prospects look bright but try and save something for the rainy days At home your children and relatives will keep you happy If you have legal problems pursue them during this period Watch your health closely and consult a doctor at the slightest indication of discomfort.

Good dates: 11, 12 and 13
Lucky numbers: 6, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



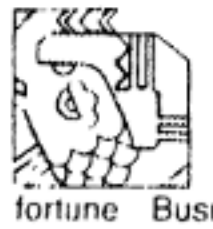
SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A domestic upheaval may cause anxiety but deal with those at home diplomatically. Your expectations will not materialise but do not get depressed as things will brighten up soon However a sudden stroke of fortune will enable you to repay most of your debts. This is the right phase to materialise marriage plans. Your health will also improve markedly. A letter will bring pleasant surprise towards the end of the week.

Good dates: 10, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 6, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) The stars shine brightly on all your efforts this week Push your business and professional interests to the utmost. A letter towards the middle of the week will bring pleasant surprise. At home your wife and children will be a source of joy to you Your financial prospects are also bright. A pleasure trip will prove financially profitable This is also a good period for love and marriage negotiations

Good dates: 7, 9 and 12
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: West



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) An eventful week lies ahead of you You will gain money or property through a sudden stroke of fortune Businessmen will bag lucrative contracts while professionals will earn the praise of their superiors. Disputes relating to property will be solved amicably in your favour This is the ideal time to get married. Your health will also improve A pleasure trip which you were looking forward to is in the offing

Good dates: 8, 10 and 13
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) From the financial point of view this is not a good week The domestic front will also bother you. Speculative ventures will not yield favourable results However, there is good news for those employed in government concerns a promotion or a posting to a better place is in the offing. This is also a favourable phase for courtship and marriage negotiations. A pleasure trip will prove financially profitable.

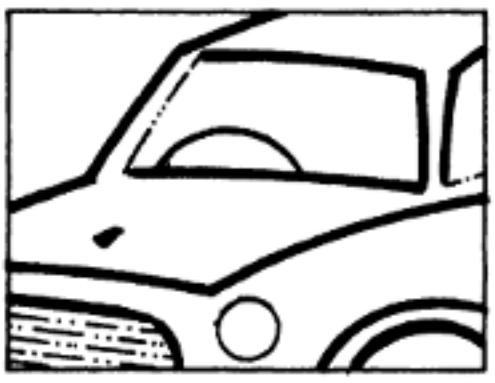
Good dates: 9, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 8
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Do not take any crucial decisions this week. Professionals are advised to be tactful while dealing with their superiors. Businessmen should be wary of deception Lovers are advised to postpone marriage plans. Financially this is a bleak period and you may have to borrow money to tide over this phase. However, those unemployed are likely to find jobs. Your health is likely to improve but do not neglect your diet.

Good dates: 10, 12 and 13
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 9
Favourable direction: West

Older Motorists: A Problem?



Are older motorists a greater danger to other road-users than younger men and women at the wheel? In West Germany, traffic experts are increasingly feeling that older road-users could prove a growing problem: they are more accident-prone than the average. The Americans, for instance, have found that women drivers, over 75 in particular, cause quite a number of accidents. And eye-specialists feel that more elderly people ought to be banned from driving at dusk or in the dark. Statistics show that 11 per cent of people in their 50s, 27 per cent of people in their 60s and 34 per cent of those over 70 cannot see properly at night. A Volkswagen survey states that 58 per cent of motorists over 50 are mistakenly convinced their sight is all right.

Experts say there are also typical mistakes old people make, especially when changing lanes, turning corners or respecting right of way. They attribute these mistakes to muscle trouble; older people being less able to turn round and proverbially stubborn. However, Olaf Kiesewetter, West German lawyer and traffic offence specialist, does not think so. "Motorists young and old make the same mistakes." He feels that accidents could be cut down by making older drivers feel relaxed at the wheel. Motoring magazines, he says, could do useful work in keeping older drivers in touch with the latest developments: for instance, publishing more articles on subjects such as new road signs.

Sing and Whistle While You Work



Singing and whistling are among the cures for boredom at work, according to a report of the Bavarian government. The report says that people are often not used to their full capacity because of the repetitive nature of their work. As a result, their mental capabilities begin to atrophy. Monotony, it says, causes the heart to beat irregularly, the pulse rate to slow, and less oxygen is taken in. Signals are not seen, reaction times are slow, performance declines, and accidents happen. The report does not find any evidence to prove the widely-held theory that women and less-intelligent people are better able to tolerate tedious work. Work using the newest of technology is also prone to boredom.

Now the Bavarian government is distributing free to more than 3,000 firms a brochure with suggestions for alleviating boredom. They include changing work, more communication through group work, physical movement and more short breaks instead of fewer, longer ones. Another suggestion that is being developed by psychologist Bartenwerfer, who compiled the report, is using a variation of the Sony Walkman idea so that employees can listen to music of their own choice during the day and at the same time hear essential work sounds such as colleagues calling and danger signals. In isolated cases, he also thinks that singing or whistling might help.

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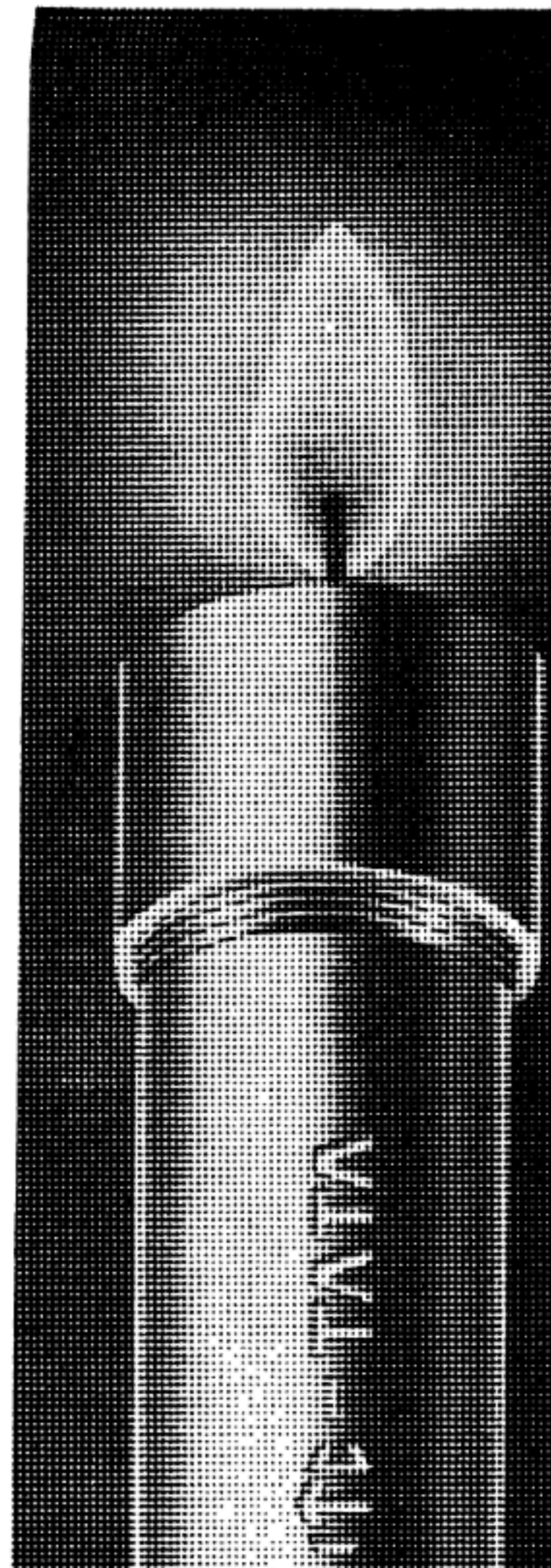
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VARIETY

CHESS

There cannot be many fields of activity in which the Icelandic championship is news, but chess is one. The young Icelandic players have built up a wholly deserved reputation over the last few years. Leading the campaign has been 21-year-old Johann Hjartarson, whose victory in the 1984 championship came as no surprise and who promises to become one of the leading players in Europe. I can think of few players of his age capable of producing a game of the class and maturity of the one below.

His opponent incidentally is Helgi Olafsson, another of the rising stars, not to be confused with Fridrik Olafsson, grandmaster and ex-FIDE president. There are a large number of Olafssons in Iceland, mainly due to the large number of Olafs.

White: J. Hjartarson. Black: H. Olafsson. English Opening.

1 N–KB3	N–KB3	2 P–B4	P–B4
3 N–B3	P–K3	4 P–KN3	N–B3
5 B–N2	P–Q4	6 PxP	NxP
7 0–0	B–K2	8 P–Q4	0–0
9 P–K4	N–N3		

H. Olafsson (Black)



Hjartarson to move. (White)

This whole variation has become a Scandinavian speciality. Black generates a lot of piece play, but Hjartarson demonstrates impressively the inherent power of White's centre.

10 P–Q5	PxP	11 PxP	N–N5
12 N–K5	B–B3	13 P–B4	B–B4
14 P–QR3	N–B7	15 R–R2	N–Q5

Black appears to be doing very well, but a series of powerful blows now destroy the well-manicured image of his position.

16 P–QN4!	Q–B2	17 B–K3	PxP
18 N–K4!	B(B4)xN	19 BxB	N–N4
20 Q–Q3	Q–B6	21 BxP+	K–R1

DIAGRAM

22 BxN!	PxB	23 Q–B5!	BxN

24 Q–R5!

The transformation from move 15 is amazing. Moreover, what did Black do wrong?

24 . . .	B–Q5+	25 K–N2	P–N3
26 BxP+	K–N2	27 Q–R7+	K–B3

28 R–K2!

Elegantly introducing his last piece. If 28 . . . PxB 29 R–K6+, while the threat is BxP followed by R–K6+.

28 . . .	Q–B5	29 Q–R5	K–N2
30 R–K7	N–Q3	31 Q–N4	K–R1

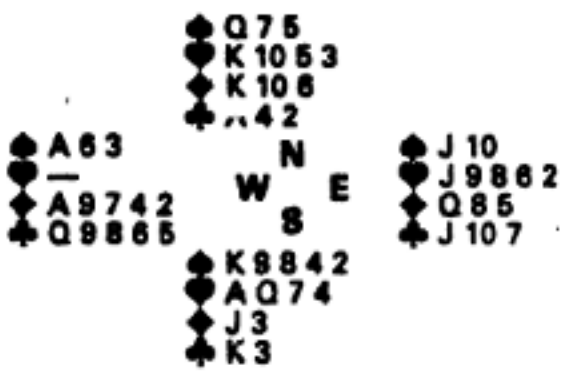
32 Q–N5! Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

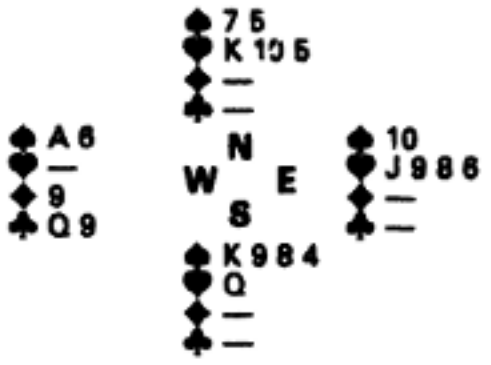
The eventual finalists in the women's section of the Olympiad, Britain and the US, met in the first qualifying round. Most of the luck went America's way, but the British scored a notable success on this deal:

Dealer East Love all



The British East-West defended in Four Clubs doubled, losing 300. Sally Horton (previously Sowter) and Sandra Landy reached Four Hearts on the North-South cards. West led the ace of diamonds and switched to a club. Prospects (to the Vugraph audience) looked poor for the declarer, who had been very unlucky in an earlier slam. However, the play went:
♦ A, ♣ A, heart to ace; ♣ K, spade to queen, club ruff; diamond to the king and diamond ruff, leaving:





South, who had made seven tricks, cashed ♥ Q, then exited with a spade, and was assured of two more.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. How is Kalaatilit Nunaat, a large island in the northern hemisphere better known as?
2. In computer terminology, what is a bootstrap?
3. The first "concentration camps" were begun by the British in the 1900s. Where and for whom?
4. In Egyptian mythology, who is the jackal-headed god of funerals and mummification?
5. What is the equivalent rank of an army brigadier in the Indian Navy?
6. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India. Which is the second most populous state?
7. What does the term "to send to Coventry" mean?
8. Gumshields are worn by persons participating in which sport?
9. Which county is known as the Garden of England?
10. The most populous "urban agglomeration" in the world is the Keihen metropolitan area. Which two major cities does it consist of?
11. Name the most expensive feature film ever made?
12. The lightest known element is hydrogen. What is the lightest metal?
13. In football, what is a banana kick?

ANSWERS

1. Greenland.
2. The programme or set of commands that get a computer moving into action.
3. In South Africa by Lord Kitchener for the Boer civilians.
4. Anubis.
5. Commodore.
6. Bihar.
7. To disregard someone completely.
8. Boxing.
9. Kent.
10. Tokyo and Yokohama.
11. *Star Trek*, a Paramount production, directed by Robert Wise and released in 1979 it cost 46 million dollars to make.
12. Lithium
13. A kick where the ball swerves through the air.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

What's in a Word

TWINE		PAIN, SHORT & SHARP
HAVE		PULL HARD
SPUN		TREAT WITH CONTEMPT
HERS		FLAVOURFUL PLANTS
PLOT		STEER
EARN		ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE

?? □□□□□□

Add a letter to each of the words with the help of the clues alongside. The six letters added will provide you with a creature that can be a pet.

Quick Think

Twenty people in a gathering of 36 have black hair, the rest grey hair. 24 of the group do not wear spectacles and of those who do, 7 have grey hair. How many of those who do not wear spectacles have grey hair and how many have black hair?

Scrambles

STONE □□□□□○

RILED □□□□□○

ADDER □□□○□

HATRED □□□□□○

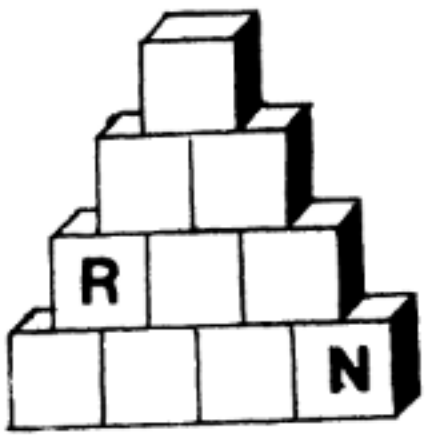
POSER ○□□□□

ANSWER: ○○○○○○



Unscramble the words given. Then rearrange the circled letters to form something pointed.

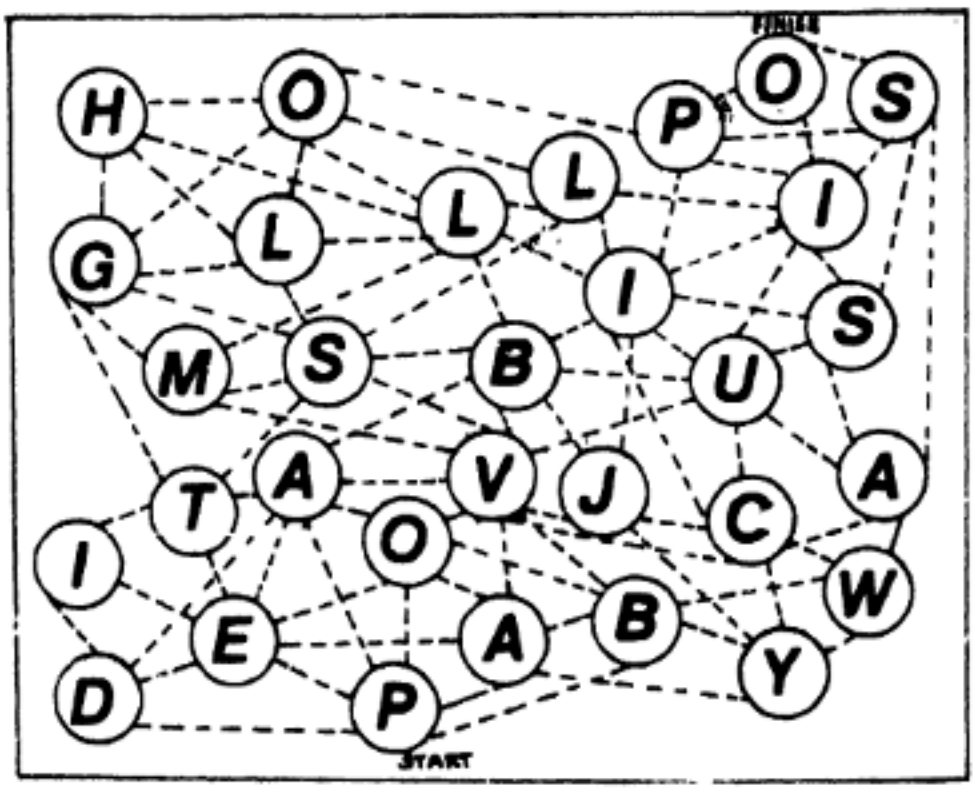
Blockbuster



E,P,N,L,A,U,I,R,L,L

Fit the ten letters given above into the pyramid so that they form eight four-letter words reading downwards. Two letters have already been placed in order to give you a start.

Personality Plus



The name of a famous person can be spelt out in the maze above by proceeding from the start and moving on to the adjacent letters, without backtracking. The clues given below may help. Can you name the person?

1. The son of a drawing master, this personality took his mother's maiden name.
2. He was born in Spain but lived in France.
3. Apart from his main activity, he practised sculpture, illustrated books and designed pottery.
4. He and a fellow artist initiated a new school of painting.
5. He had a blue period which was followed by a rose period

Give yourself points according to the chart:

Without any clue and within a minute	30
Without any clue and over a minute	26—29
With first clue	21—25
With second clue	16—20
Third clue	11—15
Fourth clue	6—10
Fifth clue	1—5

Blankagrams

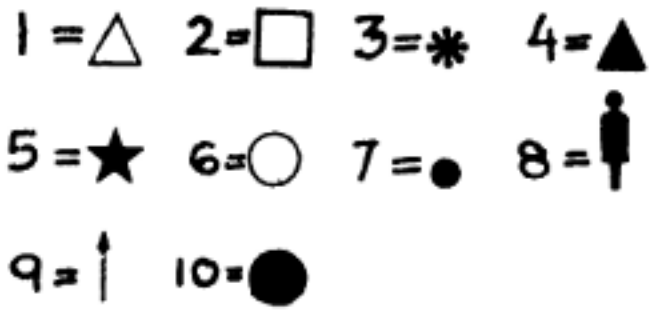
Your job is to provide the missing questions to the answers below.
For example, the question to answer No. 1 could be: "When was the last leap year?"

1. 1984, when February had 29 days."
2. "Waltzing Matilda."
3. "Yes, sir, yes, sir, three bags full!"
4. "21st—27th October, 1984."
5. "Terms of Endearment."
6. "Upstairs and downstairs, in my lady's chamber."

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Quizzbizz: The score represents the place value of the letter used in the word twice.
SYMBOLS: S = 19; O = 15; ADVERTISING: I = 9; QUIZZ: Z = 26.

Figure it Out:

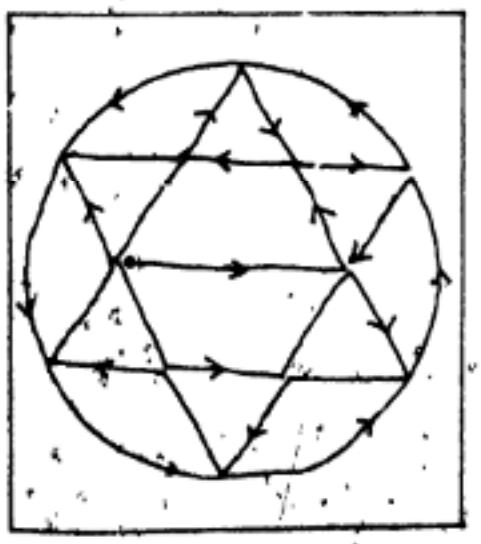



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        125
   ------
7618 ) 956789
       7618
       -----
       19498
       15236
       -----
        42629
        38090
        -----
         4539
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What's in a Word: Peanut, Brittle: Chocolate, Cream.

Quick Think: Dandelion; one possible pair: Nailed, Nod.

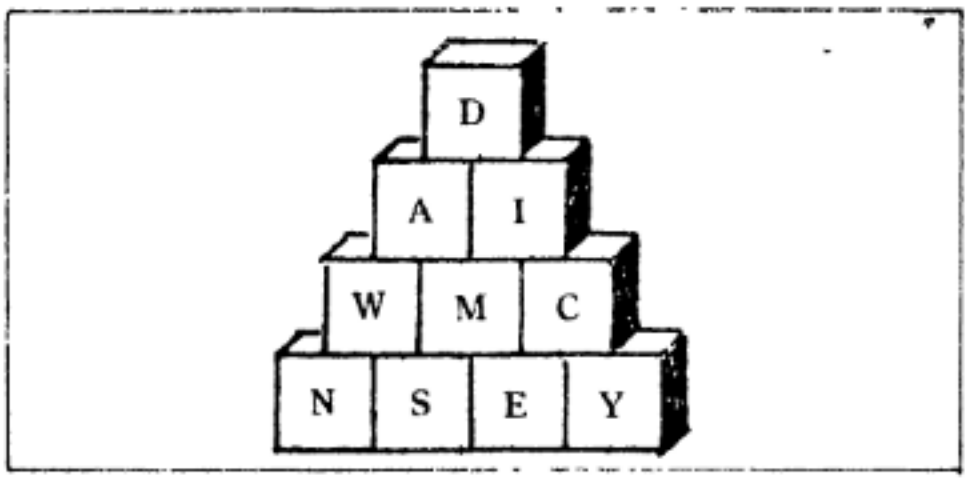
Shape Sleuth:



Mindbender:

	1	9	1	4	
2	3	8	2	2	6
1	2	7	3	6	0
3	1	8	4	7	7
2	4	9	5	8	8
9	5	2	7	9	1

Blockbuster:



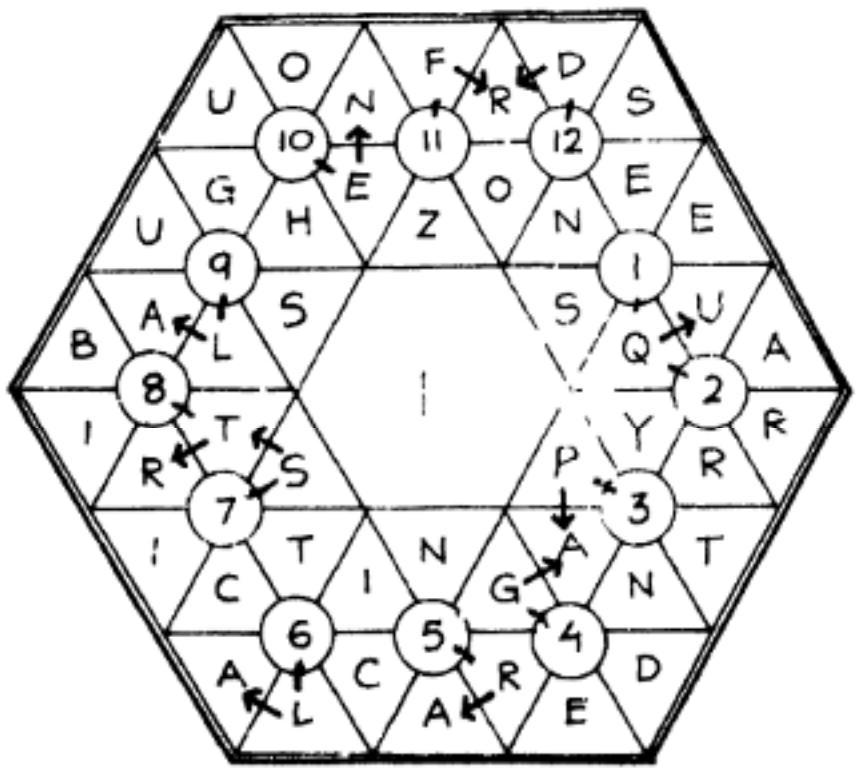
Dawn, Daws, Dams, Dame, Dims, Dime, Dice, Dicy

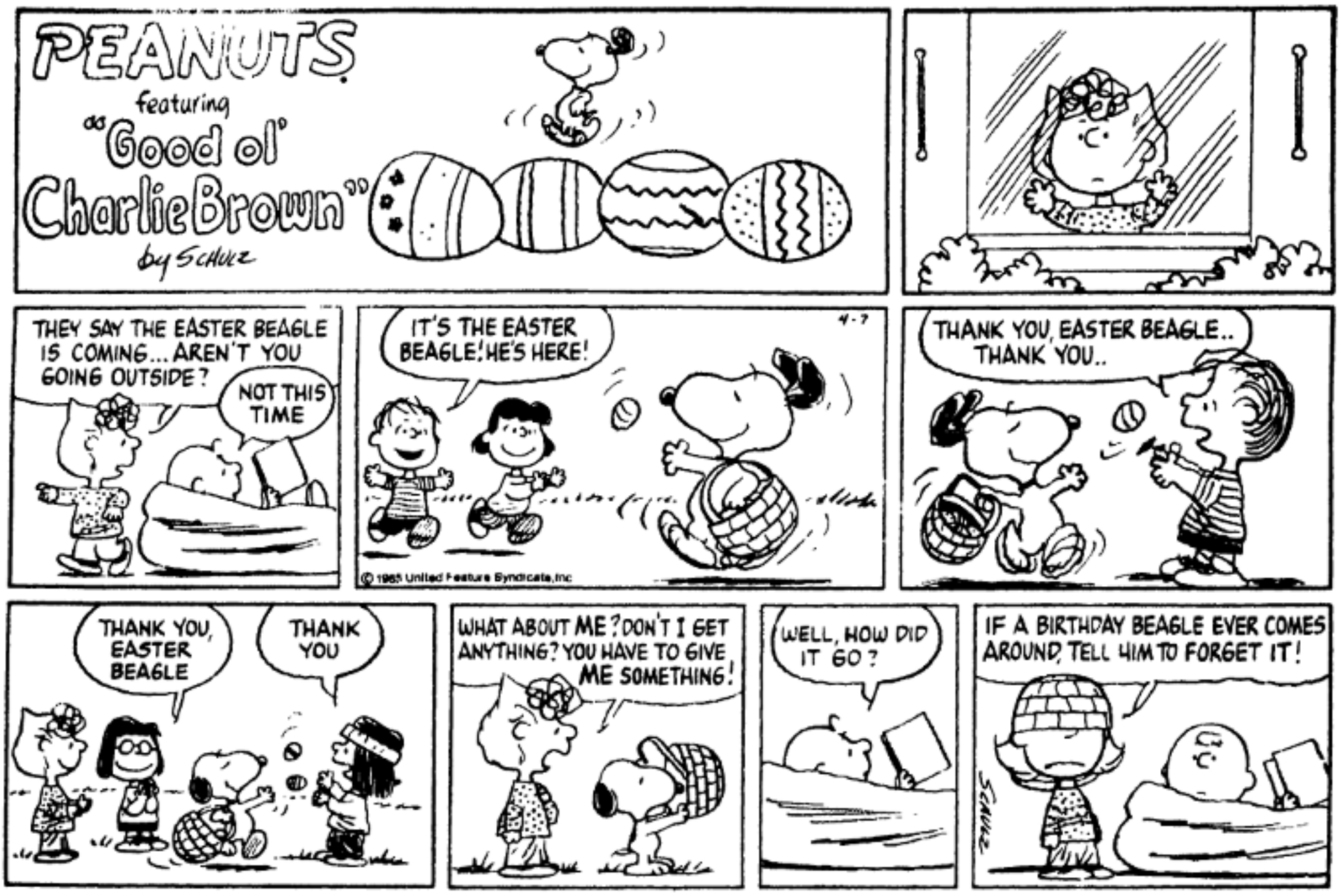
Word Power:

Word	Letter substituted
Aroused	
Squared	Q
Quartes	T
Natures	N
Parents	P
Garnets	G
Staring	I
Orating	O
Roaring	R
Jarring	J
Rearing	E
Aligner	L
Avering	V
Fearing	F
Reaming	M
Bearing	B
Brazing	Z
Barking	K
Bracing	C
Carding	D
Scaring	S
Garnish	H
Rushing	U
Sharing	A
Washing	W
Waxings	X
Swaying	Y

Our score: 7 X 26 substitutes=182

Word Play:





SCIENCE

A Wordy Processor

The word processors of the future will do more than save time in the typing pool. Computer manufacturers, software houses and publishers are working towards computer programmes which will help you not only to type and reproduce a document, but to compose it as well.

Most popular word-processing programmes now come with in-built dictionaries. When a document has been typed, the operator can check the work against the dictionary and any unfamiliar words (usually misspellings or proper names) are highlighted. The dictionary can be added to.

Wang, an American computer company, has gone one stage farther. During the past two years it has bought electronic reproduction rights to some of the world's best known reference books: the *Random House Dictionary* and *Thesaurus*, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, *Roget's Thesaurus* and big dictionaries from leading French and German publishers. It plans to provide the user with several buttons—labelled, say, "dictionary", "thesaurus", "French", and "German"—which will produce, respectively, a definition, a range of synonyms, or foreign language translations for a particular word or phrase. In 1985, Wang will launch the first of a range of products which blend reference-book publishing with office automation.

IBM is also getting into the act. It is involved in a project to update the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the largest books in the world. This effort will open up new possibilities for linguistic and historical research, but so many of the words it contains are obsolete or obscure that it is unlikely to help the humble office clerk. Wang, IBM and others are also looking at methods for rendering linguistic data bases "interactive" in ways which books can never be. This may lead, for example, to the translation of technical documents and the "filling in" of papers from tersely worded outlines.

An obvious limitation of the pure electronic dictionary or thesaurus is that the reference "book" deals only with the meanings of words or phrases. Most stylistic errors have nothing to do with lexicons. But ambitious plans are under way to develop "style-critiquing" software—an ugly word for programmes which offer alternatives to stylistically awkward passages.

Wang is developing several style and usage works, including the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Fowler's Usage*. Programmes derived from these books will catch archaic expressions, trite, wordy or commonly misused phrases and certain sorts of punctuation and simple grammar. They will also do a stylistic analysis on a whole document, by finding out the average length of the sentences and checking the level of vocabulary. If the document is very elaborate the computer might say "you will need a PhD in linguistics to understand this;" if the writing is simple it might say "your boss should understand this."

By arrangement with The Economist



Vijayeta Pandit : certain of success

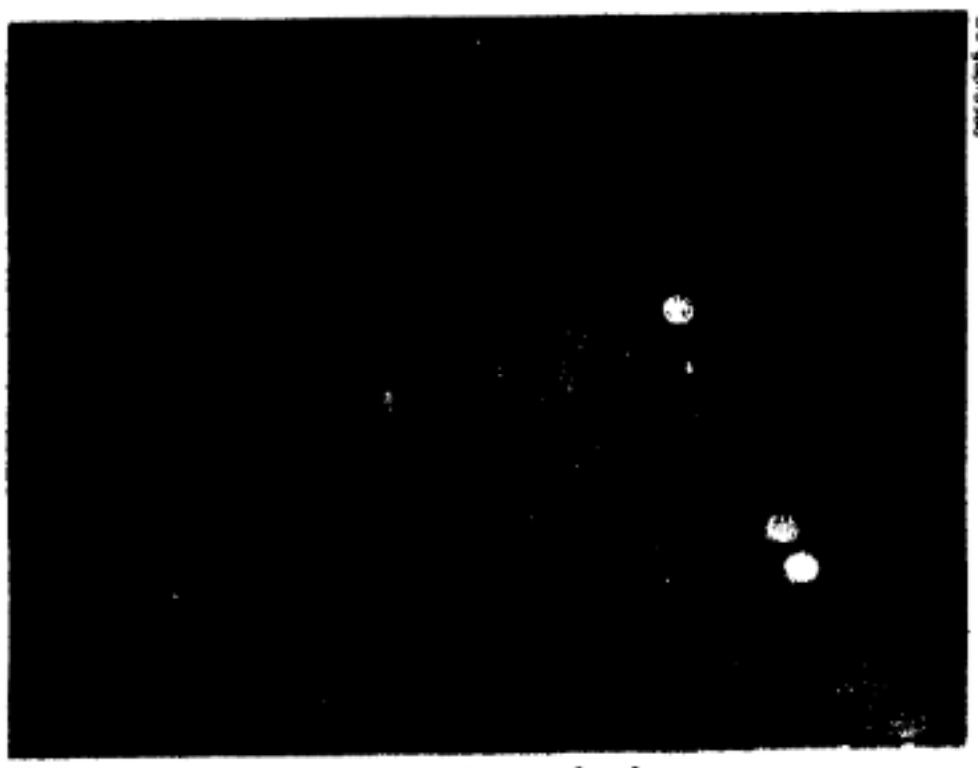
Hema Malini has at last accepted the fact that she can no longer be a young heroine. So, she has moved aside to let younger filmstars like *Sridevi*, *Jayapradha* or even *Dimple*, who is the mother of two children, take her place. Hema is now willing to play a mother's role as she has done in *Mahesh Bhatt's Zamin*. Says Hema, "I have had enough of success. I am thankful to God for giving me the kind of success very few have had. I have had my share of fame and money. I don't want the people who gave me everything to push me out and so I have decided to withdraw myself. I have no regrets at all."

Kumar Gaurav is busy fighting a battle for survival. Things seem to have gone from bad to worse after he married *Namrata*, daughter of *Sunil Dutt*, MP. His marriage seems to have put the producers off.

Talking about Hema brings us naturally to *Dharmendra*. He loves his daughter, *Esha*, so much that he visits her every day. Reason: "It is such a pleasure watching her grow up," says Dharmendra. Incidentally, the actor is taking an active interest in his family because "the children are growing up fast and they need my help"



Kumar Gaurav with Poonam Dhillon



Hema Malini : moving out to make way for the new

Vijayeta Pandit, the girl who was once so deeply in love with Kumar Gaurav that she had even thought of giving up her career to become his wife, is now planning to stage a comeback. She has signed up a number of new films and some of her leading men are *Anil Kapoor*, *Kamalahasan*, *Rajnikant* and *Jackie Shroff*. Said she : "I want to show Kumar Gaurav that I can do something and that I can be more successful than him. How can anyone who has hurt me so badly prosper in life?"

DELHI DIARY

The First Night



Bansi Lal

In the railway budget, while increasing fares, railway minister Bansi Lal has been benevolent to long distance passengers, by levying night surcharge only on the first night's journey and removing the surcharge for the subsequent nights. This made a newsman remark after the budget was presented that Bansi Lal has recognised that "the first night after-all is the first night." The minister, however, avoided a "first" that day. Customarily, the railway minister briefs the press at the Rail Bhavan after the budget. This year, neither Bansi Lal nor the minister of state, Madhav Rao Scindia, turned up for the press meet. The task of defending the increased fares and freight was left to the officers.

Sarin's Successor

The post of secretary, defence production and supply, seems to have been reserved for the officers of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IAAS) After the departure of M C. Sarin, the new incumbent, D N Ghosh, too is from this service. The IAS seems to have given up this prestigious post for a sister service, which is rare In the recommendations of the third pay commission, this post was to have gone to the Indian Ordnance Factories Services (IOFS), but the IAS, while accepting the IAAS as a competitor, apparently does not want any other service to hold this post. The choice of D N. Ghosh will not be good news to wheeler-dealers who abound the corridors of the department Like Mr Sarin, he too is a seasoned auditor and does not allow scope for audit objections while passing deals. In his early days in the steel ministry as financial adviser, the judging of accounts by the then chairman of SAIL had been exposed.

Well Informed

The recent report in SUNDAY about the influence wielded by Dhirubhai Ambani of Reliance Textiles in the corridors of power has started bringing out more stories about Ambani. According to one, when Vishwanath Pratap Singh was removed from the union commerce ministry in August last year, the then commerce secretary, Abid Hussain, came to know of his minister's exit not from official sources but from Dhirubhai Ambani As commerce minister in Indira Gandhi's cabinet (as also finance minister in the Rajiv Gandhi team) V.P. Singh did not play ball with Ambani. He was appointed president of UPCC(I) while he was on a foreign tour—the news was conveyed to him in Vienna. A surprised Abid Hussain was informed about the change when he received a phone call from Dhirubhai Ambani. The intimation came later.

Raw Deal for CBI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is receiving a raw deal. The offices of the agency, which are at present scattered in six buildings all over the capital, are being moved to a new building in the Lodi Road complex, adjacent to the office of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the external intelligence outfit. The first people to move to the incomplete building have been the top officers. There are no proper water supply connections in the building. What is worse, some top CBI men have been trapped in the lifts, which apparently had not been properly tested before commissioning. Will there be a CBI probe regarding the construction of this building?

Priyanka's Debut?

The elder child of the Prime Minister, daughter Priyanka, was seen in the visitor's gallery of the Lok Sabha on 16 March when the maiden budget of her father's regime was being presented. Accompanied by Rajiv Gandhi's political aide, Makhan Lal Fotedar, Priyanka sat solemnly through the 108-minute reading of the budget and did not show any signs of disinterest at any stage. Later, at the Central Hall, someone was heard saying that the one book worth reading from among the works of Jawaharlal Nehru was *Letters from a Father to a Daughter*. The father-to-daughter tradition seems to be maintained as far as interest in politics is concerned.

Praise for Sleuths

Home minister Shankarrao Chavan has busted many myths which had been created by the investigating agencies in the past few months. At one go, in the opening days of the budget session, he clarified that Coomar Narain had been spying not for 25 years (as reported by almost every section of the press; SUNDAY reported differently) but for three years. He also laid at rest speculation that there was any link between the spy case and the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi. (Some reports had been circulated in the media suggesting that there was a link.) Apart from these, he broke another media myth: that agencies other than the intelligence bureau (IB) were credited with the busting of the Coomar Narain spy ring. The minister was candid in his praise for the counter-intelligence officers: "In the entire history of the intelligence bureau, this is the first time, this is the first major incident of this nature, which the intelligence agencies have been able to unearth," he said while complimenting the sleuths. But this news was underplayed in the daily papers. After all when wrong reportage has taken place, the most convenient thing to do is to look the other way when the truth is out.



Sandeep Shankar

S. B. Chavan

D.E. Nizamuddin

Some names become a legend.

Sunil Gavaskar and Dinesh Exclusives.
Names uttered always,
in hushed tones of quiet pride.
Pioneers both. Gavaskar, that most
incomparable batsman, meets his
match in Dinesh—a fabric that's the
result of a tireless quest for perfection
in men's suitings.

Together, they're unbeatable—
the material timeless legends are
made of.



evernu/84/SDM/104

Decades later... still the leader.

Sunday Weekly 7 April 1985 Regd No WB/CC/256/TN/MS(C)376 MH-By-South-680.

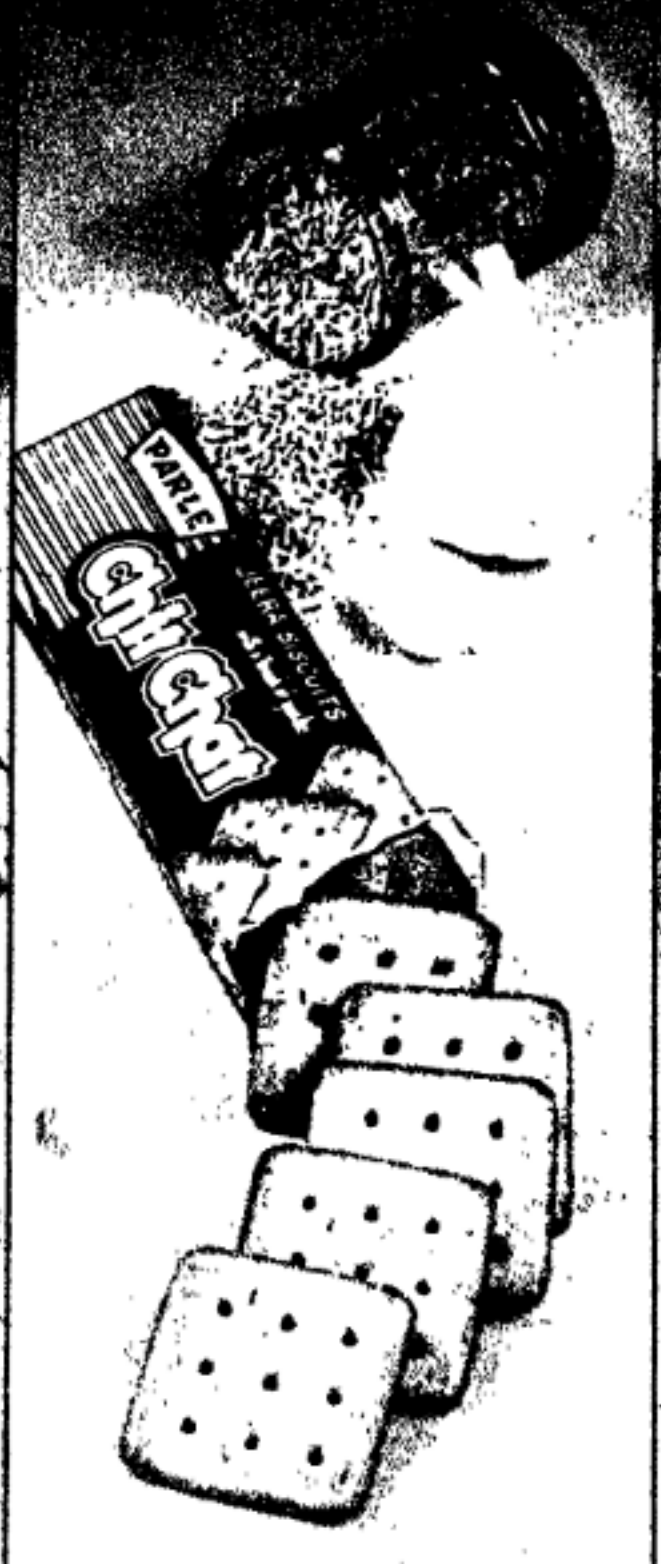
PARLE

A Parle view of cheese'n'spice and all things nice.



Easy to start, difficult to stop.

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CHEESLINGS



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PARLE
ChitChat
JEERA BISCUITS



If you must make masti, make it Musst!

PARLE
musst
MASALA PUFFS

everest/84/PP/36

Investigation: A Sunday Death in Orissa

SUNDAY



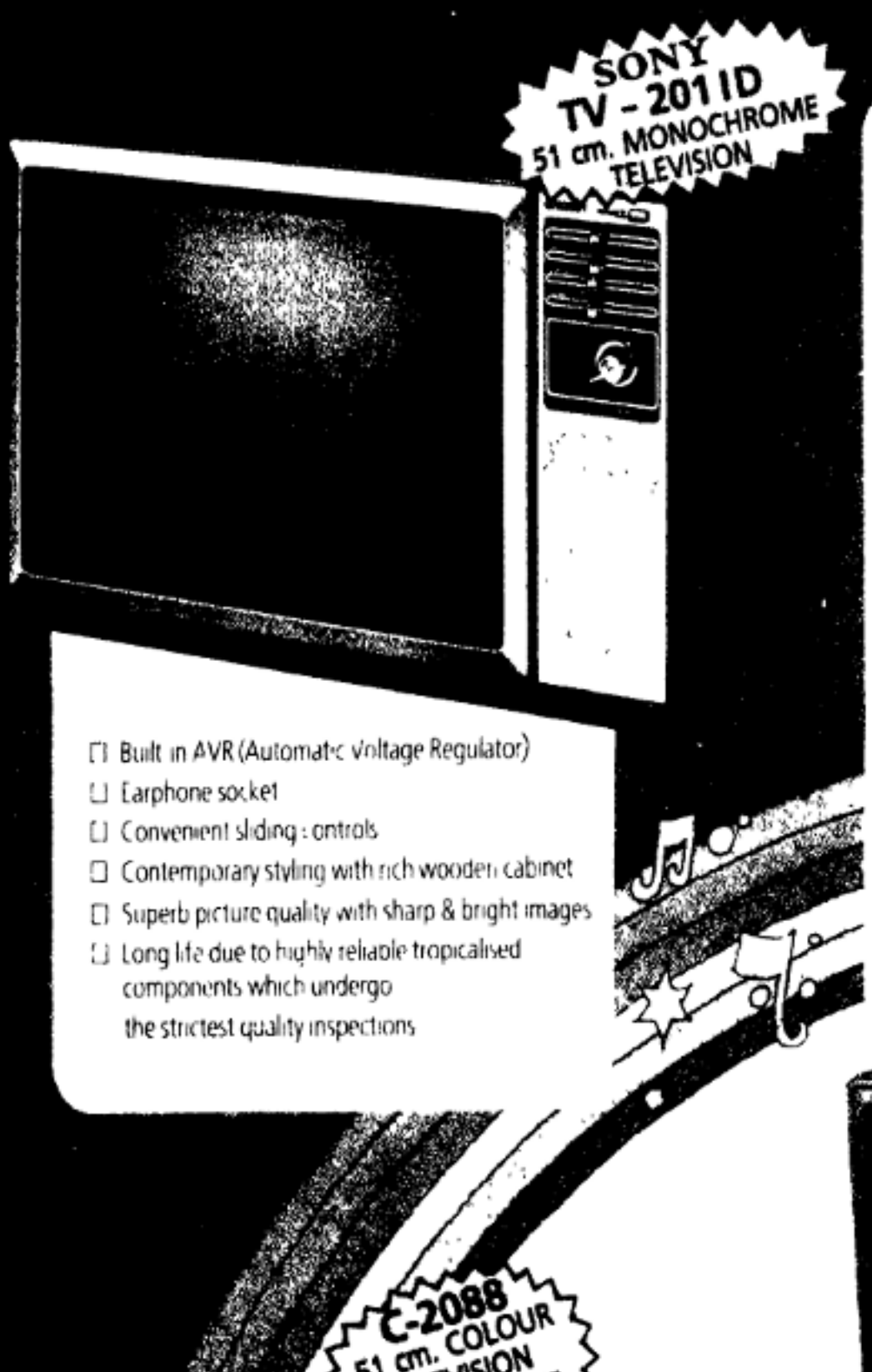
A design by
Shantanu Sheorey

THE YEAR OF THE AIDS

Introducing Televisions from

ORSON

BLACK AND WHITE TELEVISION



- Built in AVR (Automatic Voltage Regulator)
- Earphone socket
- Convenient sliding controls
- Contemporary styling with rich wooden cabinet
- Superb picture quality with sharp & bright images
- Long life due to highly reliable tropicalised components which undergo the strictest quality inspections

COLOUR TELEVISION



A spectacular success story

Today in India, Sony Black & White Television and Stereo Music Systems are manufactured at Orson's factory in Bombay opening new vistas in home entertainment. And Sony have chosen Orson on the basis of technical competence and service strength — both truly of international standards.

Three colour televisions

Now Orson proudly offer three state of the art colour televisions of superior quality and contemporary styling. Televisions manufactured at one of India's most modern factories, equipped with sophisticated soldering machines and instruments, assembly lines, all housed in an airconditioned dust-free environment. And rigorous tests ensure uniform quality — all this, backed by effective after-sales service, whenever you need it.

"Linytron" circuit with space-age high performance chassis

Equipped with improved IC chips and low noise FET, the "Linytron" High Performance chassis offers higher sensitivity, fidelity and ultra stability when voltage fluctuates. The result is brighter and sharper colour picture quality anytime, while fewer components mean extended reliability.

Other features

- **Auto search tuning system**
- **Quick start picture and sound**
- **Built-in AFT (Automatic Fine Tuning), ADC (Automatic Degaussing Circuit) and AGC (Automatic Gain Control) for stable reception**
- **Stylish cabinet designs with elegant woodgrain finish**

Ask your nearest Orson dealer to give you a demonstration of Orson Colour Television models ranging from standard colour models to sophisticated remote control master pieces. All this and Orson after-sales-service at your beck and call.







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QUALITY SINCE 1889

JULKA-D-DCM-270

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Two-in-Ones and Cassette Recorders...
to international standards of design, quality and performance.
Right here in India from PHILIPS.
Backed by nation-wide service.



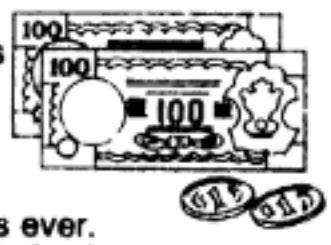
WE OFFER YOU THE BEST CHOICE!

PHILIPS

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. WHEN IT'S PHILIPS, YOU'RE SURE.

No matter which model you buy. If it's Philips, you're getting a lot more than anybody else can offer.

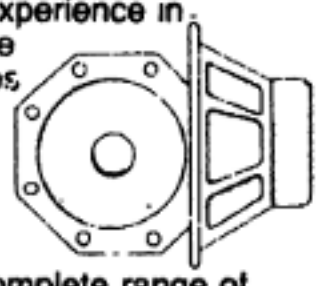
You get your money's worth.
Philips Two-in-Ones and Cassette Recorders cost a lot less than you think Innovative techniques and economies of scale have brought down Philips prices considerably. Quality however is as high as ever. So you get value nobody else can match.



You've got class. You've got style.
Philips is constantly developing new products. Introducing new designs. Now for instance, you have a wide choice of everything from pocket radios to top-of-the-line Stereo Two-in-Ones. A lot of new models to pick from. Each one better looking than the next. Throughout, the styling is international. Who else gives you so much class?



You'll like the sound of it.
As far as the quality of sound is considered, Philips reigns supreme. By design. Philips has over 50 years of experience in the field. We keep pace with the latest advances in the world of audio technology. For instance, our Stereo Two-in-Ones offer you features like chrome terro compatibility, a complete range of input output sockets, soft touch cassette eject, long-life recording and playback heads, sensitive built-in microphones, L.E.D. indicators and an I.C.-based output stage. Even our mono sets have Auto-stop, Electronic Motor Control and high efficiency speaker systems. No matter which set you choose, you're assured of greater clarity, richer, fuller sound. And you can hear the difference!



You can really depend upon it.
Every Philips product is built to last. To give you years of listening pleasure. Right from raw materials and components, to the very heart of the system – the Tape Transport Mechanism – and packaging, quality assurance keeps to high international standards. There's no compromise. We've built a reputation on it. A reputation that any Philips owner will vouch for.



You're never too far from Philips.
No matter which part of the country you're in, there's a Philips dealer within easy reach. Any time you need service, or a replacement of spare parts, we're there to serve you. The Philips dealer network is over 1200 strong, country-wide. We make sure that after we make a great product, it stays that way. For years. Who in the world offers you such a great deal? Right here in India?

Service Service **Service**



Philips – the trusted Indian household name for over fifty years

Growing children need Complan



Only Complan has 23 vital foods they need every day.

Children normally complete most of their growth by the age of 15 or 16

Proteins are the nutrients which directly contribute to growth. That's why your children need COMPLAN — now. COMPLAN has the best protein – milk protein (20%). It also contains 22 other vital foods

COMPLAN is available in delicious flavours.



vital foods in planned proportions

Protein	Riboflavin
Fat	Nicotinamide
Carbohydrate	Calcium
Calcium	Pantothenate
Phosphorus	Choline
Sodium	Pyridoxine (B_6)
Vitamin A	Vitamin B_{12}
Potassium	Folic Acid
Iron	Vitamin C
Iodine	Vitamin D
Vitamin A	Vitamin E
Vitamin B_1	Vitamin K

No need to add milk.



Complan® complete planned food

GK&E B84 GLC.68

14—20 APRIL 1985

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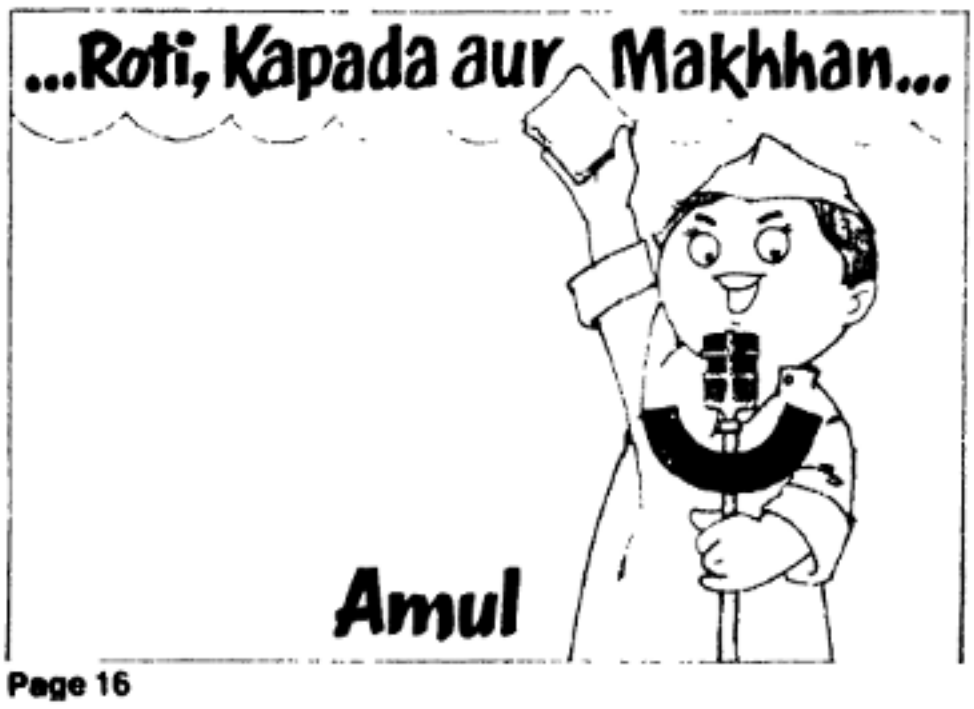
COVER STORY 16

1985: The Year of the Ad?

Indian advertising has grown to dread budgets. But the union budget of 1985 is a charter of revival for the beleaguered agency. In the spurt of activity which greeted the announcement of incentives to the corporate sector, studios are being refurbished and artists and copywriters are thinking up fresh lines, images and insight. 1985 seems set to become the year of the advertisement. A survey by Sunday correspondents

Be Indian, See Indian

With the transformation of Doordarshan to a money-spinning medium, there has been a spurt of "homemade" TV serials. A detailed report. Plus interview with Manohar Shyam Joshi, the maker of *Humlog*. Also a report on the commercials produced by Doordarshan



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INVESTIGATION 30

A Sweet Deal in Orissa

How far is the accusation that IMFA in Orissa is getting undue favours from the J B Patnaik government true? An investigation

INVESTIGATION 41

Case of the Missing Lakhs

Mystery surrounds the alleged theft of Rs 26 lakhs from the bedroom almirah of Bachcha Pathak, the Congress(I) general secretary of Uttar Pradesh. A report from Shubhabrata Bhattacharya

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Cover: A design by Shantanu Sheorey

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DATELINE / M.J.Akbar

New Delhi: Everyone has become a prisoner of his own set of words. Time has aged them; the words have become tired, frayed, battered by misuse and overblown by constant pumping. But they remain the cocoon which creates the definition of the person. The Left. In the beginning was the word, and the word was socialism. The word has become an amoeba, continually changing shape to include the latest claimant. But that doesn't matter. You can absorb anything within the shifting boundaries of the word, but never, never challenge its hegemony; never, never step outside the word into the world. It is slippery outside, and who knows when one might slip on the truth and fall flat on one's face. The Right. Capitalism. Ditto.

The emptiness of labels becomes more obvious when the capital's power brokers (the spectrum is not limited to shades of legislators and bureaucrats; it includes journalists, businessmen, hounds, lawyers, touts, hangers-on et al) turn their attention, as they kindly do once a year, to the nation's economy—at post-budget time. Is finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh Left, Right, Leftish, Rightish, Centre, Centrish? The truth is that he is nothing more and nothing less than Singhish, seeking to devise a way through the creeper-choked jungle that is the urban Indian economy. Labels fit ill. Was loosening some of the bureaucratic grip on the industrialist a very right-wing thing to do? What is the crop insurance scheme: pro-people or anti-people? Most of those denouncing the finance minister for his "pro-rich" liberalisation of the tax structure have been indulging in a bit of a fiddle because of the high tax rate all this while. Nothing evil; just enough to get by without surrendering every potential luxury to the state exchequer. Was this a budget for just 0.5 per cent of the people, as the Congressmen who had not been made ministers or given the kind of place they expected in the power structure were moaning? Probably. But if that implies that the last five budgets of the Congress(I) were devoted to 99.5 per cent of the people, then I am afraid I must beg your pardon and indulge in some abuse.

People see what they want to see in a budget, and like everything else in our country, there is enough evidence in anything to prove any point. For many "commentators" attack or praise of a government decision has less to do with the quality or merit of the decision, and more to do with their personal equation with those in power. If they haven't had their latest ego massage, or cut, X becomes terrible; otherwise X is a competent man trying to do his sincere best in the difficult situation he has inherited.

Indian politics, and Indian governance have become non-ideological. Neither action nor reaction is guided by the bend of a defined policy: the ruling MPs are those who made the right assessment about which party was likely to form a government after the December general elections, the opposition MPs are those who got it wrong. Decision and response from the opposition therefore are piecemeal. Those with self-appointed reputations try and hide this by words and labels. All that Vishwanath Pratap Singh had to do while making the same budget proposals and yet emerge a hero of the Left instead of the Right was to work in three paragraphs about the massive raise in bonus he announced for the working class, instead of keeping it down to just a sentence or two. And pepper every page of that long speech with rhetoric about wiping the tears from the eyes of the poor. That would have been enough to salve the easily amenable conscience of Delhi's concerned citizens.

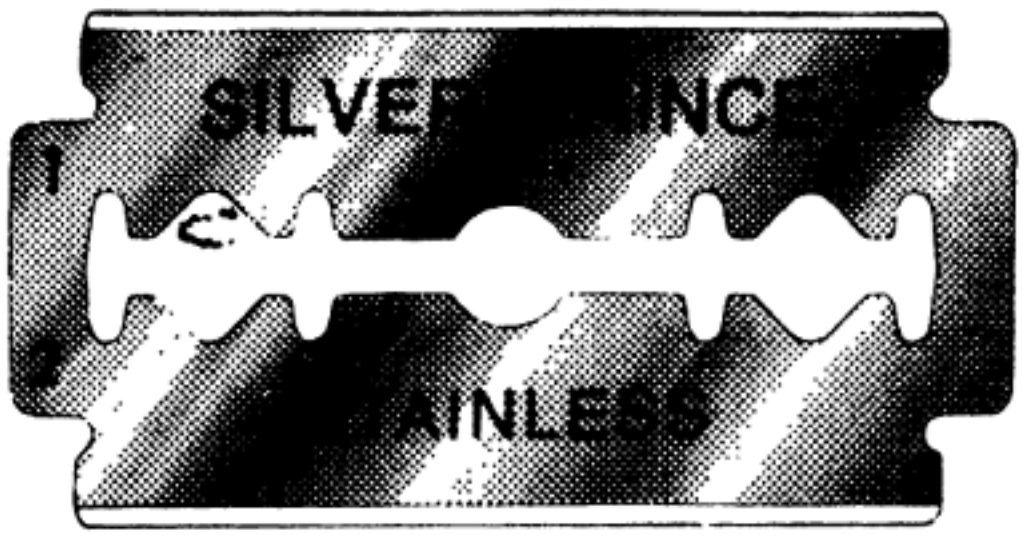
For many "commentators" attack or praise of a government decision has less to do with the quality or merit of the decision, and more to do with their personal equation with those in power. If they haven't had their latest ego massage, or cut, X becomes terrible; otherwise X is a competent man trying to do his sincere best in the difficult situation he has inherited.

The fact is that the poor know they are being had. Left and Right mean nothing more to them than the tramp of a long march to nowhere.

Question of the Hour: Has our Member of Parliament from Gujarat been rehabilitated or not? Look at the sequence of events. The man who truly loses out after the assassination of his mentor (and he knows that better than anyone else, therefore the last minute rush to help friends in the industry) is Mr Pranab Mukherjee, finance minister and confidant extraordinary of Mrs Indira Gandhi. What exactly was the reason for his political clout no one really knows. Far from being a great leader of the Bengal masses, Mr Mukherjee had to find a seat in Parliament from Gujarat (a state where he has formally taken up residence to enter the Rajya Sabha). But there it was. Mrs Gandhi would listen to Pranab Mukherjee and therefore the country listened to him too. Rajiv Gandhi was a different Prime Minister, and while the fall was not entirely unexpected it could not have hurt any less. Where once Mr Mukherjee had held centre stage at budget time, he now had to applaud from the sidelines and use the media to say how happy he was that Mr Vishwanath Pratap Singh was doing the reverse of what he had done.

Then, resurrection The MP from Gujarat became the president of the West Bengal Congress(I). An agency which first circulated this surprising decision obviously had had a little help while writing the story from the Friends of Mukherjee Club. The decision was similar to what happened to Mr V.P. Singh when he was taken out of the union cabinet and put in charge of Uttar Pradesh before the general elections. And hints were circulated that Mr Mukherjee had been promised the chief ministership of Bengal after the "inevitable" Congress victory in the next elections.

The next day, the salt began to be circulated in political circles, so that the pro-Pranab version could be swallowed with a pinch of it. Pranab Mukherjee was not being promoted; he was only being sent to the districts to nip any potential revolt in Delhi with the help of other "stalwarts" kept in the cold. There was an enquiry on against his generosity to friends during his finance ministership. What is the truth? Only Rajiv Gandhi knows and he is not, at the moment, giving interviews on the subject We await the next instalment of the serial with bated breath.



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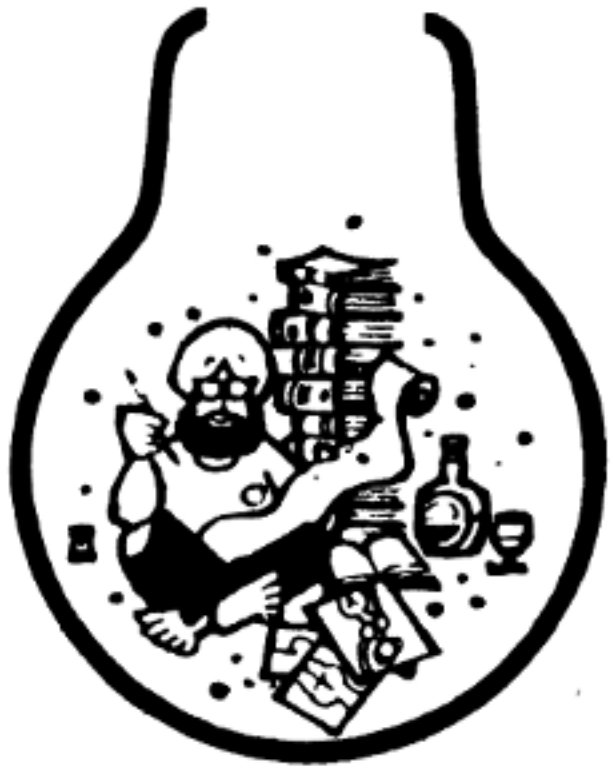
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In *Vino Veritas*

A wine-tasting festival in India would be as outlandish a notion as a urine-sampling festival in the United States. Nevertheless the unthinkable took place in New Delhi. The presiding deities were Steve Espie of the US embassy and his wife. His invitation asked me to invite other oenophiles in town. I had to look up the dictionary and found out that the word meant "wine lovers." I could think of only three couples who knew a little more about wines than that they came in three colours: white, red and rosee. This is not altogether surprising since we produce very little wine—the only two trade names known to me are Golconda and Bosca. What is often advertised on hoardings as "English wines," are not wines but spirits. The distinction between Beer, spirits and wine is vital Beer is brewed from hops, spirits (Gin, Vodka, Rum, Brandy, Whiskey etc) are distilled and are strong stuff Wine is made from fermented grapes. Its quality varies from region to region and year to year. Hence the annual fuss about sampling by professional tasters and declaration of same as vintage years.

India could become a great wine producing country provided our leaders shed their ambivalent attitude towards alcohol denouncing it in public, enjoying it in private. Our grapes are as good as any in the famous vine-growing countries like France, Germany, Russia, Italy, Spain and Greece Although wine-making is a comparatively recent development in the United States and Australia, some Californian and Australian (Coonawara Estate) products compare favourably with the best of Europe. Wine-making though an ancient art has no secret formulas. Our vintners could acquire the techniques as easily as our cheese-makers have done in producing excellent cheeses. All they need is the green signal from the government. God has given us excellent vines; what we need to do is to convert the first letter from "V" to a "W". Prohibitionists need not get very agitated over it. Most wines are very low in alcoholic content and much better for one's health than most tonics. All said and done when 90 per cent of our bodies are made of fluids, why quibble over the remaining 10 per cent? It is not for nothing that our ancients declared wine to be the drink of gods, milk of babies, tea of women, and water of beasts. However beware! Never dilute wine with water. It is the surest way of killing



its body. G K Chesterton put Noah's admonishment to his wife during the torrential flood very succinctly:

"And Noah he often said to his wife when he sat down to dine
I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine"

Back to the tasting business. The Espies laid out 13 varieties (seven whites and six reds) from seven countries with their vintages and descriptions Two bearers were in attendance to wash tumblers before we sampled the next variety. We were required to pronounce on eight points: aroma or bouquet (flowery, earthy, fruity etc.) flavour, body, texture, acidity, sweetness and aftertaste. I started off badly with the bouquet. I followed a wine-taster's advice "If, when tasting wine, you close your eyes and flowers appear before your inner eye, then the wine has bouquet." I closed my eyes but instead of bougainvilleas or roses, my inner eye perceived comely women My inner eye rarely perceives anything else

By the third sampling my head was in a tizzy I tried to soothe it by liberal in-takes of French and Italian cheeses. My in-built warning signal rang after I had gone through eight samplings I could not care about the rapture or the ineffable pleasure of drinking at someone else's expense. Five wines remained untasted. I could not appreciate Crabbe's eulogy which Steve Espie had put down as an introduction to "Bottle Notes":

"Wine, like the rising sun, possession gains,
And drivers the mists of dullness from the brains."

I took some *chooran* and a couple of aspirin tablets before retiring for the night. They did not help and my stomach was gassed beyond endurance. I woke at 2 am with a sour taste in the mouth. I swallowed many mugfuls of ginseng tea and spent hours of the dawn musing over the immortal qualities of wine. I came to the conclusion that as far as I am concerned there is no *Veritas* in *Vino*.

Why Circumcise?

Controversy over circumcision has raised its head in England again. This time a court decreed £5700 damages against a surgeon who botched up this minor operation by failing to see that the patient's foreskin was properly aligned before stitching up the wound. The main witness in the case was a Harley Street specialist, Dr Norman Pitt, who was for making circumcision compulsory. However, he was of the opinion that it is safer to have it done at a later age than is customary amongst Jews and Muslims. Dr Pitt quoted statistics to prove that the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and cancer of the penis is much lower among circumcised males than amongst the uncircumcised What is more, women habitually exposed to sexual intercourse with circumcised males as married Jewish women (and presumably Muslim) are less prone to cancer of the cervix than those who cohabit with the uncircumcised. Also women who have had experience of both varieties of males have given their verdict in favour of the circumcised.

In India there is enormous amount of prejudice amongst non-Muslim communities against this practice The last time I wrote on the subject, some communally-minded readers accused me of trying to subvert their faith. If at all it takes a snip off the foreskin of the penis to subvert anyone's faith, there could not be much to it.

Wife-seeker

A man lost his wife He looked everywhere without getting a clue The police failed to find her Her photograph in the papers produced no results. In sheer desperation the man went to a temple dedicated to Shri Ram Chandraji and prayed for help. At long last Ram Chandraji heard his prayers and spoke: "Son, I cannot help you find your wife. When I lost mine neither I nor my brother Lakshman succeeded in locating her whereabouts. A few paces from here is the temple of Hanuman, Bajrang Bali. Go and pray to him and he may help you find your wife as he helped me to find mine."

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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



A Trial to Watch

"Does anyone know Gurmukhi?" asked roly-poly Shukat Ali Khan restlessly pacing up and down the courtroom in Lahore. He had flown down from London to defend the persons who had hijacked an Indian Airlines plane in 1981. His clients know only Punjabi, and not many in Pakistan are familiar with Gurmukhi. He wanted to know exactly what the hijackers had said in their draft statement to the court. At last one Pakistani who knew the script was found.

I watched the proceedings the other day—after obtaining a special entry card—and I must admit that the place did not have the atmosphere of a courtroom. True, there were lawyers in black gowns and there were piles of voluminous law books on the tables before the defence and prosecuting lawyers. The sessions judge, Fazal Karim, who presided over the special court, sat on a dais with Mohammad Ali Jinnah's portrait beaming out from the wall behind him. But there was something unreal about what was happening. Perhaps it was the fact that armed policemen and intelligence men far outnumbered all the spectators and lawyers put together; perhaps it was the plush auditorium, with its comfortable seats, perhaps the directive under which the press has to accept the version prepared by the registrar and cannot publish anything else. Whatever it was, I could not quite believe that I was witnessing a trial.

There was something unreal about what was happening (at the trial). Perhaps it was the fact that armed policemen and intelligence men outnumbered all the spectators and lawyers put together...perhaps the directive under which the press has to accept the (court) registrar's version (of the proceedings) and not publish anything else.

The press in Pakistan is not free. It is even less free to report on the trial. In fact, an Urdu daily, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, has already been hauled up for bringing out a special edition on the hijackers' trial. A notice served by the court on the paper said that the special edition "tends to prejudice the determination of the case, State versus Gajendra Singh and others, under section 6 of the Suppression of Terrorist Activities (Special Courts) Act, 1975."

The day I was present in the court, the hijackers were not brought from Lakhpat jail in Lahore, where they are supposed to be under detention. (Many Pakistan journalists told me that they were lodged in a bungalow, and not in any jail. According to them, the accused were too well-dressed and appeared too well fed to seem to be in jail.) I am told that the hijackers—five in all—raise slogans like 'Khalistan zindabad' as soon as they reach the 'courtroom' and then start talking aloud to one another in Punjabi, quite oblivious of the court proceedings. But they appear to be taking the trial seriously now. S. M. Zafar, whom they have hired, is a leading lawyer in Pakistan. The hearing on 30 March was adjournedat his request because he said that he had not had enough time to talk to his clients. The arrival of Shukat Ali Khan from London also is proof that the hijackers are not treating the whole thing as a joke.

Apparently it is some Sikhs outside India who have hired defence counsel Zafar, on behalf of the five accused. He is an expensive lawyer, and is assisted by Warren Sajjao, Khwaja Sultan and Dr Abdul Basit. Shukat also has been flown in at the expense of the Sikhs abroad. One Balbir Singh of the Sikh World Organisation is in Lahore to "follow" the case. The Pakistan government had received requests from some leading lawyers in Britain, America and Canada from persons keen to defend the hijackers but these could not be entertained on the ground that only Pakistanis are allowed to appear for the defence according to the rules under the Special Courts Act.

The Pakistan government, which at one time seemed to be reluctant to try the hijackers, now appears anxious to prove that it is not just holding a mock trial. There is an array of prosecuting lawyers—Advocate General Rasheed Aziz Khan, Assistant Advocate General Najumuzzam, Malik Abdus Salam, Inayetullah Cheema and Niaz Ali Shah—though each one of them has been a beneficiary of public funds in one case or another in which the government has hired them. There are rumours that the case would be decided by the end of June.

The fact that the 1984 hijacking case has also been taken up—though only under pressure from New Delhi—indicates that Islamabad wants to have both the cases disposed of as soon as possible. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statement that India is watching the proceedings of the case has been an important factor in making Pakistan decide to speed up the trials. In fact the first trial was undertaken only when Rajiv Gandhi said that Pakistan's keenness to befriend India would be proved if and when they take up the trial of the hijackers. The Act under which the hijackers are being tried prescribes a sentence up to life imprisonment—which in Pakistan is not 16 years but 20 years—as the punishment. There is also a provision that prescribes the death penalty for such an offence. Recently one of those involved in the hijacking of a Pakistan International Airlines plane was executed. It is difficult to guess what punishment the Indian hijackers would be given. But they are unlikely to be let off lightly.

Significantly an official of the Indian embassy in Islamabad attends every hearing of the case: a measure of the importance the Indian government attaches to the trial. And now that there seems to be a serious attempt at detente between India and Pakistan, the trials may not be a cursory affair, after all.

OPINION

A Moment of Glory

MF Husain paid a fitting tribute to the victorious Indian cricket team (24—30 March). The cover painting was superb but the coverage of the Benson and Hedges tournament was far from satisfactory (*Invincible Indians*, 24—30 March). SUNDAY should have spared a few more pages to record the moment of glory for all Indians
S Umesh Naidu, Sindri

• The cover painting and the report on the victorious Indian team made absorbing reading After a long time the selectors displayed maturity by appointing Sunil Gavaskar as the captain and Kapil Dev as his deputy for the Benson and Hedges tournament The result was amazing: India won every match she played with convincing margins Team spirit more than anything else was behind India's spectacular victory
Sariful Hussain, Dibrugarh

• Congratulations to the invincible Indians for winning yet another one-day tournament When India won the World Cup in 1983 many sceptics described it as a fluke. They were proved wrong and going by the form India displayed in Australia I doubt whether the West Indians could have beaten them But I was disappointed to find such a short coverage by SUNDAY
Prabal Guha, Calcutta

• Ashis Ray rightly pointed out that team spirit led to the success. M F. Husain's cover painting lent attraction to the issue.
V N Narayanaswamy, Madras

• More than the sketchy report I liked the cover illustration of M F Husain.
Shyamal Pal Belonia (Tripura)

Not Involved

This has reference to the letter *Inconvenient Facts* (*Opinion*, 17—13 March) where Mr Aseem Prakash claims that the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) was an organiser of the protests against the unsavoury episode at St. Stephens College. While the PUDR strongly opposes the culture of cheap thrill at the expense of women and sympathises with those who have the courage to protest against it, it would be incorrect to attribute the demonstrations to our organisation. The issue was taken up by the students and teachers of Delhi University.
Sudesh Vaid, Delhi



Asian Dictators

I agree with Kuldip Nayar's view of the much debated ethnic problem in Sri Lanka (*Distant Neighbours*, 24—30 March) All Tamils settled in Sri Lanka are citizens of that country and India should strongly oppose the demand for Eelam It is an open secret that Tamil terrorists receive help from India The government should stop encouraging terrorists
Ajay Pant, Moradabad

• Honest efforts should be extended by India to the Sri Lankan government to solve the ethnic problem However, the Sri Lankan President, Jayewardene, should be willing to compromise on reasonable issues, dictatorial attitude will only complicate matters
Subas Ram, Anandapur (Orissa)

• J.R. Jayewardene's provocative replies to Kuldip Nayar's questions (*'India is Bullying Me'*) is bound to adversely effect India-Sri Lankan relations. I was surprised to read the Sri Lankan President's outburst against M.G. Ramachandran Mr Nayar deserves praise for the patience he has shown in interviewing a man whose logic borders on the ridiculous and whose views are coloured by racial hatred.
N. Nandhivarman, Pondicherry

• I wonder why Kuldip Nayar did not deem it fit to ask the Sri Lankan President about the indiscriminate firing by the Sri Lanka navy on unarmed Indian fishermen fishing in Indian waters This apart, the interview was comprehensive.
G Vaidyanathan, New Delhi

• Tariq Ali's *Behind the General's Election*, exposed the evil designs of the President of Pakistan, Gen. Zia-ul Haq. 'The Asian dictator of the Pentagon'. I had never come across such an apt description of Zia. He has cowed down the people of a democratic country but one day he is bound to be overthrown by the people like Louis XVI
Sangram Mishra, Cuttack

Fight for Freedom

I was an orthodox youth living in a world of slavery and ignorance till I read M J Akbar's article on the reformist movement within the Dawoodi Bohra community (*Dateline*, 10-16 March). The write-up rightly highlighted how Bohras are living like slaves in free India. The priests and their representatives behave like dictators and there is no one to check their authority. In this context I would like to narrate a personal experience. I was at my native place attending the funeral of a Bohra. Among those present at the solemn ceremony was a reformist Bohra. Midway through the funeral, suddenly some hoodlums,who I think were hired by the representative of the high priest, dragged away the reformist Bohra while we helplessly looked on. Had I read Mr Akbar's piece before I would have had the courage to react. I thank SUNDAY for enlightening me.
Daud A. Bharthu, Bombay

• Exploitation is going on in the name of religion. I invite all the Bohras to come forward and lend strength to the reformist movement.
Mazahir Kalolwala, Godhra

• It is strange how the Bohras are tolerating an autocrat. But I was relieved to learn that a movement against the Syedna is gaining momentum. By best wishes to Asgar Ali Engineer for his efforts to liberate the Bohra community.
M.Y. Sadique, Bhubaneswar

• The Nathwani Commission has held the high priest of the Bohra community guilty of usurping the fundamental rights of the Bohras. Yet the Indian government is a silent spectator. I take this opportunity to thank M.J. Akbar and SUNDAY for the bold article.
Yunus K. Baluwala, Bombay

Change or Revolution?

I was surprised to read that Kuldip Nayar does not find sufficient reasons to rejoice over Rajiv Gandhi's performance so far (*Does Rajiv Gandhi Really Mean Business?* 17—23 March) In the very first paragraph Mr Nayar had dimissed the Anti-defection Act as a means to thwart the ambitions of the PM's partymen rather than those of unprincipled politicians With a massive mandate in the Lok Sabha, I don't think Rajiv Gandhi was bothered about defections, cleansing politics was his sole aim Towards the end of the tirade, Kuldip Nayar writes "What India needs is drastic change ." But change by its very nature is slow unless Mr Nayar is referring to a revolution

D.V. Nilkund, Bhadravati (Karnataka)

• In *Prestige of the Judiciary Should be Restored* (Exclusive, 10—16 March) Kuldip Nayar observes: "The fact that protocolwise a High Court judge comes next to a secretary to the government of India, shows the position of the judiciary now.. " This is not true and High Court judges clearly outrank secretaries.

P B. Venkatasubramanian, New Delhi

• My answer to Kuldip Nayar's question, *Are Naxalites Dedicated?* (3—9 March) is Yes Naxalites stood beside the exploited and they did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for a noble cause But unfortunately a handful within the party misunderstood the motto of the movement and started terrorising people The Naxalite movement is still alive and will be alive as long as exploitation continues

Surjit Singh, Amritsar

• Instead on relying on the police version, Mr Nayar should have visited the 'disturbed areas' of Telengana to find out the truth. His accusation that Naxalites are resorting to violence and terrorising attack-sellers is not true.

K V Ramana Reddy, Kavali

Not an Occasion to Rejoice

I did not feel proud or rejoice, like M.J. Akbar, at the India government's decision not to deport the Bangladeshi poet Daud Haider (*Dateline*, 24—30 March) I can never forget that this same government killed so many poets like Daud Haider only because they had raised their voice against oppression In 1969 a popular poet, Subba Rao Panigrahi of Srikakulam was shot dead by the police in the name of an encounter

An eminent writer-poet and editor, Saroj Dutta, was murdered in coldblood in Calcutta by the police. Why didn't Mr Akbar raise his voice when Cherabanda Raju paid a heavy price for his revolutionary ideas?

S.M Rao, Calcutta

• This has reference to M.J Akbar's write-up on the death of the Soviet President Konstantin Chernenko. Over the years the Moscow-Delhi relationship was grown deeper and the death of a national leader of either country is mourned by the other. One is reminded of the Russian gesture when Indira Gandhi was assassinated: the Soviet embassy in India had brought out a booklet, *USSR shares India's grief.*

R. Venugopal, Korba (MP)

A Bright New Star

The cover story, *Star of the Future* (17—23 March), was timely and absorbing. The Janata victory in Karnataka was a morale booster for the opposition. Ramakrishna Hegde is the only opposition leader who can offer a credible alternative to the Congress(I) at the national level. The new star on India's political horizon is shining brightly and will continue to do so in the future.

R.R. Deshpande, Raichur

• When Hegde advised the state Governor to dissolve the Karnataka Assembly following the Janata Party's reverses in the Lok Sabha elections nobody even dreamt that he would stage such a spectacular comeback. Hegde's clean image and efficient administration ensured the Janata Party's victory.

S.N. Venkatesh, Sira (Karnataka)

• Ramakrishna Hegde was not correct when he said that the people are fed up with the Congress(I). In Karnataka, the Congress was without any leader of the stature of Hegde. The party's debacle in the Assembly elections was solely due to ineffective leadership. The Janata should not be too complacent of their victory.

N. Ellango, Tirunelveli

Hadley Chase Thriller

The investigative report on Rajendra Sethia who duped the London branches of three Indian nationalised banks read like a Hadley Chase thriller (*A Playboy's Plunder*, 17—23 March). A thorough probe is necessary to bring out as to how the managers of the concerned banks loaned such a huge amount without any security deposit As rightly pointed out by a section of the London press, the role of the former finance minister, Pranab Mukherjee, is intriguing.

A.N Veeraraghavan, Bombay

• Rajendra Sethia could not have cheated the banks had not top officials colluded with him. Rajiv Gandhi's 'clean image' will suffer unless the culprits are brought to book as soon as possible

C.B Dyuthikar, Bangalore

Pathetic Plight

I am not aware of a country called the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh mentioned by Srinjoy Chowdhury in his article, *A Poet's Fight for Freedom* (3—9 March). Yes, certain vested interests are trying to form such a country but it is yet to be born. I am still a citizen of the People's Republic of Bangladesh It is true that a section is waiting to persecute Daud Haider when he returns to Bangladesh but I would request Mr Haider to return to his native country. People like me are there to protect him.

Salima Wahra, Dhaka

• SUNDAY did a commendable job by highlighting the plight of Daud Haider. Mr Haider's voice had been throttled by the successive military regimes of Bangladesh and he had no way but to escape to India. I am still in the dark as a why the government wanted to throw him out when scores of people are granted political asylum in India every year.

Bireswar Mukherjee, Gauhati

Vital Omission

In the detailed article on Victor Banerjee (*Victor's March*, 17—23 February) the author blacked out the film *Doosri Dulhan* where Victor played a lead role opposite Sharmila Tagore and Shabana Azmi. When *Kalyug*, a film where Victor plays a minor role, was discussed at length I felt that *Doosri Dulhan* merited a mention.

J. Nath, New Delhi

COVER STORY

1985

THE YEAR OF THE AD?

Indian advertising has grown to dread budgets. All that "concern for the poor" and "socialism" ended up meaning another twist of the screw for the agency. The union budget of 1985, in contrast, is a charter of revival for the beleaguered agency. The enthusiasm it has generated is only too obvious: in the spurt of activity which greeted the announcement of incentives to the corporate sector, offices are being renovated, studios refurbished and artists and copywriters are thinking up fresh lines, images and insights. 1985 seems set to become the year of the advertisement.

This story could begin anywhere, anytime. At a bus stop or on a lonely moonlit night In the high offices of power or in your bathroom. Or on the moon. Advertising has gone where man has not. It goes everywhere man goes. A shadow almost, but a colourful, multidimensional one. Often when you see an advertisement, you would know the way things are going or will go.

Watch what happened in the offices of the Prime Minister and the finance minister in the days following the presentation of the union budget on 16 March. They were grappling with a flood of congratulatory telegrams. Not from big business and industry but from the world of advertisers. There were hundreds of them from different agencies and societies, clubs and federations. It was a bold budget, they said. It was growth-oriented and one that provided "direction and impetus for faster pace of change." Other than the repeal of the 20 per cent disallowance of advertising expenses there was hardly any mention of advertising in the financial bill. There was, however, a hike in MRTP from Rs 20 crores to Rs 100 crores, the delicensing of 24 major sectors of industry a reduction in the rate of corporate taxation, upgrading the limit for small-scale industries to Rs 35 lakhs, the scrapping of excise on computers and liberty for foreign equity companies to enter the Indian electronic market. These are big incentives for production and a boon for business. But the windfall, first, will come elsewhere More than anything else, it is a booster for the advertising industry as Harish Mahindra, chairman of the Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA) exulted after the presentation of the budget. There is a distinct edge to spirits in this even otherwise exciting world. Some workplaces are being lavishly renovated into plush studios, every day modern tools of work are being brought in; artists and copywriters are thinking up new sights and fresh lines Everywhere new strategies and new research programmes are being planned. "This is a very exciting moment for advertising," says Tara Sinha, the jetsetting chief executive of Clarion Advertising Services. Her words are echoed all around. The result of that accelerated activity is already beginning to show Concepts, modes, presentations are changing

"In the months to come I see the whole scenario change: advertising in the country will undergo a metamorphosis... Advertising as an industry will get its right place in the country's developing economy. The need for advertising has finally come to the forefront," says Ram Sehgal of Hindustan Thompson Associates, the biggest advertising firm in the country. "Who would have thought," he adds, "five years ago that a gas stove will become a thing of beauty."

Who made the common stove a thing of beauty is an important question The producer and advertiser or the consumer? Who is influencing whom? Is advertising determining lifestyles or is it the other way round? It is one of the things the advertising industry is interested in arguing out There has been a lot of long-standing criticism: that advertising is wasteful and socially unproductive, that it makes people want things they cannot afford, encourages unwarranted consumption and brings in aberrations in society. Perhaps a sign of the times is that advertising is now hitting back. A paper recently issued by the ISA rebuts these criticisms one by one. Advertising is not wasteful and unproductive, it says, because nobody is interested in wasteful and unproductive things. It is a serious business which involves professional people and a good deal of media and market research is aimed at cost efficiency "No conscientious, accountable management spends advertising money irresponsibly." It doesn't make people want more than their purses allow. The argument is turned around Advertising thrives when production thrives and production thrives when people have purchasing power "The whole of India is a big market today Do you think that would be so if there weren't enough people around to buy things?" asks Tara Sinha. Next, do advertisements change social outlooks? Says Stanley Pinto of Lintas India. "Advertising is a slave of social change It society changes, so will the style of advertising There has been a marked change in the thinking of the middle class and that has been reflected in advertising... I agree advertising has become more permissive but that is only because man-woman relationships have changed" He does agree though that at times it becomes quite a chicken-and-egg situation It could work both ways. Others agree on the influence advertisements exercise It is in fact a strategy with them Jaideep Samarth of Ogilvy, Benson and Mather (OBM) says he is there to "do something to people, not to say something to them." Strike a chord, set them thinking about the ideas of David Ogilvy, known as the father of modern advertising. And if his opinion is to be considered, Indian advertising is not doing too badly. David Ogilvy makes it a point to go through all the campaigns done by OBM "He has nice things to say though he is nasty at times," says Samarth.



One of the highly successful and witty DaCunha campaigns: increasing sales

There is another way the traffic moves in the advertising business: from the advertising agency back to the client. As competition in the market increases and techniques of advertising become more modern, market and media research too become more salient in the advertisers' scheme of things. Instead of just

"We Will Have to Restructure Ourselves"

Tara Sinha of Clarion Advertising Services told SUNDAY

When she was 24 and only 18 months in the business, Tara Sinha became the founder-director of Clarion Advertising Services Limited (formerly known as Clarion MCann), a blue-chip company in the trade for decades. A spiralling career-graph and today, at 51, she is Clarion's president and chief executive. In fact, she is the only woman there among several men. She thinks Indian advertising has reached an "extremely exciting" stage which, while being a boon might also pose some challenges to the industry. Nevertheless, "be enthusiastic" is the message she is passing around. Excerpts from a conversation with her:

***Q**: Do you think a boom is coming?*

A: Yes, certainly. The government has come out with a growth-oriented budget which will open so many avenues. Advertising booms if business booms and lots of incentives were given this time. The delicensing, for example, will encourage business investment. The people have got more purchasing power now and on the other hand, the delicensing and other benefits will encourage business investment. You can already see the two-wheeler market burgeoning. So is the case with the automobile industry, packaged goods... naturally advertising should boom.



Tara Sinha

Q: Is the industry prepared to take on such a boom? Are you professional enough?

A: Nobody is ever professional enough and surely this is going to be a big challenge. The advertising world has to deliver the goods. We would need some solid work to be done, both creative and otherwise. We will have to restructure ourselves in this exciting moment.

Q: Doyou have the equipment to tackle it?

A: Oh, we have a lot of talented people working but they might not always be enough. Advertising is a very hungry industry, very demanding. We might have a talent-short situation.

Q: How do we compare with the West in terms of technique and talent?

A: What I hear is that we are very good on the analysis part of it. Where we tend to slip is when we come to the consumer. We tend to forget that the consumer does not buy anything because of what is put in the advertisement but because of what he gets out of the product. We have to be more consumer-oriented. As far as the production is concerned we have made a quantum leap. We are really tops, we can match anything, anywhere, but again, when we come to films and television, we are way behind. We do not even have the right kind of actors and actresses for our purposes.

Q: How much importance do you give to market research before you go into a campaign? Some people seem to function in a vacuum...

A: There are two things here. Market research and advertising research are both very important. We are not here to put pictures and words together. Our expertise is in knowing the consumer, the market and our clients' products. You have to match both to arrive at a good combination... a good, successful campaign. You cannot function in a vacuum.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur

taking on a campaign for a client and shooting it off from the studios, advertising agencies today have to dig deep into market statistics, measure the potential in terms of existing competitive products and then enter another boardroom to plan the media launch which involves as much planning as market research, what with television having come up in a big way. But again it is question of how one looks at it. There is considerable difference of opinion in the advertising world on what really is a good advertisement

Lintas india, one of the top three agencies in the country and known in the business as the "number one brand makers" is a totally market-oriented firm which believes that it is there to sell goods through its campaigns, not to win awards for creative excellence. "Ninety per cent of any advertisement," says Stanley Pinto, one of the agency's leading lights, "must have to do with the 'what' of things. The other ten per cent is the translation of that 'what' into 'how'. The advertisments we make might not always be very exciting, they might not win awards but they always have a strong selling centre " Lintas India is one agency which believes in the efficacy of conducting a market research and running sale-oriented campaigns. According to Pinto, Lintas almost works like an extension of the marketing department of its clients and for every campaign they go back to the client with their market studies. At times they have advised their clients about the feasibility of launching one product or the other. On several occasions Lintas' clients have taken the advice, modified their products and not regretted it. But with several agencies this does not work. They feel there is no necessity for the feedback service to the client and they defend it. Bharat Dabolkar who wrote most of the punchy Amul butter campaigns and is a top executive at DaCunha enterprises thinks all the "jargon" about market research is a "lot of nonsense." "Those who talk of doing market research are just bluffing, using it as a crutch to provide more respectability to their profession," Dabolkar says. He insists his campaigns are nothing more than "simple common sense"; it involves nothing more. Indeed he says the more he tried to see things in terms of market research, the more confused he became. "Market and creativity are two vacuums and advertising is the challenge of creativity, not strategy." He illustrates his point with campaigns for various tea brands. "Everybody knows strength and taste are the things advertisers are talking about. You are successful if you can say it better. What do you need the market research for?"

Others, doubtless, disagree. Their main argument: advertisements exist

to sell. For this it is essential to understand human behaviour and the vicissitudes of the market. One has to have the heart to kill even the most creative of campaigns—"your own beautiful child" in the words of one in the business—if it does not have the selling potential. Most of all, opinion goes, a successful advertising man has to be a glutton for figures and information. That is quite a drab affair and it goes against the popular notion of advertising being a featherlight, glamour world.

That does not mean advertising is a dull place to be in. A copywriter who has recently shifted from journalism to advertising thinks her present profession is as exciting, if not more. "You keep meeting new interesting people who are a degree more unconventional than journalists and at times more thrilling. And there is always this challenge with new assignments coming." The environment, specially in Bombay, still India's advertising capital, is extremely professional. Work schedules are astonishingly precise and packed. Asked for an appointment, an execu

"A Whole Lot of Interesting Things Are Happening in the Ad World"

Bobby Sista of Sista's told SUNDAY

Shambhu "Bobby" Sista is one of the oldest hands—"a big, old dad" as someone put it—in the advertising business today, having been with it since the days of its infancy back in the Fifties to its present moment of youth. His father, Venkatrao Sista, was one of the pioneers of Indian advertising and the man credited with launching the country's first full-fledged advertising agency nearly 50 years ago. Bobby Sista himself took to the trade after studying advertising in England for two years at a time when the "need and awareness for advertising in India was just beginning to surface." He changed tracks for a brief period to become the marketing director of the* Readers' Digest *in the mid-Sixties but came back to skipper Sista's Private Limited to bigtime success

Q: *You have seen advertising change over three decades.*

A: Yes, the transformation has been phenomenal. At the time I began working, little was known of advertising in this country. People, even big industrialists did not seem to realise its importance. In the business itself the basic skills were still being developed. Not much was known of research or marketing, production techniques obviously were primitive when compared to what they are today. Today, advertising is a lot more professional, the techniques, the people, everything has changed.

Q: How would you compare the two eras?

A: It is very difficult to make comparisons. Every profession goes through a certain process in which there is competition all the time. The strong survive, the weak fall by the wayside but I would certainly like to say that the essential qualities of people involved in advertising then... they were giants, people with much more vision. They had much more concern for the profession than people have today. It is they who are responsible for making Indian advertising what it is today. It is they who, for example, had to first convince big business and industry of the value and benefits of advertising which was a lot of hard work. Also, the writers and artists involved in advertising at that time were great people. I mean any of the paintings of a man like O.C. Ganguly can be put up as a mural which is something you cannot do with the kind of artwork being produced today. (*Smiles*) Today, that aesthetic sense has gone.

Things have begun to look up with this budget. At least I have the feeling that the future holds promise....But what the ad world is unhappy about is the unfair measure of allowing 15 per cent discounts if public sector advertising is not done through private ad agencies.

Q. Is talent in short supply?

A: No, I woundn't say that, there are some very good people in advertising today but sometimes one does feel the pinch.

Q. What are the other problems that are facing the advertising industry today?

A: Things have begun to look up with this budget. At least I have the feeling that the future holds promise. We have even congratulated the government on the growth-oriented thinking but what the advertising world is unhappy about is this arbitrary, inexplicable, unfair and unprofessional measure of allowing 15 per cent discounts if public sector advertising is not done through private advertising agencies. I don't see what the logic behind this discount is. After all it is we who have got the expertise in the field. We developed all the skills and made advertising what it is today. These skills are not with the public sector. Then why the discounts? People do not realise it but advertising is one of the most insecure professions going. Today you might have all the good accounts, tomorrow you may not and you could really be down in the dumps. And the main culprit here is the public sector which not only hesitates but also, strangely, shifts its accounts from one agency to another every couple of years.

Q. But prospects, as you say, look bright for advertising.

A. Advertising in India is at a stage from where it can only go upwards. There is no sudden, overnight spurt visible but certainly a good period ahead. Coupled with this increase in consumer production has also come this new media vehicle—Doordarshan—which would be the biggest flow directly to the consumer. On the other hand, rural purchasing power is being tapped. Some say advertising is too urban-oriented, it isn't. The rural buyer is always coming to the nearest urban centre and he is influenced by what he sees there. A whole lot of things are happening in the advertising world... in a way we haven't even begun..

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur

Memorable Campaigns

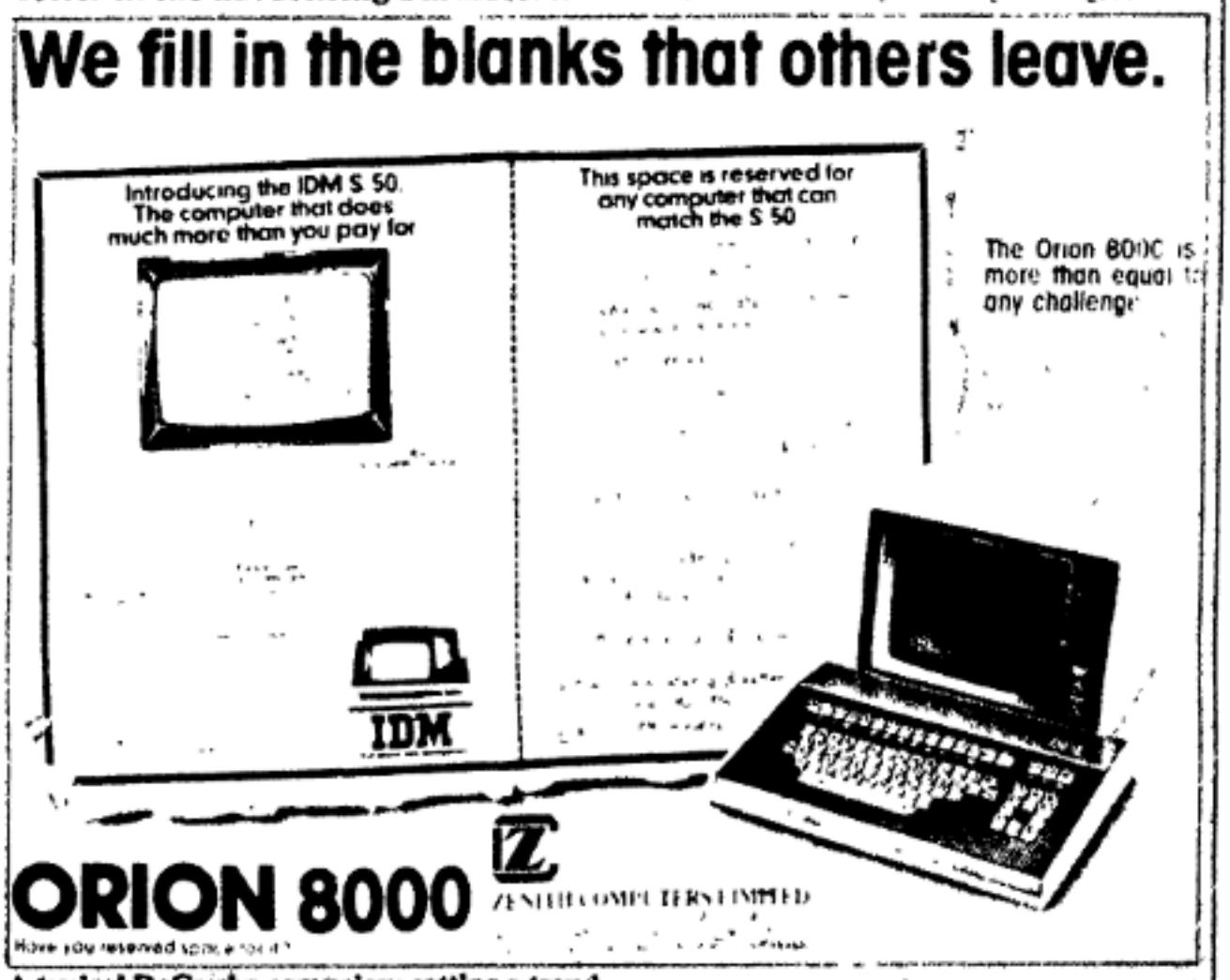
What makes an interesting, memorable campaign? Different people have different reasons. Good artwork, a couple of catchy lines: would that be sufficient? According to some, those are the right ingredients. But not everybody is prepared to accept that. Such an advertisement might be memorable, not essentially successful. And success in the market is the major determinant of the quality of a campaign. About a year-and-a-half ago an agency had released what looked like an exquisite, fair-as-is-the-rose-in-May advertisement for ladies' undergarments. On paper, it looked perfect. Yet the product it attempted to launch failed. In spite of all the creative genius it had, the campaign failed to sell. As Vinanti Tikku, a copywriter in Everest Advertising Agency says, "It is no longer important to just write a nice line, it should be able to take on the market."

Liril is a living legend. It is a campaign that—after being in the market for almost a decade—is still as fresh to the eyes and as successful on the sale-statistics charts. Liril was a crisis-management product and something for which the advertiser can take full credit. It was launched at a time when the popular soap industry was under the stress of stringent price control. Hindustan Lever which gets almost 50 per cent of its turnover from soaps was badly hit. They needed premium soaps to compensate the setback in the popular soap market. They relaunched Pears and Lux Supreme but with limited success. Lintas India or specifically Alyque Padamsee, then decided to do something. The Liril campaign was entirely his. For 18 months he and his men at Lintas researched. What do women fantasize in their bathrooms? What do men think of while bathing? Finally Padamsee came out with a slot that was still vacant: freshness. In only its second year, Liril became the number one premium soap in the market. An interesting sidelight is that Karen Lunel, the model in that film, has according to some statistics, had more one-time exposure than any filmstar: the short was running in 2,500 cinema houses across the country at the same time. Another success that Lintas has recently had is the "Lalitaji" campaign for Surf.

Then there was this series of Hot Shot campaigns done by Sista's for India's first instant camera. The "Hot Shot lady" captured the imagination and the market and last year the campaign won a string of awards for excellence. As one of Sista's rivals in the industry put it, "The Hot Shot campaign took the fear out of photography." Its creator is a lady called Jean Durante, creative director of Sista's and considered by her chief, Bobby Sista, one of the best advertising brains in the country.

DaCunha is in many ways a trend-setter in the advertising business. It was the first agency to name its competitors directly in its campaigns: the Nutramul campaign quoted the prices of all competitive products in the market to show how cheap Nutramul itself was. "People began saying this was not ethical," says Rekha Kalekar of DaCunha, "but we don't think ethics were at all involved. We were not passing a value judgment on our competitors; it was only a factual statement, quoting their prices." This seems to be a lifestyle at DaCunha's. Only recently, IDM computers had advertised their product and left a space open in the advertisement for anyone who could match the quality of IDM computers. DaCunha immediately pounced upon the opportunity, reproducing the IDM advertisement and filling up the space left open with an advertisement for "Orion 8000" computers. "We fill in the blanks that others leave" said the campaign banner.

One could go on. Advertising is an expanding, diversifying world. Things are falling into slots. Judgment is becoming classified and trends are multiplying. At an audio-visual show in Bombay recently, Ravi Gupta of Trikaya Advertising Agency pointed out some new fronts Indian advertising was breaking into. Advertising for rural markets, shoddy till a year ago, has gone slick with films being produced on *bidi* brands. Surreal, startling images are being increasingly used—for example, Dodsal pipelines, FU's campaigns. Also in use are computerised special effects. Last but not the least, political advertising was given a fillip by Rediffusion. What we shall see increasingly in the days to come is more public service advertising. Agencies have already launched plans for forming a federation of advertisers whose main work would be to enhance social consciousness and produce anti-liquor advertisements, a propaganda war on bride burning, ill treatment of women, family planning, savings, etc.



A typical DaCunha campaign: setting a trend

Sankaran Thakur, Bombay

'Advertising Pays in the Long Run'

Ashis Mitra of HTA told SUNDAY

Hindustan Thompson Associates Ltd. (HTA) is a big name in the advertising industry. An associate of a worldwide agency, HTA has given a new dimension to advertising in India by initiating scientific methods of communication and market research. With an annual billing of over Rs 32 crores, it occupies the enviable number one position in the advertising business. Ashis Mitra, manager of the Calcutta branch (head office: Bombay) spoke to SUNDAY on the state and prospects of advertising. Excerpts:



Ashis Mitra

Q: What is the reason behind the sudden boom in the advertising business?

A: Indian industry has begun to recognise advertising as an instrument of marketing. With the rapid growth of industry and the fierce competition in the market, the boom in advertising was expected. One can say that the businessman has realised that advertising boosts sales.

Q: There has been a mushrooming of advertising agencies. Do you think that they are competent enough to deliver the goods?

A: There are over 400 accredidated ad agencies in the country out of which only 10 per cent are genuine ad consultants, the rest can be called suppliers. Many people are lured into advertising because it can make a very good one-man business. The investment is minimum and the returns fantastic. Advertising is a scientific concept requiring indepth market research and analysis of communication problems. Most of the ad agencies which have sprung up overnight do not have the wherewithal to initiate such a research. However, there are a few brilliant new faces in the business like Response and Grant.

Q: The transformation of Doordarshan from black & white to a colourful, entertaining medium has considerable significance. How will the print media survive TV's pull on advertisers?

A: It has survived everywhere in the world and it will survive in India. Certain forms of ad campaigns have to be carried out through newspapers and periodicals. Going by our clients, there has been no cuts in ad budgets earmarked for the print media. It is the film industry which is going to be affected.

Q: Of the total amount spent on advertising, less than 10 per cent is spent on TV. The pace at which the TV network is expanding, it is expected to consume 33 per cent by 1990. Do you think that publishers have sufficient reason to panic?

A: In a country where 70 per cent of the people cannot afford two square meals a day it would be ridiculous to assume that they will be in a position to buy TV receivers by 1990. It is no use opening relay centres and floating TV waves in the ether. It is not likely that television will gobble up 33 per cent of advertising revenue.

Q: In about three weeks of pre-election campaign, the Congress(I) spent ten crores on advertising. Do you think that the party opened up new avenues for the advertising industry?

A: I am happy that the ad industry has been called upon to play such a role. But as a matter of principle we do not do political campaigning primarily because we do not have the necessary wherewithal to communicate with the masses living in remote villages. India's vote bank lies in the villages and I have doubts regarding the role played by those Rs ten crores.

Q: Are you satisfied with the amount spent on advertising today?

A: Certainly not. India spends about 0.3 per cent of its GNP on advertising which is about the lowest in the world—even less than what Pakistan spends. The Indian corporate sector spends a meagre 1.5 per cent of their sales turnover on advertising. The managers should realise that advertising pays in the long run, that one should increase one's ad budgets when one is doing badly.

Interviewed by Rajiv Bagchi

tive in one of the advertising agencies fixed the time of meeting at 17 minutes past six. He later explained he had to be in the studio till ten past six and coming up three floors (including the time needed to wait for the lift) would have taken approximately seven minutes.

Advertising today engages some of the best creative brains in the country. Names like Alyque Padamsee, described by some as the most outstanding advertising man in the country, the right mix of the marketing expert and the creative genius, Kersy Katrak, Roger Pereira, Frank Simoes, Bobby Sista, Mike Khanna, Tara Sinha, Sylvester DaCunha, among others. Another generation of talented people is coming up Jean Durante, Suresh Malik, Ivan Arthur and Quinetin Cohello But with work expanding and becoming more demanding, agencies are beginning to feel the "creative pinch." Slowly the creative talent begun to be soaked dry.

In the mid-Sixties and early-Seventies advertising was all razzmatazz while the business that generated advertising was not too good. Things today are the reverse. Business has multiplied manifold but there is a distinct fall in the number of applicants because the glamorous sheen of advertising had evaporated and people had realised it was not only fun but also a lot of hard work. Sometimes lines have to be written and rewritten a thousand times before the final one is selected. A small paragraph may take weeks to compose. One brand name could take all the permutations a human brain can do with the help of a computer. Naturally, more people went the other way. Standards fell and creativity, most people seem to agree, is nowhere near what it used to be in the Fifties and Sixties.

"You Cannot Cheat the Common Man"

Alyque Padamsee, managing director, Lintas India, told SUNDAY

Advertising in India has come a long way with Alyque Padamsee. He had "strayed" into it more than two decades ago "because it paid well": Rs 300 a month. He found it interesting and then he began making it more interesting and meaningful. That is the part Padamsee would like to stress on. Padamsee is known more as a theatre man but he is the brain behind as many advertising successes as plays, if not more. Advertising, in fact, has become an extension of his work on the stage.



Alyque Padamsee: "Advertising is such an interesting job to be doing"

Q: The theatre has always influenced you, hasn't it?

A: Yes, even where advertising is concerned. Theatre taught me that unless you can involve people you are not communicating. It might be information but not communication. You have to put electricity into the information to make it communication. And communication is what advertising is all about. You are not only telling people something, you are doing something to them. I often tell a story to illustrate this point. There were two blind men on a street. Both had sticks in their hands, tin-cups for coins and placards hanging from their necks. The placard of the first blind man said: 'I am blind.' But the other one had written on his placard: 'It is spring and I am blind.' The first was information, the second communication. Take that family planning slogan itself. "*Ek ya do bas*" it said. I do not say it was bad or unsuccessful—perhaps people got bored with it—but something could be done to it. Something that could communicate better. And then we made this film. We took a jar, put one tomato into it, put another and a third one. Then we show this hand trying to shut the lid and all the tomatoes burst up. And then we show this line: "*Ek ya do bas.*" People told me it was too highbrow and wondered whether the common man would understand it but we got an 80 to 85 per cent response. Even in cinema halls, in the galleries up front and in rural areas we could see people reacting to the bursting up of the tomatoes.

Q: Why have you stayed on in advertising, even after your success with the theatre?

A: Two reasons basically. Theatre doesn't pay well enough, advertising does. But more importantly, advertising is such an interesting job to be doing. There is so much interaction with life, so much about human nature that you come to know. Sometimes the things you come to realise are startling. For example, when we were launching a soap. Do you know the only time an ordinary middle-class woman is all by herself? All through the day she is either cooking or cleaning or looking after her husband and children. The only time she is all alone is when she shuts the doors of her bathroom to bathe. Then she starts humming and that bar of soap in her hand unlocks her fantasies. Those are the only moments a woman has exclusively for herself.

Q: So you work on that fantasy...

A: There is nothing wrong in having a fantasy. Everybody has a fantasy... You, I, everybody. It is a necessary release from the pressures of life. But let me tell you, I am one hundred thousand per cent against deceitful advertising. You cannot get anywhere with it. Do you think you can cheat the common man? No, he is very clever. Lots of people say advertising encourages extra spending. I do not think so. Nobody generally spends a rupee extra for things that he does not need. And nobody can be hoodwinked. The "*dehati*" is the man with the most common sense.

Q: This is a very interesting period for the industry, isn't it?

A: Yes. It has been such a good budget. We must congratulate the Prime Minister for having given us such a good one. The work will increase as business grows. I myself am recruiting more people this time than before. Then there are these very young, enthusiastic people who have gone out and opened their own agencies, making the scene so lively and competitive. They might be small, but they are very professional. We have all the "MBAs" coming in, experts in marketing and research techniques. There is much more thought content to advertising than it used to be. It is becoming more dynamic...it comes more than half the way to meet you which was not the case five or seven years ago. And television has come in a big way. An incredibly strong medium.

Q: What role do you see for advertising in the years to come?

A: The avenues are expanding. We are the only professionals in the communications business and soon the government will realise that...we have to deliver the goods.

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur

The problems of the advertising industry do not end here. There is the public sector which, to quote the managing director of one of the top agencies, has been "erratic and irrational" in its behaviour with advertising firms. Often they shift accounts without rhyme or reason. A major outflow medium is of course television now: the major focus of attention of advertisers. Ask anyone in the advertising industry and he will tell you how eager all clients are to put more money in this fast spreading medium. Suddenly the expenditure on advertising on television is galloping: an estimated Rs 30 crores in 1984, making a 50 per cent jump from Rs 20 crores in 1983. There are all indications that with the continuing expansion of the television network across the length and breadth of the country, inputs into television commercials will keep going up.

The question that is often asked is: Is there a threat to the print media? There can be no two opinions about it but the press has nothing to fear from television. Even when the television boom hit the West, it had left the press untouched. There could be an initial period of stress, particularly for the middle income press but the volume of press advertising is quite large. In 1984, while Rs 30 crores were spent on television, Rs 312 crores went into advertising in the print media. The written word always carries more weight. What television could really hit is advertising in cinema halls and in the outdoors.

But whatever be the balance, the volume of advertising is going to be much bigger and its presence will be felt more heavily everywhere. Never will there be a stage when there will be too much advertising. Where did it all begin? Someone remarked even the world's oldest profession needed advertising. Today there is no profession, in fact nothing that advertising does not touch. It follows us everywhere but in death.

Sankarshan Thakur, Bombay



A DaCunha creation: topical

"If Business Booms, So Does Advertising"

Stanley Pinto, director, Lintas India, told SUNDAY

Floor fifteen of Express Towers in Bombay is a revelation. It is the Lintas floor. Almost a dreamworld, the walls have blow-ups of Lintas' campaigns, panels of some of the best advertising specimens in the world and cartoon-quips on happenings inside the ad-world. In one cabin sits Stanley Pinto, the director of Lintas India. Short, stout and analytical, he spoke about Lintas and advertising. Excerpts:

Q: How do you rate the standard of advertising today?

A: It's a very professional world. Things are much better in the sense that more research facilities are available. We have access to a lot more information, marketing techniques have improved. Advertising thus, can be better focussed.

Q: Is the crisis on the creative side real?

A: Yes, there is a dearth of creative people and there are reasons for this. About a decade ago lots of people came into advertising, attracted by the glamour that was supposed to be here. The industry at that time did not need so many people so a lot of them, even good ones, were turned away. Today, the industry is expanding at a great rate but there aren't enough people wanting to come, perhaps because the glamour-myth has been exploded. So, a lot of mediocre talent has been given room. What is the alternative? Also, several talented people have gone freelance—they earn more money that way.

Q: You just said advertising is expanding. What is the extent?

A: Advertising is only the public face of business. If business booms, so does advertising. Take the sudden OPEC-inspired slump in business in 1974. Advertising was down too. I would not say advertising is booming in India today, the rate of growth is rather steady. But surely things are going to change in the next year or so.

Q: How is it likely to affect the advertising industry?

A: The increase in business will lead to a corresponding increase in advertising but there are other changes that are going to come. There is bound to be a mediawise redistribution of expenditure, a redivision of the media-pie. Television has become a much stronger medium with the middle classes specially. Cinema and a section of the press—the middle income press—will be under pressure.

Q: How much is Lintas influenced by the personality of the man who heads it: Alyque Padamsee?

A: A great deal, I should say. He is the most outstanding advertising man in the country. He knows exactly what to do before launching a campaign, is an expert on marketing techniques and a highly creative man. He, in fact, is the father of "Hindustan Lever" (of which Lintas India is the house agency).

Interviewed by Sankarshan Thakur

Be Indian, See Indian

The 'homemade' TV serial has arrived

Television has suddenly become Cindrella at the ball, with a new gown and the dirt washed off. Movie moghuls are rushing in from Bombay with sheaves of scripts and video cassettes of pilot projects for TV serials, hoping that theirs will be the glass slipper which will fit. The age of the Indian TV serial has finally arrived—late perhaps, but dramatically enough. The gold rush is on: Doordarshan has become an El Dorado for a dying film industry, already reeling from the deletirious effects of video piracy, and now, a spate of indigenous TV serials. The revised timings for the serials at 8.30 pm have cut into both the evening and night shows.

It all started with *Humlog* which came in as a lame, homely duck. It was a serial about a lower middle class family with its travails and triumphs which rushed past the finishing lines of rating charts, despite the cynicism of media critics. It crossed 85 per cent viewing, pushing *Lucy*, the favourite American sit-com (situation comedy) serial to the wings, and eventually off the screen. The world of advertising and the officials in the ministry of information and broadcasting woke up to the fact that they had a golden goose between themselves. While the tinsel world of Bombay could put in the creative talent, egged on by the advertising men who provide the money, Doordarshan could sell its precious TV time, a commodity advertisers are eager to grab.

Next to follow in the wake of the phenomenal and surprising popularity of *Humlog* was the slapstick TV serial *Yeh jo hai zindagi*, made at almost breakneck speed by Kundan Shah of *Jaane bhi do yaaron* fame. First, Shah was asked by Doordarshan to get six episodes (the requisite number before a serial can be aired) ready by December 1984, but in August he was told that the episodes had to be ready by mid-September. By February 1985, Doordarshan's audience survey had revealed that *Yeh jo hai zindagi* had a 91 per cent rating, leaving behind even *Humlog*, at 83 per cent. Even the perennially popular programme of Hindi film songs, *Chitrahaar* was not much above 80 per cent and the Sunday Hindi feature film (the box office hit, *Masoom*) got only 83 per cent rating. *Lucy's* top ratings had never crossed 50 per cent and *Yes Minister*, the BBC satirical serial, never crossed 30 per cent.

Imported programmes were out The accent and the idiom of the British programmes went over most heads, as did the humour. Finally the penny dropped: India is beautiful; be Indian, buy Indian—and see Indian. From 10 March this year, the TV serials made in India jumped to fourth gear: Doordarshan is screening, in its network programme beamed to 168 transmitters, six Indian TV serials a week, one episode of half an hour every evening (*Humlog* comes on twice a week) and an episode on Sunday mornings. Besides, there are many more in the pipeline.



Swaroop Sampat, Rakesh Bedi and Shafi Inamdar in *Yeh jo hai zindagi*

Most of the TV serials are from Bombay. Sponsors are now queueing up in New Delhi and as the secretary, information and broadcasting, S.S. Gill told SUNDAY, "We might have to start a rotation system of time slots for the advertisers... There is just that much time." It is almost as if the now fairly old new wave cinema—if that is what films which win the national awards or those which comprise much of the Indian panorama section of international film festivals in India or our exports to international film festivals abroad can be called—had found a lucrative outlet in TV serials or in telefilms. Television came to the rescue of cinema.

Sai Paranjpye's *Ados pados*, Kundan Shah's *Yeh jo hai zindagi*, *Idhar-udhar* (a Shobha Doctor idea), S. Sagar's *Khandaan*, Vinay Dhumale's *Apradhi kaun?* (a detective serial) have already made it to the little screen and it looks as if they are staying on. Doordarshan usually gives a contract for 13 episodes (about three months) which is renewable.

The *Delhi Chalo* call was given because the advertisers discovered after market surveys that they could get good mileage out of television. They had a captive audience and the attractive "umbrella coverage" for a large number of products. The runaway success of the sponsored shows which in the last year or so have increased the commercial revenue of Doordarshan from Rs 19 crores to over Rs 30 crores. But government officials are treading warily. They do not want Doordarshan's new found prosperity to defeat its original pur-

pose—to inform and enlighten viewers. Says Harish Khanna, director general, Doordarshan, "I would not like to copy foreign serials... If the formula psychology becomes obsessive, we will rue the day... Revenue is not my objective, it is purely incidental." But it is a marriage of convenience, really, between Bombay and Delhi: "The pressures might of course build up, but we do have the final say and control over what is screened... And we need each other. They have the good programmes, and they need the air time. I cannot make deals with Rohini Hattangadi, Sriram Lagoo, Sai Paranjpye or Gulzar." What the success of the two serials has done is to prove that India too can make comedies and soap operas. Our neighbouring countries and many of the Asian countries import TV shows, lock, stock and barrel. The dearth of foreign exchange has proved to be a blessing in disguise for Indian television.

There is another reason for Doordarshan's open-door policy to the Bombay filmworld. With the 180 new transmitters and the expansion of the TV network there had to be accompanying software production. Doordarshan does not have the requisite infrastructure or the equipment. Said Khanna, "Television has only 18 studios after 25 years of television in this country. It is already infancy leading into obsolescence. Moreover, the private studios have better equipment than us..."

Information secretary Gill,who can be described as the midwife of *Humlog* which started it all, is also cautious about opening that door to Bombay and sponsored programmes too wide: "I deliberately held back my hand. Low tariffs have helped increase the catchment area. People will get used to escalating tariff, we will increase them in a few months." Aware that the shoe is now on the other foot, it being a buyers' market today as far as TV goes, the information secretary adds: "Elsewhere it is the pressure of the seller and the product itself which dictate terms. We now give the subject, approve the director, the project and script. We have tighter control and can ensure aesthetic quality and social content." In fact, Doordarshan only takes 13 episodes at a time. Gill said again: "We do not want the producers to feel very relaxed, they will start giving us junk."

Interestingly enough, it all began with what was to be a vehicle for a social message. *Humlog* was initially intended to be a copy of the Mexican government-sponsored soap opera *Come With Me* and *We the Family*, which had a definite social objective: family planning, or adult literacy, or status of women; in fact a hundred episodes tackled a single problem.



Illustration by Bulbul Sharma

Mr Gill returned from a trip to Mexico in October 1983 with a file on the popular Mexican soap opera. Doordarshan was supposed to cut a soap opera series, a family serial, to the Mexican master design, but with Indian situations. *Humlog* was like a Trojan horse of entertainment, carrying hidden in it "socially relevant" messages: family planning, honesty, hard work, etc.

After meeting many writers, Gill found Mr Manohar Shyam Joshi, who was then editing *Weekend Review*, had been with *Dinman* and *Saptahik Hindustan* and is a popular Hindi novelist as the most suitable person to write the serial. "I thought his imagination would not run dry after 30 episodes...We needed at least 200...and he inspired confidence," said Gill. Next came the director P. Kumar Vasudev who was returning to TV after a career in films (*Kuwari Bahu* was his latest film). The *Humlog* saga was on, with S.C. Garg, formerly of the Delhi TV centre, as the executive producer.

The importance of the success of *Humlog* cannot be emphasised enough. The ice was finally broken with that indefinable common man. There was something in this sentimental serial about a lower middle class family of three generations headed by Dadaji which drew TV

viewers to identify themselves with it. The characters became household names: whereas an Amitabh Bachchan or a Rekha remain an Amitabh and Rekha after their myriad roles, Dadaji, the lovably inept Lallu, Barki, Chutki and Bhagvanti retained their TV names, often in their own homes as well.

So complete is the sense of identification that many young women have landed up in the house of the actress who plays Barki and demanded to know why she does not marry her boyfriend: Barki in one of the episodes cools off towards her fiance because she refuses to apologise to his uncle as he wants her to. In fact, the TV centre has even received threatening letters from people who write that they want to kill Barki because she has defied Indian social traditions by refusing to apologise to the uncle. Obviously, *Humlog* has got under the skin of most of the audience because it is so life-like. The *Humlog* family is everybody and anybody. Consequently, the heated reactions as well as the instant stardom of the *Humlog* cast when two of the actors were taken to the *Hindustan Times* office in Delhi to get their photographs taken for an article, the press practically mobbed them. Soap opera stars belong to the people as it were.

So intense is the involvement of the audience that author Joshi had to change the story: there is a compromise solution with the girl finally agreeing to marry the boy. When identification is complete and the reactions so intense—television has finally stepped over the thresholds of Mr and Mrs Average because of the aura of intimacy that the TV serial has—that Doordarshan will have to tread softly. The area is well-mined. For instance in one of the episodes, a new character Madhavi Nair goes to an old politician for a job as a journalist. When she leaves, the old man talks slightingly of her. Doordarshan has received a letter signed by 25 Malayalees objecting to this slur on a Malayalee girl.

When the line between life and art is removed, as is the case with *Humlog*, Doordarshan appears to have taken on more than it can chew. In the TV serial there is an organisation



ITV chief executive Ashok Raina with *Young Tarang* stars Nazia and Zoheb Hasan



Shailendra Singh

P.Kumar Vasudev, director of *Humlog*

A Giant Leap

Expenditure on advertising in India has been increasing by leaps and bounds. In the last five years the rate of revenue input in advertising has gone up by more than 50 per cent. The total amount spent in 1980 was Rs 196 crores. In 1984, the figure had jumped to Rs 403 crores. This despite the fact that a 20 per cent disallowance was placed on advertising in 1983 and the proportion of the hike from 1983 to 1984 was only 7.47 per cent. In the three pervious years the rate of increase was substantial: 27.04 per cent in 1981, 20.08 per cent in 1982 and 25.41 per cent in 1983. In all likelihood, the increase in expenditure now will be higher than at any other time in the past.

There are, perhaps, a thousand advertising agencies strewn across the country that contribute to and partake of the expenditure but a half of the total billing is controlled by 20 groups. A breakup in terms of capitalised billings:

Name of agency	Billings (in Rupees)
HTA	32 crores
Lintas India	22 crores
Clarion	20 crores
OBM	18 crores
Everest	10.6 crores
R.K. Swamy	10.5 crores
Ulka	9 crores
Chaitra	8.9 crores
Grant	5.9 crores
Rediffusion	5.6 crores
Sista's	5.5 crores
Shilpi	5.5 crores
Jaison	4.9 crores
DaCunha	4.5 crores
A.S.P.	4.1 crores
Frank Simoes	3.9 crores
Shobhagya	3.7 crores
A.C.I.L.	3.5 crores
Imageads	3.2 crores
Contract	2.2 crores

Note: These figures are liable to changes. Advertising is a fickle industry: accounts keep changing hands, new ones keep coming in.

Sankarshan Thakur



The *Yeh jo hai zindagi* team: (Standing, from left to right) Raman Kumar, S.S. Oberoi, Javed Khan, Farida Jalal, Rakesh Bedi, Manjul Sinha (director); (sitting, from left to right) Swaroop Sampat and Reena Pal

called Bahen, loosely based on *Saheli*, a feminist organisation in Delhi with which Doordarshan had originally wanted a tie-up. In fact, the Mexicans would even send out social workers to their viewers who had problems.

What most of the people like about *Humlog* is the moral values it obviously does get across. Many viewers cite the example of the honest policeman, Khan, who is after a corrupt politician. One of the telling episodes in which the socially-relevant message comes across brilliantly is when Khan is going to be transferred because of his pursuance of the truth. His friend asks him to speak to an influential Muslim politician. Khan sarcastically asks him whether the time has come when a Muslim policeman can only turn to a Muslim politician. When the other policeman says that all those who belong to a minority have to help each other, Khan replies, "But I belong to the majority of those who believe in the truth." His line and attitude went straight to the hearts of the viewers

But the real question about *Humlog* is, will it in the end only serve to reinforce traditional views or will it become a vehicle, an engine of social change? It could easily become either. Never have we had such a powerful and influential medium at our disposal. Even those who do not touch Hindi cinema with a bargepole are addicted to this serial--even cynical journalists. Doordarshan could achieve this miracle, with Ashok Kumar, the narrator serving as shepherd guiding sheep away from the path of corruption. It could all go so wrong as well if *Humlog* goes off the rails.

The other TV serials are quite different. While *Humlog* shows the lower middle class and by and large appeals to them and those in small towns, *Khandaan* appeals to the upper class. It also shows their lives. The camera zooms in during the opening shots each week on Nariman Point: this is the world of big business—the high life. The talk is in lakhs, even the telephones are imported, as are the cars. A combination of Dallas with shades of Shyam Benegal's *Kalyug*, this serial has, however, introduced Bombay filmworld to TV with its stars: Girish Karnad, Sriram Lagoo, Rohini Hattangadi, Tanuja, Jalal Agha. It is absorbing.

Some of the other TV serials, like the runaway success story, *Yeh jo hai zindagi* show an upwardly mobile middle-middle class. But the serials are all Bombay-based cousins of Hindi cinema, albeit slickly made. Mr Gill says that this is so because all the writers are in Bombay or Delhi. The television serial is here to stay, courtesy *Humlog*, the forerunner which might eventually be replaced. TV serials have become an addiction with everybody waiting for the next instalment. The fact that the attention span need only be half an hour might partially explain the phenomenal success of the serials. But India has proved, for better or for worse, that she can make them, too.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

'Humlog is Meant for the Common Man'

Manohar Shyam Joshi, the creator of Humlog, told SUNDAY

***Q**: There is a great deal of controversy about* Humlog *being too low-brow?*

A: The Indian government wanted to make a soap opera based on the Mexican one. Miguel Sabido, the Mexican playwright and stage director is a relapsed Marxist and high-brow but was he deliberately low-brow for the government programme?

Q: And you?

A: My credentials as a novelist are high-brow—relapsed but still Marxist. The post-modernist school in fiction—Graham Greene, Salman Rushdie, Gabriel Garcia Marques—do not believe in all this modern hanky-panky. Frankly I find the French filmmaker Goddard as sickening and as cliche-ridden as a Bombay film... There is a cleavage amongst those who will see a Goddard film and those who will not... I think low and high-brow can be mixed; high-brow can become low-brow... Everything is a cliche, the post-modernist cry is: What is new? Life is a cliche, therefore,enjoy and see the funny side.

Q: And that is what you give in Humlog?

A: Mr S. S. Gill wanted a soap opera but with Indian situations. The Mexican variety is even more didactic and loud—blatant propaganda. If people find *Humlog* boring, what would the Mexican one be? Ashok Kumar appears after every six minutes. The Mexicans follow the American theory of a six-minute attention span. That is why every six minutes, there is a commercial. In Mexico they have their media personality who makes a point which has already been made.

Q: What kind of letters does Doordarshan receive?

A: Mostly letters from girls who say that they are like Barki and would like to revolt like her but have nobody to help them. We got an interesting letter from a girl who wrote: "Since the chromosome comes from the male, my father is responsible for my being a girl... Please get Ashok Kumar to broadcast this. I cannot tell my grandmother and mother-in-law this, but you can tell them so that they do not blame women if a male child is not born."

Q: How did you get involved in Humlog? *From the* Hindustan Times *to soap opera is quite a change.*

A: Mr Gill returned from Mexico with a file on the soap operas and called a group of us. Most of the writers said no because the money was not good. Gill told me that money could be discussed later, the priority was to do it—he almost made it sound like a national duty.

Q: Were you not to make the series in Bombay originally?

A: We were told in February last year to go to Bombay to select the actors and that the serial would be shot in the films division. But the advertising world knew that the 21st century was coming. The air was thick with phrases like quizzes, sit-coms, talk shows. I worked with ITV (Independent Television) to help devise a sit-com. Suddenly there appeared Shobha Doctor: she had ideas and a story, and as suddenly we were told that it would be Delhi and that there would be Shobha Doctor. The go-go lady, the dynamic executive... I had until then thought I was only a consultant. I had planned it as a government set-up. But Shobha Doctor wanted to work on a one-to-one basis: one writer, one director, one writer... I left *Hindustan Times* on 24 April and shooting began at break-neck speed. In fact, the original cast ran away, they were apprehensive. I had never even heard of soap operas, so I went to the US Information Service and boned up.

Q: There was a great deal of public uproar against the girl who refused to apologise to her boyfriend's uncle.

A: Eighty-five per cent of the mail was against the defiance of a middle class girl. "We will shoot her," people wrote.

Q: How did you find a way out of this situation?

A: The boy will eventually agree. I changed the story. Dada*ji*, our equivalent of the American psychiatrist tells the uncle, Jata Shankar, that since he still adheres to traditional principles, he should understand that the world had changed; the young girl, had she been a cynic, would have agreed to apologise to him but as she is also an idealist and sticks to her principles, she is just like him. In the clash of wills, his would have to go.

Q: Humlog *has been the butt of a lot of criticism.*

A: There are two kinds of intellectual elitists: those who would like to see Keki Daruwala and Muktibodh read their poems on television—the kind of art generally above themselves—or the second, who even if they do want something popular, their notion of popular is something western... Some of the critics are so patronising, (they) do not understand Hindi. Amita Malik thinks that Lallu is the family servant who speaks funny English... She wrote that *Humlog* is a combination of *Daddi ma jaagi* and *Adhe Adhure*. And then when she wrote about the trans-Jamuna audience of *Humlog* she was giving me another compliment—*Humlog* is meant for them, not for her.

Q: You mean television is not really for the intellectuals?

A: Well, Anil Dharker described Tabassum as a bad interviewer because of her loud gestures and moving eyes... This is what David Frost does as well. Or those American shows which begin with, 'Well, hi there folks!' After all, this is show business. People are not sitting in a dark hall. They are busy eating, talking... You have to get across to them, you have to be loud.

Interviewed by [illegible]



Shekhar Singh

Manohar Shyam Joshi

Doordarshan's Money Spinners

Doordarshan expects its earnings from commercial and sponsored programmes to touch Rs 30 crores annually


Shekhar Singh

Jayashree Arora: *Humlog's* Bhagwanti

What began as a discreet invitation by Doordarshan to private producers to improve TV programmes has resulted in the creation of a new genre of entertainment. It was in 1981 that Doordarshan decided to abandon its closed-door policy and open new vistas for private entrepreneurs. It hesitatingly sent feelers to advertising agencies and producers to assist in creating popular TV. Doordarshan had before it the recommendations of a committee set up by the then information and broadcasting minister, Vasant Sathe, which had initiated the commercialisation of Doordarshan in a big way. Before launching its commercial programme scheme, Doordarshan recalled the objectives of the committee: "The government wanted to augment its revenue, encouraging outside talent by getting sponsors and with some of the additional revenue obtained through sponsorship, improve Doordarshan's programmes."


Shekhar Singh

Rajesh Puri: the inimitable Lallu of *Humlog*

The response to Doordarshan's invitation at that time was far from heartening. Few producers or professional agencies were equipped with either hardware or software to give Doordarshan the entertainment package it demanded. There was a flurry of activity as professionals looked around for new talent which they could exploit on the screen of the 'idiot box.' Media planners were suddenly asked to learn a new vocabulary—story-board, pilot programme, time slots. Restricted to producing 10 to 20 second TV spots, they were pressed to expand their horizons to plan for 20-25 minutes' of viewing time.

Among the first to break into new territory on television was Concept Advertising which brought in for its clients a galaxy of *ghazal* talent (Pankaj Udhas, Peenaz Masani, Talat Aziz and Anup Jalota); the ever-popular programme of *filmi* song sequences, *Chitrahaar* and its counterpart in Bombay, *Chhaya Geet*, were quick to find sponsors. Trikaya Advertising went a step further by negotiating a Rs 15 lakh contract with Doordarshan: they produced the highlights of the India-West Indies Test series of 1983 for their client Thums Up, and enthralled millions of cricket fans. Then came the sponsored serials from across the seas—like Lucy and *Telematch*. TV had finally become an ideal medium for an advertiser.

If TV became an extremely suitable medium for an advertiser, for Doordarshan commercialisation of TV became a goldmine. Money from sponsors and advertisers became a steady flow replacing the earlier trickle. Consider the revenue earned by Doordarshan ever since it went commercial on 1 January 1976. At that time only static spots were allowed and advertising revenue from eight stations including Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras was a paltry Rs eight lakhs. Regular commercials were permitted in late 1976 and by the end of that year Doordarshan had netted Rs 80 lakhs. By 1980 commercialisation had added Rs nine crores to Doordarshan's coffers. With the rush of sponsored programmes the figure rose to Rs 20 crores in 1983 and an estimated Rs 28 crores in 1984. By 1984, TV became the second largest advertising revenue-earner next to press advertising. According to indications, advertising expenditure on TV in 1985 is likely to touch Rs 45 crores. Doordarshan officials themselves expect their earnings from commercials and sponsored programmes to touch Rs 30 crores this year.

When Doordarshan went commercial in a big way, it was clear that the response to its appeal would depend largely on its rate structure. Doordarshan had to offer advertisers a viable package for them to shift their attention from the time-tested medium of press and radio to experiment on TV. Examine the present rate structure of Doordarshan: a 10-second spot on the national hook-up during prime time costs charges Rs 35,000, out of which the advertiser is permitted two minutes of advertising. All production costs of the sponsored programme are to be met by the advertiser and not more than three products can be advertised in one programme.

The production cost of every programme or part of any serial works out to around Rs one lakh According to agency estimates, Doordarshan's own soap serial, *Humlog*, cost Rs 65,000 per programme, *Khandaan* produced by the HTA, Rs 85,000 and *Apradhi Kaun* over a lakh. Other sponsored programmes may cost more *Paying Guest*, a serial to be aired soon by Rajashree Productions (produced for Dabur and Ponds by OBM) is likely to cost Rs 1,50,000 per serial An exceptionally good programme with a star cast (there are several in the pipeline) and excellent production quality can cost the advertiser anything between Rs 2,00,000 and Rs 2,50,000 Add to this the cost of Rs 35,000, for each product and the sponsor can spend upto Rs 25 lakhs if he needs a minimum of 15-20 repeats of the spot in a year. It is because of the high costs of production, coupled with the fact that the facility of more than one product can be advertised, that most of the large sponsors with Doordarshan today are those which have a multi-product range before them. Take the largest sponsor on TV today: Hindustan Lever, Food Specialities, Tata Oil Mills, Reliance Textiles and Godrej. They have all responded enthusiastically to a multi-product appeal on Doordarshan, and have divided their expenses on TV among a number of products.

What advantages do advertisers have if they sponsor programmes on TV and what is the reason behind some advertisers (like Vicco Vajradanti and Lakhani Hawai Chappal) slashing their press and radio budgets for TV advertising? According to D K. Bose, media controller, HTA, advertising on TV has come to stay in India because it is a cost-efficient medium and because advertising on television attracts a captive audience of nearly 40 million people. "No other medium has the scope to reach such a large segment of society I am confident that with the success of commercial TV already established, in years to come, TV will earn more and more revenue for Doordarshan." A similar view in favour of increased advertising over TV was expressed by Avishesha Bhojani, account director, Ulka Advertising, which has got several sponsored programmes lined up for its clients and are to be aired in a few months' time "Advertisers have realised that TV gives greater mileage to the product than any other medium. It is a safe investment with a guaranteed audience response," said Ms Bhojani.

Doordarshan officials themselves admit that the tremendous rush for TV advertising and sponsored programmes took them by surprise. They are, in fact, facing great pressure from advertisers for time on TV and with limited time-slots, Doordarshan has been forced to refuse time to prospective advertisers. So much so, that if an advertiser wants to air a sponsored programme on prime time, he can only get a suitable slot after December 1985. (At present Doordarshan allows two sponsored programmes to be aired on the national hook-up between 8.30 pm and 9.30 pm. Four hours of sponsored time are allowed every Sunday). With limited time slots Doordarshan has to turn down offers for entertaining programmes and has been blamed for being indiscriminate in deciding which sponsor to give time to. There are no takers for sponsors

Popularity Ratings

From being the poor relative of Bombay films for years, television has suddenly become a major source of entertainment. People who earlier switched on TV sets only to watch the Sunday film and Chitrahaar, are staying at home on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings to watch their favouritie serials. *Humlog*, *Khandaan*, *Yeh jo hai zindagi* and *Ados pados* are the new serials that are keeping viewers glued to the box.

Yeh jo hai zindagi leads with a 91 per cent rating beating the American soap opera, *Lucy*, by 40 per cent, according to the Doordarshan audience survey "It is quick moving, good, clean fun. The main characters, Ranjit, Renu and Raja are very likable and get into situations which can happen to any of us," says Santosh Manchanda. The comedy appeals to everyone; children identify with the bullied younger brother, Raja. "My sister treats me just like that," was a comment made by a boy recently. "It is an action-packed comedy about real life and has no boring messages," remarks Ashok Hemrajani. A senior lady executive, however, stopped watching *Yeh jo hai zindagi* because she found herself talking just like Renu.

Humlog has a committed group of viewers who defend this family saga. "It takes an honest and sympathetic look at middle class family life," says Vinita Rawat. "The concept of family values is strong and the characters support each other. Unlike *Khandaan*, where everyone hates everyone." But others find *Humlog* dull and feel the series has run out of story matter. "It started well, but now Majhli cries too much. Typical Delhi Doordarshan amateur stuff," complains Meera Rai. "But Lallu is good," she adds. Lallu has a high popularity rating among children and so has police inspector Shamdhar. "He looks just like Amitabh Bachchan from the back," thinks nine-year-old Aruna. "It's for old people; it's too slow. The serials from Bombay are much more entertaining," says Rajesh Jaggi.

Khandaan, a slick *Dallas*-cum-*Dynasty* serial from Bombay, has a mixed following. "Intelligent but too serious," says Anne Khan. Many find it "artificial." Promilla Malhotra dismisses *Khandaan* with, "We are not interested in the problems of the millionaire class."

Ados Pados, a serial about a divorced father bringing up a child, does not have many takers yet. But the child character Robin has won a lot of sympathy by repeatedly failing his Hindi examinations. The main appeal of a successful serial seems to be humour—preferably the slapstick kind—and if that humour can be combined with real life situations, a hit serial is created. But the comedy has to be clean with no risque scenes or conversation. "There was too much talk about girlfriends in the BBC serials Our Indian serials are those we can watch without feeling embarrassed and, what's more important, the children can enjoy them," says Kapil Rai firmly.

Regular serial-watchers identify with one charactor or the other. Even though the names of the actors are unknown to most viewers, their TV-screen images have become a part of many a family. "If I miss an episode of *Humlog*, I have to run to the neighbours to find out what happened. I really worry about these people as if they were my friends," says Santosh Manchanda. This kind of audience involvement was totally lacking in the case of the foreign serials. "We used to watch those programmes without understanding half the jokes. Anyway they were no good. *Sorry* was really pathetic but we used to watch it because there was nothing else," says Vinita Rawat. Not any more. Indian soap serials have arrived with a tremendous debut.

Bulbul Sharma, New Delhi

on the second channel of Doordarshan in spite of there being a 50 per cent discount for advertisers. Doordarshan has also been hard-pressed by advertisers to increase advertising time on TV or extend broadcast time. "Doordarshan is acting like a rationing agency, not a marketing agency," complained one advertiser who has been trying for a time slot on TV which he has been promised only after six months.

Faced with an unprecedented response from advertisers and sponsors vying for time, top officials at Doordarshan are contemplating a revision of tariff and an increase in broadcast time. Doordarshan officials argue that the advertising rates offered by Doordarshan in its new programme policy effective from 1 March this year is an incentive for advertisers. Going by the present rates charged by Doordarshan for spots on TV, two minutes of advertising time would cost an advertiser over three lakh rupees. This time was being offered to the sponsor for a mere Rs 35,000.

According to S. S. Gill, secretary in the information and broadcasting ministry, the realisation that sponsored programmes on television has great potential came after a great deal of discussion and persuasion "Today the TV serial has become an established fact of life. With indigeneous production of serials, imported programmes like *Lucy* and *Different Strokes* are not missed any longer," he said. When asked why Doordarshan had offered prime time to sponsors at a discount rate, he explained that he had "deliberately decided on a low tariff. If we had made it an expensive proposition for advertisers, then the source would have dried up soon. The low tariff introduced by us has helped advertisers in cashing in on the boom." He felt the rates of Doordarshan for sponsored programmes were a mere pittance and that the tariff was likely to be revised soon. The tariff when revised would be at least "more than doubled."

Besides anxiously waiting for a revised tariff, advertising agencies and producers of sponsored programmes are also worried about the future prospects of setting up studios and production units of their own. Producers at Doordarshan have been instructed to look around for more ideas and put on the air new serials like *Humlog*. The films division too has been requested to produce films and serials which Doordarshan can offer to advertisers. This will naturally result in a proliferation of more and more programmes and will ease the great demand on private producers. Independent Television Company (ITV), was among the first of the private companies to offer Doordarshan sponsored programmes ITV produced the popular musical serial of Indian pop music, *Young Tarang* starring Nazia and Zoheb Hasan and is currently producing *Quiz Time* for its sponsors, Limca and Amul chocolates.

Said the chief executive of ITV, Ashok Raina, "The medium of commerial TV and sponsored programmes has been suddenly thrust upon the Indian audiences. Though the programmes are extremely popular, what is lacking is a cohesive policy on such programmes. Now that Doordarshan has asked the films division to produce additional programmes with a limited time slot, what will happen to producers like us? Why have us here when there is no time to air the programmes we produce?" A way out, according to Raina, is to allow private companies to sell serials directly to Doordarshan so that they could later offer the programmes to sponsors and advertisers.

There is likely to be a further spurt in sponsored, programmes being aired on Doordarshan as the infrastructure is being expanded for more television programmes. The package deal offered by the government in September 1984 to set up ancillary units for production is soon to be implemented. Over 100 private entrepreneurs were approached by the government to set up studios for video programme production. The equipment in the package (imported from Sony) costing Rs 23 lakhs was offered to private parties for Rs 15 lakhs There are about 30 such producers who will be receiving this equipment in a few months and will commence independent programme production.

To meet the daunting demand from advertisers for whom television has become the ultimate medium, Doordarshan is now faced with a situation where it does not know how to cope with the stupendous interest generated in commercial television. During its short journey from obscurity to unimaginable popularity, commercial television has decimated radio advertising, and affected other forms of media. Commercial television is now making inroads into the world of celluloid and threatens to annihilate cinema as well.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

See No Evil

"No sex please, we are Indian" seems to be the dictum that Doordarshan is following before allowing the sponsors to air any programme. After receiving a spate of complaints about objectionable contents in some programmes, Doordarshan has now put its foot down. "We have become hard nuts in accepting scripts and programmes," said S.C. Garg, programme controller, Doordarshan.

Contracts of several advertisers have been terminated prematurely by Doordarshan in the past few months because they were objectionable. Some of the commercials taken off the TV screen recently are the Clearasil commercial produced by OBM, Hot Shot (Sistas), Rexona and McDowells (both produced by Lintas). "We do not want the evils of celluloid—sex, violence and crime to be reflected on the television screen.

Television viewers have protested against commercials aired by Doordarshan on family planning, for example, the commercial on Nirodh. Doordarshan has consequently issued a directive for all such "adult commercials" to be aired after 9.20 pm. After 1 May, viewers will see all commercials of family planning, contraceptives and sanitary napkins, only in the late hours.

A special screening committee has been set up by Doordarshan to clear all commercials and sponsored programmes. The committee ensures that the hem-line of outfits adorning female models displaying products on TV, is below the knee and the films bereft of even a hint of sex. Nudity and obscenity are taboo.

Doordarshan has, however, not as yet paid heed to complaints from conservative viewers about the dialogues in some of its most popular sponsored programmes. *Humlog*, for instance, has been attacked by viewers for introducing elements of social disparity on television: marital discord, divorce and corruption. Strong objection has been raised to the dialogues used in *Khandaan*, another serial which is high on the popularity charts. Perhaps, Doordarshan should now evolve a new code of conduct against the use of offensive words which are heard often on TV serials, including *Khandaan*.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

A Sweet Deal in Orissa

The J.B. Patnaik government through a cabinet sub-committee decision has virtually allowed Dr Banshidhar Panda, owner of Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys, to get away without paying Rs 8.59 crores, which his company owes the state as electricity dues.

"I made a man of him." That is how Janata Party stalwart and former Orissa chief minister Biju Patnaik would like to remember Dr Banshidhar Panda, the owner of Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys Limited (IMFA), makers of the rare silicon metal which has a high demand in the world market. But Dr Panda has disappointed Biju Patnaik, who had at one point of time helped and encouraged him to set up IMFA. Biju Patnaik is upset because Dr Panda's dealings with the government have been the subject of a raging controversy for the last four years. Along with another Janata Party leader of the state, Srikant Jena, Biju Patnaik has alleged that the "unholy nexus" between the chief minister, J. B. Patnaik, and Dr Panda has been growing over the last few years at the cost of the state exchequer.

It all started in 1981 when the government-controlled Orissa Forest Corporation (OFC) supplied charcoal to IMFA at the rate of Rs five a bag. At that time, the Corporation supplied the same quality of charcoal to other parties at Rs 25 a bag. Says Srikant Jena, "The OFC gave this benefit to IMFA although, on principle, the highest bidder should have been awarded the contract. When we raised protests in the Assembly, the chief minister defended his government's action on the ground that IMFA was a local industry."

The government's dealings with IMFA have been questioned the most in the settlement of arrears amounting to Rs 8.59 crores which the firm has to pay for electricity consumed by it. When the Orissa State Electricity Board (OSEB) demanded the payment, IMFA moved the courts challenging the demand of the OSEB. The controversy regarding the payment of electricity dues arose when IMFA wanted an additional 30 MW of electricity for its charge chrome unit in Koraput district, two years ago. It would have normally gone unnoticed but for the acute power shortage gripping the state. The question that the opposition had then asked was: How could the government allow such a substantial supply when most public and private sector industries in the state were working much below the rated capacities owing to power cuts?



Dr Banshidhar Panda and his wife (left) with former defence minister R. Venkataraman(in the corner, next to the plaque) and Orissa chief minister J.B. Patnaik and his wife at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of IMFA's charge chrome plant at Choudwar

The question assumed importance in view of the fact that IMFA owed the OSEB more than eight crores of rupees. In fact, the State Electricity Board had issued a circular that it would not give additional power to any company which had a backlog of payments. Further investigation showed that the OSEB, just before sanctioning the additional power to IMFA, signed an agreement with the firm in December 1982 to settle the arrears. The agreement was concluded quietly at the government's instance as it followed the decision of a cabinet sub-committee. The only excuse the government gave for the additional supply of power was that the IMFA's charge chrome plant was a 100 per cent export-oriented unit.

The pact between IMFA and OSEB has been dubbed by the opposition leaders as a "favourable act on the part of the government." The agreement has been challenged in a public interest litigation in the Orissa High Court by Srikant Jena. The deal with IMFA, however, did not remain within the courtroom since Srikant Jena and others of the Janata Party raised it in the recently-concluded Assembly session.

The point of controversy which has been raised by the opposition leaders in the Assembly is over the terms of the settlement of the dispute through



Dr Panda with former Prime Minister Morarji Desai

the payment of arrear dues. They have argued that the agreement has resulted in a virtual exemption or at best it has to pay a nominal amount. According to the agreement, IMFA is required to pay Rs 3.48 crores, which is officially described by the IMFA authorities as its "admitted dues," in 20 equal instalments over a period of five years. The dispute over the rest of the Rs 5.11 crores was to be referred to a board of arbitrators consisting of three retired High Court judges.

The first point of the agreement has been questioned in the public interest litigation on the ground that "the admitted dues of Rs 3.48 crores could be kept in banks to generate enough interest to pay off the instalments within the period of five years." As far as the second point is concerned, it is described as a still more concessionary gesture of the government towards the firm. Srikant Jena has pointed out that there is no deadline by which the dispute could be settled by the arbitrators and neither were there any guidelines. Contends Jena in his petition: "The reference to arbitration will also deprive the OSEB of the use of the amount and the interest on it."

SUNDAY met the chairman of the Orissa State Electricity Board, Mr S. K. Nanda, for his views on the appointment of the panel of retired judges. He was of the opinion that the constitution of the cabinet subcommittee panel had become "redundant" because the OSEB has decided to abide by the Arbitration Act. As per the provisions of the Act, said Mr Nanda, the IMFA case should be referred to a special arbitration tribunal since it involved an amount of over Rs two crores. Mr Nanda also added that a tribunal was yet to be appointed.

The opposition also raised another point in the Assembly. It deals with the agreement between IMFA and the OSEB. In view of the Electricity Supply (Orissa Amendment) Act 1981, it was pointed out "the legislature passed the Act with a view to enforcing uniform tariff to avoid discrimination and arbitrary concessions sometimes made to a few selected customers." Quoting the provisions of the Act, it is contended that under the legislation, IMFA "is liable to pay at the revised uniform tariff rate together with interest accruing thereon." The Act, in fact, empowered the OSEB authorities to realise its dues from any consumer since, according to the provisions, "no such realisation of amount or making or creation of demand shall be questioned in any court and, if questioned the objection shall not be maintained by such a court merely on the ground that there exists any agreement, undertaking, commitment or concession, fixing special tariffs or providing for fixation of special tariffs for the sale of electricity to such persons."



Dr Banshidhar Panda

The government's contention is that "when the disputes are referred to the board of arbitrators, they are expected to dispose of the same in the light of the statutory provisions in force. It is, however, open to the parties to settle the disputes pending in various courts and reach an amicable settlement providing for realisation of the admitted arrears as well as referring all other pending disputes to a regularly constituted board of arbitrators consisting of retired High Court judges." This official explanation has not satisfied the critics who persist in their allegation that "the concession given to IMFA amounts to whimsical squandering of public money in which every tax payer is interested." What has provoked the critics more is the government's "out of the way step to appoint a sub-committee to recommend the out-of-court settlement of the disputes with IMFA." The other point which Srikant Jena has mentioned in his litigation is "the irrational splitting up of the tariff." While the tariff part of the dispute has been settled for payment in 20 equal instalments, the surcharge has been referred to the arbitration panel. The official explanation for the grant of the instalment facility is that "in view of the heavy quantum of arrears, instalment facilities have been given to IMFA." As opposition politicians put it, the arrears would run into about Rs 10 crores if the interest is taken into account.

The controversy over what the opposition politicians describe as "special links" between the government and IMFA, has assumed a greater dimension with the alleged evasion of income tax by the company. Again it is Srikant Jena who has taken a leading role in pointing out the manner in which IMFA has evaded income tax. In a letter to the commissioner of income tax, Orissa, Mr Jena wrote that the firm had obtained relief from the income tax department since it was paying electricity tariff at the rate of 3.8 paise

per unit. In reality it was making payments at the rate of 2.5 paise per unit and thereby paying less income tax. The matter which Mr Jena raised related to the period between 1968-69 and 1972-73. Said Mr Jena, "The difference of 1.3 paise in the two rates will total up to a huge amount on which no tax has been paid." When SUNDAY contacted the commissioner of income tax, G. B. Chand, he said "The case (against IMFA) has been reopened with the permission of the Board (Central Board of Direct Taxes). The reassessment needed the Board's permission since it was a case over eight years old."

Dr Panda's troubles may not end there. In May last year, a statement was made in the Rajya Sabha that IMFA had been fined over Rs 50 lakhs for the unauthorised manufacture of some items in its Therubali plant in Koraput district. The statement, said Mr Jena, had been made only a few days before the scheduled foundation-stone laying ceremony of IMFA's second charge chrome plant at Choudwar. "Despite my memorandum to chief minister J. B. Patnaik," recounts Jena, "and the then defence minister Mr R. Venkataraman not to grace the function, the protest was rejected and both the ministers went by IMFA's helicopter (from Bhubaneswar) to Choudwar to perform the ceremony."

The helicopter is another sore point with the opposition in Orissa. Said Biju Patnaik: "Dr Panda gave his helicopter to the Congress(I) and J B Patnaik for his state-wide election tours during the last parliamentary and Assembly polls. But when I asked him to give it to me for an election meeting of the Janata Party, he refused to part with it saying that it had been booked earlier by the CM. This was a lame excuse. Dr Panda has been indulging in politics without directly participating in any political party."



At the foundation stone-laying ceremony of IMFA's charge chrome plant at Choudwar. On the dais can be seen R. Venkataraman, former defence minister, chief minister J.B. Patnaik, his wife and Dr Panda

Mr Biju Patnaik should know for it was he who had asked Dr Panda to come to Orissa leaving his job in the USA. In 1961, when Biju Patnaik had gone to London, Dr Panda had met him there. "I found him a bright boy," recounted Biju Patnaik. A graduate in metallurgy from the MIT, USA, Dr Panda was asked by Biju Patnaik to come home and start a smelting furnace for ferro-alloys in the state. He did not have the finances and it was Biju Patnaik who, as chief minister, assisted him. Since then, Dr Panda has become a major industrialist of the state. Naturally he has had to keep in touch with politicians in power.

According to IMFA authorities—Dr Panda was unavailable for comment as he had gone to Sweden—electricity is the major raw material for the production of ferro-alloys. Said M.S. Dass, assistant general manager (public relations) of IMFA, "For the production of silicon metal, 60 per cent power is required. As regards the payment of dues to the electricity board we are not going to run away. We will definitely pay our dues." Mr Dass also said that earlier almost everyday there used to be disputes with the electricity board regarding tariff. They had all been settled. The factory in fact was closed down for three months because it had utilised all the power allotted to it. "We pay Rs one crore a month as our electricity dues," said Mr Dass. "I don't see what the difficulty is in our payment of instalments."

As far as the use of the helicopter is concerned, Mr Dass said, "When the chief minister asks us for the helicopter, we can't say no." Who paid for it, we asked. Mr Dass hedged about for some time before replying that someone did but he did not know who. According to Biju Patnaik, the rate for hiring a helicopter like the one IMFA has is between Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 an hour. Mr Dass also volunteered information that his company was involved in a lot of philanthropic work. And all the trouble regarding IMFA had been taken to court because of IMFA's rivals who were instigating the Janata Party to raise the issue in the Assembly. "We do such a lot of good work," said Mr Dass, "that our rivals are jealous of us." But does the philanthropic work absolve IMFA of its duties to the OSEB?

Sarada P. Nanda and Tirthankar Ghosh, Bhubaneswar



Former defence minister R. Venkataraman in the Choudwar plant

INVESTIGATION

A Classic Bungle

Computers for CLASS, a programme to introduce computers in Indian schools, have been acquired through a dubious deal with a bankrupt British firm

In a bid to take the nation into the 21st century, computers are being introduced in Indian schools. The programme for taking computers into Indian classrooms has been named Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools (CLASS). The way the computers have been acquired shows that while Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is trying to root out corruption, even in a vital programme like CLASS, bungling has taken place The computers, acquired through British grants, have been purchased at prices higher than the international price. What is more, Acorn, the British firm from which the computers are being purchased in semi-knocked down (SKD) condition went bankrupt early this year because of poor sales in the Christmas season, a period when British firms usually make profits. India has bought computers made in Hong Kong, via the UK and paid a higher price. The Hong Kong manufacturers had offered to sell the computers directly at a lower price, but this offer was not taken seriously. And when the Hong Kong firm was getting its pound of flesh, it did not bother after the initial offer to pursue the matter. If a British firm was making a quick buck at India's cost, it could not be a matter of great concern in Hong Kong.

The Prime Minister's office learnt about the financial position of the British supplier in February. On 20 February 1985, Arvind Pande, joint secretary in the PM's office, wrote letter No. 17(855)/85-PMSto Mr S.R. Vijayakar, secretary, department of electronics, enquiring about the crisis in Acorn Computers, UK, the suppliers chosen for school computers. The query was passed on to Mr Virendra Mohan, chairman of Semi-Conductors Complex Ltd. (SCL), the public sector firm entrusted with the CLASS project. According to a reply sent by the SCL chairman to the government on 25 February, Mr N. Saxena, general manager (modules and subsystems), of SCL had been despatched to London on 23 February (three days after the PM's office showed its concern). On 25 February, Saxena telephoned the SCL chairman from London and gave his report. To quote the letter of the SCL chairman to Mr S.R. Vijayakar (letter No. SCL/1004/1/85): "Mr Saxena has informed me today over the telephone that Acorn Computers ran into difficulty due to shortfall in sales during the Christmas season. Acorn has recently incurred a loss of pound sterling 10.9 million, against which Olivetti has given them pound sterling 18 million for 49 per cent equity, to tide over the difficulty. The staff has remained unchanged except for the chief executive. Changes in policy, if any, will be known after next two weeks. However, we have been assured that supplies to India will not be disrupted".

This reply to the query raised by the Prime Minister's office shows the status of the company to which the vital CLASS project has been entrusted. The very fact that SCL or the Department of Electronics (DoE) did not wake up to the crisis in the British firm till the Prime Minister's office ordered an enquiry shows that the new ethos which Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is trying to spread in the government departments has not really percolated to lower levels. It is left to the Prime Minister's office to be vigilant, so that bungles can be detected.

The story of the CLASS project is also a reflection on the Indian company which has been entrusted with this important project. After about seven years in hibernation, SCL, a public sector company under the DoE completed civil construction work and infrastructure facilities by September 1983 and started wafer fabrication activity on 2 October. Amongst its proposed activities were large scale integrated circuit (LSI) design, maskmaking, wafer fabrication and assembly of electronic modules for watches and clocks, etc. On 12 March 1985, a half-page advertisement in *The Times of India* told of a new activity by this company. With a picture of a mother and child on a small screen of a computer, the SCL introduced to CLASS the Unicorn Personal Computer Module—which, it was promised, would be a friend, teacher, artist, executive and much more. This Unicorn Module was based on micro-processor chips that were being fabricated at the Chandigarh plant of the company, the advertisement announced.

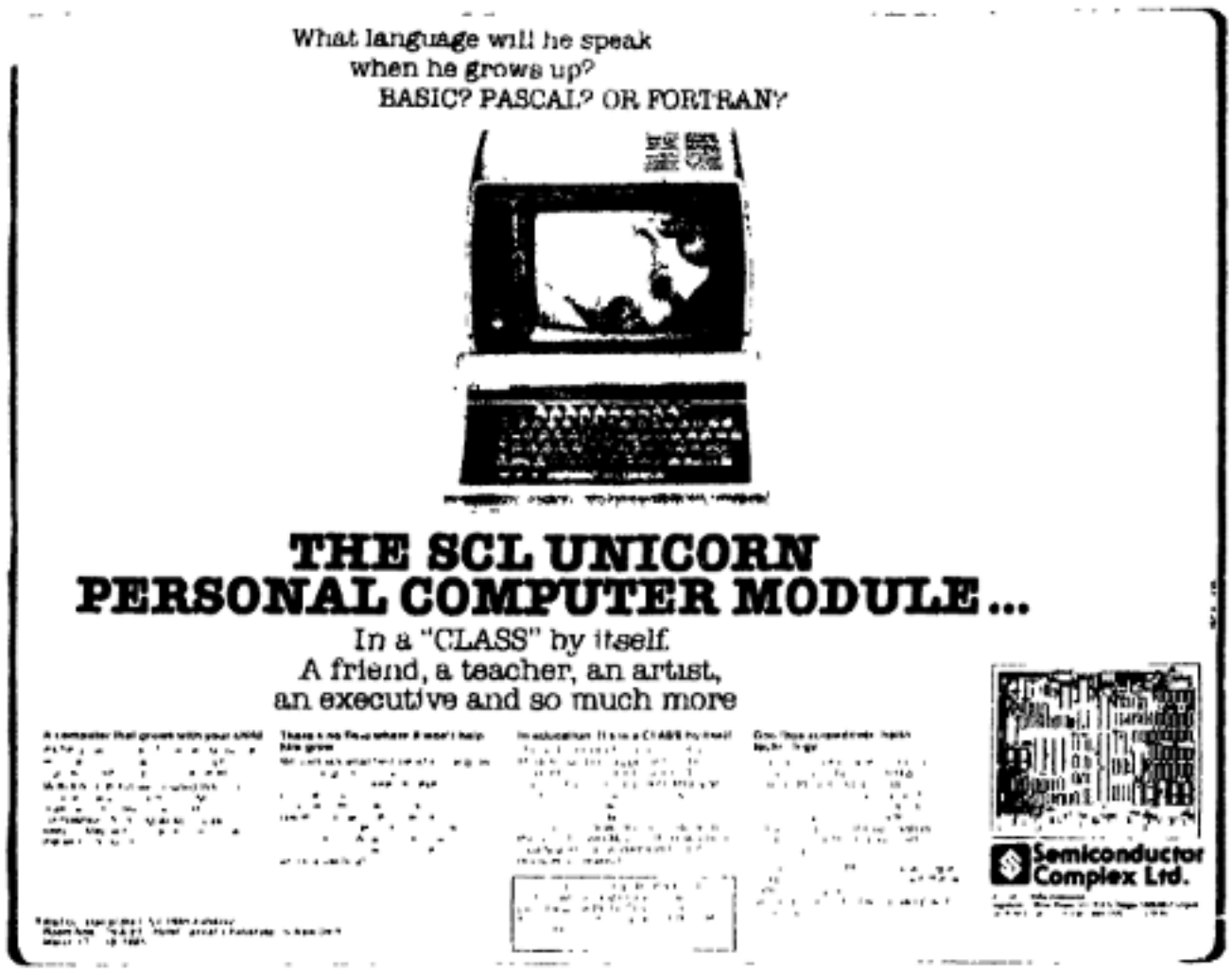
The major change in the project implementation schedule of the company has been obviously approved by the DoE. The buy-back arrangement with the collaborators for the fabrication of the silicon wafers has fallen through and the company is carrying an unsold stock of around Rs 2 crores till the end of 1984. The direction from the DoE was to sell this stock only through Keltron in India. In this welter of confusion, whoever thought of this company starting the manufacture of personal computers with such a lot of promising features? Thereby hangs a tale.

During November 1983, a note was initiated at the instance of the late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to introduce computer education to the children at school so that they would be familiar with the advanced tools of teaching as they got ready to step into the next century. Approval came from the Prime Minister quite promptly. At the 68th meeting of the electronics commission on 24 December 1983, details of follow-up action on the CLASS project were discussed with the direction that the report of the evolution committee for the selection of a computer system for the pilot project be prepared and placed for the consideration of the electronics commission. The secretary, electronics, wrote to the ministry of education, conveying the approval of the commission on the project on 12 April 1984. Between 15 February and 8 May 1984, the ministry of education wrote to all the state governments and union territories to select and send a list of 250 schools in line with the objectives and criteria set out for the CLASS project and this was finalised on 29 June 1984.

The committee for the evaluation of computer systems for the CLASS project was set up around the last week of January 1984. About two months before this, during first week of December 1983, an Indian working at the British Council joined the DoE on a long term contract, as the head of the manpower department. He headed the implementation committee of the CLASS project.

Though the Prime Minister's approval in principle to the CLASS project was received by the DoE during November 1983 and the electronics commission was deliberating upon the details till June 1984, at the instance of the head of the manpower division, during January 1984 itself broad details of the arrangements were agreed on between the governments of UK and India in the field of computer education in schools. With the approval of the then secretary and deputy minister, electronics, a formal note was sent to then finance secretary, Mr P.K. Kaul (now the cabinet secretary), to avail of the British grant-in-aid for 1000 computers with accompanying teaching aids costing about Rs 2 crores. The ministry of education was also roped in to accept the British aid. By the end of May 1984, in a letter from Mr H.E. Swift, attache in the British high commission, to the department of economic affairs, the British government agreed that pending decisions on the pilot project (on which the ministry of education was still collecting information from the state governments regarding 250 schools and could finalise the list only on 29 June 1984), overseas development aid, under which the British government agreed to provide computer equipment for an initial training programme to be started in India, including 12 trainees also to visit India to assist in the conduct of training. Accordingly, 170 computer systems arrived in Delhi, a good one month before any decision was taken as to where the project would begin and how.

Such was the enthusiasm on the part of the officials that the then minister of state for education, Sheila Kaul, led a delegation to the UK from 10 to 15 February 1984 for an on-the-spot study of the use of computers in schools under the British system. This delegation had as a member the head of the manpower division of the DoE. The recommendations of the delegation were finalised by 13 March 1984. This was further approved by the electronics commission a week later. Another delegation of five members again went to the UK from 14 May to 28 May 1984, to give the finishing touches to the British offer of the entire package of computers for the CLASS project. In fact, the steering committee of the project started sitting every week during May and June 1984 to finalise all arrangements to receive the British systems for the Indian schools, though the state governments were in the process of selecting schools and teachers required for making it a success.



An advertisement for the SCL Unicorn personal computer

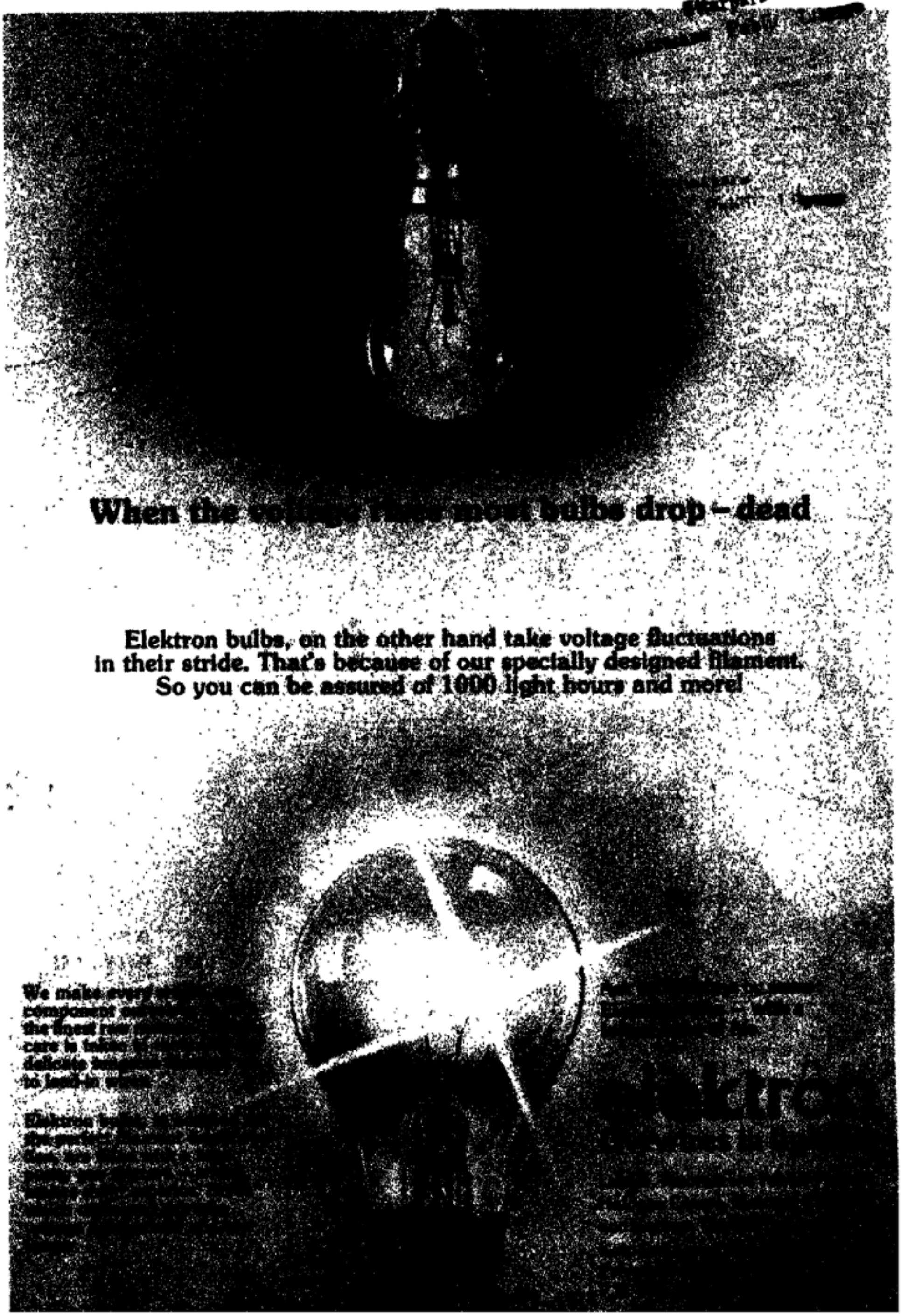
It was a swift decision, made on an emergency footing. In fact, the entire CLASS project was finally wedded to the British system. Was this the best system in the world? Was any enquiry made in any other country about the system of computer education in schools? Was the ministry of education so overawed by the DoE that pending all enquiries and decisions, the British system was thrust upon it, and due to such a hurry, upon the entire system of education in the country for all time to come? Those who know the answers are mum. The story, with further details, is unfolding slowly.

Though SCL started production of silicon wafers only on 2 October 1983, forgetting their accumulated loss over a period of seven years they arranged for the import of 1,500 to 2,000 SKD kits from a British firm during May 1984 to be assembled for sale to schools in India. As a member of the Indian delegation, a senior official of the company visiting the UK during May 1984, called the British firm's representative to his hotel room and negotiated the price of the computer kits, even though the other members of the delegation were unaware of such private negotiation. The prices agreed on by this official of the company were 40 to 80 per cent higher than the normal price. And these kits, in fact, were being sent from Hong Kong to the UK and were then being resold to India. One Mr Wang was not only involved but also sent a direct quotation to the DoE, for reasons best known to him, mentioning a price for the computers much below what the senior official of the company had agreed on. This was promptly suppressed by then secretary, electronics. The name of the British company doing such business in school computers was Acorn and their model was called the BBC micro computer BBC model—Acorn B. Meanwhile, of course, 1000 computers had arrived, as against 170, under British aid and were slowly getting distributed in the schools along the length and breadth of the country.

Two developments have taken place quite recently so far as the import of kits for 1,500 to 2,000 computers by the SCL is concerned. Without any rhyme or reason, the computer division of the DoE agreed to the import of computer kits by the company and the secretary, electronics, approved it. But the payment to the British firm was withheld till February 1985 as the finance people were not satisfied with the explanation of the company for such import. And the British company, Acorn, went bankrupt!

On 13 March 1985, the chairman of the electronics commission inaugurated an exhibition at the capital's Samrat hotel. "SCL-Unicorn," the Acorn computer acquired for schools in India, was among the attractions there. While the Prime Minister's office tried to investigate the bungling, the "Class-by-itself" deal was praised by the electronics commission chairman.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi


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INVESTIGATION

Case of the Missing Lakhs

Who did the Rs 26 lakhs, stolen from the house of UP Congress(I) general secretary Bachcha Pathak, belong to?

A theft in the residence of Uttar Pradesh Congress(I) general secretary, Bachcha Pathak, has become the talk of the town in Lucknow. According to a report filed with the Hazratganj police station on the night of 10 March, six lakh rupees have been stolen from an almirah in the politician's bedroom. While attempts are being made by Bachcha Pathak to explain that the money in question was "white," the grapevine has it that the actual amount stolen, both in cash and kind (jewellery) is in the vicinity of Rs 26 lakhs.

Bachcha Pathak was the state's minister for cooperatives till he was drafted for party work last year. According to him, while two lakh rupees were his own, the rest of the money stolen belonged to his close associate, Narendra Pratap Singh. Why was so much loose cash (which was not part of political funds) kept in the house? According to statements made by Bachcha Pathak to the press, as his family was involved in certain contract deals, the loose money was required in his house. The theft is alleged to have been the handiwork of one Hansraj Tiwari, who used to stay in the residence of the politician.

The accused had appeared before the Kaiserbagh police station an hour before the FIR was launched in the Hazratganj police station and sought the police's protection as some people were "trying to murder him." Within moments of the FIR being launched, Tiwari was traced to the Kaiserbagh police station and detained. Though it is only a case of theft, bail was not granted to Tiwari till the end of March. Before making the arrest on charges filed by a VIP, the police did not conduct any enquiry—just the politician's word that hard cash worth lakhs had been stolen from his house was enough to put Tiwari behind bars. While the case of theft against Tiwari is *sub judice*, no attempts have so far been made by the competent agencies to ascertain the source of such large cash funds which were lying in an almirah in the politician's bedroom.

Hansraj Tiwari had approached Bachcha Pathak sometime back for help in getting a job. According to allegations made by Tiwari, Pathak, who then was the minister for cooperatives in UP, asked him for money for getting him a government job. Later, Tiwari was employed by the Land Development Bank and started living in Pathak's bungalow on Kalidas Marg (this road in Lucknow mostly has VIP bungalows). Tiwari has alleged that the politician's bungalow was a den of debauchery and he was appalled to witness the rape of a woman in the house some months back, after which he had decided to expose the VIP. He had contacted the state vigilance department and furnished details about the goings-on



Bachcha Pathak

in Pathak's residence. Tiwari has also alleged that he was sodomised. According to informed sources, Tiwari was a pliable tool in the hands of Bachcha Pathak and a confidant of the politician till his girlfriend was raped in Pathak's house some months back. Thereafter, he gave the impression of being "loyal" to Pathak, while planning his revenge. The Harishankar Tiwari gang of eastern UP being close to Bachcha Pathak, Tiwari ganged with Virendra Shahi and waited for the opportune moment to strike. He was in regular touch with the vigilance department and had been passing on information about the goings-on in Bachcha Pathak's house. No action, however, was taken by the authorities though Tiwari was regularly informing them about the amount of money kept in the house, and other unsavoury incidents.

The sequence of events on the night of 10 March was intriguing. Around ten pm, Hansraj Tiwari jumped out of a white Ambassador car (USM 9855) near the Kaiserbagh Chauraha (crossroads) and approached a police patrol, pleading that he be saved from "murderers." The car, which had been held up in the traffic, disappeared by the time the police patrol could be activated. Tiwari was taken to the police control room, where he alleged that an attempt had been made by Narendra Singh and some others to murder him. He alleged that Narendra Singh (who is supposed to be the owner of the Rs 4 lakhs stolen from Pathak's almirah) had gone to the residence of Bachcha Pathak around nine that night accompanied by four others. They had assaulted Tiwari and shouted, "You have put the police on the trail of Bachcha Pathak, we will teach you a lesson." Tiwari said that he had been pushed into the white Ambassador and was being driven out of the city to be murdered. When the vehicle was stuck in the traffic, he raised an alarm and as a result a crowd gathered. When he was allowed to get out of the car, he ran towards the police patrol. Tiwari sought the protection of the police from the assailants and tried to invoke the good offices of some officers in the vigilance department, whom he had been informing about Bachcha Pathak's activities.

At five past eleven that night, Narendra Singh went to the Hazratganj police station and lodged a report of theft against Tiwari. In this report, Narendra Singh said, "I stay in the residence of Bachcha Pathak, general secretary of the UPCC(I) at 6 Kalidas Marg. I work as his PA and I had deposited Rs 4 lakhs of my money for safekeeping with Pathak. This money had been kept by Pathak in the almirah in his bedroom. In this almirah he had also kept Rs 2 lakhs of his money. Both Pathak and I had the keys to the almirah. In the days when Pathak was minister for cooperatives, an employee of the Land

Development Bank, Hansraj Tiwari, had been sent on deputation to his staff. This man used to look after Pathak's residence in his absence. The key to Pathak's bedroom was kept with him. On 28 February I left for Varanasi. Pathak had gone to Ballia in connection with the elections. By mistake, I had left the keys to the almirah under a pillow. Today, on 10 March I returned from tour along with Pathak's nephew Ashok Pathak and Bharat Kunwar On opening the almirah I found that the Rs six lakhs kept there were missing. When I questioned Hansraj Tiwari, he admitted that he had stolen the amount and hidden it somewhere within Lucknow. I have brought Hansraj Tiwari along, please recover the stolen money from him."

Hansraj Tiwari was arrested that night, on the basis of this report He had reached the police control room with the patrol party Narendra Singh through his VIP contacts, knew this. Getting him arrested was not difficult. But even the director general of police, J. N. Chaturvedi, was amazed the next day when he was informed about the arrest. He was surprised how a man could be arrested in a case of theft without a preliminary enquiry. He told newsmen that he was ordering the release of Tiwari. But in the meantime, the police had produced him before a magistrate and the court had remanded Tiwari to 14 days' custody.

Tiwari has alleged that the politician's (Pathak's) bungalow was a den of debauchery and that he was appalled to witness a rape in the house some months back, after which he decided to expose the VIP.

Tiwari said that there was an income tax raid on the residence of Bachcha Pathak on 8 March. The income tax authorities had taken away the money, according to him. The police guard posted in the politician's residence told the press that on that night some people had come to 6 Kalidas Marg along with Hansraj Tiwari and after some time had left with a big suitcase. The guard did not suspect foul play because he had known Tiwari to be a confidant of Pathak.

Did the income tax department raid Pathak's residence? The answer is no. Then who were the people with Tiwari who left with the suitcase on the night of 8 March? Apparently Tiwari was working with a criminal gang to make off with the money. According to Lucknow's grapevine, the amount stolen was around Rs 26 lakhs but the theft report had mentioned only six lakhs as the complainant felt confident about explaining the source of only this amount of money. The chase on the night of 10 March was on attempt to recover the money from Tiwari. If they failed to recover it his pursuers had orders to bump him off so that the controversy did not become public.

The incident has created a furore. The fact is that lakhs of rupees have been stolen from a politician's residence. There are too many loopholes in the version given by either side and the matter being *sub judice*, it cannot be commented upon. However, the "clean" image of the Congress(I) has certainly been tarnished by the Bachcha Pathak episode.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, Lucknow



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Diplomat, Editor, Workaholic

Prem Bhatia, editor of The Tribune, *wins the 1984 B D. Goenka award*

Prem Bhatia, the distinguished editor of *The Tribune* and recipient of the 1984 B.D Goenka award for journalism has had a varied and rather unusual career. After receiving his master's degree in English from Government College, Lahore, Mr Bhatia joined *The Civil and Military Gazette* as a sub-editor. His father, a member of the income-tax tribunal had wanted him to join the Indian Civil Service. When the Second World War broke out, Mr Bhatia joined All India Radio, in the counter-propaganda department which attacked the Nazis

From AIR, Mr Bhatia joined the public relations department of the army and quickly rose to be the youngest-ever Lieutenant Colonel in that department. This was a very special department indeed for it had people who were to become the domineering figures of the Urdu literary world. One of them was Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Public relations appeared to suit the young Lieutenant Colonel who moved to Bengal and joined the public relations department of the West Bengal government. *The Statesman* took him on shortly afterwards, and Mr Bhatia soon became the *Statesman's* special representative in Lucknow. His stint as the daily's man in Lucknow was to be a prelude for his later years as the *Statesman's* chief of bureau in New Delhi. Vijayalaxmi Pandit took him to Moscow in the late 1940 s as public relations officer when she was appointed India's envoy in Moscow

From public relations, Mr Bhatia returned once again to journalism: he was the *Statesman's* chief of bureau and its diplomatic correspondent in the mid-Fifties. But he was not to remain in the post for long: he joined *The Tribune* as editor for a year before joining *The Times of India* as its resident editor in New Delhi. Two years later he was appointed resident editor of the *Indian Express* in New Delhi.

Mr Bhatia moved away from journalism to a diplomatic assignment once again when in the mid-Sixties, he was sent to Nairobi as India's High Commissioner, where he remained for three years before his appointment as India's envoy to Singapore. His days in the diplomatic service over, Mr Bhatia became the chief editor of the Indian News and Features Agency (INFA) for a brief while before he went to Chandigarh as editor of *The Tribune*, where he has been ever since, doubling the paper's circulation in a little more than a year. He was instrumental in bringing out the newspaper's Hindi and Punjabi editions.

The Tribune's coverage of Punjab through the recent turbulent years won the paper and Mr Bhatia a lot of accolades and ultimately the Goenka award. Mr Bhatia certainly changed *The Tribune's* work ethic. He is so punctual that his employees say you can set your watch by him.

Every morning after he has read his newspaper, he calls the *Tribune* journalists at home and takes them to task for mistakes. He also knows how to get work done. When his Shimla correspondent had not filed a story for two weeks, Mr Bhatia telephoned him and asked him why there had been no stories from Shimla. The correspondent replied that nothing was happening. Then Mr Bhatia asked: "How is the weather?" The correspondent told him that Shimla had its first snowfall that day. "Well, then," said the editor, "file immediately on the first snowfall."

Prem Bhatia is interested in sports: golf at the weekends is a must. When he was younger, cricket was his passion and had the war not broken out when it did he might have played for India.

Madhu Jain, New Delhi



Prem Bhatia: 'A journalist is in the dock everyday or every week'

The Cloistered Passion of Radha and Krishna

BY SUDHIR KAKAR AND JOHN MUNDER ROSS



Radha and Krishna in an eternal embrace

For an Indian—or, more exactly, a Hindu—the love of Radha, the beautiful cowherdess who later became a goddess for some cults, and Krishna, the youthful dark god who is the object of widespread devotion, is less a story remembered than a random succession of episodes seen and heard, sung and danced. Over the centuries, their love has been portrayed in thousands of exquisite miniature paintings which have fixed the lovers in separation and union, longing and abandonment. The love story is heard whenever we listen to the great vocalists of Indian classical music—from Kumara Gandharva to Jasraj—sing the devotional songs of medieval saints who in their poems sometimes watch and at other times participate in the love play as Krishna's beloved. The story grips our imagination every time we behold the animated expressions, flashing eyes and sinuous movements of an Indian dancer who (as Radha) dances her anger at Krishna's infidelities or (as Krishna) begs forgiveness for his impetuous dalliance. The love affair is recreated each time a Krishna devotee participates in the communal singing of an episode from the story in a temple and especially when he or she, possessed by the spirit of one of the lovers, feels impelled to get up and ecstatically dance the god or his beloved.

The Radha-Krishna legend, then, is not a story in the sense of an orderly narrative whose protagonists have a shared past and are progressing towards a tragic or happy future. It is more an evocation and elaboration of the here-and-now of passionate love, an attempt to capture the exciting, fleeting moments of the senses and the baffling ways in which love's pleasures and pains are felt before retrospective recollection, trying to regain a lost control over emotional

life, edits away love's inevitable confusions. It is not tragic but tender and, ultimately, cheerful.

The sybartic tenderness enveloping the caress of the lovers is striking. A long line of bards and balladeers, most of them indebted to the twelfth-century Sanskrit poet, Jayadeva, who decisively shaped the legend's outlines, have often described the setting of this love. A Hindu needs only to close his eyes and "remember" to see Vrindavan, an Indian garden of Eden spring into existence. In the perpetual sunshine of the myth, distinct from the mists of history, a forest thicket on the bank of the river Jumna awakens to life on a tropical spring day. The mustard fields at the edge of the forest, with their thick carpet of dazzling yellow flowers, stretch far into the distance. The air is redolent with the perfume of pollen shaken loose from newly blossomed jasmine and bunches of flame-colored mimosa flowers hanging round and heavy from the trees. The ears are awash in the humming of bees, the cries of cuckoos and the distant tinkling of bells hanging around the necks of grazing cattle. The call of Krishna's flute comes floating through the forest thicket, further agitating the already unquiet senses, making for an inner uprising and an alien invasion. The story, aiming to fix the essence of youthful love, has an amorous rather than geographical landscape as its location; its setting is neither social nor historical but sensuous.

In the falling dusk, Nanda, Krishna's foster father and the chief of a community of cowherds, asks Radha to escort Krishna home through the forest. On the way, in a grove, their "secret passion triumphs." Radha's thoughts come to be absorbed by Krishna who, however, is unfaithful to her as he sports with other cowherdesses—hugging one, kissing another and caressing yet another dark beauty.

When he quickens all things
To create bliss in the world
His soft black sinuous lotus limbs
Begin the festival of love
And beautiful cowherd girls wildly
Wind him in their bodies.
Friend, in spring young Hari (Krishna) plays
Like erotic mood incarnate

Radha is jealous as she imagines the "vines of his great throbbing arms circle a thousand cowherdesses" but more than jealousy she is infused with all the confusing emotions of a proud, passionate woman who feels deserted by her lover

My heart values his vulgar ways,
Refuses to admit my rage,
Feels strangely elated,
And keeps denying his guilt.
When he steals away without me
To indulge his craving
For more young women,
My perverse heart
Only wants Krishna back.
What can I do?

Solitary grief and images of a love betrayed and passion lost, recreated in reverie, alternate and reinforce each other, but seem somehow benign.

My eyes close languidly as I feel the flesh quiver on his cheek,
My body is moist with sweat; he is shaking from the wine of lust.
Friend, bring Kesi's sublime tormentor to revel with me!
I've gone mad waiting for his fickle love to change.

The power of Radha's yearning work a change in Krishna. Of all the *gopis* (cowherdesses), interchangeable suppliers of pleasure and feelings of conquest, Radha begins to stand out in Krishna's mind as someone special who is desired in her uniqueness. In Maurice Valency's formulation, from the "heroic lover" for whom no woman is exceptional and who simply desires a variety of amatory dalliances, Krishna becomes the "romantic lover" impelled toward a single irreplaceable mistress. The unheeding pursuit of pleasure, a bewildered Krishna discovers, has been brought to a halt by pleasure's worst enemies—memory and attachment.

Her joyful responses to my touch,
Trembling liquid movement of her eyes,
Fragrance from her lotus mouth,
A sweet ambiguous stream of words,
Nectar from her red berry lips—
Even when the sensuous objects are gone,
My mind holds on to her in a trance.
How does the wound of her desertion deepen?

Having been the god who strove to please himself alone, Krishna has become a man for whom the partner's well-being assumes an import-



In the couch of love

This is a chapter from a forthcoming book by the authors

ance easily the equal of his own. He discovers that he would rather serve and adore than vanquish and demand. As a tale of love, this transformative moment from desire's sensations to love's adoration, gives the story of Radha and Krishna its singular impact. (It is a remarkable coincidence that three of the world's best-known works of romantic love which occupy pivotal positions in their respective cultures—Beroul's *Tristan and Isolde* in Europe, Nizami's *Layla and Majnun* in the Islamic world and Jayadeva's *Geetagovinda* in India—were all produced roughly at the same time in the twelfth century.)

To continue the story: hearing of Krishna's remorse and of his attachment to her, Radha, dressed and ornamented for love, awaits Krishna at their trysting place in the forest. She lingers in vain, for Krishna does not come. Radha is consumed with jealousy as she imagines him engaged in an amourous encounter with a rival. When Krishna finally does appear, Radha spurns him angrily:

Dark from kissing her kohl-blackened eyes
At dawn your lips match your body's color, Krishna
Damn you Madhva! Go! Kesava leave me!
Don't plead your lies with me!
Go after her, Krishna!
She will ease your despair.

But, in separation, Radha and Krishna long for each other with a mounting sense of desolation. Eventually, Radha's friend persuades her to abandon her modesty and pride and go to her lover.

Your full hips and breasts are heavy to bear.
Approach with anklets ringing!
Their sound inspires lingering feet.
Run with the gait of a wild goose!
Madhu's tormentor
Is faithful to you, fool.
Follow him, Radhika!

In the full throes of a sexual excitement when even her "modesty left in shame," Radha rushes to meet an equally ardent (and repentant) lover. Krishna sings:

Throbbing breasts aching for love's embrace are hard to touch.
Rest these vessels on my chest!
Quench love's burning fire!
Narayana (Krishna) is faithful now. Love me Radhika!
Offer your lips' nectar to revive a dying slave, Radha!
This obsessed mind and listless body burn in love's desolation,
Narayana is faithful now. Love me, Radhika!

Once the ecstatic love-making subsides momentarily in an orgasmic release, a playful Radha asks Krishna to rearrange her clothes and her touselled hair, as also

"Paint a leaf on my breasts!
Put colour on my cheeks!
Lay a girdle on my hips!
Twine my heavy braid with flowers!
Fix rows of bangles on my hands
And jewelled anklets on my feet!"
Her yellow-robed lover
Did what Radha said.

Jayadeva, legend has it, hesitant to commit sacrilege by having the god touch Radha's feet- the usual sign of a submissive lower status—was unable to pen the last lines and went out to bathe; when he returned, he found that Krishna himself had completed the verse in his absence.

The fascination of Jayadeva's creation is, of course, also due to its



The lovers enjoy an intimate moment

musical form. Jayadeva set each canto of the love poem to a different musical mode (*raga*) and rhythm (*tala*). It is a work which succeeding generations have regarded a marvel of music as much of language and meaning. And music, we know, that fine-tuned language of the senses, best captures the Dionysian or rather, in our context, the Krishnanian spirit and sensual spontaneity of the erotic. The erotic sensibilities of lovers, and of others with either the potential for love or its haunting memory, can be reproduced in music with greater fidelity than in words since there is a direct rather than signified correspondence between musical forms and the forms of emotional life. Love is not about something; it is. Jayadeva seems to have intuitively known that (in Kierkegaard's words), "the sensual mood is too heavy and too dense to be sustained by speech; only music can express it."

The story of Radha and Krishna as it has come down to us today, differs from Jayadeva's version in only one significant respect. Jayadeva merely hints at the illicit nature of their love when he has an older Radha change from young Krishna's protective escort to become his lover, thereby also defying the authority and instructions of the chief of cowherds:

"Clouds thicken the sky.
Tamala trees darken the forest.
The night frightens him.
Radha, you take him home!"
They leave at Nanda's order,
Passing trees in thickets on the way,
Until secret passions of Radha and Madhava
Triumph on the Jumna riverbank.

Later poets (notably Vidyapati), who tend to focus more on Radha and her lover than on Krishna gave the illicit in the story a more concrete cast and a specific content. Radha is another man's wife and her liaison with Krishna, whatever its meaning in mystical allegory, is plainly adulterous in human terms. Radha is certainly not a paragon of womanly virtues detailed in Hindu texts; nor does she come close to any of the "good" or "bad" mother-goddesses of Indian mythology and religion. In her passionate craving for sexual union with her lover and in her desperate suffering in his absence, Radha is simply the personification of a *mahabhava*, a "great feeling" that is heedless of social proprieties and unbounded by conventions. Before attempting our own interpretation of the *mahabhava* of the legend, we must first briefly locate the love of Radha and Krishna in its cultural-historical context. As various scholars have pointed out, many different Indian traditions—religious and erotic, classical literary and folk—have converged and coalesced in the poetical renditions of the myth, especially Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, to give that particular work an allure that extends over large parts of the sub-continent.

In India, 'passion love' first appeared in the court poetry and drama of the so-called classical period of Hindu civilisation, spanning the first few centuries of the Christian era. Earlier, in the epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana, love was usually a matter of straightforward desire and its gratification. This was especially so for the man for whom a woman was an instrument of pleasure and an object of the senses (*indiryartha*)—

one physical need among many others. There is an idealisation of marriage in the epics, yes, but chiefly as a social and religious act. The obligation of conjugal love and the virtue of chastity within marriage were primarily demanded of the wife while few limits were set on a husband who lived under and looked up at a licentious heaven teeming with lusty gods and "heavenly" whores, otherworldly and utterly desirable at once and most eager to give and take pleasure.

The Buddhist domination of Indian society which followed brought with it Buddhism's sombre view of life, in which the god of love was identified with Mara or Death. The new cosmology it imposed was not particularly conducive to developing a literature of passionate love. Nor did love enter through the back door of erotic mysticism. In the Therigatha, or psalms of notable sisters of the Buddhist order, marked by dutiful daughterly sentiments towards the Buddha, there is none of the eroticism of their medieval Christian counterparts who in their passionate outpourings conceived of Christ as a youthful bridegroom.

All this seems to have changed radically with the dawn of the classical period that spanned the first six to seven centuries of the present era. In the poetry and drama flourishing at the courts, love became a predominant theme, indeed one overshadowing every other sentiment. It is a love that is both deeply sensual and moulded by mutual passion. The woman is as ardent as the man and initiates the wooing quite as often. Indeed, the surviving poems of the few women poets show them to be even freer in their expression than their male counterparts.

The Sanskrit poems and dramas are characterised by a playful enjoyment of love's ambiguities, a delighted savouring of its pleasures and a refined suffering of its sorrows. Spontaneity, fervid abandon and love's transports are generally absent from this poetry. Apart from one or two notable exceptions, the depiction of love is on a miniature scale—short stanzas seeking to freeze one or another of love's emotions, cameos yielding glimpses into arresting erotic moments. What is considered important—and this is the core of the Indian theory of aesthetics—is to capture the *rasa*, literally, "flavour" or "essence," or the mood, of a particular passionate instant which can then be relished by the poetically cultivated connoisseur. The intensity of the mood is not enhanced through psychological depth but by accumulation of sensuous detail. Blurring the boundaries between internal feeling and external sensation, love is seldom described as something ethereal or treated in terms of the evaluated sentiment but is equated with a definite sensation or a feeling in its concrete bodily manifestation. As Barbara Miller remarks in relation to the *Gitagovinda*: "Passion is made palpable through the sensuous descriptions of movements and physical forms. Seasonal changes in nature and bodily signs of inner feelings are coloured richly to create a dense atmosphere of passion."

For most modern readers who have an affinity for the personal and the subjective, the emphasis of classical Indian literature on love as a depersonalised voluptuous state may delight the senses but does not touch the heart. For those whose sensibility has been moulded by individualism, it is difficult to identify with the impersonal protagonists of Sanskrit and Tamil love poems who are not a particular man or woman but man and woman as such—provided he is handsome, she is beautiful and both are young. The face of the heroine, for instance, is always like a moon or lotus flower, eyes like waterlilies or those of a fawn. She always stoops slightly from the weight of her full breasts, improbable fleshy flowers of rounded perfection that do not even admit a blade of grass between them. The waist is slim, with three folds, the thighs round and plump, like the trunk of an elephant or a banana tree. The navel is deep, the hips heavy. These lyrical yet conventional descriptions of body parts seem to operate like collective fetishes, culturally approved cues for the individual to allow himself to indulge in erotic excitement.

Now, a facet of the beloved woman's beauty is certainly impersonal in the sense that it is nature's gift, especially to youth, and its minimal presence is necessary for the eye to stay and linger, for the glance to become a gaze, for the poet to wax lyrical. As Auden remarks, "A girl who weighs two hundred pounds and a woman of eighty may both have beautiful faces in the personal sense, but men do not fall in love with them." For our more modern tastes, however, the part played by impersonal beauty is receding in favour of a personal beauty which is more an individual than a natural or cultural creation. The impersonal lust evoked by looking at a woman in parts—and at the parts of a woman, as in most traditional Indian poetry, is no longer the major ingredient of love. The choice of the beloved is no longer solely determined by her conformity to a great cultural model but also because of a uniqueness in which even her flaws are cherished. It is now the fleeting yet characteris-



Radha and Krishna in the forest: oblivious to their surroundings

tic trivialities—the narrowing of her eyes in a quizzical smile, the nibbling of the fleshy part of the lower lip when engrossed in thought—which fascinate and enthrall the lover, the flash of aesthetic admiration superseded by the wave of adoration. In the verses of Shakespeare's great sonnet:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like
the sun; ..
My mistress, when she walks,
treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my
love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Furthermore, Indian poetry becomes inaccessible, even boring,



Krishna admires Radha's eyes

when its early freshness begins to wilt under the scholastic dictates which become more and more compelling in the later centuries. Not unlike the efforts of modern sexologists, Sanskrit poetics and erotics had now defined, analysed and categorised the many moods and situations of love. Lovers—men and women—had been stereotyped according to the ways they approach and react to love. They were further divided and subdivided according to rank, character, circumstances as well as the different shades of their feelings and gestures. With its insistence on the "appropriate" combination of types, feelings and situations, the scholastic steamroller crushed the creative expression of passionate love as effectively as Epic indifference or Buddhist disapproval.

From sixth century onwards, first in the south and then in the north, another shift took place which led to a reemergence of passionate love. As with most things Indian, the change originated in the religious sphere but then expanded to influence Hindu culture and sensibility in such a profound way that its reverberations are still felt today. Scholars have called the shift *bhakti*, the rise of devotional religions in rebellion against the petrification of contemporary Hindu practice. The poet-scholar, A. K. Ramanujan, has pointed out the parallels between *bhakti* and European protestant movements: protest against mediators like priests, rituals and temples in favour of direct individual experience of the Divine; a religious movement of and for the underdog and including saints of all castes, trades and both the sexes, a religion of arbitrary grace, monotheism and evangelism. Shiva in the south and Krishna in the north become the objects of *bhakti*'s impassioned devotion and *bhakti* poetry, brimming with the love for the Lord, flowers in the vernacular languages which, to some extent, take over from Sanskrit, the language of "high" culture. Drawing on conventions of the classical literature of love and using an existing pan-Indian stock of symbols and figures of speech, the *bhakti* poets nonetheless strive for spontaneous, direct, personal expression of feeling rather than a rarified cultivation of aesthetic effect and the "emotion recollected" preferred by the Sanskrit poets.

Radha and Krishna, although linked to the heroine and hero of classical love poetry in many ways, are primarily products of the *bhakti* movement whose principal mood has always been the erotic. In contrast to much of Western poetry of sexual mysticism, though, Radha and Krishna are not figures of erotic allegory. Given *bhakti's* need of possessing and being possessed by the god and the fact that sexual love is where the fullest possession, the "closest touch of all," takes place, the creators and audiences of *bhakti* poetry seek to project themselves into Radha's love for Krishna through poems that recount all its passionate phases. For *bhakti* is preeminently feminine in its orientation, and the erotic love for Krishna (or Siva as the case may be) is envisioned entirely from the woman's viewpoint. The male devotees, saints, and poets must all adopt a feminine posture and persona to recreate Radha's responses in themselves. Radha's passionate love for Krishna, raised to its highest intensity, is not an allegory for religious passion but *is* religious passion. Jayadeva thus does not need to make a distinction or choose between the religious and the erotic when he introduces the subject matter of his poem by saying:

If remembering Hari (Krishna) enriches your heart,
If his arts of seduction arouse you,
Listen to Jayadeva's speech
In these sweet soft lyrical songs.

Befitting his status as the *adi-guru* ("first teacher") of Radha-Krishna cults, Jayadeva *knows* that the enrichment of the heart and the arousal of senses belong together.

The augmentation of passion or, more specifically, the heightening of sexual excitement is then the "great feeling," the *mahabhava*, that pervades the Radha-Krishna legend. Radha incarnates a state of permanent amorous tension, a here-and-now of desire that carries within itself a future expectation of pleasurable release but...oh, not yet! Her concern is not with "lineaments of gratified desire" but with their anticipation. Radha personifies an enduring arousal that does not seek orgasmic resolution. Hers is an effort to reach the very essence of eroticism. As she herself says in one of Vidyapati's songs:

Through all the ages
he (Krishna) has been clasped to my breast,
Yet my desire
never abates.
I have seen subtle people sunk in passion
but none came so close to the heart of the fire.

In her interviews with the temple-dancers of Orissa, the anthropologist Frederique Marglin highlighted the fact that when these women talk of the love (*prema*) of Radha and other cowherdesses, they do not mean a chaste, platonic love but refer specifically to the fantasy (conscious in this case, but unconscious in many others) of unending and sustained sexual excitement. The absence of *kama* or lust in Radha's love for Krishna does not mean an absence of desire, but of orgasm. The dancers, who seek to enact for themselves the tension and intensity of the mythical cowherdesses, explicate the distinction by stating that one of Krishna's names is *Acyuta*, "the one whose seed does not fall." Marglin writes: "What is the meaning of Krishna's retention of his seed? My informant delineated several levels of meaning. First, there is the testimony of everday experience, in which sexual pleasure is only momentary. After orgasm the pleasurable erotic ten-

sion is gone; in such a manner one attains only temporary pleasure or happiness (*khyanika sukha*). Furthermore, by ejaculating one loses one's strength and becomes old. In this world, the world of *samsara*, pleasure is brief and one begets children, whereas in the divine play of Krishna there is continuous (*nitya*) pleasure and no children. The *gopis* are not impregnated...The shedding of the seed has ulterior consequences, i.e., a birth. Krishna's erotic dalliance with the *gopis* has no ulterior purpose or consequence. It exists for itself, in itself." It is indeed a dwelling in the immediacy of excitement, a locking in of body and mind in total erotic involvement.

Using classical conventions in which sexual excitement is denoted by certain bodily manifestations such as sweating and bristling of hair (the mention of sexual organs and genital sensations were always unacceptable), poem after poem seeks to convey the *rasa* of Radha's arousal. In giving central place to the body in the depiction of erotic passions—which are after all ideas which the mind would not have unless it were united to the body, the *bhakti* poets seem to intuitively recognise and affirm the truth of Auden's assertion that "Our bodies cannot love. But, without one / what works of love could we do." In Radha's excitement, produced by the anticipation of intercourse,

She bristles with pain, sucks in breath
Cries, shudders, gasps,
Broods deep, reels, stammers,
Falls, raises herself, then faints.
When fevers of passion rage so high,
A frail girl may live by your charm.

While in the sensuous fervour of foreplay,
There was a shudder in her whispering voice.
She was shy to frame her words.
What has happened tonight to lovely Radha?
Now she consents, now she is afraid.
When asked for love, she closes up her eyes
Eager to reach the ocean of desire.
He begs her for a kiss.
She turns her mouth away
And then, like a night lily, the moon seized her.
She felt his touch startling her girdle.
She knew her love treasure was being robbed.
With her dress she covered up her breasts.
The treasure was left uncovered.

At first glance, the large number of Radha-Krishna poems that describe the near-harrowing effects of their separation on Radha do not seem to support our contention that sexual excitement is their central emotion and its generation their chief purpose. Yet even leaving aside the fact that much of the content of separation poems consists of Radha's recollections of erotic pleasure—an effort to retain expectancy through reminiscence—we know that in romantic literature around the world, the division of lovers has been a well-known device for whetting erotic hunger. In life as in art, turnings in the path of love's fulfillment have always been found necessary to swell the tide of the libido. Separateness and union are not different categories of love, as the convention of Indian poetics would have it, but are intimately connected through the workings of desire. The lover's and the poet's dwelling on apartness represents his or her abjuring of possession that would deflate desire. Erotic passion, in de Rougemont's anthropomorphic formulation, always invents distance in order to exult itself more completely. Below the surface sadness, lies the lovers' *need* to create impediments to the enjoyment of their love, to *deliciously* postpone their delight

Sexual excitement is also a mental state, the product of those fantasies where, as Robert Stoller has pointed out, one oscillates between an anticipation of danger and the expectation of replacing danger with pleasure. The major fantasies, largely unconscious, which are reflected in the trembling attraction of Radha's love for Krishna are decisively formed and coloured by the theme of a forbidden crossing of boundaries

First, in the pervasive presence of the adulterous in the narrative there is an illicit transgression of moral and legal limits. Second, in striving to entertain the erotic feelings and sensations of the other sex, a lover would violate his primal sexual demarcation as a male. Furthermore, the arousal provoked by these fantasies is both preserved and brought to pitch by the stealth and secrecy in which the crossing of such bounds takes place.

The most obvious manifestation of the illicit, involving the crossing of boundaries set by social mores and norms, is found in the adulterous and later accounts which saddle Radha with a husband, throwing in a mother-in-law for good measure, persistently underline the adulterous nature of her love for Krishna. There was, of course, much theological uneasiness regarding this circumstance. Some commentators went to great lengths to explain why, since Krishna is god, he could not have actually coveted the wife of another. Others went to even greater lengths to prove the contrary, explaining that precisely because Krishna is god he is not bound by normal human restrictions. In the end, and perhaps inevitably, the community's quest for pleasure triumphed over its theological scruples in firmly demanding that the mythical lovers be accepted as unambiguously adulterous.

The identification of the adulterous with the thrilling and romantic is common enough in Western literary tradition. But in the Indian context, the link is possessed of a special resonance since there the dichotomy between the conjugal and the adulterous has remained sharp and charged with tension over many centuries.



Krishna washes Radha's feet

The third-century Tamil epic of *Shilappadikaram* (The Ankle Bracelet) is perhaps the earliest illustration of the "separate but equal" attractions of the adulterous and the conjugal for the Indian man. The sensuality and abandon in the descriptions of Kovalana's relationship with his mistress Madhavi in this epic, provide a strong counterpoint to the tenderness and uxorious dependability of his wife, Kannaki.

In the ritual sphere, right from the beginning, the god and goddess of sexual love have been segregated from deities who preside over marriage and fertility. Even today the so-called "love marriage," almost a contradiction in terms—and the subject of much excited gossip when it occurs—is mostly met with in the fantastical world of Indian movies

and is generally deemed a daring Western import of the urbanised and presumably licentious upper classes.

As far as legalities are concerned, both the conventions and the laws about adultery have been and remain extremely strict. The epics considered adultery as one of the five great sins for which there is no atonement—the others are the murder of a Brahmin, slaying of a cow, unbelief, living off a woman—and warned against its frightful consequences. "In all cases a man must never approach the wife of another. For there is nought in the world which so shortens life as that the man on earth should visit the wife of another. As many pores as are on women's bodies, so many years will he sit in hell ..He that touches another man's wife is born as a wolf, as a dog, as a jackal, then born as a vulture, a snake, a heron, as also a crane." The law books reckon the adulterous couple among the seven kinds of murderers who may be killed with impunity and "if a man comes upon his wife in another man's arms, and kills both, then the king must not punish him." This is a state of affairs which, to go by some notorious court decisions of recent years, has not greatly changed. Manu, the ancient Hindu law-giver, is even more bloodthirsty in his opposition to adultery: "Whatever woman betrays (by intercourse with another man) her husband, proud of her beauty and descent, the king shall cause to be torn in pieces by dogs in an open place. The paramour shall be roasted on an iron bed; brushwood shall men throw (upon the fire); there shall the evil-doer be consumed."



Radha in Krishna's clothes: transcending the boundaries of gender

In mythology, too, the adulterous woman at least rarely escapes the consequences of her actions. Ahilya, the wife of a sage, who was more a victim of Indra's (the king of gods') lechery and less an enthusiastic participant in their short-lived revel, paid dearly for her unwitting lapse. Parshuram, commanded by his father, killed his own mother who, when out bathing, caught sight of a handsome king sporting with his wives and was "unfaithful in her heart." Even today, we know from clinical practice that in most sections of Indian soceiety adultery is rarely a matter of casual, common-place liaison. Even its fantasised contemplation by the woman is reacted to with moral dread and as a momentous psychological event.

In contrast, the poets and literati of the classical period, who have exercised a great influence on subsequent cultural attitudes and sentiments, at least of the upper castes, generally scorned the Hindu marriage as a preeminently social and religious duty. They saw in marriage a deadly foe of the passion to which they—as indeed most poets—have always aspired. In writing with nostalgia of scenes of love unhampered by matrimony or in lamenting the disappearance of love with marriage, the poets' scorn of conjugal love was unremitting.

Where the moon is not inveighed against
and no sweet words of the messenger are heard,
Where speech is not choked with tears
and the body grows not thin;
but where one sleeps in one's own house
with he one owns subservient to one's wish;
can this routine of household sex,
this wretched thing, deserve the name of love?

With notable exceptions such as Bhavabhuti who rhapsodised over the tenderness and deepening affection of the marital tie, the poets and especially the female of this (artistic) species—Vidya and Bhavakadevi for example—idealised the rapture of the illicit liaison. In counterpoint to the damnation heaped upon her in religious and legal texts, the adultress was assured of the poet's admiration and sympathy. In the poetic and dramatic conventions, for instance, there are three kinds of women: the courtesan (*veshya*), the wife (*svakiya*), and the "other woman" (*parakiya*). The other woman is further subdivided into two kinds: the unmarried young girl (*kanyaka*) and the married woman (*parodha*). It is the *parodha*, the other man's wife, who best embodies the principle of eros (since, risking much, she has the most to lose) and is therefore considered the most desirable lover. As one Sanskrit poet writes:

So there are
Women who attract with
their loose ways
prostitutes
and there is the deep shyness
of one's own wife

the most beautiful and most
graceful showing
her love
opening flower
but who in this world can
fill one with joy
like another man's wife
loving with naked breast.

In contrast to the classical poets who stressed the frank elation, the incomparable "joy" of loving another man's wife, the *bhakti* cults gave more exalted reasons for making Radha an adulterous *parakiya*. For them the adulterous was symbolic of the sacred, the overwhelming moment that denies world and society, transcending the profanity of everday convention, as it forges an unconditional (and unruly) relationship with god a.. the lover. Stirring our sense of the esse..tial instabilities and disorderliness of passionate love, Radha would sing:

At the first note of his flute
down came the lion gate of reverence for elders,
down came the door of *dharma*,
my guarded treasure of modesty was lost,
I was thrust to the ground as if by a thunderbolt.
Ah, yes, his dark body
poised in the *tribhanga* pose
shot the arrow that pierced me;
no more honour, my family
lost to me,
my home at Vraja
lost to me.
Only my life is left—and my life too is only a breath that is leaving me.

In imparting adulterous love elements of the divine, the *bhakti* poets went even farther than the troubadours of medieval Europe who had equated it with "true" love. In the legendary and oft-quoted decision taken at the so-called Court of Love in Champagne in 1174 it was maintained: "We declare and affirm, agreeably to the general opinion of those present, that love cannot exercise its powers on married people. The following reason is proof of the fact: lovers grant everything, mutually and gratuitously, without being constrained by any motive of necessity. Married people, on the contrary, are compelled as a duty to submit to one another's wishes, and not to refuse anything to one another. For this reason it is evident that love cannot exercise its power on married people."

Both the Indian sanctification and the European romanticisation of extramarital love distract attention from its "real" fascination: its obviation of many factors that promote sexual anxiety and consequently inhibit desire. The structure of the adulterous, so far removed from the mundane, the longterm "dream of safety" and dependability of the conjugal relationship, may not be so easily subject to the Oedipal taboos which, in a marriage, often come to attach themselves to the partner. In other words, the adulterous relationship is relatively free of those instances of impotency or frigidity in marriage that involve a transference to the spouse of unconscious sexual attitudes, and prohibitions, entertained earlier towards the parent of the opposite sex. Freed of inner taboos, the adulterous situation yet partakes of its delightful excitement, with the betrayed spouse [illegible] as an *outside* impediment, both regulating erotic intensity and, insofar as he or she is an obstacle, enhancing it. Reliving the thrills of Oedipal fantasy, the adulterous lover does not confront the parent's image or injunctions in the person to whom he or she makes love. In this adventure, taboos have been left by the wayside and are not everyday matters.

In the Indian case, there is an additional consideration. The hierarchical dictates of the family call for male supremacy within marriage. The adulterous, in contrast, is free of all distinctions of relative status between man and woman. Radha can address Krishna as "*tu chora* (You thief)," which would be unthinkable for a wife who is constrained to use the most respectful form of second person address when speaking to her husband—a proscription which is hardly conducive to sexual abandon in the "master(s) bedroom." Furthermore, the clandestine life of the adulterous is [illegible] of snatches of stolen time, rather than long periods of coexistence. This mitigates demands for intimacy on levels other than the sexual. The body, shackled by social and moral restraints and enmeshed in a web of unconscious expectations and attitudes from the past, glimpses in the adulterous a promise of new-found emancipation and expansiveness.



The divine lovers, Radha and Krishna

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Therein it is unfettered by the spontaneous, vivid, if transient encounter.

Besides the adulterous overthrow of social convention, the crossing of individual sexual boundaries is the other major source of erotic excitement in the artistic treatment of Radha and Krishna. In painting, the depiction of this crossing ranges from the portrayal of the lovers in the traditional Orissa school where they appear as one androgynous entity, to some of the paintings from the Himalayan foothills where Radha and Krishna are dressed in each other's clothes or Radha is seen taking the more active "masculine" role in coitus. In poetry, Sur Das would speak in Radha's voice:

You become Radha and I will become Madhava,
truly Madhava; this is the reversal which
I shall produce. I shall braid your hair and will put
(your) crown upon my head. Sur Das says. Thus
the Lord becomes Radha and Radha the son of Nanda.

The inversion of sexual roles is even more striking in the depiction of their intercourse. The poet Chandi Das praises as beautiful ". .the deliberate, sensuous union of the two/ the girl playing this time the active role/riding her lover's outstretched body in delight" while Javadeva gives voice to what are normally regarded as "feminine masochistic" sexual wishes when he has Krishna sing:

Punish me, lovely fool!
Bite me with your cruel teeth!
Chain me with your creeper arms!
Crush me with your hard breasts!
Angry goddess, don't weaken with joy!
Let Love's despised arrows
Pierce me to sap my life's power!

Under the influence of nineteenth-century Western phallocentricity, one of the dubious intellectual "blessings" of British colonial rule, many educated Indians would become uneasy with this accentuation of femininity in a culture hero. The great Bengali writer, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the proponent of a virile nationalism would write of the *Gitagovinda*:

"From the beginning to the end, it does not contain a single expression of manly feelings—of womanly feeling there is a great deal—or a single elevated sentiment...I do not deny his (Jayadeva's) high poetical merits in a certain sense, exquisite imagery, tender feeling, and unrivalled powers of expression, but that does not make him less the poet of an effeminate and sensual race."

In the *bhakti* cults, where the worshipper must create an erotic relationship with Krishna, the transcendence of boundaries of gender becomes imperative for the male devoteewho endeavours to become as a woman in relation to the Lord. In his case the violation of the biblical injunction "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garments" is far from being an "abomination unto the Lord thy God." In *bhakti*, Lord Krishna not only demands such a reversal from his male worshippers but has himself set the compelling exemplar Consequently, tales of Indian saints who have succeeded in feminising themselves are legion To give only a couple of illustrations: the fifteenth-century Gujarati saint Narsi Mehta writes, "I took the hand of that lover of *gopis* (Krishna) in loving converse...I forgot all else Even my manhood left me. I began to sing and dance like a woman My body seemed to change and I became one of the *gopis*. I acted as a go-between like a woman and began to lecture Radha for being too proud...At such times I experienced moments of incomparable sweetness and joy " A.K. Ramanujan tells us that the voice of the Tamil saint-poet Nammalvar, who wrote 370 poems on the theme of love, was always that of a woman: Krishna's beloved, the girl friend who consoles and counsels, or "the mother who restrains her and despairs over her daughter's lovesick fantasies." Nammalvar's love poems alternated with other kinds of poems and a thirteenth-century commentary explained these shifts: "In knowledge, his own words; in love, a woman's words." A legend has it that Amaru, one of the earliest and greatest Sanskrit poets of love, was the hundred and first incarnation of a soul which had previously occupied the bodies of a hundred women. Narsi Mehta, Nammalvar and countless other,unknown devotees of the Radha-Krishna cults bear testimony to the primal yearning of men, ensheathed and isolated by their "phallic" masculinity, to yield their heroic trappings and delight in womanliness, others' and their own. These universal wishes are distinct from the pathological cases where similar fantasies and femininebehaviour might well be a manifestation of "homosexual libido," a retreat from phallic masculinity into anal eroticism. In other words, some of the devotees may indeed be closer to the case of Schreber, the psychotic German judge who was convinced that he was being transformed into a woman in order to become God's wife and give birth to a whole new race of men. Like Schreber, these devotees too may be defending against their fear and unconscious belief that they have been emasculated and consoling themselves with femininity as a compensation



A Kangra painting of Radha and Krishna

Yet for most of the worshippers and the saints, as for the rest of us, the wish to be a woman is not a later distortion of phallic strivings but another legacy from our "prehistoric" experience with our mothers. The mother has figured early on as the omnipotent force of a parental universe, making things, including fathers and other males, materialise as if at will. It is she whose breast and magic touch soothed the savage instinctual imperatives, she whose fecund womb seemed the very fount of life. Such maternal and feminine powers are earthly yet mysterious and transcendant, undiminished by

the utter sensuousness in which they are manifest As the little boy grows toward manhood and assumes his predestined masculine role in society, he may come to exaggerate the brittle and rather obvious puissant attributes of the phallus and disparage those who do not possess it Yet what he does not have gnaws at him and in the veil of night (or in the veil drawn over consciousness in the ecstasy of religious possession) he would gratefully surrender his penis



Sheltering from the rain

to the vagina and the woman who possesses it.

Krishna's erotic homage to Radha conveys something of the aching quality of the man's fantasy of surrender at the height of sexual excitement. He longs to be smothered and penetrated by the woman's breasts as he willingly shrinks in his mind's eye. Every fibre of his male organ is attuned to the welcoming wetness his eyes cannot see nor he know, straining even as he finally expels his seed from his self, an emissary journeying deep into the lover's internal dark continent. The thrusting penis, man realises once again, can never take or hold the woman. It merely enters her territory and touches her portals, only to shrivel and all too rapidly be withdrawn. Did it not provide a recurrent bridge to her, man would gladly cede his penis and castrate himself to be one with the beloved. The "secret of man," gods included, to borrow from Bruno Bettelheim, is that they want to be that which they cannot have: Woman.

The profusion of the imagery of darkness and night in the meetings of Radha - Krishna—as indeed in the trysts of Romeo and Juliet and of Layla and Majnun (or, for that matter, Tristan and Isolde)—underscores the secret nature of these fantasies. The paintings which show Radha and Krishna surrounded by darkness while they themselves are lit by a sullen glare from the sky, or portray the lovers enclosed in a triangle of night while around them the rest of Vrindavan's inhabitants unconcernedly go about the day's tasks, are visual metaphors for a sensualism which is simultaneously hidden from the world and from the lover's awareness. For Radha, as for Juliet, night and darkness are excitement's protectors as are silence and secrecy its friends. "Leave your noisy anklets! They clang like traitors in love's play Go to the darkened thicket, friend! Hide in a cloak of night!" advises one of Radha's friends. In a Basholi painting from *Rasmanjari*, the text describes the seated lovers thus: "Fear of detection does not permit the eager lovers' gaze to meet. Scared of the jingling sound of armlets they desist from embracing. They kiss each other's lips without the contact of teeth. Their union is hushed too." Many other portraits of Radha reveal that it is not only the world which must remain unaware of her sexual arousal. Radha, too, when in a state where "...love's deep fantasies / struggles with her modesty," would feign ignorance of her true condition—one part of Radha treating the awareness of her arousal as if it were a secret another part of her self must not admit knowing—and it is given to the poet to correctly perceive her struggle.

Words of protest filled with passion,
Gestures of resistance lacking force,
Frowns transmuted into smiles.
Crying dry of tears—friend,
Though Radha seeks to hide her feelings
Each attempt betrays her heart's
Deep love for demon Mura's slayer.

Other poets, identifying with a Radha who steals out at night to meet Krishna, graphically describe her fear while they merely hint at her suppressed thrill, sharpened by the threat of discovery, in images of storm, writhing snakes, scratched and burning feet.

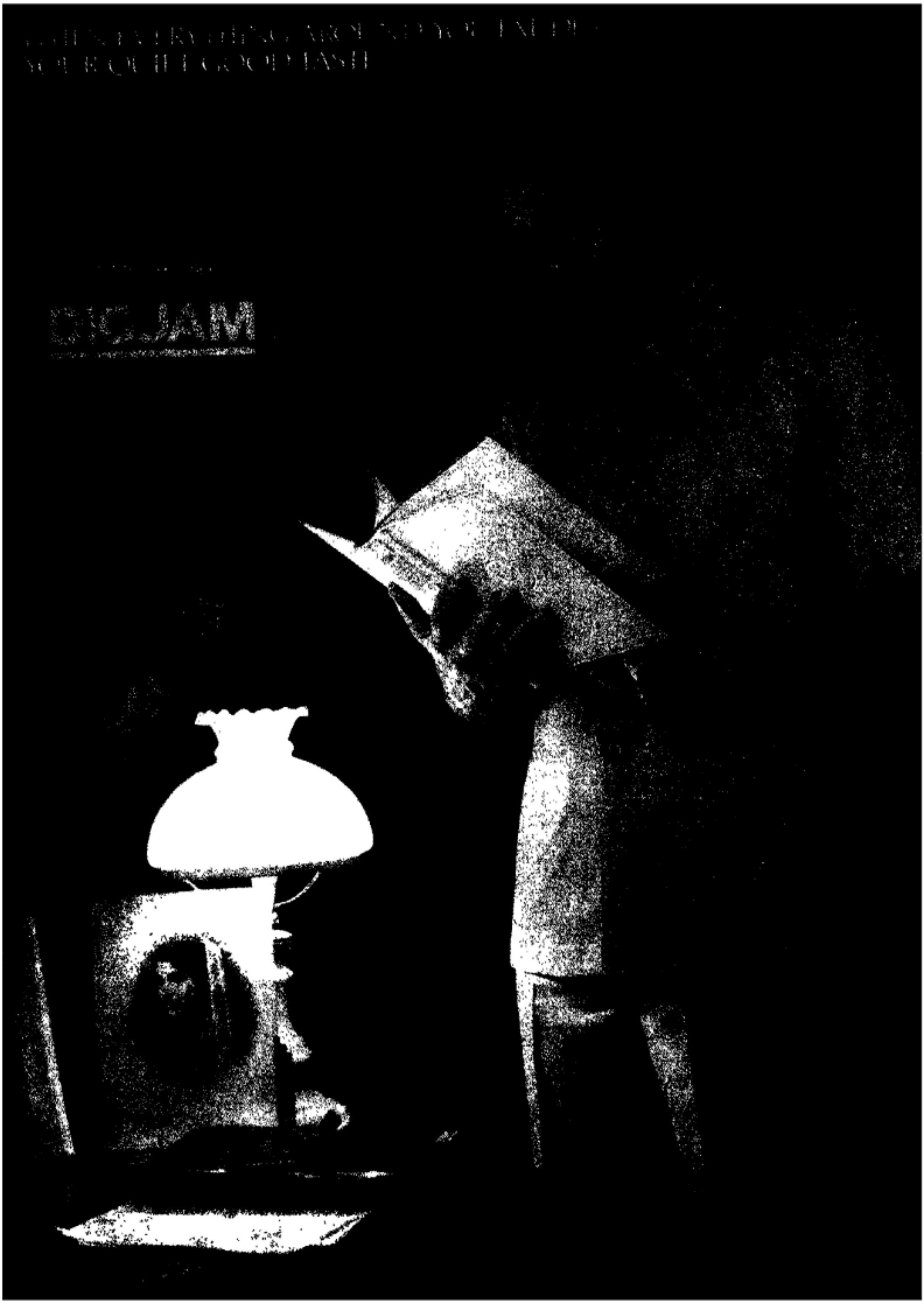
O Madhava, how shall I tell you of my terror?
I could not describe my coming here
if I had a million tongues.
When I left my room and saw the darkness
I trembled:
I could not see the path,
there were snakes that writhed round my ankles!
I was alone, a woman; the night was so dark.
the forest so dense and gloomy,
and I had so far to go.
The rain was pouring down—
which path should I take?
My feet were muddy
and burning where thorns had scratched them.
But I had the hope of seeing you,
none of it mattered.
and now my terror seems far away ..
When the sound of your flute reaches my ears
it compels me to leave my home, my friends,
it draws me in the dark toward you.

We imagine that on hearing Radha's plaint, Lord Krishna, whose gaze into the recesses of the human heart is as penetrating as it is compassionate, smiled to himself in the dark. He would have surely known that the strains of his flute, like that of Pan's before him, is the perennial and irresistible call of the human senses.

And what do darkness and night mean to Krishna as he passively offers himself to Radha's embraces? Here, too, only under the cloak of night does the Lord reveal the deepest "secret of man"—that he would be a woman. In the night, visual and discreet modes of perception are replaced by tactile, visceral, and more synesthetic modes. Representations of the self and beloved fade and innermost sensate experience comes to the fore. As the illusion of bodies fused, hermaphrodic, is fostered, the fantasies around womanliness and sexual excitement feed each other, and Krishna "knows" Radha not with the eye but with the flesh.

Night's curtains never completely part in this gentler story, whose protagonist, moreover, is a god able to withstand and transcend such Protean changes. Hence the lovers survive, and tragedy is averted.


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Centre's Move for Conciliation

Akalis yet to reciprocate gesture

On 11 April, just a couple of days before Baisakhi, when the Akali leadership had threatened to launch a *morcha*, S.B. Chavan, the union home minister, made a series of announcements in the Lok Sabha that was seen as a bold initiative to restore normalcy in Punjab. Among them were: the holding of a judicial enquiry headed by a sitting Supreme Court judge into the Delhi riots following Mrs IndiraGandhi's assassination on 31 October 1984, the lifting of the ban of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) imposed on 19 March 1984 in the wake of increased extremist activity and plans of the government to order the release of more Akali Dal leaders under detention.

All these came in response to the demands that the Akali Dal had been making as a precondition to talks. It was also a step meant to stall the threat of another stir in Punjab. The initial reaction to the announcement was encouraging. In Punjab, where the atmosphere was becoming tense with Baisakhi just two days away, there was instant relief. Even the Akali Dal president, Harchand Singh Longowal, welcomed the initiative although he added that it had come late. The next day, the Akali Dal, after consultations with the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC)leadership, put off its action plan. But very soon hope began evaporating when the Akalis began saying that the government had not conceded enough. The announcement of the postponement of the stir came with a footnote: the party "would be forced to take the next step," if the government did not accept all their demands by 1 June. These demands include the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, the release of all Akali leaders and Sikh youths arrested during and after Operation Bluestar and the scrapping of the Terrorist Affected Area Act. The impasse in Punjab thus continues.



Harchand Singh Longowal

Events on Baisakhi day too indicated that the "bold initiatives" of the centre had not the desired effect. In fact Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi did not hesitate to say that the announcement had not prompted the Akalis to take any "positive steps" towards a solution of the Punjab tangle.

The Akali Dal chief Sant Harchand Singh Longowal has been quite unmoved, not prepared for any dialogue till the government gives a blanket clearance to all the demands. Some other Akali leaders were more alarming in the note they struck. Jagdev Singh Talwandi, leader of the Akali Dal (Talwandi group said that he did not oppose the demand for Khalistan or anyone who raised such a demand. On Baisakhi day, the Golden Temple saw the first open pro-Khalistan demonstration after a long time. As honours were being given to those Sikhs who had given up national awards or seats in Parliament in protest against Operation Bluestar, a group of AISSF activists wearing *kesari* turbans and shouting pro-Khalistan slogans climbed onto the dais and disrupted the function. On the streets of Amritsar too, similar slogans were raised as a massive procession proceeded from the Golden Temple to Shaheed Gunj where the first Nirankari-Akali clash took place on Baisakhi Day in 1978.

At the same time, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, the alleged assassins of Mrs Gandhi, have been made "martyrs" by the Akali Dal. And



S.B. Chavan

Longowal defends this well-rehearsed logic If the government can honour "those who virtually destroyed the Takht" why cannot the Akalis make martyrs out of Satwant Singh and Beant Singh? None of the Akali leaders are,as yet, prepared to say a word on the future. All they do is reiterate their one-point demand: fulfil all their demands. At the same time, they stress that it is the government that is interested in increasing the tension in Punjab, not they. And as the Akalis remain on the offensive there are signs that the government too is beginning to stiffen up: It has already made it clear that it is not ready to release those who are charged with secessionist activities.

The next important date for Punjab will be 1 June when the Akali Dal plans to launch its action plan, if by that time the government has not met all its demands. It has already announced it would be holding a "genocide week" from 1 June to 7 June and what happens during that period will depend on what happens between now and the beginning of June.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY

In Search of the Truth

The CBI's investigations are being completed

On 11 July, the multi-crore Union Carbide plant at Bhopal will be shut down. Operations inside the plant had been halted since the night of 2 December, when the methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from its tank No. 610. The Union Carbide premises were taken over by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) who are completing investigations in order to ascertain how the leak occurred. The final stage of the CBI's investigations began inside the plant on 6 April when a team of six scientists supervised the cutting open of the 40-foot tank No. 610 dug out for the purpose. The operation, delayed for weeks, was to ascertain the exact amount of polymerised residue inside the tank and the nature of the chemical reaction that had triggered off the leak.

During the operations, samples of the polymerised residue of MIC were collected by the team of Indian scientists and experts from the Union Carbide Corporation, America. The scientists, who had expected a thin layer of the residue, discovered six, to eight inches of residue still inside the tank. Instead of the five tonnes of estimated residue, there were about 12 tonnes. With this discovery, the possibility of certain impurities inside the tank at the time of the leak arose again. The operations of the CBI, successful as far as collecting samples of the greyish-green residue and the metallic surface of the tank are concerned, could not be completed. The weighing of tank No. 610 has had to be postponed for a later date.

The results of the CBI investigation, following the opening of the tank, will be significant in view of the report presented by the parent company in America detailing the accident. The report prepared by a team of US scientists states that a sizable quantity of water had entered the tank and caused the chemical reaction. The report also mentions that the water could have entered the tank either "inadvertently or deliberately." The possibility of sabotage as implied by the report of the US scientists can be refuted only when the CBI presents its report on the disaster.

The most significant discovery of the cutting-up operations after 6 April was the finding of large amounts of carbon deposits on the roof of the tank. According to Indian experts present on the spot, the presence of carbon has established with "some amount of certainty" that the abnormally high temperatures generated inside the tank resulted in the decomposition of the MIC into hydrogen cyanide, which was released into the atmosphere with the MIC, causing the death of 2,500 people.

The suffering of the thousands of MIC victims will continue till scientists and medical practitioners can establish the exact nature of the exposure and the chemical reaction that triggered off the leak. Till today, experts are divided in their opinions on the treatment given to the victims. The impediment for the Indian and foreign experts struggling with the treatment of MIC victims is that there is no record of death by MIC exposure in any part of the world. A report sent from the Union Carbide Institute plant at Charleston, USA, concerning previous exposure to methyl isocyanate, clearly states that out of the 86 exposures recorded with them (which occurred between 1965 and 1973), 53 exposed persons suffered from respiratory complaints, 12 from skin irritations and 21 from eye defects. None of the victims had succumbed to complaints following MIC exposure.

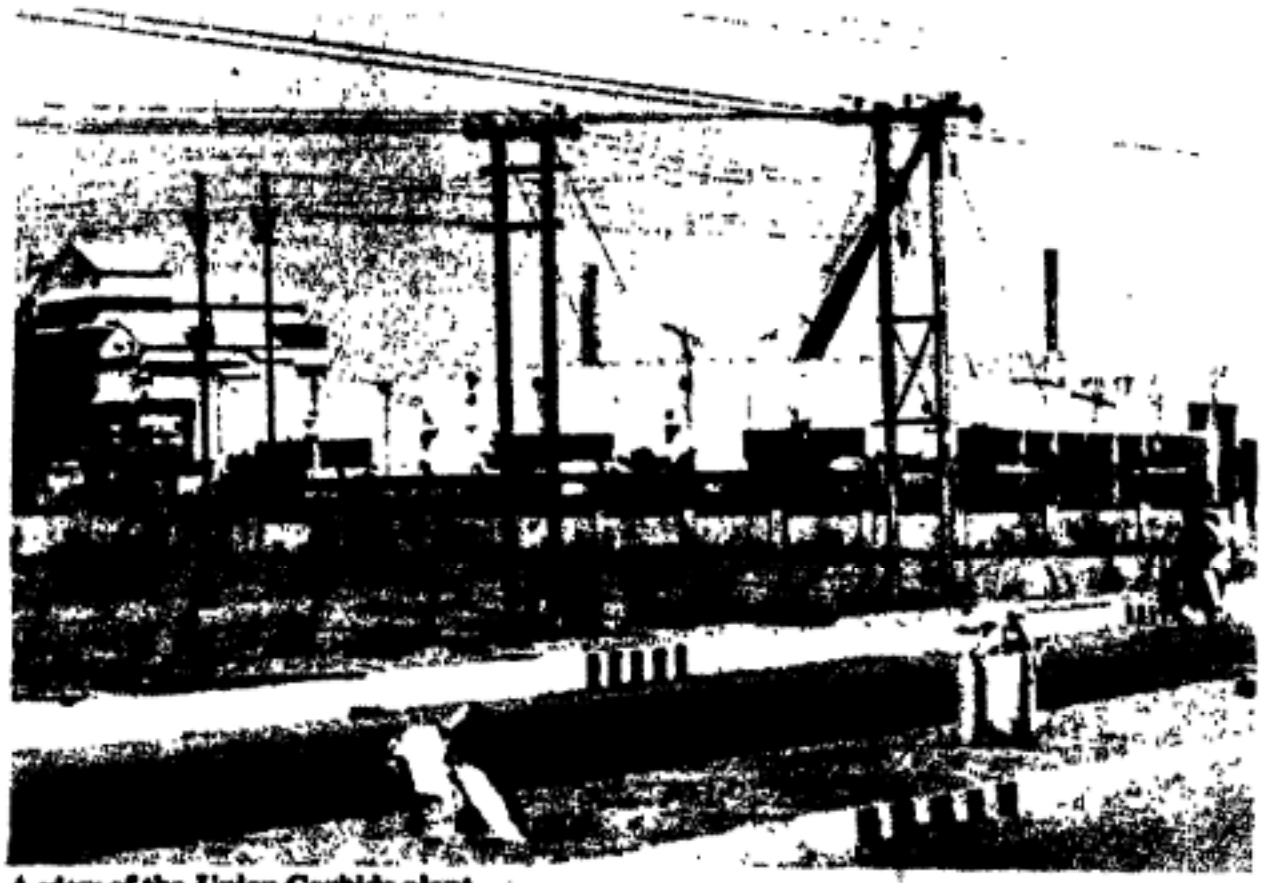
Though the Union Carbide Corporation has ruled out the possibility of cyanide poisoning, it has already been confirmed that MIC turns into hydrogen cyanide under extreme pressures (the fact sheet on MIC No. F-43458 printed in 1976 clearly states this). Further, the gas victims themselves have shown symptoms of acute cyanide poisoning as evident from the large number of post-mortems.

The administration of sodium thiosulphate injections was recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) which has conducted various surveys on MIC exposed persons. According to ICMR scientists, no serious adverse effects have been observed.

According to Dr S. Sriramachari, additional director general, ICMR, "It is a possibility that cyanide poisoning did take place when the MIC leaked, with the presence of some other chemicals," he said. But there are detractors to this theory who negate the possibility of cyanide poisoning. Among them is Dr N.P. Mishra, head of the medical department of Hamidia Hospital, Bhopal who argues that symptoms of cyanide poisoning cannot remain in the bodies of the victims four months after exposure. Dr Mishra said: "Cyanide kills within 24 hours and it is not possible for its effects to linger on for so long." He also felt that the administration of sodium thiosulphate to the victims has resulted in severe after-effects including vomiting, unconsciousness and convulsions.

The two opposing views of medical experts treating the victims in Bhopal are yet to be clarified. In spite of the obvious implications of the discovery of carbon monoxide deposits in the MIC tank, and the medical records of treatment given to the victims, thousands of people are being given conflicting treatment

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi.



A view of the Union Carbide plant

EDUCATION

Questionable Practices

Mass leakage of examination papers in Maharashtra

Never before has an examination in Maharashtra been so plagued by such massive leakages and the blatant sale of question papers. And never before have the board authorities in both Nagpur and Pune made a more strenuous effort to deny the obvious. Matters came to a head when the leaked question papers of the tenth Matric examination of the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education held last month were published in the local newspapers on 30 March 1985 . Not surprisingly, considering the thoroughness of the racketeers, the questions almost tallied with the actual question paper.

Long before the examinations, the crowd of people waiting at the bus stop for the super express bus from Nagpur was a familiar sight. It was the convenient rendezvous for both the buyers and sellers of the question papers. Xerox shops in the smaller towns where large crowds were noticed also did better business during the examinations, copying by hundreds the question papers.

The chairman of the Nagpur divisional board, Mr G.S. Pardeshi, had claimed that what were flooding the examination centres were "guess papers" and that the board was not able to do anything to catch the persons responsible for the alleged leakages. These denials did not convince anyone, least of all the students who found that the "guess papers" tallied by 80 to 90 per cent with the board's question paper. These denials were proved to be untrue on 30 March when the leaked-out geography paper tallied almost exactly with the actual question paper.

The *Nagpur Patrika*, *Hitavada* and *Nava Bharat*, three important dailies of the city published in their issues of 30 March the "leaked" geography question paper while the *Nagpur Times* and *Lokmat* which had copies of the paper did not print it. The printing of the copies of the "leaked" question paper created a sensation. As copies of the newspapers reached almost all parts of Vidarbha except the westernmost regions of Akola and Buldana districts, the questions were available to students in seven out of the nine districts of Vidarbha.

When the students who had either paid for the question paper or had read it in the newspapers went to the examination hall, they found that the official geography paper tallied almost exactly with the one published in the papers. The question paper printed in *Nagpur Patrika* contained all but three of the sub questions and covered 33 marks out of a maximum of 40. The question papers with the *Nagpur Times* and *Lokmat* were also nearly identical to the actual question paper. This time, there is no possibility of claiming that there was no leakage, but both the board and the government dragged their feet in the matter. At first there was a show of urgency and the examination committees of Nagpur and the Pune divisional board met to consider the leakage. But their decision was not made public.

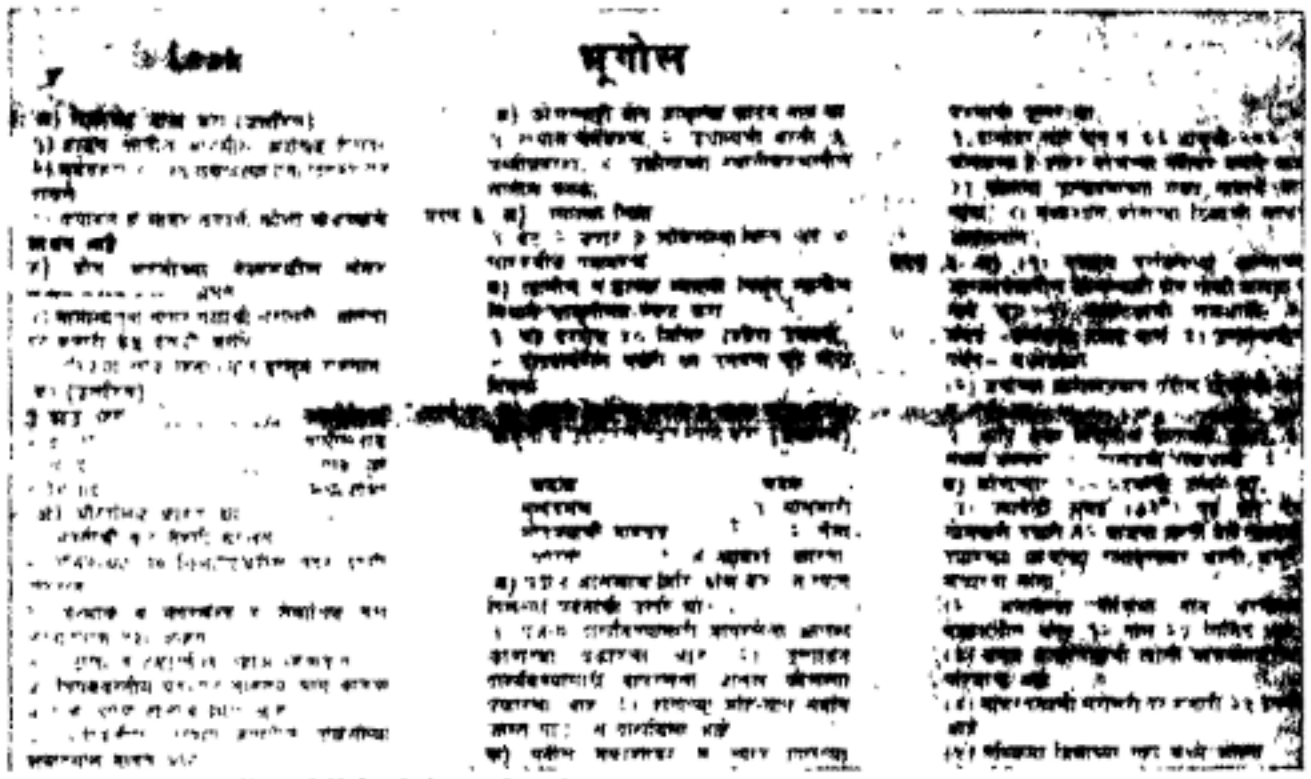
The board has recommended a re-examination. In the Legislative Council Vilasrao Deshmukh, minister of state for education, said that R.S. Jambhule, chairman of the Maharashtra Board, would visit Nagpur to hold an enquiry. That was on 1 April 1985. But Jambhule did not reach Nagpur till 8 April. Meanwhile, students have been assured that there would be no re-examination in geography, even though the paper has leaked out. It is however, common knowledge that a large number of other question papers also leaked out. In fact, The Nagpur newspapers had with them a question paper of another subject but a last minute mix-up led to it not being printed. This paper also tallied with the official paper. The geometry paper was also available at Akola. But the board insists that only the geography paper leaked out.

How did the leakage occur? The board's regulation for the setting of the question papers, and their printing and storage are almost foolproof What is more probable is that some unscrupulous invigilator in charge of a rural centre, either in collusion with his deputy or by himself opened the sealed envelopes containing the question papers, took out one and sealed the envelope again. There is very little possibility of detection as no strict account of question papers is kept and very little can be done to keep a check on examination centres in rural areas. The stolen question paper was then sent to Nagpur, Akola or Amravati. There it was sold for thousands of rupees after which xerox or hand-written copies were made and despatched to various smaller centres. During the process the cost per copy came down and some question papers were sold for as little as Rs ten per copy.

There are also allegations that higher-ups in the board are also in league with the racketeers. This has led to a demand for the reconstitution of the state and divisional boards, members of which have held office for more than a decade.

The massive leakage, however, is not likely to lead to any dramatic improvement in the results, say the teachers. The only sufferers will be the good students who have worked throughout the year but may not do as well as those who have been fortunate enough to acquire copies of the question papers before the examination. Meanwhile, the men behind the rackets who must have made lakhs of rupees, are still untraceable. Nor does it seem likely that the investigations will progress very far.

M.V. Padalkar, Nagpur



A "guess paper" published in a local newspaper

TAMIL NADU

Policemen Run Amok

Constables beat up innocent people and damage property

There is something bizarre and frightening about policemen going on a rampage. And that is what happened on 1 April at Avadi, a suburb of Madras and an important township because of the defence establishments: the Heavy Vehicles factory, the Central Vehicle Research Development Establishment, the Central Vehicle Department and the Indian Air Force. The headquarters of the Tamil Nadu Special Police (TSP) and the Central Reserve Police(CRP) are also located in the town.

The TSP constables went berserk on All Fools Day, beating up sleeping civilians, looting and damaging public property worth thousands of rupees. Altogether 25 persons were injured It was not just another law and order situation. Here, the perpetrators themselves were the forces of law and order. But what is most reassuring is that the senior TSP officers whom this correspondent spoke to accepted the blame and did not attempt to make excuses on behalf of the errant TSP constables.

Daily at 7.30 pm, a roll call is taken at the TSP camp, after which the constables are allowed to go out. They can go to town only on medical grounds and that too after securing written permission. However, on 1 April, a few constables sneaked out to see a late night film show in a local theatre which was screening *Ayirathil Oruvan (One in a Thousand)* starring MGR and Jayalalitha. At the theatre, two TSP constables tried to force their way in with the counterfoils of old tickets. The theatre has its own goons to handle such situations, which invariably occur during late night shows. The altercation led to a fight between the theatre staff and constables who were being helped by about a dozen of their colleagues. The theatre staff managed to overcome two of the constables and detained them. Meanwhile, the manager of the theatre, Ms Kannan, made a complaint to the police. While she was recording her complaints, the two captured constables escaped.

They told the other TSP constables in the camp highly distorted and exaggerated versions of the incident, giving the impression that several TSP constables had been seriously injured, unconscious and dying. On hearing the story, the TSP commandant left for the police station to book a complaint about the two constables who he thought were still in custody. The other TSP constables inflamed by the alleged atrocities rushed out of their barracks and stormed into the theatre. Armed with soda water bottles and cold drinks from the theatre canteen they entered the auditorium and attacked the men, molested the women and beat up the children. The frightened cinegoers ran outside and soon a crowd of about 1,000 persons had gathered in the dead of night. The TSP men sneaked away and the local police had to contain the mob by requesting them to disperse. Enraged by the actions of the TSP men, the mob caught hold of Lance Naik Kumaresan of the TSP just as he got off the train and beat him up.

Hearing of the incident, the TSP constables went berserk, looting and damaging public property. Armed with iron rods, belts and *lathis* they ransacked the town and *bazaar* areas, forcing open shops. Said Benny, a shopkeeper, "My shop was closed. At about 12.30 at night the TSP men came and forced open the shop and ransacked it. They took away all the cigarettes, and smashed all the cold drink bottles and machines. "He claims he has lost goods worth Rs 11,000. Most of the shopkeepers near the Round Tana of Avadi town had a similar story to tell.

A *lathi* charge was out of question. The only solution was a police firing but that would have graver consequences because the rioters were constables who had access to a great deal of arms and ammunition in their depots. If one of them had been injured or killed in the firing, they might have opened fire with their light machine guns and killed hundreds of people. The local police tried to pacify them and finally by about 1.30 am, their anger and energy spent, the TSP constables returned to their barracks.

The Vyapari Sangam (traders' association) of Avadi declared a *bandh* to demand compensation for the goods damaged by the TSP constables and also wanted extra protection to safeguard them from such occurences in the future. With wisdom and foresight, the director general of police Mr V.R. Lakshminarayan ordered the immediate removal of the TSP battalions to Tirupattur Andkrishnagiri as the irate public may have retaliated against the TSP men the next day. The collector of Chingleput K.A. Mathews ordered an inquiry into the incident to be conducted by the district revenue officer Mr Chokalingam who is expected to submit his report by mid-April. Meanwhile, the TSP has suspended five constables on grounds of indiscipline.

The TSP comprises seven battalions which are to be used during emergencies, when the local and armed reserve police fail to contain a situation. They are used often because of inadequate manpower of the local police. On the night of the incident, there were two battalions of the TSP in the Avadi camp. One had returned from Delhi in October 1984 after serving a five-year deputation in the capital. They were in charge of VIP security but were brought back for a refresher course.

The incidents have shaken the local population. Benny expressed the growing fear of the common man when he said, "What guarantee do we have that the TSP men won't do this again? What guarantee do we have that the CRP and IAF men will not do this? For all we know the local thugs will take a cue from this and loot and damage our goods. Who do we turn to for protection?"

Anita Pratap, Madras

A shop destroyed by the policemen



KARNATAKA

Taking On the Press

Bureaucrat prevents publication of local paper

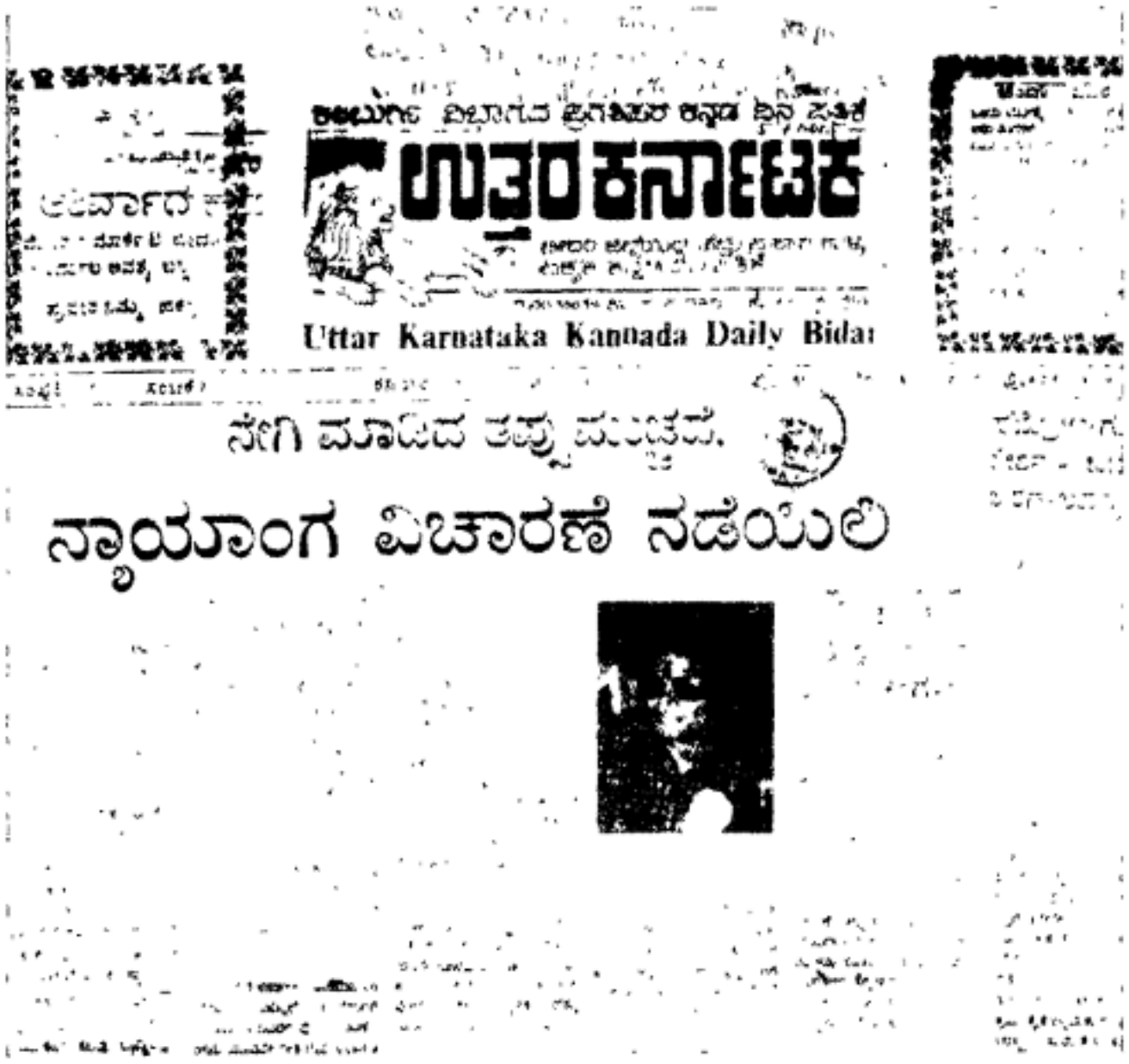
In the remote district of Bidar in north Karnataka, a deputy commissioner has successfully defied the judiciary, the executive and the legislature to stop a newspaper from functioning. The entire newspaper community in Bidar is up in arms, against the DC, Mr K.L. Negi, in a case that has raised eyebrows in many quarters.

Relations between the press in Bidar and Mr Negi were never very good. Long before Mr Negi came down on the local Kannada daily, *Uttara Karnataka*, the local journalists had frequent brushes with him, though not always at his instigation. In one of the first such confrontations, journalists were denied passes for the Prime Minister's visit during the election campaign on the eve of the Lok Sabha polls. The DC had a perfectly good reason for turning down the journalists' request (they wanted to meet Mr Gandhi on the tarmac of the helipad) because of the tight security regulations. But the manner in which he threw out the journalists aggravated an already strained relationship.

The crunch came when *Uttara Karnataka*, a four-page Kannada daily edited by Mr Shivasharanappa Wali published a report, according to which Mr Negi got into a drunken brawl with another official on Republic Day at the local officers club. The news made the headlines. In its enthusiasm to nail Negi, the daily followed up the next day with a front page editorial demanding a judicial inquiry into the whole episode. That happened to be the paper's last issue—for at least some time to come, the publication was suspended.

On the morning of 4 February, at 3.30 am, Mr Negi, accompanied by the assistant commissioner, the SP, Mr Srivarsava, two sub-inspectors and a vanload of policemen descended on Mr Wali's office-cum-residence and demanded to see the licences and the certificate of registration of the newspaper. Not satisfied with the documents produced, they locked up the office premises. Shivasharanappa Wali's battle for justice and freedom of expression had begun.

He came to Bangalore the very next day and immediately moved the journalists' union. On 9 February, Wali appealed to the High Court against the DC's order closing down his newspaper. Meanwhile, Negi also wrote to the registrar of newspapers, recommending that the newspaper's registration be cancelled, which was promptly complied with. However, Wali filed another petition before the High Court making the registrar a party to the whole case. Thereafter, the advocate appearing for the registrar filed a petition before the High Court, submitting that they had withdrawn the cancellation of the registration of the newspaper.


ಉತ್ತರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ

Uttar Karnataka Kannada Daily Bidar

ನೇಗಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ತಪ್ಪು ಏನಿತ್ತೆಂದು.

ನ್ಯಾಯಾಂಗ ವಿಚಾರಣೆ ನಡೆಯಲಿ

The front page of a copy of the paper

Shivasharanappa Wali won his case on 19 February. The High Court quashed the order of the DC and directed him not to interfere with the publication of the newspaper. If for any reason, a show cause notice had to be issued to the newspaper at a future date, then the matter had to be taken up by the DC of neighbouring Gulbarga, the court ordered. Wali could collect the High Court order only on 6 March. He immediately went back to Bidar to show the order to the DC, who promptly showed him the door. The editor then sent the order by registered post with acknowledgement due. Even after receiving the order, Negi refused to give him an appointment or lift the ban on the newspaper.

Instead, on 12 March the *taluk* executive magistrate served another order on the editor banning the publication of the newspaper on grounds that there was tension in Bidar town and Section 144 had been imposed. By now, the Assembly elections were over and Bidar town, which has an equal number of Kannada, Urdu and Marathi-speaking people, elected a Muslim MLA from the Congress(I). But the MLA himself disagreed with the order of the *taluk* executive magistrate. Laikkuddin, the Bidar MLA, says that while there was some tension between his party workers and the BJP, the situation was exaggerated and had no bearing on the publication of the newspaper. He has no doubt that Negi was excessively harsh on the editor of *Uttara Karnataka*.

The district administration's intransigence and defiance of the High Court order once again brought Wali to Bangalore. This time he approached the home secretary, Mr Muddappa, who immediately cancelled the order of the magistrate and warned that nothing should be done to give an impression that the gov-

ernment was interfering with the freedom of the press. But the district administration remained unrepentant. Even oral instructions from the chief minister, Mr Ramakrishna Hegde, appeared to have no effect. Mr Hegde's attention was drawn to the matter at the All India Mofussil Journalists Conference on 28 February at Mandya which he inaugurated in the midst of his hectic election tour. Since then, the chief minister has assured action at several public forums and later telephonically admonished Negi.

As late as 29 March, when the matter came up before the Legislature, nothing had happened. The home minister, Mr B. Rachiah, told both Houses of the Legislature that he had rescinded all orders banning the newspaper. But with doubt writ large on his face, Shivasharanappa Wali collected the official proceedings of the house in print, and a letter of authority from the home minister before he took a bus to Bidar, hoping to have his press rolling in time for the 57th All India Kannada Literary Conference scheduled to begin in Bidar on 5 April.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

BOMBAY

A Racket up in Smoke

But political clout helped O.P. Bahl, the owner of Khyber

On 21 March 1984, 50 *goondas* led by one Syed Mohammad Hadi and A.W. Shahabas Khan (a relative of Karim Lala) took a *morcha* to the office of the "A" ward municipal officer, Mr D.A. Pinto, demanding that he should not prosecute Mr O.P. Bahl, owner of the Khyber restaurant in Bombay which burnt down on 31 March. For half-an-hour these *goondas* shouted slogans of *murdabad* and burst firecrackers. The corporation had to be superseded, they demanded and challenged Pinto saying that they would see how he could demolish Khyber's "Moghul Room." They also *gheraoed* Mr Pinto. Pinto, familiar with the ways of hooligans as also the antecedents of Hadi and Khan asked the *goondas* how much they were being paid to do this. There was silence in the room after which the troublemakers left.

Pinto has been carrying on a one-man crusade against the irregularities committed by Mr Bahl who was a Congress(I) MLA since 1980. Mr O.P. Bahl's fight to regularise the irregularities he committed with his money-power and political connections, is typical of every powerful hotelier. Mr Bahl is also the landlord of the four-building complex where Khyber is situated and has been harassing a number of his tenants.

Till Khyber burnt down, Mr Bahl continued to illegally use 879 square metres of area though he has a licence to use only 254 square metres. Cases have been filed against him by the state buildings, health and drainage departments but he has ignored all of them and continued his irregular dealings. Prosecution against him began from January 1984 for the unlicensed restaurant. Altogether 99 offence sheets were handed over and 66 cases filed. Bahl was held guilty in all the cases and fined only Rs 4,600 on 11 September 1984 by the Presidency Magistrate's court though the minimum fine is Rs 200 and the maximum Rs 1,000 for each offence according to the municipal law.

While Bahl managed to get away with it, his tenants lived in fear of being roasted alive. Between 1977 and 1979 when Bahl began the renovation work, Francis D'Souza, a young resident went to see the then municipal commissioner, B.K. Choughule (the present home secretary) to complain against the illegal chimneys, the noise and the smoke emanating from the cooling tower and the chimney. Mr Choughule visited the site but did nothing about it. In 1983, another resident Mr Bomi Sethna faced problems after Mr Bahl cut off the water supply. For two years there was no water in the toilets. Bahl then took over the bathrooms and converted the area for his chimney. A municipal standing committee of 40 persons had visited the site in November 1983 but again, nothing was done about it.

According to Francis De Souza, the four buildings were once owned by the Sassoon J. David Trust and later acquired by the Tatas. The Tatas then sold it to Bahl reportedly, for a total of Rs one lakh, in 1977. Two of the four buildings are residential-cum-commercial and the other two are purely commercial. All the residential premises occupied by previous owners were forcibly taken over and more area was added to the restaurant. The empty space has been used by Bahl to construct illegally a fifth building. It is believed that Bahl did not submit the plans for approval to the municipal authorities and went ahead aware that he could get it regularised and that the battle in the courts would go in his favour.

Bahl's *modus operandi* for making additions to his restaurant was simple. On Friday nights, equipment would arrive; by 5 pm the next day, gangs of workers would arrive and work would begin that night and continue till Sunday night. When residents of the building and of neighbouring buildings would complain about the noise, he would pay no attention. Bahl was employing the same tactics on 31 March when the fire broke out. He was installing a third *tandoor* without any permission from the corporation. During the



The Khyber restaurant after the fire

welding work, the apparatus blew up setting the carpets on fire and finally all the other rooms: The Moghul Room, The Maharaja Room, The Party Room, The Walk-in, the pantry and the kitchen. As Mr Pinto said, "The most controversial portion of the restaurant has disappeared."

Four residents of the building, Madhukar Rane, Bharat Patel, K. David and V.D. Kanchan along with some other residents claimed that they were "living with a bomb. If it had exploded, it would have been a disaster for hundreds of people," they said. "On the day of the fire, we saw two tempos taking away around 120 gas cylinders, all of them illegally stored in two feet wide passages of our buildings. More than a year ago the fire brigade had asked for their removal but besides giving assurances, Mr Bahl did nothing," one of the residents added.

How could Bahl get away with it and for so long? In 1983, during a public furore, urban development minister Ramrao Adik had kept the Bahl action file in his "safe" custody for a whole year. The then municipal commissioner was too timid to ask for it so that proceedings could begin against Bahl. At that time, the 'A' ward officer Mr Pinto initiated action against him and because action was pending, Pinto did not renew his licence for running the restaurant. But Bahl continued to operate the restaurant without a licence. On 22 August, Bahl approached Mr D.M. Sukhtankar, the then chairman of the Bombay Municipal Corporation to ask him to order Pinto to restore the licence, and stop prosecution. However, Pinto did not accede to Mr Sukhtankar's request until the court finally let off Bahl.

What now? The residents are on the streets. The corporation is dithering over what should be done. De Souza says, "It is obvious from what we have told you that Bahl has violated all the rules, laws and regulations for the sake of personal gain without any scruples. He made the tenants of four buildings sit on gunpowder. In view of his being so ruthless, careless, negligent and inhuman, he should not be considered fit to continue as a landlord of these buildings and we tenants demand that all four buildings should be handed over to those who are willing and able to take over and carry out repairs on a cooperative basis."

Meanwhile, Bahl called a meeting with the residents on 8 April and appealed to them as "my brothers and sisters" to shift to transit camps immediately so that he could repair the burnt down structure as this was his bread and butter and he was starving. One wonders if the tenants are going to be hoodwinked by him again?

Olga Tellis, Bombay

ANDHRA PRADESH

Change of Stations

Are central government firms moving out of the state?

Are the central government organisations moving out of Hyderabad? Is it only a coincidence that in recent weeks there have been rumours of a number of central government organisations moving out of the city. There is already a belief that there is a plan to move central government offices out of Hyderabad because the state does not have a Congress(I) government. But it is the short span of time in which the reports of at least four central government organisations either closing their offices or cutting down their establishments in Andhra Pradesh which has given credence to the feeling of discrimination. After the drastic reduction of the allocation for the Visakhapatnam steel plant, there are rumours that the entire project may be shelved altogether, as the costs have escalated to an astronomical figure. Among the organisations which are reportedly planning to downgrade their activities are the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), the Directorate of Oilseeds Research, Indian Airlines engineering base and the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC).

The ITDC unit in Hyderabad has been closed since the beginning of this year. The unit had incurred heavy losses during the previous year. The fleet of commercial vehicles that the unit maintained have been shifted to other centres. Employees of the corporation contend that the heavy losses are mainly due to bad management, that there was no need to close down the unit as proper management would make it profitable. Some employees, however, moved a petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court against the closure of the unit, but the petition was dismissed. The other organisation that is likely to bring down its shutters in Hyderabad is the Directorate of Oilseeds Research, housed at the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University since its inception in 1977. The directorate moved into its own building in Rajendranagar just last year when the building was inaugurated by the union minister for agriculture.

The Visakhapatnam steel plant has been plagued by a shortage of funds. Other major problems are: an inadequate supply of water and the possible increase in costs. A delegation of the city Congress(I) committee has called on the Prime Minister to plead for more funds for the steel plant.

Another central government establishment which is likely to be moved out of Hyderabad is the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), a Hyderabad based central government corporation. There is a proposal to merge NMDC with the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC) as an integrated operation combining mining, ore handling and export would reduce costs. A merger with MMTC will mean that the headquarters of the NMDC will be moved to Delhi. NMDC employees apprehend that a merger could lead to large-scale transfers of staff and even retrenchment, affecting hundreds of employees.

The Union steel minister Vasant Sathe who inaugurated NMDC's new office building in Hyderabad and a meeting of the Federation of All India NMDC Employees Unions said that he was against the merger proposal. But the union leaders are afraid that other considerations may finally prevail. The note on the proposal is still doing the rounds of the steel ministry.

Telugu Desam Party's general secretary Mr P. Upendra, replying to questions about the shifting of these establishments said: "Our reaction to these things is well-known." In the early 1970s, a number of organisations including BHEL R and D, defence research establishments, IDPL, the HAL Electronics Division and ECIL had moved into Hyderabad. In the early 1980s, tremendous activity had begun on the outskirts of Hyderabad at Patencheru in Medak constituency when it was represented by Mrs Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha. Now, the big question being asked is why the conditions which made Hyderabad a suitable location for these establishments have suddenly changed.

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

Brush with India

"*Pakoras*, silver bangles and the star-studded skies are the things we liked best about India." This was the conclusion Kevin, Greta and Enilda, young artists from New York City public (state) schools, came to after their two-week stay in India as a part of the Festival of India activities. The children won the trip to India by painting portraits of India in a competition organised by the Asia Society. "I used to dream about India," says Greta, "men in turbans, bright saris, and the Taj Mahal, so I drew these images. I guess they chose my drawing because that's what everyone feels about India." After staying here with Indian families and travelling, the children found the India of their dreams different. "The people are real nice but they speak so many languages and keep asking you to eat more," said the confused teenage New Yorker Kevin, "and why do boys hold hands here all the time?"



Bob Wade

Training Cells

Chess anyone? "You can have training programmes for chess just as you might for hockey, football," says Bob Wade, chief trainer of the British Chess Federation, now visiting India, a land of chess from where, alas, only a few chessplayers make a mark in international tournaments. Those grey cells can easily be marshalled, as can the muscles, according to this international master who was twice the British champion, and was given the Empire for his contribution to this exacting game. The secret of improving the quality of chess players lies in getting grandmasters to train or at least examine how young players perform. What India needs is a "star". There are no Amitabh Bachchans of chess in this country to add to razzle dazzle. Neither is there publicity to this game which is, according to Wade, all in the mind. When his country realised it was slipping badly in chess, a training programme was started and 15 years later, Britain inched to second place.

Set to Succeed

On the day after Raja Man Singh of Bharatpur was killed in the busy grain market of Deeg by the police, his daughter, Deepa Singh, sat in his huge, rather frayed armchair by the fireplace.

Stroking the arm of the chair, she had said, "I am sitting on daddy's throne." Dazed, though she was then, her remark might prove to be prophetic: the Raja's daughter will be contesting the coming byelections for the Deeg Assembly seat (the election was countermanded) as an independent candidate which her father had held in the Rajasthan Assembly since 1952. Chances are that the Congress(I) might not put up a candidate against her. Nor would the opposition like to oppose this rather strong personality. Normally Deepa lives with her husband and little daughter in Saharanpur. She may now have to move to Bharatpur and Jaipur. Not only has the chair to be occupied, but also the MLA's flat her father had:

A Chip Above

Just as the small-budget filmmaker made it to the box-office, along came video piracy and later the indigenous television serials to snuff out the brief euphoria. So, in the join-them-rather-than-lick-them strategy, many are going to make films for television. One of them is Suresh Jindal who cajoled Satyajit Ray to make *Shatranj ke Khilari* in Hindi. He also produced the first small-budget big-hit *Rajnigandha* and is now busy producing a film based on Prem Chand's novel written in the Twenties: *Panch Parmeshwar*. The film is to be directed by Kundan Shah for television. Not daunted by the new age of television, Jindal is quite enthusiastic about the transformation in the world of communications: "Man first began to walk, then came the horse, the automobile, the car, electronics and now communication is through dust—that little silicon chip, what else is it?" The cinema hall-owners will now have to behave themselves, according to Jindal who foresees a day when one video cassette recorder will serve 100,000 theatres. "Maybe we will have one giant video screen outside the ministry of information and broadcasting, projecting over the entire capital city."



Suresh Jindal

Jindal at present has more pressing problems on hand. He has sued the government of Uttar Pradesh for not exempting his national award-winning film, *Katha* from entertainment tax. Says Jindal: "From 1978, which was incidentally *Shatranj ke Khilari's* year, all the award-winning films, including last year's have been exempted from paying (entertainment) tax."

CHP-Rice Flour: Rich in Protein

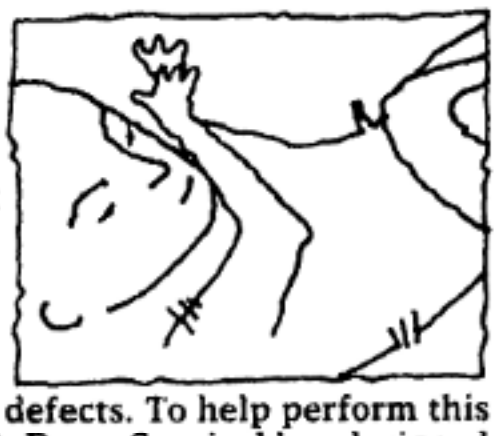


A new hope now emerges for undernourished children in Third World countries. Scientists in the agriculture department of the United States have developed a technique for producing a kind of rice flour that is three times richer in protein than standard rice flour and could help reduce malnutrition. The flour, called CHP-rice flour, contains 25 per cent protein, compared with eight per cent for standard rice flour. Wheat flour has about 12 per cent protein. The new processing method, which the department is making available for commercial use, involves adding an enzyme from the fungus *aspergilus oryzae*, commonly used in the food processing industry, to a rice flour solution.

Exploding a Myth

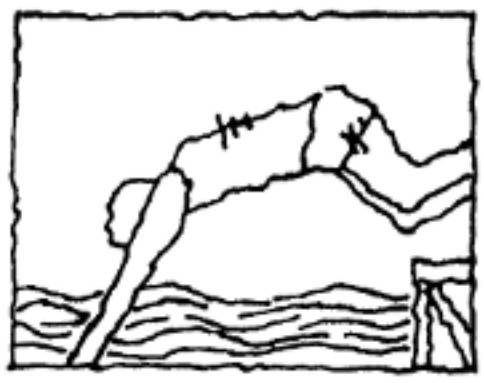
There is a false impression that accident victims deliberately exaggerate their injuries in order to gain compensation. Such injuries disappear once they get the money. This erroneous notion of "accident neurosis" started in the early Sixties when a neurologist suggested that some victims of accidents deceived the courts and exaggerated their injuries in order to increase their compensation. This view has appealed to many lawyers who have treated claims with scepticism. However, a report in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* says that patients who were said to have 'accident neurosis' complained of physical problems long after they were given accident compensation. Long after the legal wranglings were completed the vast majority of patients were still unfit and, for the most part, were either unable to work or not able to take back the physical and emotional responsibilities they had before

In Search of Birth Defects



Achorian biopsy is an operation where samples are taken from different parts of the placenta and can be performed in the first three months of pregnancy. Great care is taken at this stage so that the foetus is not damaged, but in skilled hands the test can reveal many birth defects. To help perform this delicate operation, Britain's Down Surgical has designed an extremely precise instrument called the KCH cannula. The manufacturer, working with King's College hospital, London, has produced the cannula from malleable 16 gauge silver tubing 260mm long. The instrument can be "modelled" into the appropriate shape depending on the foetal position. The device has to be used in association with ultrasound equipment, which the operator uses to guide the instrument precisely.

Harmful Sport



Deep-sea diving could damage the brain, as a research in Lancaster university has shown. Older divers suffer from a loss of memory and other mental problems compared to their younger colleagues. The research states that working in harsh environments such as those existing in the North Sea over a long period could lead to brain damage and thereby poorer performances.

For a Longer Life

Four researchers in the United States have discovered a natural substance which promotes the rapid growth of new blood vessels. This could help patients suffering from heart disease or stroke and might also be useful in the treatment of cancer. The team injected a substance derived from cat omentum—a membraneous apron which covers organs in the abdomens of animals and humans—into rabbit corneas, an area devoid of blood vessels. After three days new vessels appeared.

Heartening Experiment

A team of Osaka university medical experts have kept the hearts of "braindead" patients alive for up to 54 days. It's the world's first experiment. Dr Tsuyoshi Sugimoto, leader of the team, said they kept six hearts alive for between nine and 54 days with the aid of a hormone that maintains a certain level of blood pressure. Normally, the heart stops beating a few days after the brain's death.

Longer Periods of Painlessness



Scientists in the United States have developed a technique for enveloping a local anaesthetic so that it works for up to 40 hours with a single injection. The new strategy should relieve chronic or surgical pain without stopping the healing. Later, it may be applied to anti-cancer and anti-arthritis drugs, permitting direct injection into affected areas to avert side-effects and deliver medicine only where it is needed. Using the technique would require less anaesthetic and so would be less costly.

The method involves enclosing tiny droplets of a drug in membranes resembling those of a human cell. The idea is at least 20 years old, but droplets can carry much greater amounts of drug than previously developed particles, generally known as liposomes. When a local anaesthetic is injected, it spreads to surrounding tissue. To increase the effect and duration of the drug's action, a higher dose may have to be given. This could be dangerous, since higher doses produce higher blood levels of the drug and could lead to convulsions and heart attacks.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration Debashis Deb

BANGALORE: There are coins embossed with figureheads. But have you come across currency notes stamped with a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi? A trickster produced such a "rare note" to dupe a shopkeeper here on 26 March. The owner of a government fair price shop at Shantinagar told police that a stranger showed him the note on 26 March. When the surprised victim, Mr Lakshman Gowda, rubbed his eyes in disbelief, the conman told him confidently that there must be at least a dozen such notes in the cash box, which the shopkeeper had simply not noticed. What followed was an earnest search for the Mahatma currency in the cash box, with the stranger generously offering a helping hand. After searching the bundles of notes in vain, the stranger gave it up in exasperation. The bemused man walked away shaking his head in wonder. Hours later the shopkeeper discovered to his horror that Rs 3,000 was missing from the cash box—*The Times* (Waheed Khan Bawadiwale, Hubli)

MADRAS: A legislator of the AIADMK played a prank on the speaker in the Tamil Nadu Assembly to mark All Fools' Day. During question hour, Mr S. Duraiswamy (AIADMK) raised his hand. Presuming that the member wanted to ask a supplementary question, the speaker, Mr P.H. Pandiyan, allowed him to speak. Rising to his feet, Mr Duraiswamy announced he had received a message that Mr Pandiyan had been made the secretary general of the United Nations. As the members of the House burst into laughter, Mr Pandiyan reported: "I know today is 1 April"—*The Telegraph* (Dr Prahlad Ghosh, Calcutta)

SHILLONG: A primary health centre in the Patharkhama area of East Khasi Hills was being run by its chowkidar single-handed for want of requisite staff, according to an opposition legislator of the Meghalaya Assembly. Speaking on a cut motion on demands for grants for the health department, Mr Garson Lyngdoh said the chowkidar had to work as doctor, compounder and nurse as well as administer injections—*Hindustan Times* (I. J. Sharma, Unchahar, Uttar Pradesh)

NASIK: The Nasik unit of the Janata Party took out a funeral procession here on 25 March to highlight the inefficient working of the telephone department and demanding immediate remedial action on complaints. For people, acting as pall-bearers, carried the telephone on their shoulders while other processionists chanted "*Ram Nam Satya Hai.*" Women in some areas sprinkled water in front of their houses in the traditional manner, as the procession moved on—*Indian Express* (M. S. Gopal, Visakhapatnam)

BANGALORE: A case of an avaricious wife manipulating to get her living husband as dead with a view to inheriting his property was brought to light in the Assembly on 28 March. Mr Vedanta Hemmige (Janata) said he wanted an explanation from the government and added that the man had already decided to sue the government for a sum of Rs one lakh for issuing the certificate without investigating the claim of the wife—*Deccan Herald* (K.V. Harsha, Bangalore)

SALEM: After a 45-hour struggle, a purblind, pregnant,elephant that was stuck in the boggy area of the Dhandikkam reservoir near Dhenkanikotta in Dharmapuri district was tugged out of the slush by some 500 villagers on 2 April, but not before it was tranquillised. As usual, the elephant, 15 months' pregnant, came to the reservoir along with her male companion on 31 March. While the male had his fill from the edge of the reservoir, the female elephant, said to be blind in the left eye, walked into the swamp and was stuck knee-deep in the mud. Eye-witnesses said the elephant had raised a tearful cry and the male elephant stretched out its trunk but it was not possible to pull her out. On 1 April the male elephant retreated into the forest on seeing the village crowd. When forest officials began rescue operations by placing huge logs in front of the trapped animals, it tried to walk on them but they sank in the slush. As a last resort, a rope was tied round the animal and the villagers pulled it out to safety—*The Hindu* (Ali Akbar Teherally, Madras)

WITHOUT COMMENT

He (Vasantdada Patil, chief minister of Maharashtra) functions as though these were his last days (in power) and he knows it. So he just moves from one day to another—Sharad Pawar, leader of the Progressive Democratic Front, quoted in *The Telegraph*

We do not seek a military victory over India—Laldenga quoted in *New York Times*

The only place I thought that I would be out of place would be here (as Governor of Maharashtra)—Idris Latif, now India's ambassador to France, in *Indian Express*

Not all the criticism against the academic standards at Visvabharati are valid. I must point out that not all the departments at Harvard University are centres of excellence—Nemai Sadhan Bose, vice-chancellor of Visvabharati University, quoted in *The Telegraph*



We cannot and will not permit Calcutta to go under—Rajiv Gandhi

Reagan has nothing to do with Sudan. He don't interfere here, or his nose will be cut—Col. Muammar Gaddafi, in *International Herald Tribune*

Love, according to Hindi cinema, is no longer running around trees. It has progressed beyond that. Now it's climbing up tall trees and doing Bharat Natyam on the branches—Ramesh Sippy in *The Times of India Sunday Review*

No one sees my best work, the Bunuels, the *Mahabharat* of our times, the *Ramayana* series I worked on. All they are interested in are my stupid horses—M.F. Husain, quoted in *Society*

BEGINNING 21 APRIL 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a week of mixed fortunes The financial prospects are not very bright do not indulge in risky financial ventures If you have plans to change your profession do so only after consulting your elders Businessmen are advised to be wary of deception This is not a favourable week for love and marriage negotiations However, you will be cured of a chronic ailment this week Your home front will provide you with the necessary energy to overcome obstacles
Good dates: 21, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 1 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South



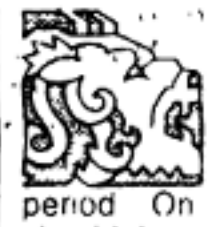
TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is an excellent week for professionals and businessmen utilise the opportunities that come your way and do not waste time on socialising Creative artists and intellectuals will also find this phase favourable On the domestic front a sudden turn of events will relieve you of a lot of tension Financially your prospects look bright this week but avoid extravagance A pleasure trip you were looking forward to is in the offing But watch your health closely
Good dates: 23 25 and 27
Lucky numbers 3, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This s an excellent week and you will make progress on all fronts Those in service will earn the praise of their employers a transfer which you were seeking may come off this week Those unemployed may find jobs during this period Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business On the financial front some of you will inherit property The home front will remain peaceful This is also the ideal time to pursue legal matters The phase is also good for lovers
Good dates: 22 24 and 26
Lucky numbers: 6 7 and 9
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (15 July—14 August) If you have plans to start a new business, this is the right time to do so Those in business should not hesitate to undertake challenging ventures Professionals should consult elders before changing their profession Friends and relatives will prove very helpful in resolving domestic problems Lovers will find this phase favourable For those waiting to get married, this is the ideal time to execute plans Those above 45 should keep a sharp eye on their health
Good dates: 21, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South west



LEO (15 August—14 September) Be prepared for setbacks on the financial front You may have to borrow money to tide over this lean period On the professional front you should be circumspect in your dealings with superiors. However, the domestic front will remain inspiring This is also a good period for matrimonial alliance Businessmen will find this phase favourable. A letter from a long lost friend will give you a lot of pleasure A pleasant surprise is in store for you this week
Good dates: 22, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is not a good week for professionals you will come in for severe criticism from your employers Your colleagues will also misunderstand you Businessmen should be careful while dealing with their customers However, lovers and those intending to get married will find this period favourable Disputes regarding property will be resolved in your favour Domestic problems, if any, will also be solved A pleasure trip is in the offing But do not neglect your health
Good dates: 23, 24 and 26
lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction. South east



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This is a week of mixed fortunes You may suddenly fall ill but do not get overworked Petty domestic problems will add to your worries On the professional front you will come in for severe criticism from your employers for neglecting work A friend close to you may get you down However, businessmen will find this period favourable Your financial prospects do not look very bleak A journey towards the end of the week will relieve you of a lot of tension
Good dates: 24, 25 and 27
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Social and domestic engagements will keep you busy but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health Those in service are advised not to neglect their work However, this is a lucky week for creative artists and lawyers This is the ideal time to settle law suits At home your children will be a source of inspiration Financially some of you will gain money through an unexpected source
Good dates: 21, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) A lucky week lies ahead of you so make hay while the sun shines With a bit of effort businessmen will clinch profitable deals Those in profession will make steady headway. Friends and relatives will contribute to your hapiness. Your financial prospects look bright and monetary gains through unexpected sources are indicated At home your family will be a source of joy Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans Those above 50 should be careful about their health.
Good dates: 22, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 9
Favourable direction: East



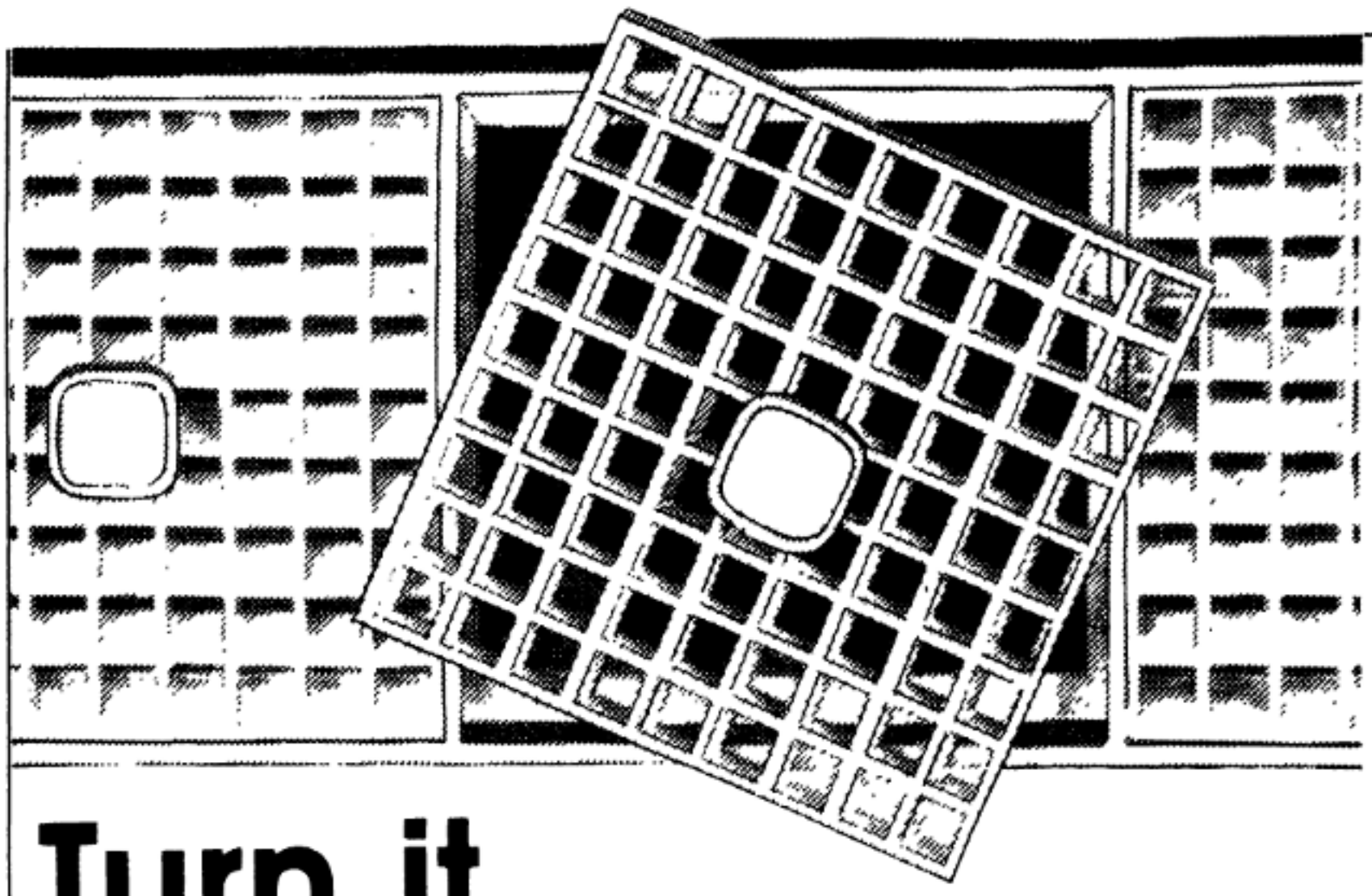
CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) A domestic problem which had been bothering you for quite some time will be solved this week The stars are particularly favourable for those in service a promotion or a posting to a place of your liking cannot be ruled out But avoid taking hasty decisions regarding your career The period is also favourable for sportsmen On the financial front some of you may win a lottery Your health may pose fresh problems Watch out for a pleasant surprise at the end of the week.
Good dates: 23, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Do not get disillusioned by the slow pace of progress on all fronts Questionable romantic ventures should be avoided Those employed in government concerns should be cautious while dealing with their superiors. Businessmen are likely to face stiff competitions At home a member of your family may suddenly fall sick Financial prospects are not very bright avoid speculative ventures The period is however favourable for matrimonial negotiations.
Good dates: 25, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: North-west



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is an extremely lucky week for those in business. Do not hesitate to enter into new contracts For those in service progress will be slow but steady If you are looking for a job there are chances that you will find one this week. The domestic front will provide you with all the energy to embark on new and challenging ventures Your financial prospects will look up This is also a favourable period for love and marriage. Keep a vigilant eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 21, 23 and 27
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: South-east



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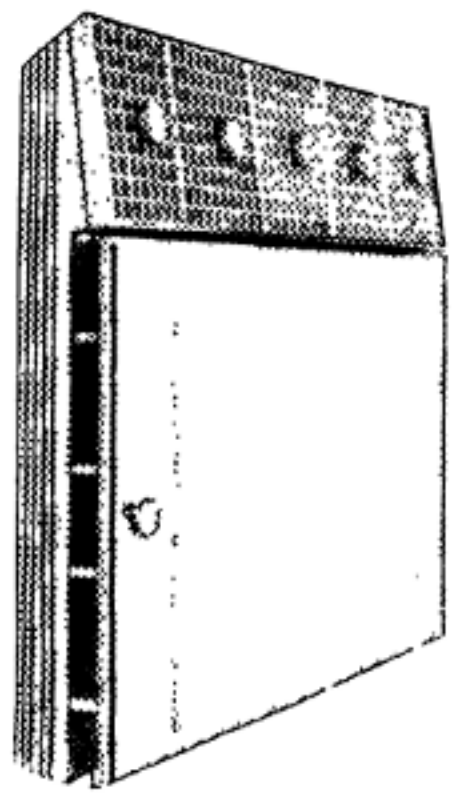
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VARIETY

Chess

It has been a long time since I published a game played by John Nunn. Unfortunately there came a point in his career where he stopped winning short brilliancies against weak players and started winning long brilliancies against strong players, the latter being notoriously difficult to publish and explain without resorting to serialisation

Despite the change in his style, John remains of course a devastating attacking player I never cease to be amazed by those who still blithely walk into sharp variations of the Sicilian against him Inferior sharp variations at that. The following is a typical result

White: J Nunn Black: B. Cserna. Sicilian Defence. Najdorf Variation Lugano 1984

1 P–K4	**P–QB4**	**2 N–KB3**	**P–Q3**
3 P–Q4	**PxP**	**4 NxP**	**N–KB3**
5 N–QB3	**P–QR3**	**6 P–B4**	

John plays the Najdorf as Black and probably employs this as the move which gives him most trouble when colours are reversed

Cserna (Black)



Nunn (White) to move

6 . . .	**Q–B2**	**7 B–Q3**	**P–KN3**
8 0–0	**B–N2**	**9 N–B3**	**QN–Q2**
10 Q–K1	**P–K4**	**11 P–QR4**	**P–QN3**
12 PxP	**PxP**	**13 Q–R4**	**B–N2**

This is a position Black has long been recommended to avoid, as White is given too much scope to develop a mechanical attack

14 B–R6 0–0 15 N–KN5 KR–B1
A relatively new idea. Black plans Q–B4+ – KB1 to relieve the grip on his kingside.

16 K–R1 Q–Q3 17 BxB KxB

DIAGRAM

18 NxBP! KxN 19 QxP+ K–K3
20 QxP
Opting for three pawns and a continuing attack for the piece 20 RxN+ NxR 21 QxB also came into consideration

20 . . . Q–K2 21 QR–Q1
An important link to stop Black's king crossing the Q file

21 . . Q-R2 22 Q–N3 K–K2
23 N–Q5+! BxN 24 PxB
The tempo on his queen renders Black's game hopeless

24 . . Q–R3 25 P–Q6+ K–Q1
26 B–B5 R–R2 27 BxN RxB
Or 27 KxB 28 QxKP

28 RxN Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

Bridge

A slight surprise to pick up a '2 count', hear the bidding opened on your left, and finish as declarer in a slam contract!

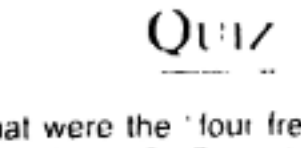
Dealer West N–S vulnerable

	♠ A J 10 7 6 ♥ A K 7 ♦ A J 3 ♣ A Q	
♠ K ♥ Q 10 9 5 ♦ K Q 10 9 8 7 2 ♣ 6	N W E S	♠ Q 9 8 5 4 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ K 10 9
	♠ 3 2 ♥ J 8 4 2 ♦ — ♣ J 8 7 5 4 3 2	

This was the bidding when Poland was North-South against Brazil in the Olympiad .

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
—	1 ♦	dble	1 ♠
No	2 ♦	dble	No
4 ♣	No	6 ♣	No
No	No		

West led the king of diamonds and Przybora ruffed The club finesse lost and a heart was returned, won in dummy Realising that the ace of clubs might be needed later as an entry card, South discarded a spade on ♦ A, led ♠ A, and ran the jack discarding a heart He soon reached this ending



	♠ — ♥ K 7 ♦ J ♣ —	
♠ — ♥ Q 10 ♦ Q ♣ —	N W E S	immaterial
	♠ — ♥ J 8 ♦ — ♣ 4	

Now West was extinguished by the last trump (You see why ♣ A was not cashed earlier? If ♠ J is covered, South will need to return to dummy with a heart to cash ♠ 10 and there will be no entry to dummy for the subsequent squeeze.)

TERENCE REESE

Quiz

QUESTIONS

1 The Salk vaccine reduces the incidence of which disease?
2 Who have been described as "a kind of journalistic centaur with an aristocratic Republican head and runty Jewish hindquarters?
3. Who fought the battle of the Hydaspes?
4 With which scientist is the discovery of high energy radiation belts around the earth associated?
5. What is the ring of fire?
6. With what astronomical concept is the big-bang theory, the steady-state theory and the Pulsating (Oscillating) Universe theory associated ?
7 What were the "four freedoms" proclaimed by US President Franklin Roosevelt?
8 In psychology what is a Freudian slip?
9 What do the initials GATT stand for?
10 The term "Fifth Column" is used to describe an organised body working for the enemy behind battle lines When was the phrase first used?
11. The flag of which country has a maple leaf on it?

ANSWERS

1 Polio
2. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, co-authors of the books *All the President's Men* and *The Final days*.
3. Porus and Alexander the Great in 326 B C
4 James A Van Allen. The belts are named after him
5 The area around the Pacific Ocean susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic activity.
6 The development of the Universe
7 Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship freedom from want and freedom from fear
8 A momentary breakdown in the delivery position of a person
9. General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs and Trade.
10 The Spanish Civil War.
11 Canada

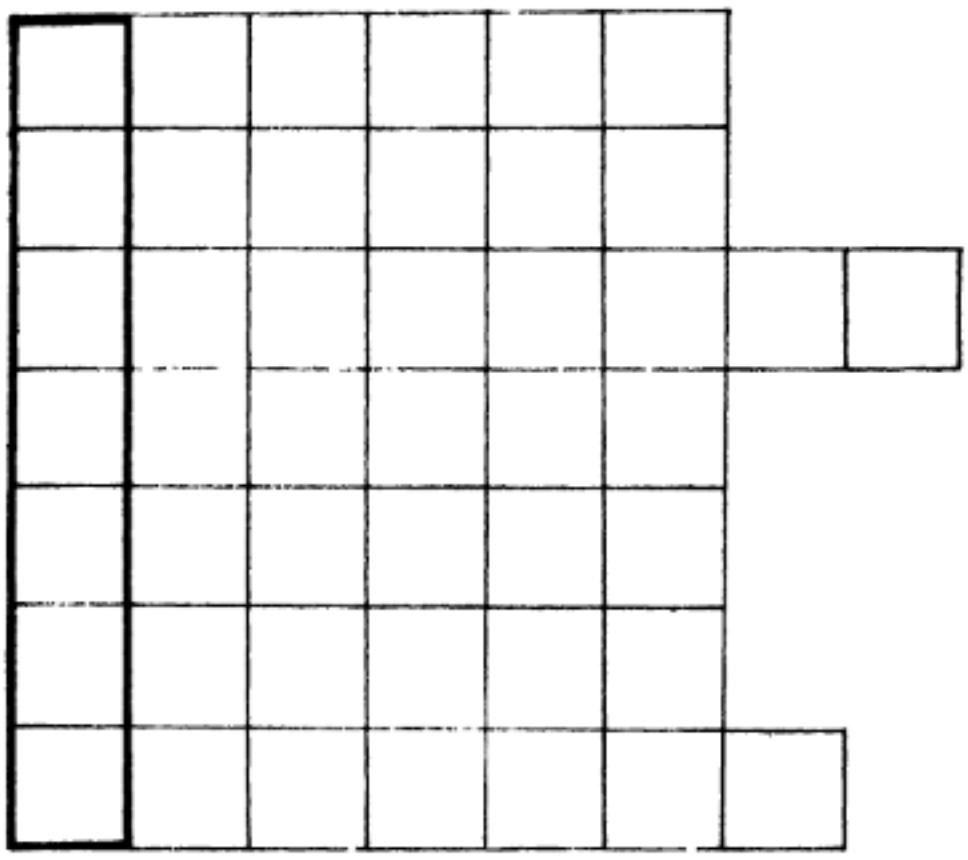
TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Word Power

The end of each word clued is a word in itself and is also clued. For instance, the word FOREHEAD could be clued in this way.-

WHOLE WORD — END
brow — chief



Now fill in the grid according to the clues given below. If you complete it correctly, you will find that the first letters reading downwards will give you another word Can you say what this word is?

CLUES:

WHOLE WORD	END
On all sides	Globular
Household	Period
Moisten	Passage
Coarse seaweed	Fish hook
Inattentive	Despatched
Compact collection	Obtain
Account	Narrative
Hidden word	Political star

Try Your Hand

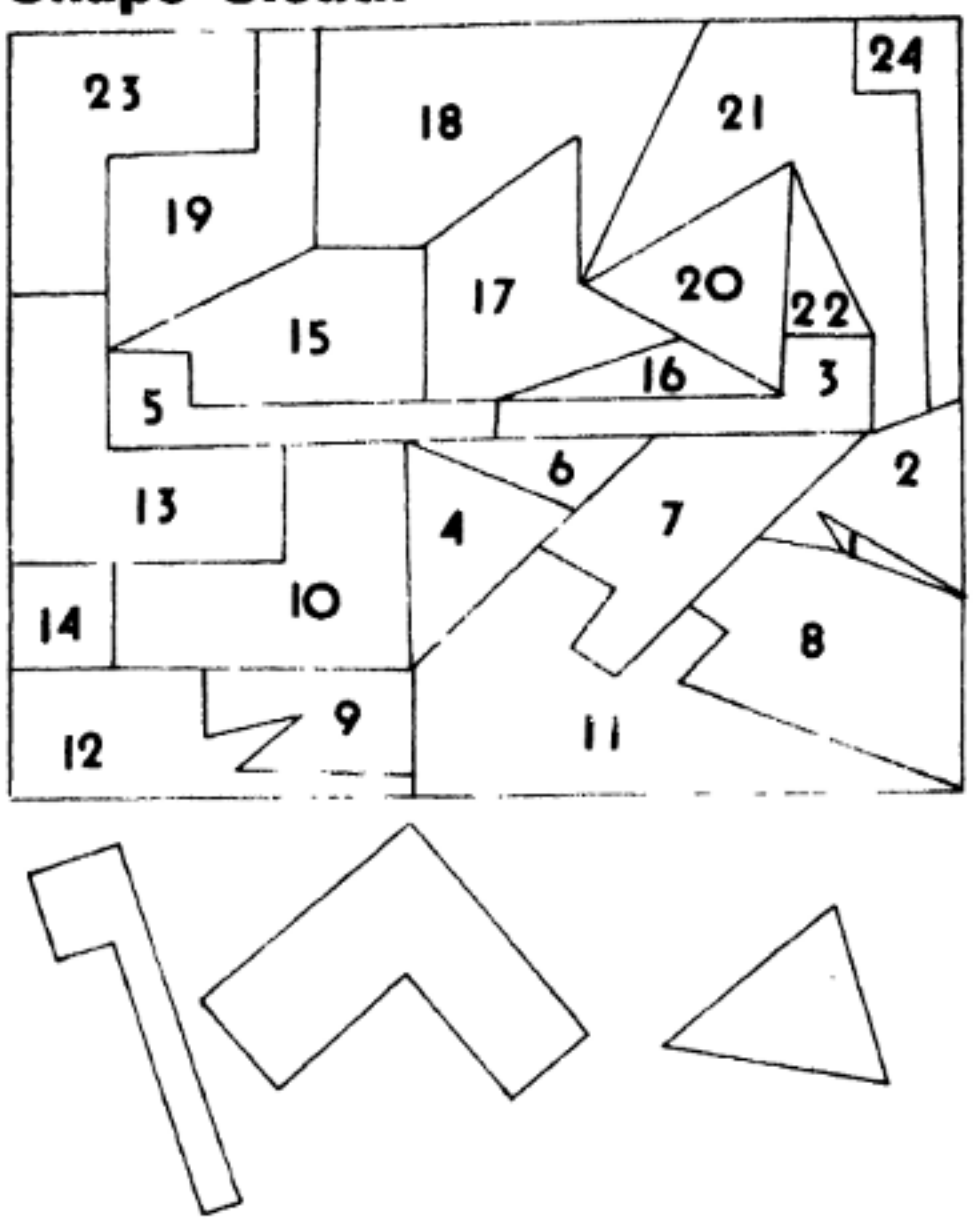


This may be a familiar problem. Without lifting your pencil, how can you go over all the 25 dots, in straight lines without going over any line?

Missing Link

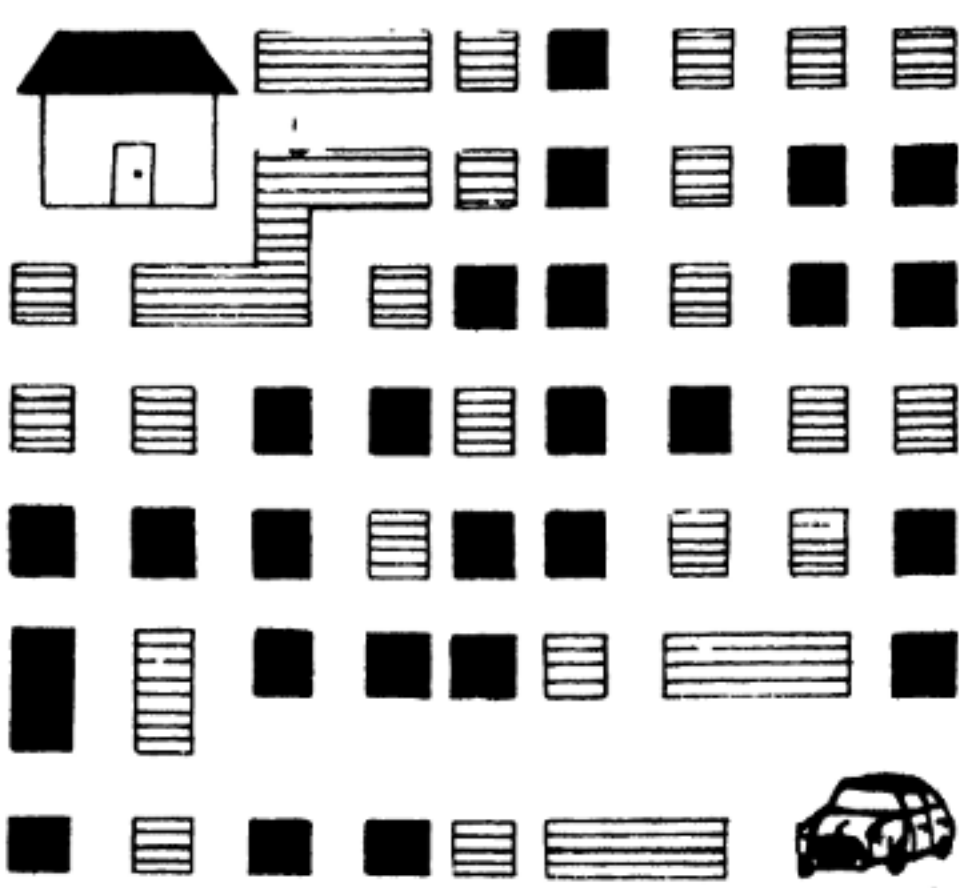
Fill in the missing number:
20 22 — 23 18

Shape Sleuth



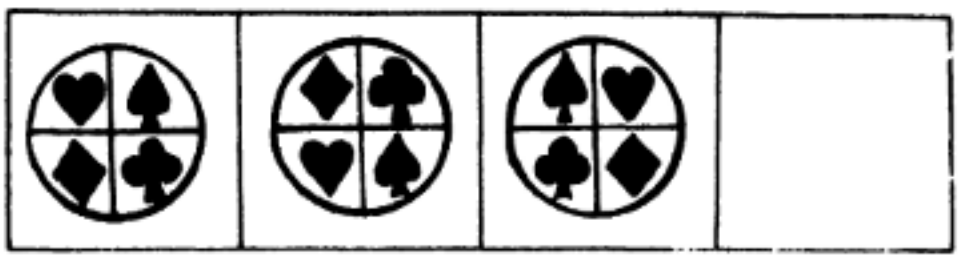
Where do the pieces given above fit in?

Figure it Out



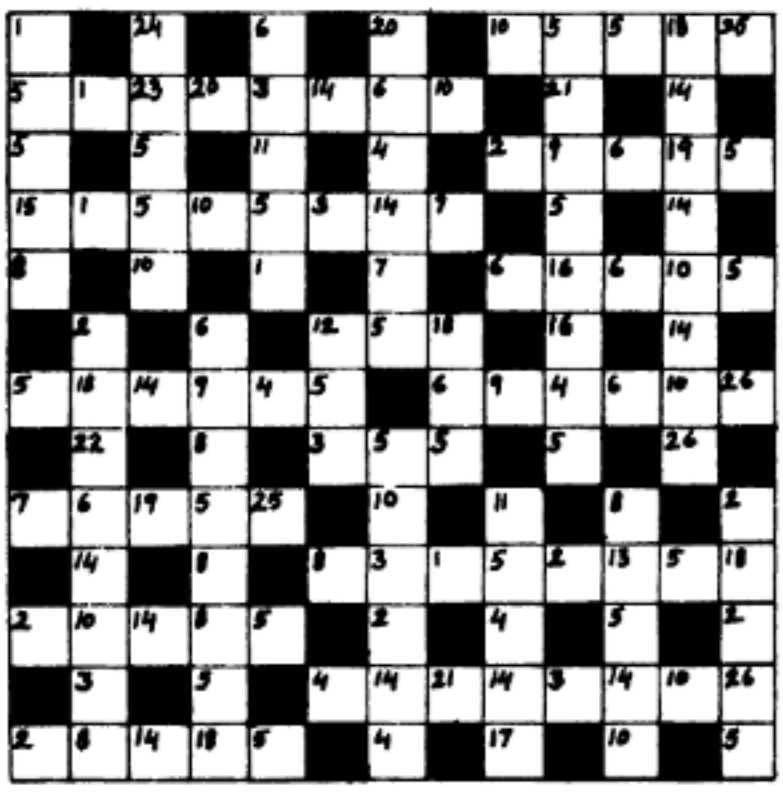
This car can only travel through areas of the same colour. Can you plot the route it must take to arrive at its destination?

Mindbender



Complete the last circle logically.

Cryptocross



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	A	T							N			

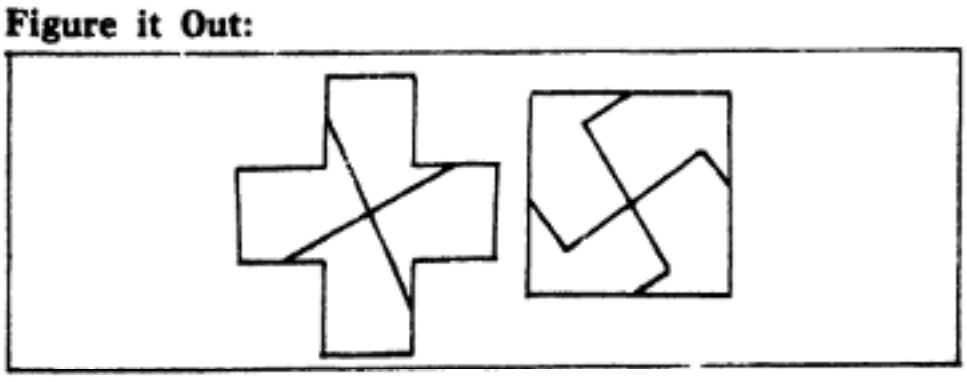
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Wit Sharpener: 500×2=1000; 401×3=1203; 664×4=1656; 633×4=2532; 415×4=1660; 223×5=1115; 554×6=3324

Figure it Out:



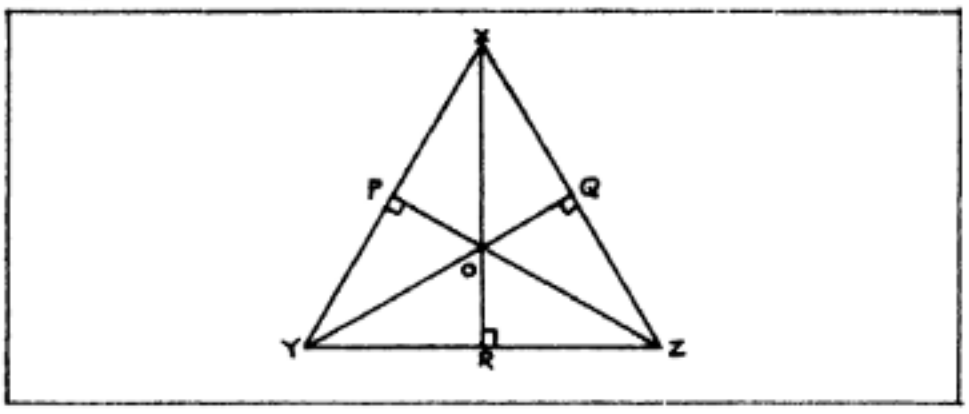
Quizzbizz: d) Four times a year, whether we need it or not.

Shape Sleuth: 1—d; 2—c; 3—b; 4—e; 5—f; 6—a.

Word Power: The three-letter word is ART
Carton, Parties, Rampart, Starting, Heart.

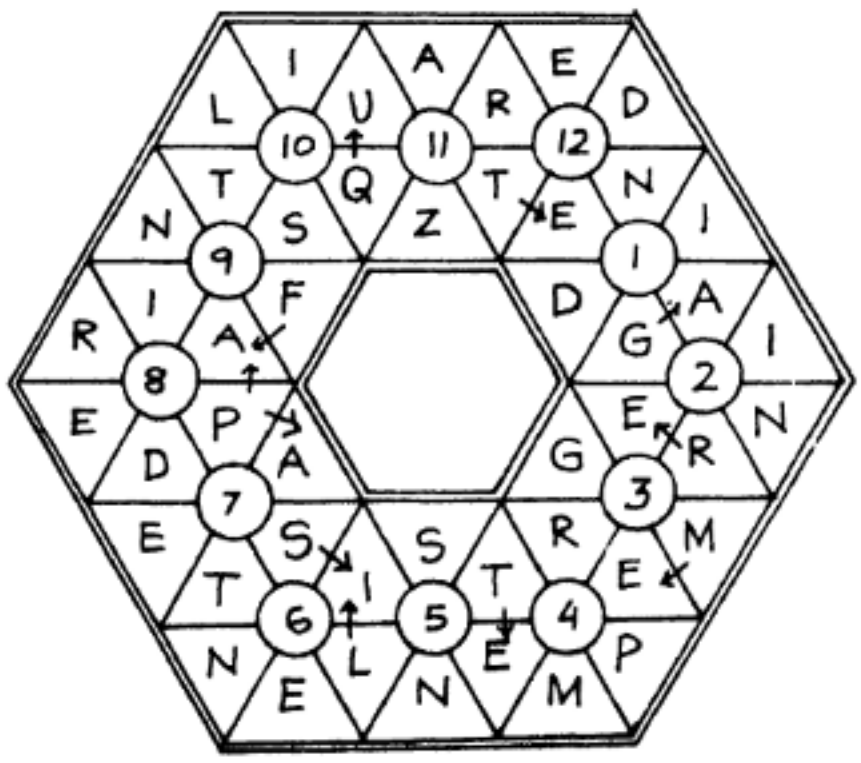
Mindbender (Page 71): 1. Golf ball is missing 2. Club is square and not rounded 3. G is missing on shirt 4. Pocket on trouser is missing.

Mindbender: The garden is in the shape of an equilateral triangle. It does not matter where the landowner builds his temple. The sum of the lengths of the paths (perpendicular to the roads) will always be constant.

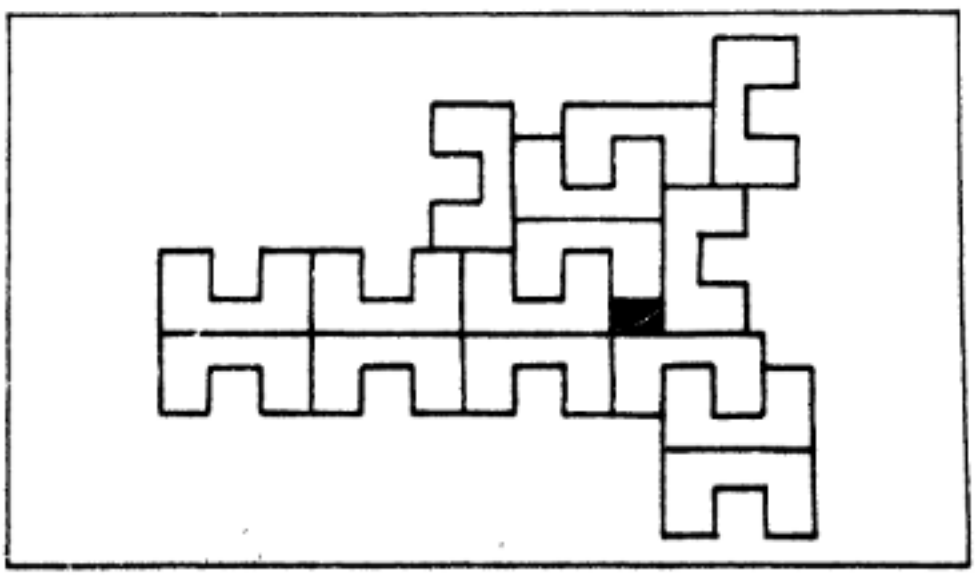


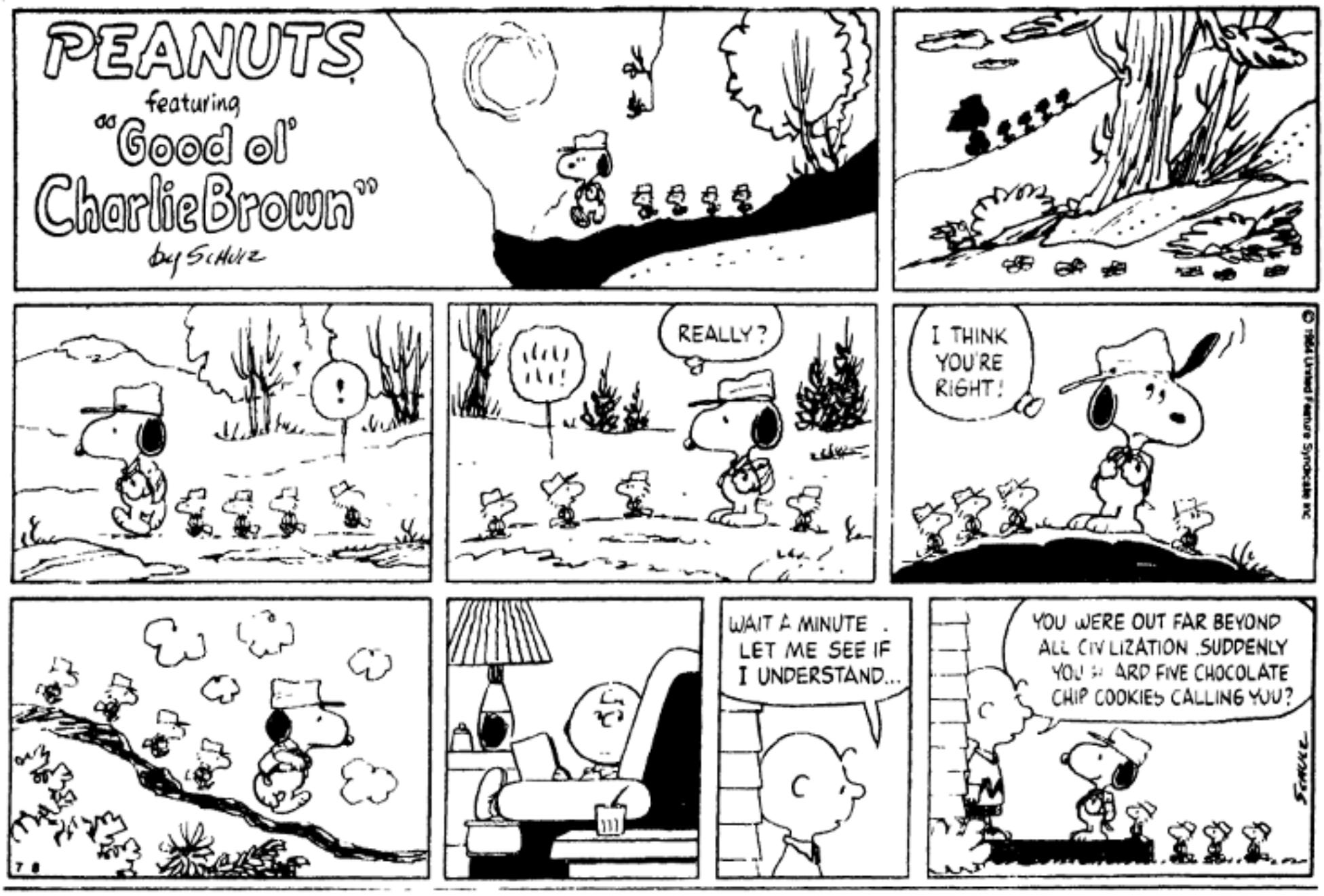
Witsharpener (Page 71): Mona who received Rs 50,000 (clue 4) is not Harish's daughter (clue 1) so she must be his niece. Therefore Nina is the daughter and she received Rs 3 lakhs (clue 1). Anil was not the son nor the nephew (clue 3) so he was the brother. Neither he nor the nephew got the business and Rs 2 lakhs (clue 3), therefore the son inherited this. His name was not Prakash (clue 2) nor Anil (clue 3) so it was Jagdish. Therefore Prakash was the nephew who inherited the car. We already know that Nina the daughter received Rs 3 lakhs, Mona the niece Rs 50,000 and Jagdish the son Rs 2 lakhs. Prakash the nephew got more than Anil the brother (clue 3) and inherited Rs 25,000 along with the car. Mona did not receive the house so she got the paintings and Nina inherited the house.

Hexagonal Puzzle:



Shape Sleuth (Page 71):





RADEUS-BB/L/2-85

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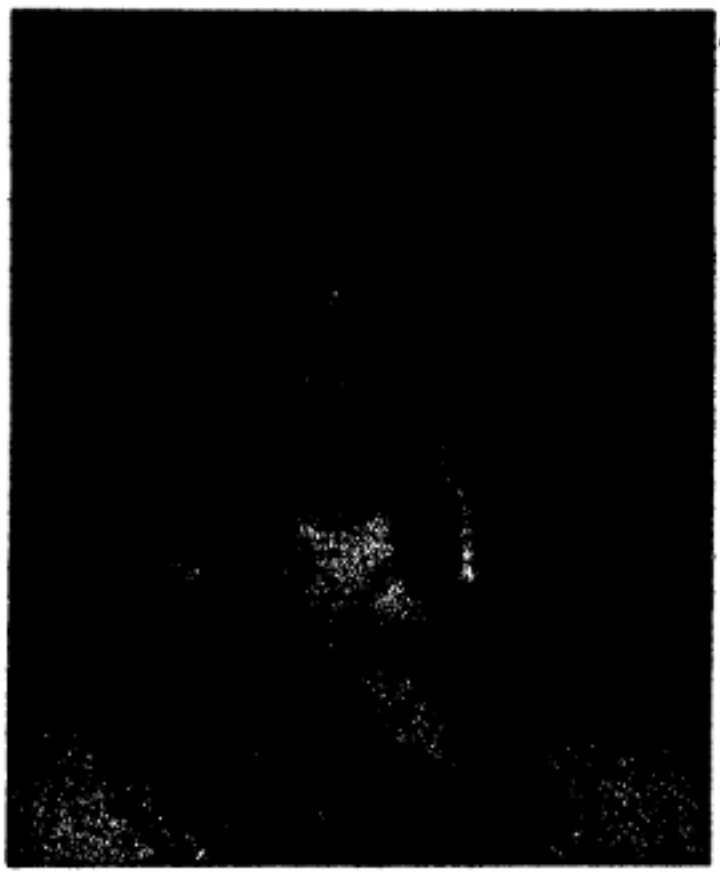
ARTIFICIALLY FLAVOURED. CONTAINS NO FRUIT JUICE OR FRUIT PULP

Public

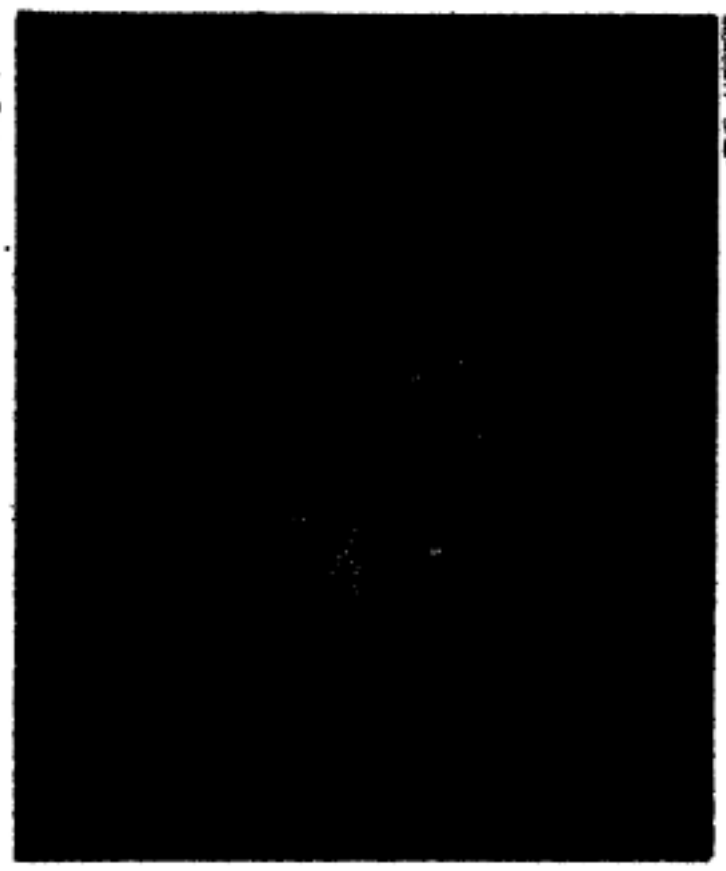
Mahesh Bhatt is working on a film that will make or break *Kumar Gaurav* and *Sunjay Dutt*. The two star sons have been clearly outclassed by *Sunny Deol, Jackie Shroff* or even *Anil Kapoor*. Just when directors were shying away from them, *Rajendra Kumar* and *Sunil Dutt* put their heads together and approached Mahesh Bhatt for help. The latter obliged and started *Naam*. The film is about illegitimate children and *Poonam Dhillon* and *Amrita Singh* are there to add glitter to it. Also at stake are the lakhs of rupees which Rajendra Kumar is investing. "This is a major attempt for my company which suffered heavy losses But I want to see the boys coming alive again. This is their last chance," Kumar Gaurav's father said confidently.

Producers and directors who once queued up before *Zeenat Aman's* door to sign her up are now neglecting the actress. Reason: age is finally telling upon the sensation of *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* and her exposures no longer titillate the audience. For the last six months Zeenat has not signed a single film. A record of sorts for a star who not very long ago signed a film a day.

Misfortunes never come alone. *Basu Bhattacharya's* troubles started the day his wife, *Rinki*, walked out on him and started a campaign against him. In several interviews to gossip magazines, Rinki talked about the torture and humiliation she suffered at the hands of the director for 16 years. Basu Bhattacharya on his part is silent regarding these charges. His mental agony has been compounded by the fact that two of his films failed to take off due to lack of finances.



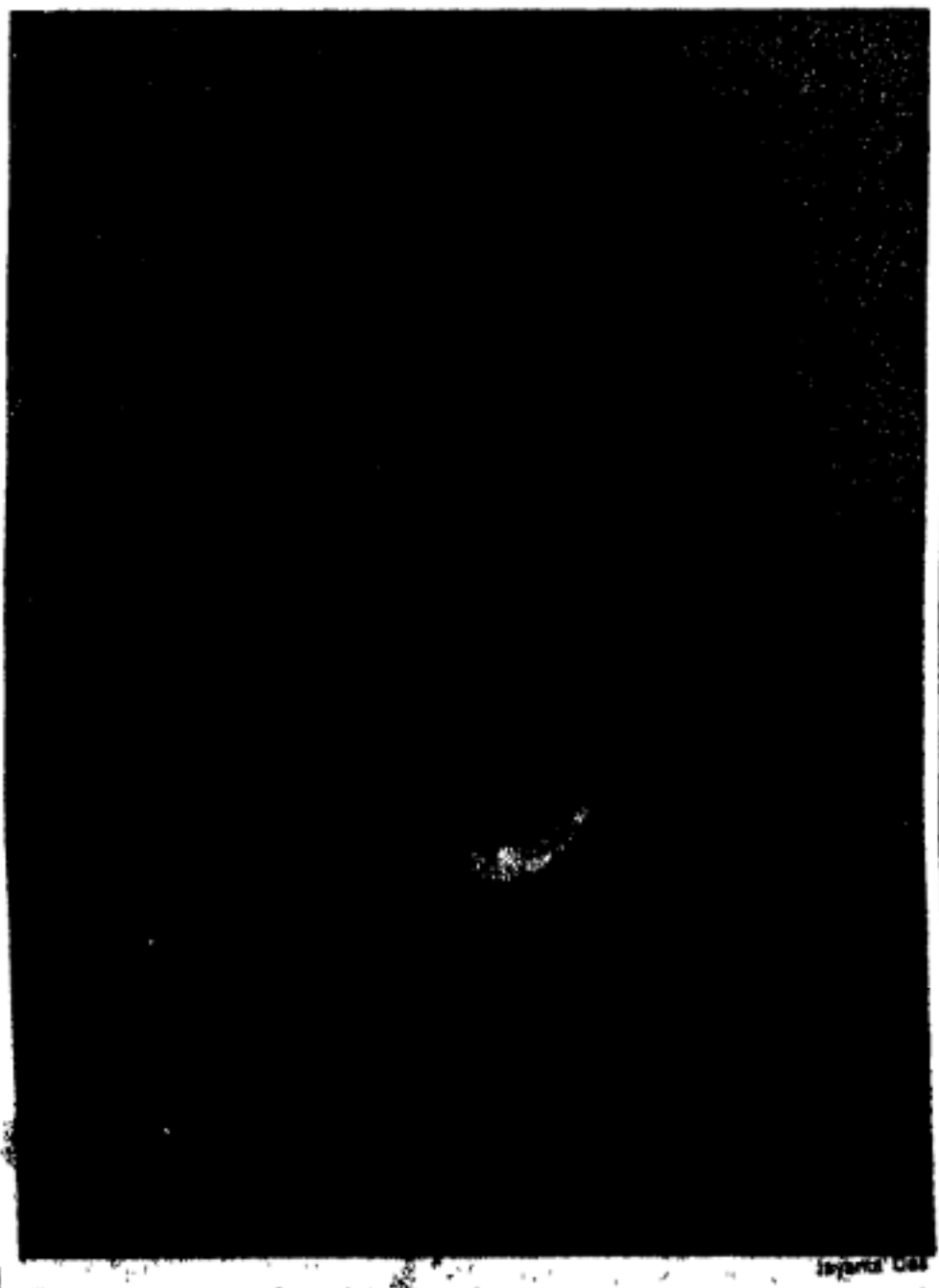
Jayanta Das



Mukesh P Shah

Sunjay Dutt (left) and Kumar Gaurav: last chance

Dilip Kumar's illness has upset *Subhash Ghai* who was all set to launch his ambitious project, *Karma*. But Subhash is made of sterner stuff and he has decided to continue shooting without the legendary superstar. "I know how to make up things at the last moment ... I have done it before and I am going to do it this time also," Subhash said.



Zeenat Aman: neglected

Jayasudha has forgotten her past. She divorced her first husband and is now happily married to *Jeetendra's* cousin. Her future plans in her own words: "I have decided to concentrate on film direction." Another *Aparna Sen* in the making?

The Telugu film industry is passing through a crisis. Most of the grand extravaganzas are not doing too well at the box office and distributors too are unwilling to oblige the big budget producers due to the video invasion. A realisation is slowly dawning upon producers and artists that there should be less of money and more of acting. The sooner the realisation turns to reality, the better.

Guess who was the happiest person when the Andhra Pradesh government honoured *Suhasini* with the best actress award? *Shobhan Babu*. Ever since Suhasini entered the tinsel world in skirts, the Telugu superstar has been going around telling people that Suhasini would make it big one day. On the sets too, Shobhan Babu never loses an opportunity to compliment and encourage her.

DELHI DIARY

Number Seven

The Prime Minister's house was referred to as "number one" till now, because it was situated at 1 Safdarjang Road. Mr Rajiv Gandhi having shifted to 7 Race Course Road (with bungalow No. 5 serving as the office complex), the PM's house should now be referred to by the lucky number, "seven." The shifting was done on an auspicious day, in the first phase of the "Navratri" preceding Ramnavami, the birthday of Lord Rama. The process was completed by 29 March, the "Ashtami" preceding Ramnavami. On that day Makhan Lal Fotedar, political adviser to the Congress president, also shifted from 1, Akbar Road (which was the previous office complex of the PM's house) to 5, Race Course Road. The office which Fotedar is now occupying is more spacious than the previous one. On the day of the transfer, Fotedar was in tears. He had been Mrs Indira Gandhi's aide for long. In fact, he is the only relic of the Indira Gandhi era in the new set-up. Fotedar was Mrs Gandhi's election agent in Rae



Sandeep Shankar

M.L. Fotedar

Bareili in 1977 and had been in the news then due to his forceful, but unsuccessful, attempt to stall the announcement of Raj Narain's victory. With the PM having shifted, the person occupying the house neighbouring 7, Race Course Road, information and broadcasting minister, V.N. Gadgil, has been asked to move. as his bungalow is required by the security personnel. The Prime Minister's immediate neighbours now are Arun Singh, parliamentary secretary (who occupies the house next to Mr Gandhi's) and works and housing minister, Abdul Ghafoor.

Minister On Leave

Kerala's health minister, K.P. Ramchandra Nair, has gone on a long leave. This unprecedented act has not been necessitated by reasons of health. In fact, the health of the Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government would have been affected had the minister not handed over his portfolio to the chief minister and "gone on leave." A member of the National Democratic Party (NDP), which has four MLAs, Nair had been under pressure from his party colleagues, who wanted him to resign so that the NDP constituent could nominate another minister. In 1982, the NDP nominee in the Karunakaran ministry was K.G. Kartha. Kartha has now mustered the support of the other two MLAs and is threatening to quit the UDF if Nair is not dropped. Chief minister Karunakaran has found an easier way out : he has taken over the health portfolio and sent the minister "on leave." In March, the transfers of doctors were processed by Kerala's health ministry. With Nair "on leave" Karunakaran has been burdened with additional administrative work concerning the doctors' transfers.

Wealthy Prisoners

Coomar Narain, the kingpin of the busted spy ring, and the international cheat Rajendra Sethia, have been lodged in adjacent cells of the Tihar jail. Both are "B" class prisoners, entitled to certain comforts. Stories trickling throughthe jail's gates have it that while Sethia is leading a carefree life, Coomar Narain is a worried man. He does not even read newspapers. One day, Coomar Narain is said to have commented to Sethia that the latter must be a regular jailbird, considering the way he is living in jail. Sethia protested and said this was his first experience. Not being in touch with newspapers, Coomar Narain asked Sethia if he was a rich man. The reply was evasive. At this point Coomar Narain is said to have told Sethia, "Have you ever seen a lakh of rupees? I have lots of money, so I am worried. You can afford to be carefree." Amused at Coomar Narain's "wealthy" disclosure, Sethia is said to have laughed at the reply.

Kathmandu or Bangkok?

Did the Russian defector, Igor Gueja, go to Kathmandu enroute to the USA? While speculation so far has been restricted to the Nepalese capital, sleuths investigating the disappearance of Gueja do not rule out the possibility of his having taken a Lufthansa flight to Bangkok from Palam airport.

The departure time of this flight just suited Gueja: it left in the forenoon. By the time Gueja's disappearance was noticed, the defector was flying in Indian airspace over Farukhabad, Lucknow, Gaya and Calcutta (the flights to Bangkok from Delhi take this route).

Kingmaker?

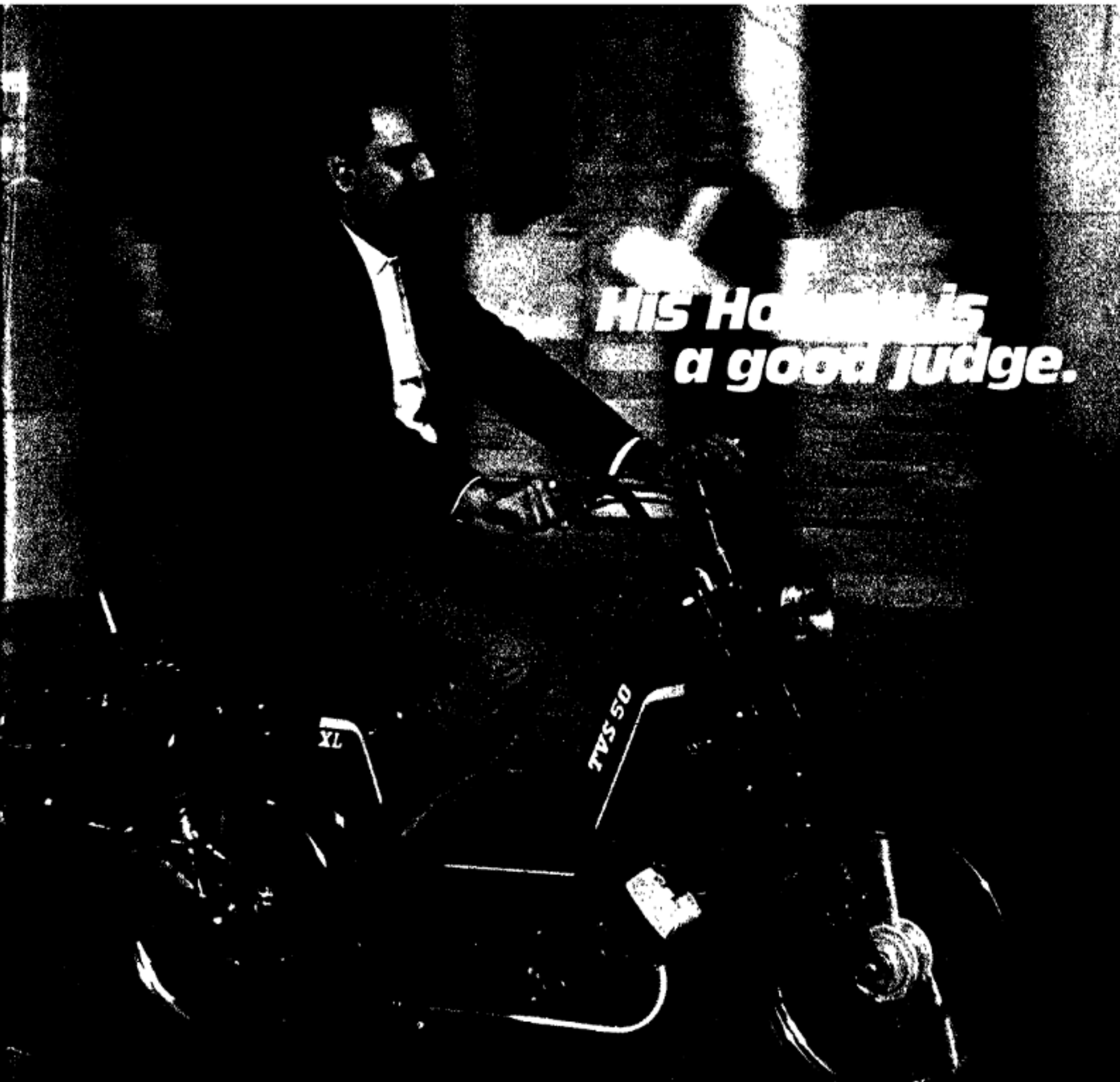


Sandeep Shankar

Sitaram Kesri

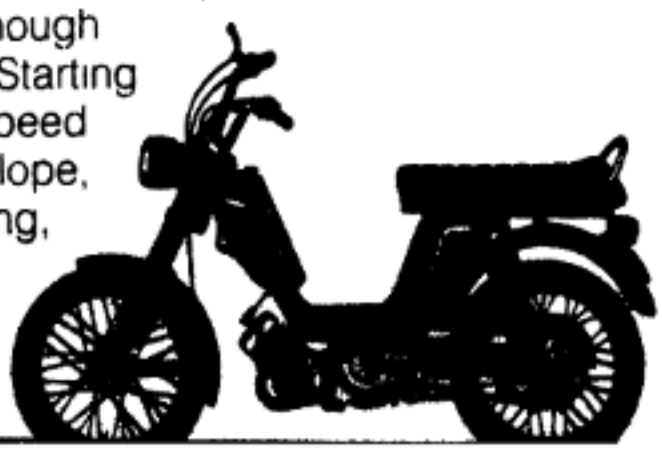
Sitaram Kesri, the AICC(I) treasurer, seems to have 'helped' two former Bihar chief ministers in a row. Chandra Shekhar Singh, who became a union minister on 30 March, had met the Prime Minister at a dinner on the night of 29 March. The host was Sitaram Kesri. Venue: Parliament House Annexe. The new Bihar chief minister, Bindeshwari Dubey, was being feted. The Prime Minister attended the dinner and talked to the invitees, mostly MPs from Bihar. The next morning, C.S. Singh was inducted into the council of ministers. As the chief minister of Bihar, C.S. Singh had faced opposition from Kesri. Perhaps unwittingly, Kesri helped C.S. Singh this time. Another former Bihar chief minister, Abdul Ghafoor, who is now a union cabinet minister, had shot back into the centre stage courtesy Kesri in 1983. At the Bombay session of the AICC(I), Ghafoor was literally pushed into the working committee meeting as an invitee by Kesri, who wanted to counter A.R. Antulay. Ghafoor has not looked back since then.

D.E. Nizamuddin



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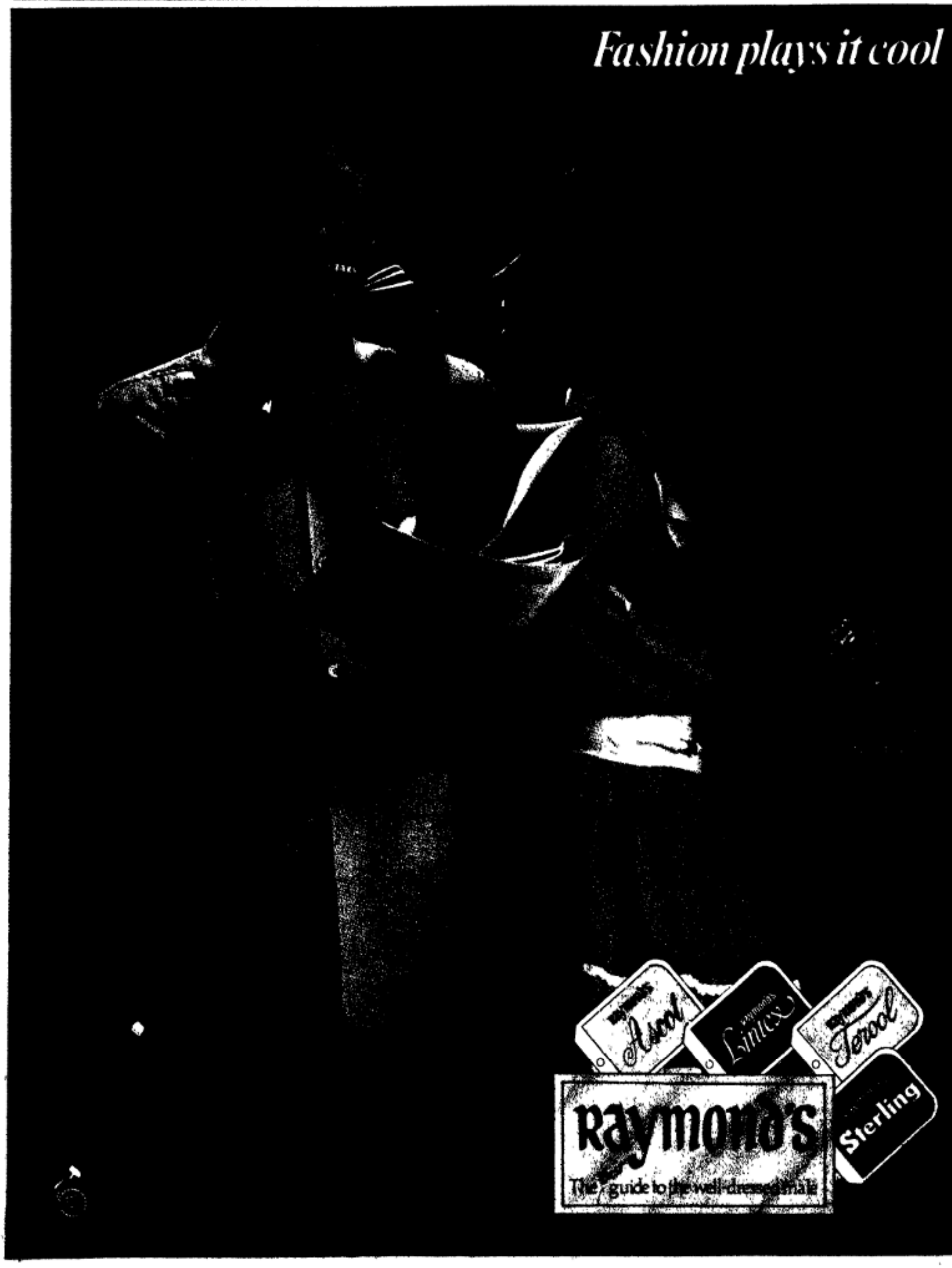
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THE SAFARI RANGE FROM RAYMOND'S

Fashion plays it cool



COLLAPSE IN GUJARAT: HOW? WHY?

SUNDAY

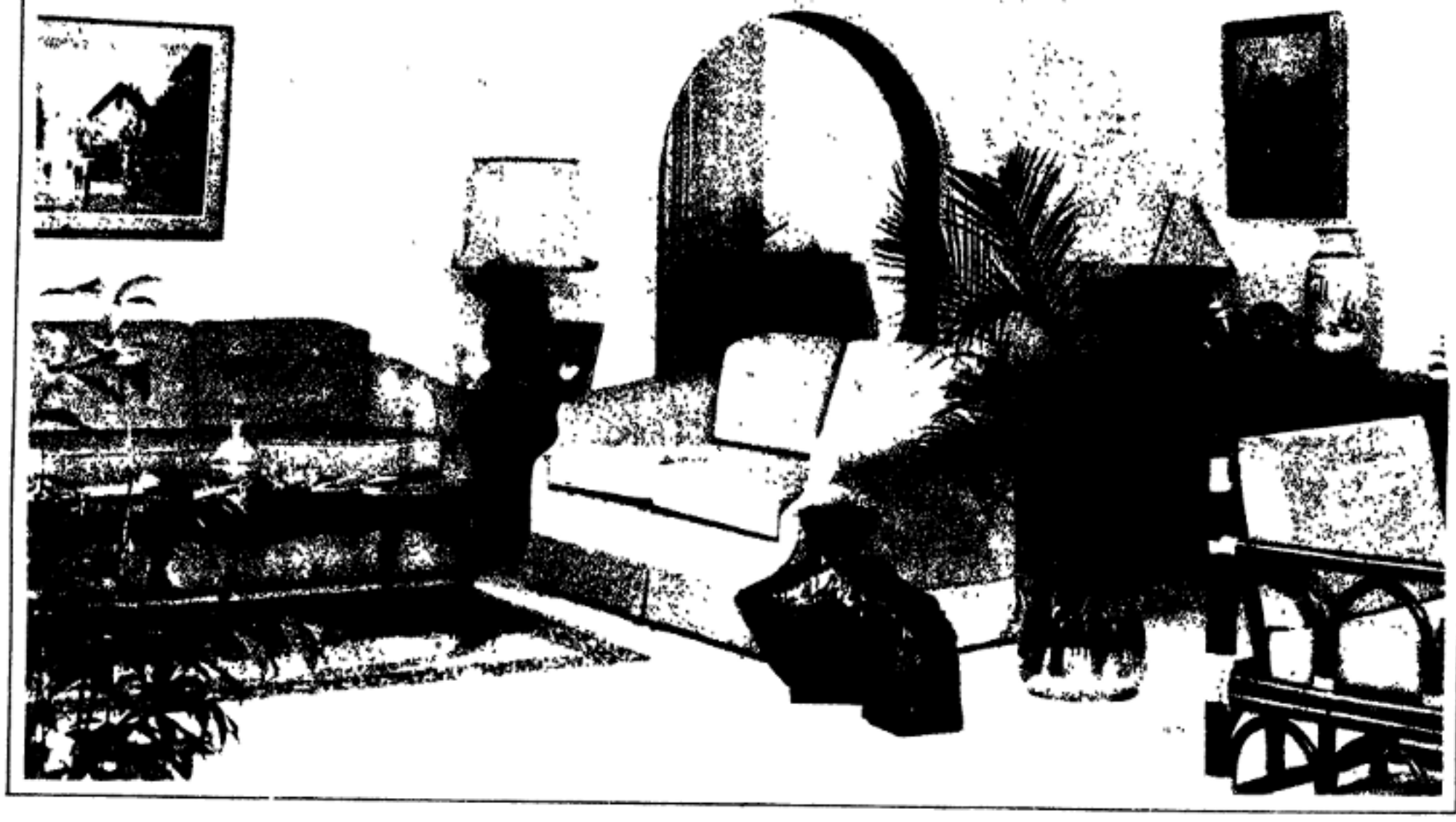


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AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

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Police vs People

The police have unleashed a reign of terror in Gujarat. Instead of quelling the bloody communal riots which broke out in Ahmedabad in the wake of the anti-reservation stir, the police openly terrorised people, looted shops and burnt down newspaper establishments. SUNDAY correspondents report on the police atrocities and why CM Madhavsinh Solanki must step down for his inability to handle the crisis.

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M.J. Akbar interviews the PLO chairman, Yasser Arafat

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Shireesh Kanekar profiles Kishore Kumar, the singing sensation who has decided to quit after regaling audiences for over four decades.



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ANALYSIS **46**

The Hindu Dilemma in Punjab

The Hindus in Punjab have always feared the assimilation by the Sikh majority community. Any attempt at solving the Punjab crisis should take this Hindu psyche into consideration, writes Harcharan Bains.

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In Tamil Nadu

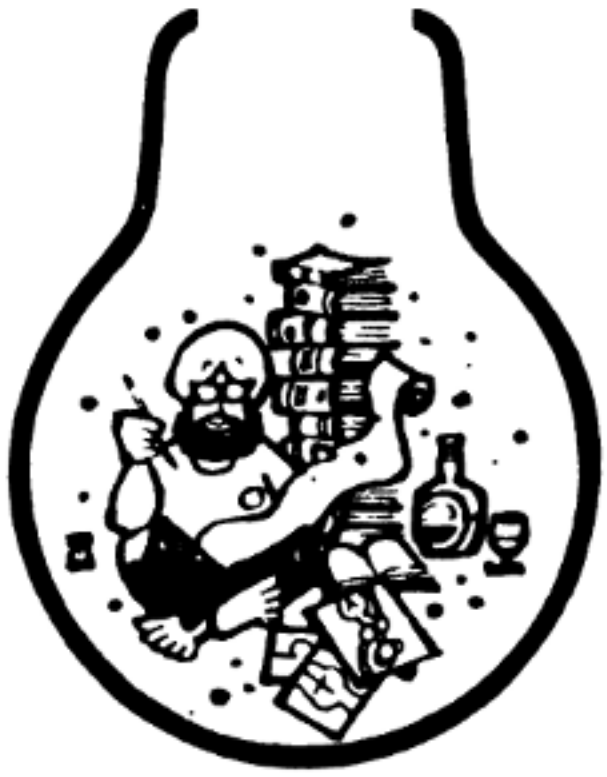
On the flight to Madras I found myself sandwiched between two enormous Tamil males. Tamilians come in different shapes, sizes and colours. The oversized are of the same dimensions as Zulu warriors; the average are smaller than I. Their complexions range from ebony blue-black of Nilotic tribesmen to the pale-ivory of a Jayalalitha. It was my misfortune to be wedged between two swarthy monsters both oblivious of my presence. They spread their elbows across from either side totally immobilising me. Came dinner time. With great difficulty I extricated my hip-flask from my trouser pocket and rang the bell for a tumbler of ice. Would these fellows object to my drinking in the aircraft? I turned to the bigger one of the two who seemed to be engrossed in reading what appeared to me a Tamil version of the Srimad Bhagwad Gita. Very timidly I asked him if I had his permission to imbibe spirits for which my body was thirsting. He turned from his spiritual guide-book and grunted something in Tamil-English which I wishfully interpreted as, "Drink what you like. How does it concern me?"

Dinner was served. While my neighbours polished off their trays I was unable to move my hand beyond emptying the contents of my hip-flask into my tumbler and taking it up to my lips. Except for that the two-and-a-half hour journey to Tamil Nadu would have been unbearably long. They should ban big-sized Tamilians from travelling by Boeing aircraft.

We landed in a freshly washed, humid Madras. An unseasonal shower had made it cooler than Delhi. It was barely 9 pm but there was hardly any traffic on the streets. "This is Vyjayanthimala's constituency from where she defeated Era Sezhiyan," remarked my escort as we passed by a dozen men standing by a *paan-bidi* stall. "Era Sezhiyan is a very honest and able politician," I said. "That's why he lost," came the prompt reply. In MGR's star-obsessed Tamil Nadu looks count for more than learning.

* * *

When I do not know where I am, I find it hard to get sleep. Besides the strange hotel-room, my throat seemed to be giving up. I got up many times during the night to see the hour. At long last came the dawn like thunder over the Bay of Bengal.



A fiery sun fought its way up through mountains of dark clouds cleaving through like a ball of molten lava and setting them aflame. For a while I watched the gory contest between the sun and the clouds before I noticed the stretch of green dotted with a few bungalows and cricket pitch beside a broad canal. I decided to let out the fetid conditioned air from the room and let in fresh ozone. I threw open the balcony door. A whiff of warm air drenched in urine assailed my nostrils. I quickly shut the door and beat a hasty retreat back to my bed.

* * *

No one goes to Madras without buying something Madrasi. Silk saris and sandal wood products seem about the sum total of all they produce. If you are flushed with black money, you cannot do better than invest it in a Conjeevaram temple sari. A good specimen can lighten your purse by Rs 10,000. There is nothing in silks for less than Rs 500. The better buys are cottons called *chungdi* from Madurai: all under Rs 150. You can buy them anywhere in this city but most outsiders make a bee-line for *Nully*. This one Chettiar-owned shop has a sale of Rs five lakhs every day.

* * *

The closer I came to speech-making, the worse my throat got. Antibiotics, gargling and throat lozenges made little impact. Like most northerners I suffer from a Tamil complex; these Tamilians are too nimble-minded for my types and would tie me up in knots. After the introductory eulogy pronounced by my friend R. Ramakrishnan, I was almost voiceless. I apologised for my hoarseness. I told them that at normal times I have, what a lady friend assured me, a sexy voice. I sounded like a randy bull frog. I croaked on for 20 minutes about the wretched state of affairs in the country and passing of the point of no return in Punjab. As they say in Tamil *Ethai venumanalum* of anything goes.

After the speech my throat began to mend itself. After a short siesta I had a long session with Surya Narayan Rao, head of the state RSS. It has not been fully recorded that the RSS played a very honourable role in the anti-Sikh violence of last November. Nor of efforts to instil confidence among Sikhs that they remain an integral part of Hindu society and India. It was followed by yet a longer seance with K.S. Ramanujam of *The Hindustan Times*. He lectured me on the benefits of meditation, vegetarianism, nature cure and Brahminical morality. Ramanujam deftly mixes self-depreciation with name-dropping.

* * *

Educated Tamilians baffle me. They have the sharpest of minds and at the same time they are utterly irrational in their addiction to caste, ritual, superstition and belief in astrology. No people in the world are as self-righteous and sanctimonious as Tamilian Brahmins. The only way the likes of M.G. Ramachandran and Karunanidhi can cope with them is by wearing dark glasses.

My friend R. Radhakrishnan is a Brahmin of the bigger breed of Tamilians. Unlike other members of his fraternity, he has no hang-ups of caste nor imposes his views on diet or drink on others. At his table the Nawab of Arcot, now Sheriff of Madras, breaks bread with the Chettiar, the Sikh and the Harijan. Radhakrishnan is an early-achiever: a top executive in his twenties; Sheriff of the city and a millionaire in his 30s and Member of Parliament in his forty's. No matter what discrimination they practise, no one can keep a Tamilian Brahmin down for too long.

* * *

The German Indologist Lassen in his *Indische Alterthumskunde* opined that the name Madras is a derivation of *Manda Rajya* realm of the stupid. Authors of Hobson Jobson believe that the German was taken for a ride by some Bengalis who resented Tamilians being regarded brighter than they. Most English who came in contact with Tami-

lians regarded them as "the benighted." I am inclined to agree with the judgment.

Babu Habit

In the last year of his service a certain Babuji was made head of the cash section. All vouchers had to have his signatures before they could be cashed. He introduced a new system whereby his prior approval was required in writing before any purchases could be made. It worked so well that he decided to introduce the same system in his home.

One Sunday his wife sent him a note saying that the children wanted to eat *pakoras*; hence a sum of Rs 15 may kindly be sanctioned for purchasing oil, *besan*, *paalak* etc. The husband recorded that oil and *besan* had become too costly and beyond the reach of a middle-class family like theirs; hence the proposal was rejected. Next Sunday his wife sent another note saying that she wanted to accompany her friends to a movie; hence an amount of Rs 20 be kindly sanctioned for a cinema ticket and refreshments. The husband recorded that the pay of a government employee is almost finished by the 20th of the month and it being the last Sunday of the month, there was no money left with him. The proposal may be re-submitted in the first week of the next month. The wife got irritated and wrote an application saying that she had not visited her parents for long and should, therefore, be granted leave for one month. The husband wrote, "Leave granted Substitute may be arranged."

Contributed by R.R. Bajaj of New Delhi.

Mohalla Mentality

I have often wondered why in all our big cities and towns different communities live in different *mohallas*. Although it is not quite the same in the countryside, a similar pattern is discernible. Most villages in northern India continue to be described as Brahmin, Jat, Rajput, Aheer, Meo (Muslim) or Harijan depending on which caste predominates. Down to the tiniest hamlet, homes of one caste will be found in one lane, those of others in others with those of Harijans in the outer periphery.

I now know how these *mohallas* must have sprung up because I notice a new kind, the Sikh *mohalla* taking shape in cities like Delhi and Kanpur where members of the community were subjected to violence. Most Sikh refugees I questioned were unwilling to return to their original homes. At first they made excuses that their dwellings had been damaged beyond repair. Even after they had been repaired and re-furnished, they remained reluctant to re-occupy them and in many cases only the men came back to them during day time to rejoin their womenfolk in refugee camps or in homes of other Sikhs. Many sold their homes and shifted to areas where they are amongst larger numbers of their own community, preferably close to a gurudwara where they could go for refuge in times of trouble. It was difficult to argue with them: they simply feel insecure and will not trust the police to be even-handed in putting down communal mischief.

I am not sure if communal *mohallas* are necessarily a bad thing. Till such time as communal harmony remains a distant dream and law-enforcing bodies become paragons of impartiality, the *mohalla* guarantees undisturbed sleep.

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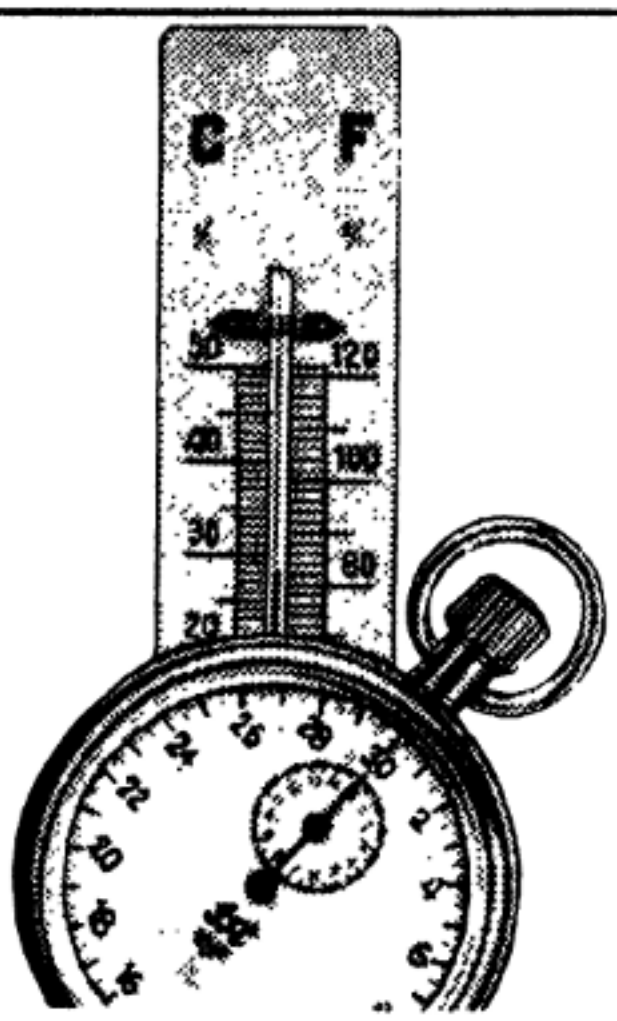
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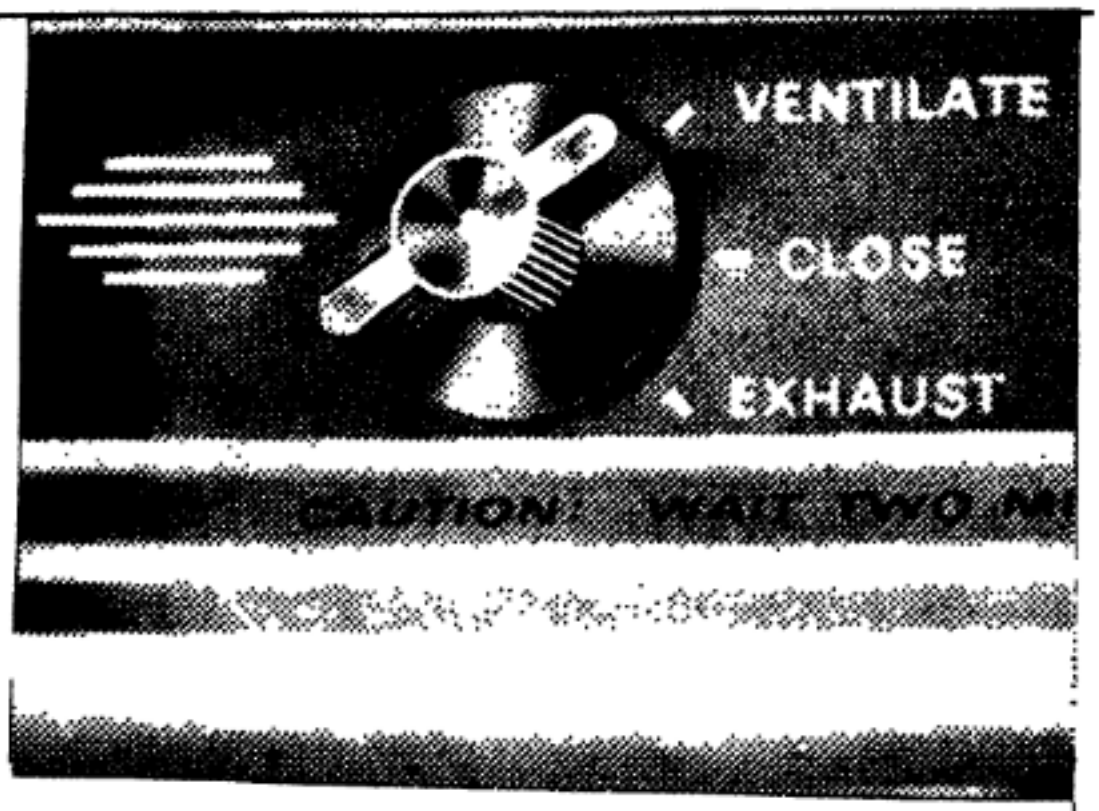
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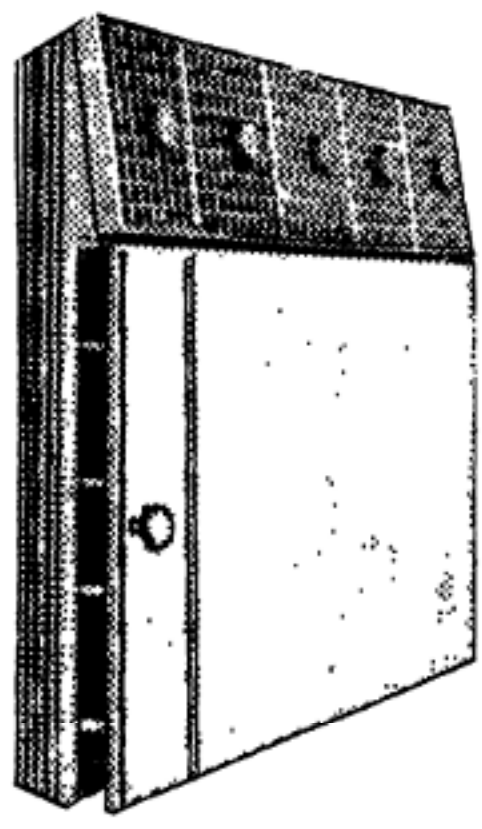
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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



In Defence of Gianiji

I have not been able to make out who was behind the recent attack made by K.K. Tewari, a senior Congress(I) MP from Bihar, on President Zail Singh in the Lok Sabha. The backing is supposed to have come "from above." But it is hard to say who the person from "above" was, because Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi himself expressed regret over press criticism of the President, even before Tewari's allegations were heard in the House.

However, the fact remains that no action has been taken against the erring MP; not even a warning has been given. That the Lok Sabha speaker, Balram Jakhar, allowed the statement despite protests from Madhu Dandavate, the Janata Party Parliament chief, and did not expunge the remarks, also indicates that there is more to this than meets the eye. The "information" given by Tewari is also not correct. He alleged that Deedar Singh Bains and Yogi Bhajan Singh, two prominent Sikhs who supported the secessionists abroad, stayed with the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Checking with Rashtrapati Bhavan sources, I find that the allegation is not true; they never stayed at Rashtrapati Bhavan nor is there any record of their meeting with the President. The union home minister, S.B. Chavan, a few days later informed the Lok Sabha that according to the secretary of the President, none of the two so-called "Sikh extremist" leaders had stayed with the President. Yogi Bhajan Singh had met the President during a visit in January 1983. What Tewari forgot to mention was that when these two Sikhs visited India they met both the former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. Bains was publicly honoured at a function arranged by Satyapal Mittal, the Congress(I) Rajya Sabha member, held in the memory of Gurmukh Singh Musafir, a former Punjab chief minister. And Rajiv Gandhi was present at a reception hosted by the World Sikh Council's branch in Delhi to Yogi. But unlike Bains, who changed sides after Operation Bluestar, Yogi is still an opponent of the demand for Khalistan and is very keenly involved in philanthropic projects in the USA.

I personally think that Zail Singh has acted in the country's interest after Operation Bluestar. If he had knuckled down under pressure from the Sikh community and resigned, we would have faced more than a constitutional crisis. Yogi Bhajan Singh was one of those who sent a cable to the President urging him to remain in office for the sake of the country and the Sikh community. Besides, the President's exemplary behaviour came to the fore when his cavalcade was stoned on 31 October 1984 while he was driving down from the airport to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where Mrs Gandhi's body was lying. He could have very easily created an uncomfortable situation for the ruling party that day by insisting that the Congress(I) Parliamentary party elect its leader formally after Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Instead, he accepted the Congress Parliamentary Board's intimation that Rajiv Gandhi had the unanimous support of the Congress(I) Parliamentary party.

It is because of Giani Zail Singh's insistence that he should in no way compromise the office of the President and the fact that he did not step down from the office of the President after Operation Bluestar, he has had to face a barrage of criticism from the Akalis and a number of other Sikhs. But in spite of this, the President has stood his ground and the threat of excommunication by the high priests—a sword which is always hanging over his head—has not made him change his stand. The Giani may have at times shown more deference to the high priests than he should have as the President of this country, but even the President has the right to hold his own religious views and we must not overlook the fact that he is a deeply religious person. On the whole, he has behaved with restraint and propriety.

This is also reflected in the advice he has been giving the government. In fact, the recent *faux pas* over the presentation of awards to servicemen who took part in Operation Bluestar would not have taken place if the President's advice had been heeded to. He was against the presentation of citations to armymen for the "work" they had done during Operation Bluestar as it had meant firing on their countrymen.

But often the government's right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. The message did not reach the people in-charge of the publicity and they distributed the brochures which had been printed a few weeks earlier in which the citation, as first drafted, were handed out. At the investiture, no citation presented mentioned Operation Bluestar, Amritsar or the Golden Temple complex. For the bureaucratic bungling that failed to delete these words from the original draft sent to the press, the President had to bear the brunt of the blame and the ire of his community.

The President under our Constitution holds the highest office in the land. The person occupying that office demands proper respect. Giani Zail Singh's past involvement in the Punjab tangle may not have been above reproach, but the time to take that into account was before he was elevated to the office, not now. A campaign against him such as the one witnessed in Parliament may injure the office of President of India beyond redemption.

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World of Ads

Advertising in India has come a long way (*1985: The Year of the Ad*, 14—20 April). There is a steady flow of ad campaigns and its overall effect is overwhelming. One writes with a 'Gee flow silver-tipped ball-pen,' eats 'Maggie,' the 'two minute noodles' and rides a 'Luna' which has the distinction of being 'two out of every five mopeds on the roads.' With such consumer involvement the ad world is on its way up.
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• The cover story was interesting but I disagree with some of the remarks against BBC serials regarding their popularity ratings. For instance, Vanita Rawal finds the serial *Sorry* pathetic. To her the serial has no meaning. But to viewers like me it is the story about a dominating mother. It is a tale about a 41-year old bachelor who is over protected about by his mother. The son wants freedom but the mother objects. Similar cases are quite familiar in India, where we have joint families with the mother dominating over affairs. However, it is good that new Hindi serials have come up. But it is a pity that Doordarshan authorities have stopped telecasting foreign serials in the process. I would request Doordarshan authorities to give us more variety programmes interspersed with BBC and American serials. I also request SUNDAY to publish a report on All India Radio and its schemes to face the growing threat from television.
Syed Rashadath Ali, Calcutta

•The cover story by Sankarshan Thakur was educative and informative. The concept of advertising is changing but at whose cost? In a developing economy, consumerism should not be blown out of proportion. It hurts in many ways—our limited resources will suffer and will sow the seeds of confusion, frustration and embarrassment in the minds of the middle class. Moreover, it will enhance the *laissez faire* attitude in our young people.
Rajani Kant, Hyderabad

•I was pained to notice that the issue devoted to advertising contained an ad which was unaesthetic and vulgar. I am sure that a journal of SUNDAY's standard can well afford to refuse a couple of thousands and reject such ads.
Kamal Mitra, Durgapur

•While I thank Ashis Mitra of HTA for describing our agency as 'brilliant,' I regret that he was wrong in presenting facts. Grant Kenyon & Eckhardt is not a new face in advertising having been incorporated in this country in 1947.
Sandeep Chaudhuri, Calcutta



•I agree with Madhu Jain that Indian TV serials have arrived with a bang. (*Be Indian, See Indian*) Home-made serials like *Humlog, Khandaan* and *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* are a welcome change from *Lucy* and *Yes Minister*. The Indian TV serials have captured the heart of the average viewer, and I must say, that the 'idiot box,' whose only attraction was the Sunday film, or the *Chitrahaar*, is now a source of proper entertainment. The articles by Madhu Jain and Ritu Sarin made interesting and informative reading.
Kaushik Sarkar, Calcutta

Religious Beliefs

Kuldip Nayar's assessment of the conditions faced by the Ahmedias in Pakistan and his plea for tolerance comes at an appropriate time when the mood in India is charged with emotion and anger. (*Exclusive, Ahmedias Woes*, 31 March-6 April). I fully endorse his views of broad-mindedness and a humane acceptance of each other by different religious groups. At the same time, however, I would like to clarify certain statements made by Mr Nayar which are misleading.

Mr Nayar asks: Why should a 'Kalima' which celebrates the oneness of God, become objectionable if it appears in the places of worship of the Ahmedias? It is so because the Kalima is the password of Islam and the gist of what the religion is. It endorses two truths of the religion with which each Muslim is familiar: that God is one and there is no other; and that Mohammad is his prophet and is the last of his messengers. This is precisely where the Ahmedias break away from the main body of Islamic belief.

The non-conformers have always suffered rejection at the hands of society. The Ahmedias have broken away to reform and make their own tenets which the rest of the Muslim world do not recognise. The Ahmedias while lamenting the treatment given to them, have at times deliberately cultivated this 'separateness.' They are a united and strong economic group and one cannot refute the fact that many intellectuals have emerged among them. An Islamic state like Pakistan with its autocratic President is bound to harass them and sporting the 'Kalima' on badges in protest would be purposeless, besides inciting feelings against them. This chasm between the two communities will not easily be bridged. With their strong economy and closely-knit community the Ahmedias ought to strive for an independent state. Meanwhile they should follow the saying: 'In Rome do as the Romans do.'
Nishat Hyder, Gulbaga

•It was disgusting to read Kuldip Nayar's article on the Ahmedias. It seems he does not know that the basics of Islamic faith is not only the 'Kalima' but also the *Khatem-ul-ambia* (the last Prophet). Does Mr Nayar know that according to the Ahmedias, one Mirza Bashir Ahmed of village Qadian in Punjab, was the last Prophet? I would like to inform Mr Nayar that Muslims and Christians believe in Jesus (Hazarat Isa). Yet there is a difference: a Muslim accepts him as one of the Prophets, whereas a Christian declares him as the son of God.
S. A. H. Abidi, Margherita (Assam)

Shocking Deal

The investigative report by Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, *A Classic Bungle* (14—20 April), was an eye-opener. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi talks of eliminating corruption, but it seems that he is up against a wall. The dubious deal to purchase computers shocked me since the education ministry is involved in it.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

The Multinational Monster

The cover story on the Bhopal gas tragedy was comprehensive and illuminating (*The Cover-up*, 7-13 April) It thoroughly analysed the wide spectrum of the tragedy, the long-term effects and clearly established the culpability of the American company, the Indian management and the government of Madhya Pradesh. The Indian government has filed a suit for damages against Union Carbide in America. But it should concentrate on rehabilitating the victims and providing medical aid to those suffering.
P. Govind, New Delhi

• The Bhopal tragedy can only be compared to the devastation at Hiroshima. The aftermath at Bhopal is more dangerous and catastrophic. After the tragedy, I hope the government will not grant permits to such killer-industries without checking up on safety measures It is even more shameful that many people died due to lack of proper medical aid. Thanks to SUNDAY for the eye-opener particularly the post-mortem report by Ritu Sarin
Prabhakar Patra, Koraput (Orissa)

• Unfortunately, the developing and under-developed countries of the Third World are the worst sufferers due to lack of adequate pollution-control devices and efficient maintenance systems in factories like those in the developed countries. Union Carbide cannot avoid its moral responsibility and should give full compensation, though no amount of compensation would be adequate for the loss of life and property in Bhopal.
M.H. Rama, Bhubaneshwar



A premature baby born in Bhopal

• Congratulations to SUNDAY for the superb cover story. However, we would like to make some clarifications on Ritu Sarin's article *Scant Relief* where she makes a statement about Kishore Bharati's involvement in the activities in Bhopal.

Although it is true that Dr Sadgopal is a senior member of the Kishore Bharati, he along with a few other members of the group decided to work in Bhopal in their individual capacity. As such they do not represent Kishore Bharati. To work effectively, these persons together with a number of local activists from Bhopal and other cities decided to launch a front, *Zahreeli Gas Kand Morcha*. The Morcha comprises engineers, lawyers, doctors, scientists and some members of the Kishore Bharati. The Morcha has been raising issues of immediate interest such as proper medical care, adequate compensation for the victims, removal of the Union Carbide factory, financial relief during the period of joblessness as well as other issues of far-reaching significance. The Morcha worked to inform the poor about their rights in the face of such a crisis and mobilise them in an organised manner through rallies, *dharnas*, *gheraoes* and other means of protest. The *dharna* mentioned in the article was just one of them. Such activities were not conducted by the members of the Sangharsh Morcha alone or by "activists of Kishore Bharati." In fact, most of the people staging *dharnas* were residents of *bastis* and victims of the gas leak, who were mobilised by members of Morcha. This does not mean that Kishore Bharati does not support the Morcha's activities.
Dr. Sushil Joshi, Hoshangabad (Madhya Pradesh), Co-ordinator, Kishore Bharati

• Union Carbide can in no way shrug off its responsibility for the Bhopal fall-out. But the question is: Can the Indian government do so either?. The government's ignorance about the faulty design of the plant is unpardonable. How can the MP government explain their negligence in checking the safety measures of the UCL plant regularly? Why in the first place was UCL allowed to set up a plant to produce a deadly gas like MIC in such a densely-populated place? These are questions to be answered by the Indian authorities and not by the UCL
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

• *The Case Against Carbide* gives the readers an impression that the safety factor was either overlooked or neglected by the parent company. The CBI report also indicated that the safety factor was ignored. There was also a lacuna in the working of the state government which granted a licence without adequate checks regarding the safety measures. Possibly, the name and fame of Union Carbide gave the state officials the stamp of trust. The trust has been shaken.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)

Indo-Bangladesh Relations

M.J. Akbar's snide remarks at Enayetullah Khan was not in good taste (*Dateline*, 31 March—6 April). Many in the Indian print media suffer from a wrong mental fixation about Enayetullah Khan and assume that he is a habitual India-baiter. But most Bangladeshis feel that Enayetullah Khan and his newspaper, *Holiday*, picked up enough courage to expose Indian perfidy over the sharing of war booty left behind by the vanquished Pakistani army as well as criticise the plunder indulged in by Indian merchants with the help of their indigenous collaborators when Bangladesh's economy was in ruins. *Holiday* had to pay for its conviction when the paper was closed down and its editor jailed.

On resumption, *Holiday* picked up cudgels over New Delhi's hesitancy to hand over to Bangladesh the Tin Bigha corridor despite a signed accord as well as India's refusal to give Bangladesh its due share of the Ganga waters. *Holiday* also criticised India's decision to erect a barbed wire fence along the Assam-Bangla border. Bangladesh seeks good neighbourly relations with India. If Indo-Bangladesh relations have not come up to expectations, the fault lies with India.
Murad Ali Kader, Chittagong (Bangladesh)

Identifying the 'Hidden Hand'

The author of *A Period of Fear and Uncertainty* (17—23 March) rightly felt aggrieved over the 'assistants of the Central Secretariat Service' being allowed to continue to live and work in Delhi. I have been informed that the assistants get themselves promoted as section officers in a short span of 15 to 16 years. These section officers then 'manage' to become under secretaries—a grade that would normally go to the IAS officers who are rotting in the states The greed of these assistants do not end there. They come up the ladder alarmingly fast to hold such prestigious posts like those of deputy secretaries, directors and joint secretaries.

Arup Pant, New Delhi

• The article highlights the doings of the "hidden hand" without identifying it. The last paragraph of the write-up gives the impression that the "hidden hand" belong to the officers of the Central Secretariat Service (CSS) which, if true, is a reflection on the whole set-up. All the posts of secretaries, additional secretaries and 95 per cent of the posts of joint secretaries are held by members of services other than the CSS. Then how can members of the CSS manipulate senior postings as alleged by the author?

I. Deb, New Delhi

• After having dwelt at length on the doings of the 'Orwellian eye' and the 'hidden hand' the author jumps to the astonishing conclusion that the 'hidden hand' belongs to the officers of the Central Secretariat Service who have 'continued to stay in Delhi throughout their career, formed an old boys' network in every ministry' making 'subtle moves to man all the secretariat posts upto the level of secretary.'

At the outset, it may be pointed out that initial recruitment to the Central Secretariat Service is made not only at the level of assistant but also at the level of section officer through the same examination by which IAS and other central services officers are recruited. Having joined the service through the same examination, the CSS officers spend many more years to reach the position of deputy secretaries and directors than those in the other central services. Thus, their continuous stay at Delhi is at the cost of their career and promotion. The IAS officers have systematically tried to surpress them by shrewd moves like denying promotion to them even when they are due. Unlike the IAS and other services who earn their right to promotion over time, CSS officers have to go through a rigorous selection for promotion at all levels. But, even after they have been thoroughly screened and selected by the competent selection committees, they are not assured of a placement. Their names are circulated among various ministries along with those of officers of other services. It is the sweet will of a secretary to pick or reject an officer of the CSS for a vacancy in his department.

As a result, many officers who are eligible for promotion having been selected by a committee of as many as four secretaries, may not find placement for as long as two years. The effect of this policy of denial of promotion opportunities to the CSS officers has been that their number in the higher echelon in the secretariat has been constantly going down whereas in 1972 they held 9.8 per cent of the appointments of joint secretaries and above, the figure came down to 1.9 per cent in 1983. Out of 99 secretaries, there are none belonging to the CSS: the last CSS officer to reach that level was A. J. Kidwai who retired a decade ago. Among the 121 additional secretaries, there is only one CSS officer and out of 392 joint secretaries, only five belong to the CSS.

As regards unknown persons being appointed to important posts, the mysterious Mr Bhora is none other than B.B. Vohra, who retired as petroleum secretary and there should be no surprise if he was appointed as chairman of the advisory board on energy. Again, it has been stated that H.K.L. Kapoor retired as chief secretary, Gujarat 'more than a decade ago' whereas he retired only in March 1983. In any case, both these officials were illustrious members of the IAS fraternity and it is only they who would be interested in finding positions for their erstwhile colleagues. Surely it could not have been the 'hidden hand.'

Before an IAS officer is deputed to the centre, his consent is obtained. No officer is sent on deputation unless he is interested. If the IAS officers feel that dislocation of their family life and children's education is so great, they are under no compulsion to come to the centre. However, there must be obvious advantages in coming to Delhi because there is always a queue of officers and most of them use all possible means to get a tenure at the centre.

The role of an IAS officer in a developing economy is more important in the states where large-scale development projects and schemes are underway to improve the lot of the common man. The Central Secretariat Service officers were expected to provide continity and assist in the formulation of higher policy for the administration of the nation. The IAS and central services were intended to bring in some field experience and knowledge of ground conditions to the process of policy formulation. Unfortunately, with the passage of time the role of the CSS is being relegated to unimportant functions of administration and house-keeping. The time has now come when the department of personnel and administrative reforms should sit up and examine the role and performance of not only the CSS but also the Cetral Administrative Pool which was once formed and later disbanded. I am sure the highly complex policy-making function requires officers with long experience and knowledge of precedents and rules.

Surinder Kapur, New Delhi

Sitaram Kesri is Clean

The report regarding the production and disbursement of election material is totally unfounded and mischievous, to say the least (*Sitaram Kesri to be Removed?*, 24 February—2 March). The malicious report has sought to bring a slur to the fair name of some functionaries in the AICC(I).

Needless to say, the AICC(I) has been handling its publicity in a meticulous manner and with a very high degree of responsibility, keeping in time with the highest traditions of the party functioning.

The irresponsible allegation of being a beneficiary in monetary deals against no less a person than Sri Sitaram Kesri is baseless. Sri Kesri is a person of high integrity and has at least 50 years of dedicated service behind him.

Shrikant Varma, MP, General Secretary, All India Congress Committee(I), New Delhi

The Akalis Should Reciprocate

The special report, *Punjab: The End Game* (24—30 March), was illuminating but one cannot digest the idea that Sitaram Kesri was behind the appointment of Arjun Singh as Governor of Punjab. In fact, Rajiv Gandhi is an able and shrewd administrator as he has proved it in a short span of six months.
R Sahay, Calcutta

• The central government's determination to solve the Punjab problem has been amply demonstrated in the special report. The Punjab tangle needs a political solution and the government has taken bold initiatives hoping the Akalis will reciprocate. The appointment of Arjun Singh as Governor is a master-stroke of political shrewdness. However, the Akalis still continue their confrontanist attitude and with the release of the Akali leaders exremist activities appear to have gained fillip.
P. Govind, New Delhi

• Concrete steps have been taken to rescue the Punjab problem by way of releasing Sant Longowal and seven other Akali leaders and ordering an inquiry into the November riots by Rajiv Gandhi. He has invited the Akalis to the negotiating table which is a step in the right direction. It is time Sant Longowal buried the hatchet and proved that he is a moderate in the real sense of the term. Religious sentiments should never be given little importance when the unity of our nation is at stake.
S. Jayaraj, Coimbatore

• After the various steps the Prime Minister has taken to solve the Punjab tangle since he assumed office in January 1985, one cannot blame the government if the Akalis do not respond to his overtures. First, he set up the cabinet sub-committee consisting of senior cabinet ministers, who were responsible for hearing out the Akalis in particular and the Sikhs in general. Next, he released Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and other Sikh leaders. This was an entirely political decision. It was aimed at renewing talks with the Akalis To start negotiations afresh, he also appointed Arjun Singh as the Governor of Punjab. But it seems that the Akalis are either terrified of terrorists, or are themselves terrorists They should have condemned the deahts of Hindus in Punjab.
Rajesh Sahay, Hazaribagh

An Author's Plight

This has reference to Narendra Kumar's letter *Publisher's Plight* (*Opinion*, 7-13 April) I do not know whether I fall in the category whom the author calls "people with ignorance or prejudice maligning publishers and hence far more sinned against than sinning!"

I am working in an acedemic institution and since the career of a person in all acedemic institutions is based on the principle "publish or perish" I had the misfortune of facing the "magnanimous behaviour" of one of the publishers. In 1976, I wrote a book, *Perspectives on Indian Banking*, which was published by Popular Prakashan. Though the first edition of this book is out of print, the publishers (R.G. Bhatkal is the proprietor) did not have the courtesy, inspite of my repeated requests, to give me the royalty or the author's complimentary copies of the book even after ten years.

Now, will Narendra Kumar, a representative of the publishers, pass a judgement on me as to whether I am ignorant or prejudiced and maligning the publishers?
Gopal L. Karkal, Bombay

Lively Calcutta

I did not understand what Sunil Dutta wanted to convey through his photofeature, *Calcutta, Calcutta* (14—20 April). I have noticed over the years that lensmen in Calcutta are over-anxious to depict only the uglier side of their city. I would have appreciated an assortment of the good and the bad side of Calcutta.
S.K. Basu, Calcutta

• The PM had labelled Calcutta as 'a dying city.' And now SUNDAY publishes a photoessay of only the murkier side of the city. It was throughly unfair as the magazine liked all its citizens derives its life and breath from Calcutta.
Mrinal Kundu, Belur (WB)

• Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's remark that Calcutta was dying was not an exaggeration as the photographs reproduced in SUNDAY will bear out. The reaction of the ruling Left Front government was that of one with a guilty conscience. Ever since the present government came to power seven years ago, the city is dying a slow death due to lack of planning and development.
M.S. Singhal, Calcutta

Privileged Minority

I read Khushwant Singh's articles with interest for he always has something new to say But of late I find that he is suffering from a *Minority Complex* (*Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 17—23 March). I differ with his view that everywhere in the world the minority community is harassed. I do not know much about what is happening in the rest of the world, but as far as my country is concerned, the minority communities enjoy special privileges. If we keep on harping on majority and minority interests, the concept of national integration will remain a pipe dream.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• *Electoral Refoms (Gossip Sweet and Sour*, 24—30 March) made a very pertinent suggestion. Most of the voters are illiterate and therefore not capable of differentiating between political ideologies. A couple of rupees is sufficient to buy votes Isn't this a mockery of democracy?
S. Naidu, Sindri

World Champions

Zaheer Abbas paid a fitting tribute to the Indian cricket team for winning the Rothmans Cup at Sharjah ('*India has Qualified as the Undisputed Champions of One-day Cricket*,' 17—23 March). However, the report was conspicuous by the absence of any good pictures.
Pankaj Basu, Jalpaiguri

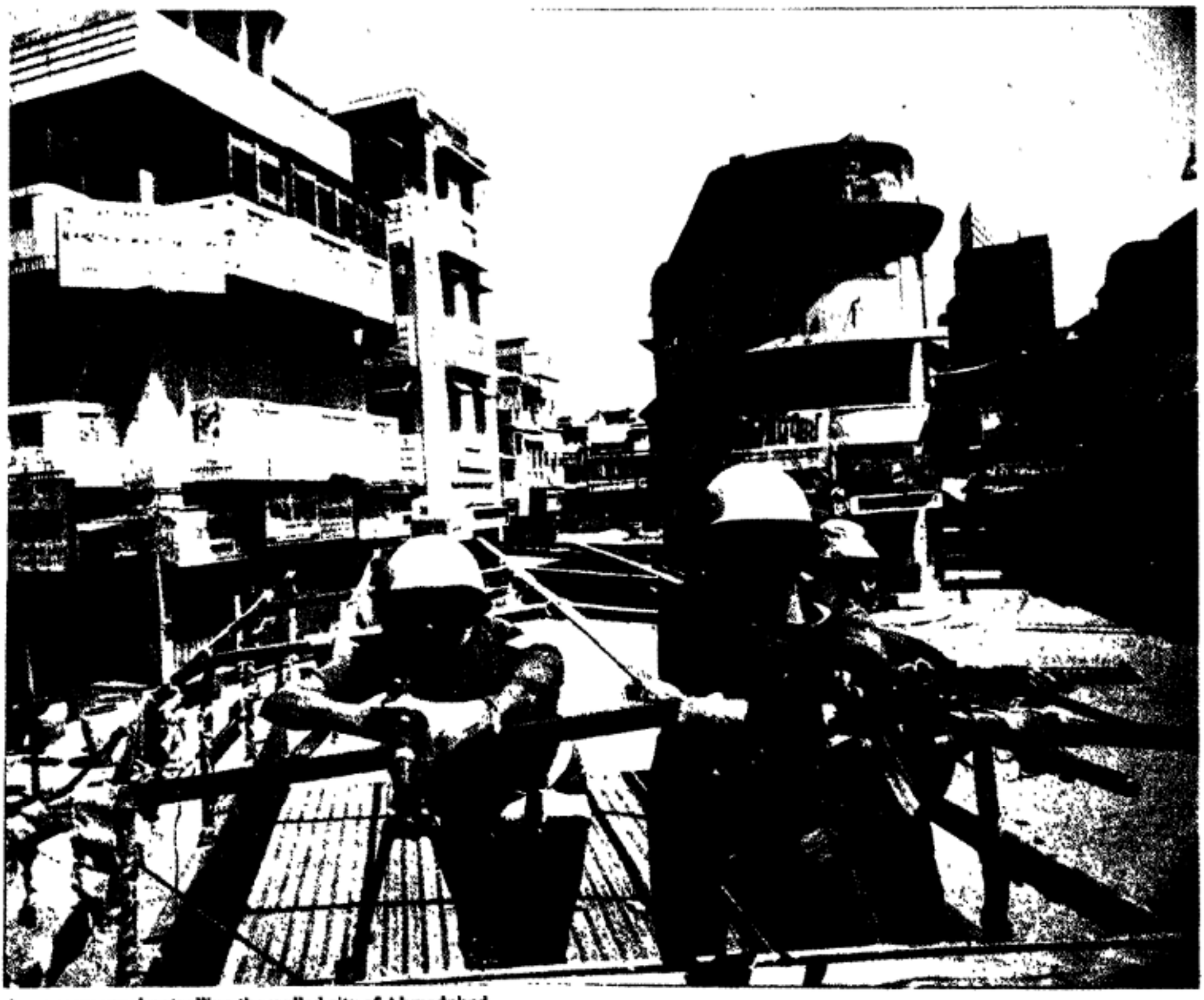
• Congratulations to the Indian team for winning the Benson and Hedges and the Rothmans tournament. While Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev and Ravi Shastri were behind the victories, the rest cannot be underestimated. If the Indians keep up the team spirit they had displayed in Australia and Sharjah, I am sure that many more honours will come to them.
G.V. Phaniraj Kishore, Hyderabad

• Zaheer Abbas's word of caution that India is not necessarily the best team in the world stems from his jealousy at our success. Winning two major tournaments is certainly not a fluke or a "patch of good fortune." The sincerity and dedication of the Indian players earned them the victories. Srinjoy Chowdhury's tribute to Jimmy Amarnath was also befitting (*Amarnath: Mr Consistent*). If I were given the choice, I would have chosen Amarnath to lead India after Gavaskar instead of Kapil Dev.
Pramod Sahoo, Chirimiri (MP)

COVER STORY

POLICE Vs PEOPLE

What began as an anti-reservation agitation in the first week of March and led to communal riots by the middle of April, has taken a new twist today. It is now a battle between the police and the people, with the former setting new records in brutality. Following the death of a constable during rioting in Ahmedabad, Gujarat's policemen took the law into their own hands and, brooking no interference, went on a rampage, mercilessly beating up helpless people and pregnant women, looting and destroying shops and burning down media establishments. It was ultimately the army—once again—which had to be called in to restore a semblance of normalcy. All the while chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki and his government, which has lost its ability to rule, refused to admit the truth or discipline the policemen. Instead the chief minister has defended the lawmen and blamed the media for provoking them. SUNDAY correspondents report from Ahmedabad.



Army personnel patrolling the walled city of Ahmedabad

Photographs: Sondeep Shankar

The 25th of April was the tenth day of continuing violence in Ahmedabad. For most of that time the city lived indoors under curfew. Sporadic incidents claimed more than three dozen lives, hundreds of others were injured and thousands left homeless. The police had revolted, beaten, burnt and killed. Its control room at the Shahibag police headquarters had collapsed, the army had been called in and the entire government had been forced to shift to the Circuit House annexe where the army set up its own control room. But there was no breakdown of law and order in Ahmedabad, because police commissioner B.K. Jha said so. He has his own scales somewhere and all these things put together did not quite measure up to be called a breakdown of the law and order situation. "When did law and order break down in Ahmedabad? Where?" he shot back when asked why things had gone out of hand. Deaths have occurred, he agreed, the police did indulge in rioting, curfew was in force, the army was out on the streets but did law and order break down? No, when? The police commissioner's face breaks into a smile. "The situation in my city is improving, nothing wrong." On the floor above in the Circuit House annexe sits chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki, surrounded by his cabinet colleagues, smiling, posing for photographers. He is just back after being chased out by angry refugees at the Bapunagar relief camp shouting slogans of "*Solanki wapas jaao* (Solanki, go back)." He had gone there to offer solace but had to return hurriedly. Had the security not been so tight the irate refugees would have roughed him up. When asked how his visit to the refugee camp went Solanki said: "*Bahut achha raha* (it went very well)." That in itself was a comment on the government's attitude to the Ahmedabad situation. Nothing out of the ordinary has happened in the town. Whatever has is because of the "rumour-monger press" which blew things out of proportion. Did the police do anything wrong? If it did it was only because the force was "excited and deeply disturbed" about the adverse coverage it got in the press. "Let the police do its work, cooperate with it" was the appeal being sent out by the government. "After all," said police commissioner Jha, "policemen are only public servants. Their interest is the interest of the people." These public servants, the custodians of law and order had for days plundered and pillaged Ahmedabad, unleashed terror on the people to "restore peace."

The police in Ahmedabad has itself become a force of anti-social elements. It was a force whose belligerence needed restraining by the army. "*Army hatva lenge* (we will have the army removed)," is the latest warning being used on the people by the police and it works. That would leave the police alone to do its "public service." How long, ask policemen openly, will the army remain here. You have to face us one day. Ahmedabad lives constantly under that threat.

The Gujarat government is not wrong when it says the police force is angry and agitated over happenings in the last few weeks. Nevertheless, the reasons given for the rise in the tempers of the police are subject to question. Solanki says the press is carrying out a campaign against him for no good reason: an *akhbari aandolan* characterised by falsehood and



Police vans burnt in Ahmedabad during the anti-reservation stir

exaggeration. The result, according to him was simple: the police could bear the "attacks" no longer and naturally reacted. His police, the Gujarat chief minister maintains, is not to blame; it only responded naturally. But was it "falsehood and exaggeration" that so piqued the Ahmedabad police or was it something else? In a couple of cases reports in the local press did appear exaggerated. One such concerned the alleged entry of the police into a temple in Saraspur while chasing a group of anti-reservationist demonstrators on 10 April. The local vernacular press said that the police had broken open the gates of the temple and violated the sanctity of the holy place which was not exactly the case. The police had gone to the temple, it had broken open one gate but never entered it as reports suggested. That, however, would be all as far as exaggeration goes. There are a series of other incidents for which the police had nobody but itself to blame for the "adverse publicity" it got in the press. It could not even use the Saraspur incident as an excuse for its violent behaviour. It began its terror tactics much earlier.

On 7 April the Akhil Gujarat Vali Mahamandal, the organisation of parents leading the anti-reservation agitation with the Navrachna Samiti of Students, had called its meeting at the Sanghvi High School in the Navrangpura locality of Ahmedabad. Before the delegates could assemble there, the police cordoned off the school, forcing the Vali Mahamandal to shift the venue to the H.K. Arts and Commerce College on Ashram Road. Here too, it was the police that reached first and locked the premises.

All this, without any provocation from the Vali Mahamandal leaders—the government just seemed determined not to let the meeting be held. Harried, the Vali Mandal leaders then reached the Indian Medical Association (IMA) hall but were allowed in only on three conditions: voices should not be raised, police should be allowed in, nobody would clap. The Vali Mahamandal leaders agreed but even as they were discussing their programme of action, a violent pro-reservationist crowd stormed in, disrupted the meeting and beat up Vali Mahamandal members. How such a violent mob managed to get into the IMA hall despite



Street urchins and poor people retrieve whatever they can from the burnt shops in Ahmedabad

the heavy police bandobust still remains a mystery.

Even before this, in the first days of April, an incident had taken place in Asarwa, a labour colony near Ahmedabad's civil hospital. The police had picked up some boys of the Municipal School and beaten them up about which residents of Asarwa complained to the police commissioner, B.K. Jha, on 5 April. In their complaint they named deputy commissioner of police, Rajan Priyadarshi, superintendent of police, J.S. Jadeja and inspector Chawad. Just as the petitioners were returning from the office of the police commissioner, the police chased them and let loose their *lathis*. Among those most seriously injured were women who were pulled out from their houses in Asarwa and caned in broad daylight. On being presented with a petition, the Gujarat High Court banned the entry of these policemen in the Asarwa area which, say apologists of the Solanki government, created a lot of "resentment" in the police.



The Asarwa incident was the first real exposure of the police tactics and from then onwards things began moving in a vicious cycle. A "deeply hurt" police force took it out on the city and reports in the press only compounded the "injury to their sentiments," by the middle of April the cause and effect chain had sparked off incidents all over Ahmedabad. Specially affected were localities in the walled city: Astodia, Raipur, Raikhad, Manek Chowk and Khadia. And then came the biggest blow for the police. On 20 April, the High Court, on a petition submitted by BJP MLA Ashok Bhatt and others, banned the entry of certain police officials into these areas and ordered an enquiry into alleged police excesses. The enquiry was to be conducted by R.P. Rathod, secretary in the revenue department of the Gujarat government and J.N. Bhatt, registrar of the Gujarat High Court and submitted by 25 April. The police was incensed. The final spark came on the morning of 22 April while the two-member team was conducting the enquiry in the Raipur area. Head constable Laxman Desai was knived and killed by someone in the crowd.

By 12.30 pm, when Laxman Desai succumbed to his injuries in the Vadilal Sarabhai hospital, the Ahmedabad police was on the rampage. A procession of policemen coming out of the hospital set fire to a row of shops, pelted stones at anything and everything, looted commercial complexes, stopped vehicles and set them ablaze. At the Shahibag police headquarters, the control room collapsed and policemen threw down their arms, ran out and joined others in loot and arson. Among their first targets was the *Gujarat Samachar* building which they destroyed. They then moved to the *Jansatta Bhawan*, the office of the *Indian Express* and *Jansatta* and tried to set fire to it. The building, however, was left virtually untouched as the army reached it in time. Both newspapers had one thing in common: they had reported in detail the excesses committed by the police in Ahmedabad city.

Khadia is in the heart of the walled city of Ahmedabad, a densely populated, labyrinthine locality built in pre-colonial days. Khadia's psyche has always been anti-Establishment. During the revolt of 1857, Tantia Tope had directed operations from here for a while. A century later, during the Quit India movement of 1942, Khadia had become such a pain for the British that the imperial government had ordered it to be "razed down." Even they did not succeed. R.K. Vashishtha, commandant of the second brigade of the State Reserve Police (SRP) wanted to. He had old scores to settle with the people of Khadia.

On 15 April there had been clashes in Khadia which the police said were communal. But that does not seem to have been the case. What had happened was that around 7.00 pm a police party had gone to raid the den of Balam Dada, a bootlegger in Khatkiwad, a Muslim locality near Khadia. But they were chased away. An hour later, the raid party (some locals maintain it was not a raid but an attempt to squeeze out *hafta* (illegal cess, from the bootlegger) went again to Khatkiwad. This time they were chased away, too. When residents of Khadia saw the police and the residents of Khatkiwad running towards them, they thought it was an attack. They clashed. The police fired 47 rounds, and five were killed. Khadia, volatile as it is, remained disturbed.

But peace returned on 17 April when residents and the police, under command of DCP Mohapatra, "pledged truce" and exchanged sweets. Then suddenly things went haywire. Even as Mohapatra was reassuring the people, R.K. Vashishtha arrived along with his SRP brigade, determined to teach the residents of Khadia a lesson. He had suddenly been deputed to replace Mohapatra. Vashishtha, after all, was the man who had the right credentials: a "professional" when it comes to handling riots. He has in fact, been used by the Solanki government to quell them on several occasions since 1980. It was he who had "handled" the anti-price rise agitation in Khadia in 1980. His brigade immediately laid siege and the SRP men launched the attack with cries of "*Phoonk do Khadiane* (burn down Khadia)." The solid, ancient gates of Khadia were rammed open by SRP vehicles and the cops went from house to house, looting, manhandling and ransacking. From the Chowk watched R.K. Vashishtha, sitting in an easy chair, a carbine on his lap: the proud executor of "Operation Khadia," once a plan of the imperial British government itself. Journalists wanting to see him while the operation was going on were told by SRP men: "*Saheb ni mijaj bahut garam chhe, tane khatma hone chhe* (Saheb is in a very bad mood, do you want to die)?"

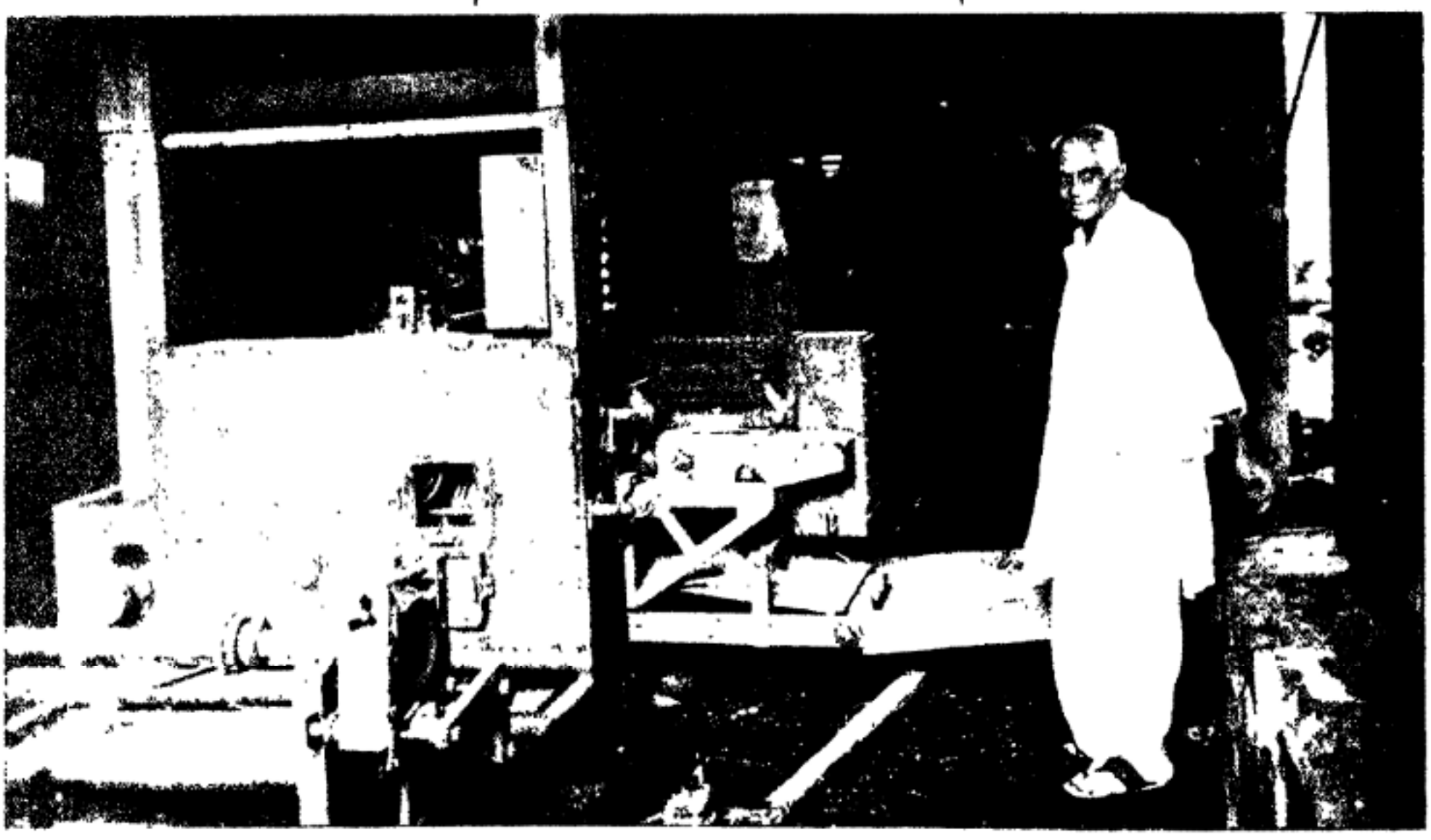
Gujarat's Lawless Lawmen

"They have killed my baby. I had reared journalism in Gujarat for 45 years, they killed it in one shot," said Shantilal Shah, editor of *Gujarat Samachar*, the largest selling daily in the state. He kept on repeating the words as he moved about amidst the ruins of the three-storeyed Lok Prakashan Bhawan. Two days after a mob of irate policemen had set it ablaze, parts of the building were still smouldering. The press, black with soot, was still stuffy with smoke, and the editorial section which had been ransacked, still throbbed with the heat that had ravaged dozens of photocomposing terminals and the entire dark room equipment. The basement right below was a stack of ash: roll upon roll of burnt newsprint. And beside it, in a shed that looks no more like one now, the lino-type units reduced to a heap of scrap. The place is all ash, soot and twisted metal. It took only 15 minutes to wreck the work of 45 years.

Gujarat Samachar was one of the first targets of organised police violence when they struck work and went berserk on 22 April. A little after 1.00 pm that day, policemen arrived at the *Gujarat Samachar* building in Khanpur in a van and two jeeps and started beating up the security guards and watchmen. They then rammed their vehicles into the locked gate. Once inside, the orgy began. Eight vehicles, a dozen scooters and motorcycles belonging to the staff were burnt down. Other policemen rushed in with stones and Molotov cocktails and set the press on fire. When Shantilal Shah tried to protest from his office window on the first floor, a stone was thrown at him. Fortunately, it hit the glass pane. The 70-year-old editor escaped with minor scratches but some of his staffers in the press were badly roughed up by the mob. The first wave left after doing initial damage. Then came the second attack, this time a much stronger one, which drove right into the lino-type press at the far end of the compound, and set fire to it with petrol and engine oil. Outside the gates, another group kept fire engines, which Shantilal Shah had summoned, from coming in. The firemen were held by the police at gunpoint while their brethren were busy finishing off whatever remained of the press. The fire engines did finally come in but only after the army arrived and the damage had been done. The loss, according to initial estimates, runs into Rs seven crores.

All efforts to call help failed. Said Smritibehn, managing director of Lok Prakashan and daughter-in-law of Shantilal Shah: "There was not one place that we did not try. Right from the office of the home minister and the chief secretary to the office of the police commissioner but nobody seemed to be anywhere. It was as if everything had collapsed." She along with her two teenaged sons and a sick aunt were trapped on the top floor of the building where the Shahs live. "The entire place was choking with gas and we didn't know what to do. We could not go down the stairs since it was all on fire... Ultimately, we had to go down the fire brigade ladder... My God, they would have killed us that day," said Smritibehn, still dazed by the experience.

Shantilal Shah and others in the editorial and managerial sections too had to jump down 15 feet into the backyard because the police-mob had blocked the front entrance. "It was a very well-planned operation," said Shantilal Shah, "timed so well



Shantilal Shah, editor of *Gujarat Samachar*, stands beside his press reduced to ashes by violent policemen

that even the rescue teams came in when they had seen to it that everything had been destroyed." He maintains that the attack was planned and executed by the Solanki government. "This is only an indication of how brutal and vindictive Solanki can be. For the last two years we have been fighting against the corruption and inefficiency of this government and this is what they have given us. They wanted smugglers to run the government, we opposed it and look how Solanki has replied." Shah has no doubts that chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki, once himself a *Gujarat Samachar* staffer, personally gave the go-ahead for the destruction of his newspaper.

Gujarat Samachar has long been a critic of the Madhavasinh Solanki government, taking it to task at every opportunity. Relations between two deteriorated further when the paper exposed in detail the financial scandal of Jaikrishna Mrugesh, a businessman believed to be very close to the Gujarat chief minister. All through the anti-reservation agitation too, the *Gujarat Samachar* had been followingwhat it called an "independent attitude" and reported extensively on police atrocities being carried out in various parts of the state. Early in April, Shantilal Shah, his sons, Shreyans Shah and Bahubali Shah, and his daughter-in-law had received several threats to their lives if they "did not stop the false anti-government propaganda." The Shahs had repeatedly requested for security arrangements in view of the threats but they never came. "Why would they give us security when they themselves were hatching plans to burn us alive?" asked Shantilal Shah.

The police assault on *Gujarat Samachar* was not an accident, not just one of those things that came in the way of "a temporarily agitated police force" as the government is making it out to be. It was a determined attempt carried out to the end with success. The police drove straight to the building in vehicles that carried petrol-bombs, iron-rods, stones and anti-social elements. Their mission accomplished, they drove away. But worse came later. The attack went unnoticed by anyone in the government. Madhavsinh Solanki in fact, sought to defend the act saying that the police had been "deeply hurt" by the adverse publicity it got in the press. That has hurt more than all the flames that gutted the Lok Prakashan Bhawan.

Sankarshan Thakur, Ahmedabad

The same day, on 17 April, another operation was conducted in Gomtipur, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. This was supervised by additional commissioner of police A.K. Bhargava. According to him, there was a threat of caste war in the area because the harijan *basti* was under attack. So the police entered Gomtipur at six in the evening. This operation was planned to perfection: Bhargava is a former intelligence officer who was incharge of interrogating insurgents in Manipur before he came to Ahmedabad. Water, telephone and electricity connections were cut off before the police entered, according to a resident of the area. Then they set about spreading terror. They rained *lathis* on men, manhandled women, pulled down houses: in short, created havoc. Some policemen indeed were seen roaming about with their pants down challenging women of the area in a most lewd manner. Enquiries later revealed that there was no real threat to the harijan *basti* from the residents of Gomtipur since there is no way to reach the *basti* from Gomtipur other than one which goes through a police *chowki*. And the police *chowki* had not reported any disturbance.

When reports were published the next day on the Gomtipur atrocity, an incensed A.K. Bhargava summoned a reporter from the *Indian Express* and threatened him. "Do you know what will happen to you journalists if the police goes on strike? Do you realise the consequences of the reports you have been giving?" he asked. This threat of a police strike came five days before the policemen actually struck work on 22 April. Later, Bhargava himself is said to have directed the police attack on selected newsmen.

Allegations that the police strike and terror tactics were planned came from another quarter. Shankarbhai Patel, president of the Akhil Gujarat Vali Mahamandal, said that they had received a similar threat "directly from the government" on 20 April. According to him a meeting of top ministers including home minister Amarsinh Chaudhary, and the pro-reservationist leaders took place in Gandhinagar in which a "plan of action" was decided. Said Shankarbhai Patel: "They conveyed to us secretly on 20 April that if we did not take back our agitation they would burn *Gujarat Samachar* and *Jansatta*, ask the police to go on strike, prepare a hit-list of anti government people in the press and provoke caste wars all over the state. By 22 April all this really started happening and we were all shocked." The anti-reservation agitation has truly been pushed into the background by what has been happening in Gujarat since 22 April. The fight is now on several fronts: between reservationists and anti-reservationists, between high caste Hindus and backwards, between Hindus and Muslims, between the people and the police, between the police and the press. But in all cases, the police has been a special tool whether it be a caste war or a communal clash.

Amir Hassan Sayyid is an old man. He has seen several agitations, several communal riots in his time. He survived the bloody communal carnage of 1969 in Ahmedabad. "I have seen the police behave since 1969...I have no faith in them, I have no faith in politicians...you must remain here..." Amir Hassan Sayyid was pleading to Brigadier S.C Katoch, in charge of rehabilitating the Muslims of Indira Garib Nagar and Bapunagar, left homeless after the bloody night of 22 April. Around him, in the Bapunagar Amand Chowk relief camp were 7,000 frightened, dazed faces. Conservative estimates said 25 of them had been killed in one night but the biggest casualty among them was confidence. "The army must remain here...we cannot go back to our homes without you," they pray again and again. At the back of their minds hangs the policeman's warning: "How long will the army be with you, you have to face us some day.."

There are 1,500 huts in Indira Garib Nagar, inhabited mainly by Muslims. On the night of 22 April, it became a battleground and by the next morning, a ghost town. Today it is a huge arc of burnt huts. Pathan Muin Khan (38), a *paan*-shop owner, was an eyewitness to the events: "They came around eight in the evening...the police, in two mobile vans and two jeeps...I could recognise sub-inspector B.D. Rana, sub-inspector Yadav and sub-inspector Patel and they had several local *goondas* along with them. rumours had already been spread about an attack from our side and in the day the police had taken away many of my friends. They stopped the vehicles and signalled to a crowd that had already collected in the neighbouring HUDCO scheme colony and Anand flats...they came down, first with bricks. Then when we retaliated, the police started firing on us...our homes were ransacked...our women mistreated...our property burnt...what could we do when the police itself was firing from their side?.I don't know why they did it."

In Bapunagar again, the planning was perfect. Army patrols in the area

"The Situation Has Slipped Out of Hand"

Indubhai Patel, president of the Gujarat Pradesh Janata Party, spoke to Sankarshan Thakur

Indubhai Patel, beaten up by a pro-reservationist mob on 23 April, lay in private ward number 8 of Ahmedabad's Vadilal Sarabhai hospital with skull injuries. His eyes were bloated red with blood. He could hardly see or talk but he was alert enough to evade all queries on the stand of his party and the opposition on the reservation issue. Excerpts from the interview with SUNDAY.

Q: *Why were you attacked by a pro-reservationist mob ?*

A: I do not know who they were. It happened so suddenly I could not even find out. The day *Gujarat Samachar* was burnt down I spent the whole day in their office trying to arrange help. I even rang up Madhu Dandavate in Bombay and told him that the situation was very dangerous and that law and order had completely broken down. Even the fire brigade was prevented from coming to *Gujarat Samachar* for quite sometime... (we were all very desperate Finally, we had to send messages to the military to rescue us. The next morning at around 7.00 am I left home and was driving down to the party office when at Majurnagar we saw about three thousand people indulging in looting and arson. We slowed down our vehicle and immediately stones were thrown at us. I was hit by a big one on the head. After that I have been in this place (the hospital)... the situation has slipped completely out of hand.

Q: Why?

A: Because of the government. Because of the cold attitude of Madavsinh Solanki and his men. Because they thought they could control the people by resorting to oppressive measures. All the violence in the state over the last few weeks has been planned and organised by the government of Solanki The police have been rioting. Who will control the situation? I met Madhavsinh Solanki and told him that he should try to solve the matter in a peaceful manner but he would not listen to me. I told him then that his policy of attack will not pay and the results are before him today.

Q. What is the stand of your party on the reservation issue?

A: We have always wanted an amicable settlement of the problem. The government should try and negotiate with the agitation leaders. It cannot afford confrontation. But instead of that, I am sorry to say, the government has lost all confidence of the people by acting in the way it has, by organising and encouraging violence.

Q: What makes you think the government is organising violence?

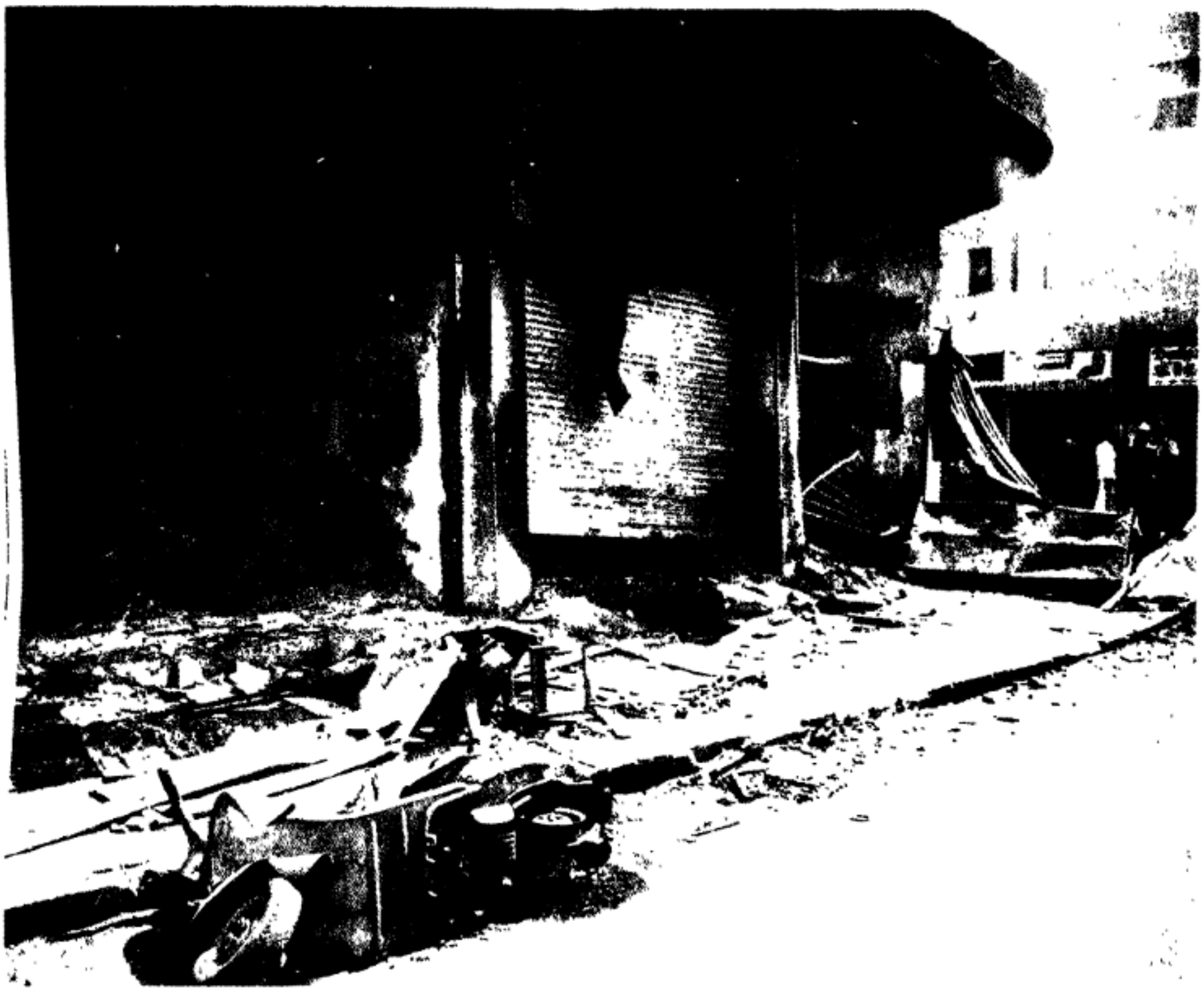
A: Who else is? This is my firm belief Every time the agitation leaders hold a major peaceful programme, violence is mysteriously triggered off somewhere. The pattern is very similar. The government is using violence as a tool to suppress the agitation. It even gave a free hand to the police to go on the rampage and cause so much damage.

Q: What is going to be the role of your party in the days to come? Your stand on the reservation issue has been rather unclear...

A: As I said, we are trying for a peaceful solution to the problem. We have to create an atmosphere in which talks can take place between the government and the agitation leaders. We are for creating normalcy in the state and helping the people. But the government has adopted an impossible attitude. No state can allow this kind of thing to happen. We have to smoothen out the situation as the government continues to play with fire....I really cannot tell what is going to happen.



Injured BJP leader Indubhai Patel



Shops and vehicles burnt during riots in Ahmedabad

were misdirected by the police (this was confirmed by army jawans) and sent to another area so that the operation could go smoothly. M.L. Ansari, one of the residents who ran to a neighbouring locality and tried to contact the police could not get through. "Nobody seemed to be there in the police headquarters," he said. The apprehension of the people is that as soon as the army goes away, there will be fresh trouble from the police.

Not that there are no problems today. There is an undercurrent of tension between the police and the army—perhaps because their missions are so different—there is duplicity, the orders are unclear, the areas undefined. "What can we do?" asked an officer from the Madras 18th brigade. "There is so much confusion. Two control rooms, two sets of forces and the police is bent on doing a different thing altogether...these guys just run amok." The army in Ahmedabad is openly critical of the police.

The reasons behind what the army officer called "the odd behaviour of the police" are not far to seek. There are interesting aspects of the police set-up in Ahmedabad. Chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki apparently thinks he has a very good team of policemen working for him because he has not changed a single senior police officer in the city for quite sometime now. The same people have been in the same posts since before the Lok Sabha elections in December 1984 The only change that has taken place was at the top Police commissioner Y.B. Jhala, already on a two-month extension made way for B.K. Jha when the former retired on 31 March 1985. There is quite obviously a level of cooperation that the government of Madhavsinh Solanki and the police have reached from working so long together. And, to make things run more smoothly during the recent disturbances, Prabodh Rawal—Solanki's former home minister who was denied a ticket this time—has virtually been made the "super home minister" of the state. He has a "better relationship" with officers in the Shahibag headquarters and around the 18 police stations of the Gujarat capital because he had worked with them as home minister for so long. So Rawal was brought in—even to the circuit house annexe, the temporary headquarters of the government where he not only briefs the press and "assists" the present home minister Amarsinh Chaudhary with his work but is also known to be taking important decisions in cooperation with senior police officers who are "close" to him. Apparently the Congress high command's denial of a ticket to Prabodh Rawal has not affected his standing in the Solanki administration.

Sankarshan Thakur, Ahmedabad

COVER STORY

COLLAPSE IN GUJARAT : HOW? WHY?

A look at the factors which led to the violent agitation rocking the state

Ahmedabad has emerged as a perfect mirror of the fractured Indian society, showing up the most frightening images in the past two-and-a-half months. The anti-reservation stir, launched by students in protest against an 18 per cent hike in the quota of seats in government jobs and education for the 82 socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC), has changed colour so rapidly that even the most seasoned observer of the Gujarat scene has been left confused and bewildered. First, the delayed reaction to the hike itself was timed to derive maximum advantage. Then came the 18 to 22 March communal turn to the stir that left at least 13 dead. The advent of April made many, including the government, think the agitation was petering out when on the night of 15 April yet another bout of violence claimed at least 13 lives. In between, there have been fears of a caste conflict with harijans and others threatening to launch a counter-agitation to protect the reservation policy.

The most notable aspect of the continuing unrest is that the main adversaries in the agitation have often been relegated into the background with others like communal forces and anti-social elements exploiting the situation. The climax



Assessing the damage caused by the riots in the walled city of Ahmedabad

came on 22 April when a mob stabbed a police head constable, Laxman Desai, to death in the Chhabila Hanuman area within the walled city, triggering off a mass walkout from their posts by part of the police force. For nearly six-and-a-half hours they stayed away from duty, during which time terror reigned supreme.

The police were incensed by a barrage of criticism and court action for alleged atrocities while trying to enforce law and order during the disturbances in the city. The building and the press of a leading Gujarati language daily, the *Gujarat Samachar*, were gutted in a fire started by policemen on 22 April Its owners allege the instigation came from those who did not like the daily which has been a strident critic of the Solanki ministry. Journalists too were the targets of police wrath because of the detailed reportage of what many of them said were fabricated stories of atrocities. Several of them, irrespective of whether they belonged to papers pitted against Mr Solanki or to papers sympathetic to him,were beaten up and threatened. One of the first victims, some days before the police strike, was Rakesh Sahay, a photographer and correspondent from Delhi who was covering the stir for *Ravivar*.



The anti-reservationists have suspended their agitation in view of the latest turn of events, just as they had done when the first communal troubles broke out in March this year. But the operative word in their announcement was "suspended," which means it could be resumed later. In a span of some 70 days, the Solanki government was witness to an upheaval that surpassed all past agitations in Gujarat, including perhaps the most famous of them, the 1974 Nav Nirman movement that toppled the Congress(R) government of Chimanbhai Patel. What was most noteworthy in the chain of events was that nobody had foreseen the latent dangers lurking below the surface in society It was not just the danger of a caste war between the upper castes and the lower castes Enmeshed were dangers of communal outbursts which in turn were quickly used by *goondas* for a spree of arson and looting, of general restiveness, of the police being caught in a crossfire of charges, of the policemen losing their tempers, of the people turning upon the police and the police taking their revenge on the press. Together the scenario made up a frightening picture of unrest in which a gulf of distrust between the authorities and the people was created

Politically, it left the Solanki ministry neck-deep in trouble, underlining the point that inspite of its massive majority in the 182-member Gujarat Assembly with as many as 149 members belonging to the Congress(I), the government was not only helpless, but hapless as well. It made feeble attempts at mobilising Congressmen "to explain to the people the real facts about the reservation policy." But, the Gujarat Pradesh Congress(I) Committee being an emaciated organisational wing, its impact was only peripheral. Not only the president of the PCC, Mahant Vijaydasji but his general secretary, Prof. Hasmukh Patel, have gone to the legislature and new appointments have not been made

The resultant reliance on official machinery has been counter-produetive because it gave an appearance that Solanki was fighting a lone battle. In the 1981 anti-reservation stir, he had an enemy in Jinabhai Darji, one-time ardent supporter of the chief minister and now a dissident. In the 1985 Assembly elections, most of the dissidents, including the finance minister, Sanat Mehta, were denied tickets. The list was full of Solanki's supporters, but equally without people who could speak out and be heard.

The agitation leaders assert that they have been maintaining a low profile all through the past two-and-a-half months, avoiding a 1981 type situation when clashes between the upper castes and lower castes took place The Congress(I) has said that the Bharatiya Janata Party, and its younger leaders were behind the scene in masterminding troubles in Ahmedabad and elsewhere. On their part, the BJP men said some elements in the ruling party itself were fanning the troubles for the chief minister.

In the maze of charges and counter-charges, it was difficult to determine where exactly the blame lay. What appeared more puzzling was that whatever turn the situation took, *goondas* were always waiting in the wings to join in. The more than 500-year-old city of Ahmedabad has been a city where Muslims and Hindus have lived beside each other. Once known as the Manchester of India, it also has been a premier textile and trade centre The Gujaratis have a very strong trade and entrepreneurial instinct, with hundreds of thousands of them living all over the globe. The character of the main city would understandably be that of a conservative, tolerant and profit-conscious society, comprising elements that would make up a generally peaceful city. And it is, save when mass madness erupts. A number of non-Gujaratis who have worked and lived for some years in Gujarat, and in places like Ahmedabad and Baroda, have opted for these places upon retirement rather than go back home

And still, in 1969 Ahmedabad saw the unparalleled communal riots that left hundreds of people dead. In 1974, the Nav Nirman movement, that brought the late Jayaprakash Narayan back into active politics started in Gujarat, and a government with a clear and massive majority had to leave. In 1981, the first anti-reservation stir which turned into a caste war, took place in Ahmedabad. Now the second anti-reservation stir, has left people dead, the population frightened, the government shaken and the society in turmoil.

If this is the mirror of India's fractured society, it is all the more frightening for one more reason. There was no valid reason for all the ugly turns to the situation to take place in the past two-and-a-half months. Is communal harmony so fragile? Are the *goondas* in a con-

stant state of readiness to exploit every turn? Are leaders of society—not just of the government—incapable of providing a leadership that would inculcate a sense of tolerance and mutual dependence instead of hatred and destruction? And, finally, if this happens in Ahmedabad today, can it be ruled out from any other area tomorrow?

There is little doubt that the 18 per cent hike in the reservations for the SEBC was patently political. It was announced on 11 January 1985, just before the Assembly elections were announced. The hike was based on part-acceptance of the Rane Commission's findings But the government did not publish the report itself, although a decision came nearly two years after the report was given. Then, came the first twist. Although the government had announced the hike, it had not implemented it. It was clear the carrot had been dangled with a view to attract votes from the backward classes who are not among the scheduled castes and tribes which have statutory reservations.

The anti-reservation stir took formal shape some six weeks later, on 18 February. The timing was perfect as far as gaining momentum for the agitation was concerned. Had it been started immediately after the 11 January announcement, it might have failed to click because it could not have involved students, nor could it have had the tacit approval of the opposition parties which would have feared a loss of votes from the backward classes in the elections if they spoke up against the reservation policy. After the election, the Congress(I) could feel emboldened to implement the decision, but curiously it did not feel so.

Actually, as some political observers have pointed out, the reservation quota hike for SEBC (as distinct from the quota for harijans and tribals) looked very much like a decision belonging to the era of late Indira Gandhi. Around the time of the Assembly elections Rajiv Gandhi had made a remark in Hyderabad to the effect that perhaps the reservation policy needed a review. The remark came much after the hike decision had been disclosed. But it threw the Congress(I) in a dilemma in Gujarat. What Rajiv Gandhi thought of the whole thing at that time was not known. (Later the Prime Minister clarified he was in favour of a national consensus and not a review but that was on 23 March by which time the situation had worsened in Gujarat.)

Actually, ever since the 1981 agitation against reservations there have been complaints from communities which have thought themselves to be backward but were not included on the list of the 82 SEBC groups identified some years ago by the Baxi Commission. The Rane Commission was set up to identify new groups for adding to the list and suggest the percentage in the reservation quota. The commission gave a majority report recommending a hike in the quota by 18 per cent to take all the reservations to 49 per cent. But it also recommended the adoption of an economic criterion to determine backwardness rather than taking caste as a basis, arguing that consideration of caste factor tended to reinforce the caste barriers instead of demolishing them The commission was not against the reservation for Harijans and tribals, provided by statutes The government did not agree with this and followed the lone official member's dissent note to continue following the Baxi Commission



Residents queue up for essential supplies in Ahmedabad

criteria. The government has been emphatically saying that the Baxi formula included economic criteria too but was not the sole criterion.

Mid-February is a time when annual or preliminary examinations in schools and colleges begin in Gujarat. The agitation sparked off on 18 March, with a call to boycott the examinations. The call was a success. Once the examination schedules were upset, the government had a tactical disadvantage. It had to face the agitation against a decision that it had never implemented and about which Rajiv Gandhi had vaguely hinted at. On 16 March, after having tried persuading the students to return to their classes, the government made the first retreat. It said the quota hike had been postponed for a year and that a review would be made. The retreat came close on the heels of the Akhil Gujarat Navrachna Samiti of the students—which had been conducting the stir—being joined by the Akhil Gujarat Vali Mahamandal. the parents' association. The two together gave a call for a *bandh* on 18 March. In spite of the concessions announced on 16 March, the call was not withdrawn. The government, anxious to avoid a violent confrontation with the students and parents, asked the police to handle the *bandh* with kid gloves. Much of the force that day came from *lathis*. The communal twist came on that night in Dariapur and Kalupur areas and the orgy of violence against the police bandobust, marked by the use of burning rag balls, cement balls studded with nails, manhole covers and other missiles like stones, led to four days of communal rioting and left 13 dead.

The government anticipated that the anti-reservation stir would peter out. The agitators had postponed their stir as soon as communal riots began to rock the city. The Prime Minister made an airdash to the city, preceded by the union home minister, S.B. Chavan. The Prime Minister spoke of the need for evolving a national consensus on the reservation issue and blamed the opposition for the communal twist. The opposition in turn hit back by pointing an accusing finger at the Congress(I). Later, the BJP was identified by the ruling party as the force behind the ugly situation. But the verbal political onslaught on the BJP was matched by an action of the administration which breathed fresh life into the anti-reservation stir. Three student leaders who were going to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister were arrested. Two days later a judge ordered their release on personal bond. As they were coming out,

'The Government Has Unleashed Violence to Frighten Us'

Shankarbhai Patel, president of the Akhil Gujarat Vali Mahamandal, told Sankarshan Thakur

Till sometime ago Shankarbhai Patel (48), was an unknown man. He was simply a lecturer of sociology in the L.D. College of Arts, Ahmedabad. Today, as president of the Akhil Gujarat Vali Mahamandal (All Gujarat Parents' Confederation) which is one of the organisations spearheading the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat, he has suddenly shot into the limelight. When SUNDAY met him, he was literally "underground" with some of the other agitation leaders in a basement parlour in central Ahmedabad. Excerpts from the interview:

***Q**: Why has this agitation been marked with so much violence?*

A: Not because of us. We only believe in peaceful means of protest and our major protests have been peaceful. But every time the government has engineered violence to defame us and terrorise us.

Q: But why is it that communal clashes are taking place during such an agitation?

A: How do I know? It is a deliberate attempt of the government to give the whole issue a twist and create terror among the people so that the agitation dies down. These tactics will not pay. The government has lost all its popularity by the way it has behaved over the last month or so. I have reason to believe that the police was intentionally sent on strike and given a free hand. There was a secret understanding between the government and the police.

Q: What makes you think so?

A: Look at the way they have highlighted the murder of the police constable and used it as an excuse for all the violence that the police indulged in. To top it, the chief minister and even the union home minister defended the police. It was very wrong of them. Also the burning of the *Gujarat Samachar*. It reflects the mind of the chief minister himself because he had been against the paper for a long time and had been openly saying that the anti-reservation agitation was being carried out mainly by the daily newspapers... so they burnt it down.

Q: Why have negotiations broken down?

A: The government initially was (being) very difficult to deal with. They kept on arresting our people on various false charges, I agree that now they have agreed to most of our preconditions for talks but still they are putting conditions that are not acceptable to us. They say there should be five representatives from both the pro-reservation and the anti-reservation side in the talks. We will not agree to that.

Q: Why?

A: Because that would always be unfair to us. The government is trying to do *Bandar nyaya*. Can't it decide for itself what it has to do? We will not accept such conditions. We want a direct meeting with the government; no other parties should be involved.

Q: But is your demand for complete abolition of reservations not unfair? How can you expect it to be done immediately?

A: We never said it should be done immediately. The government should at least accept it in principle and then implement it gradually. But yes, the programme of abolition should be time-bound. the last phase should be implemented latest by 1989.

Q: For the moment, have you suspended your agitation?

A: No, no, no. Make no mistake. We have not suspended the agitation. (We have suspended) only our public programmes keeping in mind the disturbed situation. The agitation is going on and will go on

Q: What if the government disagrees?

A: This government has already shown us what it is capable of doing. They have unleashed violence to frighten us away. But we are ready to face them.



A securityman stands guard at a refugee camp in Ahmedabad

the student leaders were taken into custody under the National Security Act. Junior doctors, who were in the vanguard of the 1981 stir too, went on strike and the government issued sack orders on hundreds of such doctors.

The administration appeared to believe that the stir would soon fizzle out. The government had also attracted a lot of criticism for police inaction during the communal violence in March. The government took a hard line and told the agitators to come to the negotiation table and then raise their demands. The agitationists had put forth three preconditions: release the NSA detenus; withdrawal of the sack orders on junior doctors, and inquiry into allegations of police excesses reported from some areas like Asarwa and Saraspur. Later, the demand for the inquiry included alleged excesses in some other walled city areas like Khadia. Newspapers started publishing stories on these alleged excesses. Citizens, probably advised by social and political workers, took recourse to a new device against the police, of moving a court of law against specific police officers for atrocities and getting them barred from going into the area.

If the government had learnt a lot from the agitations of the past, the people too had drawn valuable hints. The 1974 agitation had forced Indira Gandhi never to concede to any such agitation again, be it in Assam or Punjab. The idea was that sooner or later agitations developed fatigue and would peter out.

The current agitation is marked by an understanding of this fact by the agitators themselves. The anti-reservation stir itself has been conducted on a low profile, collectively by the two committees. In course of time, committees were formed in other towns and cities too and when the situation took a communal turn in Ahmedabad, the stir was suspended in the city but was continued in other areas of the state. Also, in day-to-day programmes, the agitators seemed to have taken care to ensure that the confrontation did not rise to a peak on its own: the logic being that if there was a peak there also would be a valley. Such ups and downs could kill an agitation. The stir was continued on an even keel, the ugly turns notwithstanding.

On 15 April, R.D. Pradhan, union home secretary, made a sudden air-dash in the evening to Ahmedabad to hold talks with the local authorities for an assessment of the law and order situation. Quick on the heels of his departure in the night, a fresh bout of rioting broke out in Raikhad and Gol Limda areas. It was reportedly triggered by a raid by the police on a gambling den and took on a communal colour with groups of people involved in battles with the police. It was soon followed by a fresh spate of complaints of police high-handedness. The BJP workers moved the High Court and got a two-member panel appointed to probe the charges. This seemed to have caused widespread resentment in the police which was evident from reports which came in. The reports said the police stood by quietly even as curfew orders were broken by people. The government promptly denied any police strike. Two days later on 22 April came the final straw that broke the police patience. A head constable was stabbed in the walled city. His death caused resentment and anger in the police ranks who left their posts for the hospital where the dead body of the policeman had been taken. The hours that followed saw lawlessness in the city without the custodians of law and order on duty.

In the meantime, on the night of 18 April, the government conceded a major demand of the anti-reservationists by ordering release of seven leaders detained under NSA. The next day an hour-long talk was held between six representatives of the stir and Madhavsinh Solanki following which the acceptance of the two remaining preconditions were announced. The agitationists said the government had released their leaders, agreed to withdraw sack orders on medicos and look into the charge of police atrocities. But, they asserted these were only preconditions to start a dialogue and did not automatically mean the stir would be withdrawn. Their basic demand was that reservations should be phased out and abolished. This is quite different from the 18 per cent hike that touched off the agitation. It is also doubtful as to how far chief minister Solanki can go in meeting this demand, because to do so is not in his hands.

The worst crack in the fractured society in Ahmedabad is the wall of distrust that has come up between the police and the people. There may be a grain of truth in the allegations that it was a politically motivated campaign against the police that led to this. But the moot point is that this distrust has to be demolished soon before it gets stronger. Neither could be allowed to drift farther apart. How to do this and restore tranquility in the state is a question that cannot be dodged anymore.

A Special Correspondent, Ahmedabad

Why Solanki Must Quit

The Gujarat CM's inability to govern the state has led to chaos

Prabodh Rawal, the home minister of Gujarat in the first five years of Madhavsinh Solanki's rule, was denied a party ticket when the Congress(I) high command decided to undertake a weeding-out operation before the Assembly elections early this year. Having been denied the party's nomination, Prabodh Rawal cannot be a minister now. In Solanki's second term as Gujarat's chief minister, the *de facto* home minister, however, is Prabodh Rawal. The new home minister, Amarsinh Chaudhary, is only there in name. The circuit house annexe of Ahmedabad has become the seat of power of the Solanki regime these days (the state's capital, Gandhinagar, being far from the scene of disturbance in Ahmedabad). Prabodh Rawal runs the affairs of state from this double-storeyed red-brick complex. Amarsinh Chaudhary's tasks are performed by Rawal, even the newsmen are briefed by him. This is only one of the irregularities of the Solanki regime. Not only is popular mood disregarded, even the judgment of the Congress high command is questioned.

The control of Rawal over the state apparatus has not been accentuated due to his appeal among the masses. Rawal is said to be popular among Gujarat's police officers. He is liked by the policemen because during the five years he was home minister, he protected them and let them go scot-free whenever scandals broke out. R.K. Vasishtha, the commandant of the State Reserve Police (SRP) who conducted "Operation Khadia" on 17 April, was under a cloud sometime back. Rawal had seen to it that Vasishtha was not harmed. On 17 April, when the police went berserk at Khadia, therefore, Vasishtha knew that no harm could come to him because Prabodh Rawal continued to be at the helm. Rawal, however, was sent "underground" for a few days when a central team of the Congress(I), comprising Chandulal Chandrakar and Tarun Gogoi, visited Ahmedabad. In the period of the team's visit, Amarsinh Chaudhury was allowed to brief the press, to meet the officers minus Rawal and behave like the home minister. (Rawal, of course, lurked behind the scenes and ran the show.) Apart from flouting the high command's judgment about Rawal, Madhavsinh Solanki is also adept in the art of deception. While Gujarat burns, hide-and-seek is played with facts. If Madhavsinh Solanki has to go, then a major reason for his departure can be the Rawal factor.

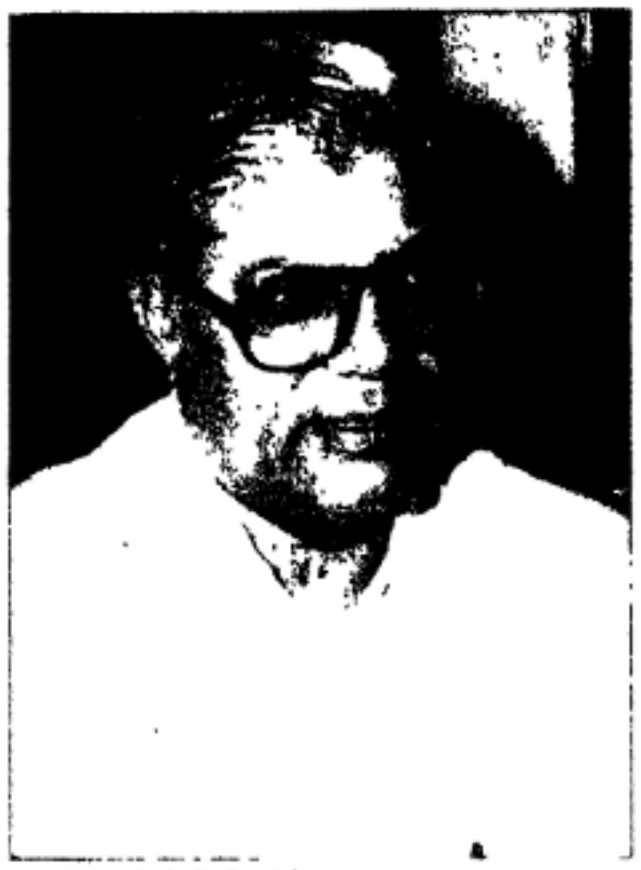
The Gujarat agitation of 1974 was the ominous precursor to the events which followed in 1975. Gujarat, therefore, should not be taken lightly. The Solanki regime has been singularly marked by a series of agitations which have taken their toll on the state over the last five years. Now, the policemen of Gujarat have been misbehaving with impunity. They have attacked the people when they are supposed to protect them. It is indeed a disturbing feature that the military has to be relied upon to discipline the uniformed guardians of law. The press in Gujarat has been attacked. The media had played a major role in exposing the links between Solanki and businessman Mrugesh Jaikrishna, who is now behind bars because two of his employees were nabbed by the Bombay



Six orphaned children of a family in a relief camp in Ahmedabad



Amarsinh Chaudhury



Madhavsinh Solanki



Prabodh Rawal

customs sometime back while trying to leave the country with Rs 46.63 lakhs worth of foreign exchange. When the press speaks the truth, as *Gujarat Samachar* did, the only way to quieten it, the Solanki way, is to let the police run amok, take on the role of an unruly mob and burn down the press. Madhavsinh Solanki must go, because if the media is silenced by mob violence, then the basic edifice of democracy is threatened.

What has Madhavsinh Solanki done to restore the people's faith in the police? The credibility of the state was best summed up by a senior journalist, who was reluctant to move out of his residence during the curfew. Normally, reporters brave curfews to fulfil their professional responsibilities. The journalist, to whom this correspondent spoke on trunk telephone, commented: "How can I go out? If I show my press card, the police will attack. And if I do not identify myself the people will beat me up." Indeed, the terror tactics of the police has been driven home so far that senior journalists of Ahmedabad's newspapers were ringing up police officials and even the home minister (Amarsinh Chaudhury) to get their stories cleared, lest there be trouble. So far, there has been no word of regret from the chief minister of Gujarat for the happenings.

The misfortune has been compounded by the fact that even the union home minister, S. B. Chavan, has not reacted firmly against police hooliganism. Chavan's concern for injured policemen has hurt the sensibilities of everyone who cherish democracy. While attacks on policemen must be condemned, the circumstances leading to such incidents have to be looked into. The policemen who raped Maya Tyagi in Baghpat, the uniformed sadists who blinded prisoners in Bhagalpur, those who broke limbs of Varanasi's undertrials, the anarchy of Uttar Pradesh's Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) on Id day of 1980 in Moradabad: these acts cannot be pardoned. Gujarat's policemen unfortunately today stand in the dock for similar crimes. When the guardians of law become predators, normal behaviour cannot be expected of the members of the public.



Rakesh Sahay: victim of police brutality

The main grouse of Gujarat's policemen is that the press exposed the police atrocities. Had *Ravivar*'s photographer Rakesh Sahay not returned to Delhi with broken limbs and a scarred body, the capital's press corps would not have had the opportunity to witness the bestiality of the Ahmedabad police. Why was Sahai battered? He saw a pregnant woman being assaulted with *lathis* in the city's Manekchowk area (close to Khadia). When he photographed the incident, he himself was a victim of assault. The press in Gujarat, like Rakesh Sahay, was reporting what was happening. And the price which it paid for its professional vigilance was that while the police attacked, the government looked on, perhaps, admiringly.

Madhavsinh Solanki's government has become the symbol of everything which is the opposite of democratic decency. At first Solanki tries to play with a sensitive issue like reservations for electoral gains. Then, he allows lawlessness to prevail. Anarchy stalks the bylanes of Ahmedabad and Baroda today. A chief minister who is insensitive to people's hurt feelings and protects those who perpetrate the law of the jungle must go. The union government had to virtually thrust the army on Ahmedabad to control the policemen. Perhaps, it could have acted more harshly, if Governor B. K. Nehru was present. It is a shame that while Gujarat was aflame, the Governor was holidaying in Switzerland and had to be summoned back. An insensitive Governor and an unpopular chief minister cannot provide the healing touch, which is required in Gujarat today.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

ESSAY

Populism and Its Aftermath

By Romesh Thapar

Last November, soon after the near genocidal attack on the Sikh communities in the north, an old, distinguished citizen of Delhi who had been abroad during those terrible days came over to get a blow-by-blow account. He listened to me in silence, and made only one comment "Today, it is the Sikhs. Tomorrow, it will be us."

Every morning, when I pick up the newspapers, invariably crowded with items of disturbance, assault and violence, I remember this warning. The total failure of the police during three days of carnage in Delhi, ordered or otherwise, is now beginning to repeat with a certain monotony. Ahmedabad is the latest example, and with new sinister manifestations—the press is under direct assault by the police because it has dared to expose their criminalities. Journalists are being battered and their offices set on fire as a first warning.

But is it really the "first" warning? There have been so many cases of police vendettas against intrepid reporters. The press itself has been tenuous in its exposure of such acts and not really anxious to confront a corrupted force. Local "sanction," after all, is very important in these times of insecurity. Several journals and news-sheets of opposition groups have been silenced. Copies of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) report on the Delhi riots, an indictment of the police force and the politicians tampering with it, have been seized in various areas. Persons who have translated this report have been charged with "sedition."

Our understanding of free expression, whether at government level or among ourselves, is in a state of considerable disarray. A reporter doing his duty to the best of his ability, and responsible to his editor, is pilloried for dissenting views and often, I am afraid left to fend for himself through the jungle of court procedure. We are not stirring to support the rights of the dissenter. We are as guilty as the police who go on a rampage because they have been reduced to gang leaders and know no better.

The situation is much worse in the so-called "provinces" of our sprawling sub continent. It calls for battle against political *dadagiri* and its close links with a largely criminalised police unable to live on its wages and compelled to "offer its services" to the highest bidder. Small wonder, then, that some editors (even reporters) are persuaded to carry arms for self-protection. We are, in fact, acknowledging that our systems of law and order are collapsing. The fear is infectious. Already in India, there are too many guns around, licensed and unlicensed—a commentary on our condition. With every new eruption in our massive urban sprawl, now covering some 200 million people in crowded, unhappy conditions, self-protection is becoming an obsessive matter And in our communalised and casteist conditions, self-protection usually means the ability to wallop or eliminate anyone who stands in the way of our amoralities, of which there are endless variations.

The populism of our political parties, the attitude of drifting with those who are mobilised or organised, irrespective of what they stand for, is the gut problem of our national life. The police force, and all its extraordinary variations in para-police and para-military formations packed with unemployed aliens sponsored by our *netas*, is a plaything in the hands of the local politicians surrounded by toughs and bully-boys. Every urban centre is a festering focus of this "alliance."

The walled city of Ahmedabad has been ravaged, and now a warring people, blinded by casteism (even communalism) have turned on the police—and the police tear on in renewed frenzy. What of Bombay, for years under the shadowy control of smuggler "dons" and killer squads who are protected because they provide the finance for our political parties. If you think Calcutta and Delhi are so very different, take a sampling of so many "incidents" from bride-burning, to miniature dacoity, to running vendettas in the teeming *mohallahs*. We don't even have a record of what goes on. No society which describes itself as democratic would tolerate this state of affairs. We lack vital concerns. Our people are faceless. We think only of ourselves, and one day in a fast, deteriorating situation this thinking too becomes irrelevant. Let us not forget that the terrible brutalities against the Sikh communities finally made us sensitive to such suffering and compelled us to demand compensation for ruined families. I am haunted by the fact that not a single case of compensation was recorded or fought for until then, in hundreds of riots against Muslims and harijans

We are entering an extremely dangerous phase in India. Thirty-seven years of development have transformed the aspirations of the people. The knowledge that political clout only comes from an organised presence is central to the agitational, even violent, approach to each problem because these are not carefully analysed, assessed or elaborated.

The walled city of Ahmedabad has been ravaged, and now a warring people, blinded by casteism (now communalism) have turned on the police

since the transfer of power in 1947.

It is imperative that the sternest possible measures be taken to warn mobsters, and their political instigators, to keep their hands off the press, its reporters and photographers. However, to expect that the public will warm to this task when the press itself has been a more or less silent witness to the destruction of the democratic system, failing repeatedly to highlight the attack on free expression, is to expect too much in our present demoralisation.

The notion that "investigative journalism" is the be-call and end-all of courageous reporting is a lot of hooey. The exposure of the *loot-maar* situation in high places is nothing in comparison with the dogged, daily coverage of the misuse of power at the base of our society, in out-of-the-way *mohallahs*, in isolated villages and hamlets. The small paper, the broadsheet, the tiny pamphlet, doing this job is vital to our future—and, here, there is no protection for the articulator of the people's needs and demands. The democratic system has been so shattered by near-criminal political practice at almost every level of living, particularly in the urban sprawls, that a correction is not possible without major initiatives by the centres of political power in our land. The police, para-police and para-military will have to be drastically reorganised and restructured along the lines suggested by the Police Commission. Those recommendations are fundamental to the future and must have the support of the major political parties—and that means finding the finding for the reform. It is necessary to underline this because there is a reluctance on the part of the populist politician to discipline himself on the question of manipulating the police system for his own ends. It is here that the press and its active reporters have to stir to break the power of the populist politician.



Armymen take up position in the walled city of Ahmedabad

This is done not by editorialising but by detailing the interference and demanding the termination of the political careers of these rapscallions.

A tall order? Yes, very much so, but what prevents the increasingly dominant electronic media from moving out into the country to research the real state of our democracy or from opening a wide-ranging debate on the political failure to buttress the forks of law and order or from organising our people to act in the defence of their basis rights? Formulate these questions in all their sharpness. If Akashvani and Doordarshan are departments of government and cannot play this role, then surely it is time to open the electronic media either to genuine autonomous control or to competition. Interestingly, this demand is hardly voiced in our press or by our normally excitable political parties. Clearly, we do not know, and are very far from democratic debate. Our anger is bolted up inside us, ready to burst at every provocation. It would be revealing to research the coverage of the electronic media on so many issues which are tearing us apart. How much of the Punjab tangle has been freely argued to preserve dialogues between Hindu and Sikh and to widen areas of understanding? Was the aftermath of the assassination covered in depth to turn us into sensitive human beings? Were issues, and not personalities, the theme of the coverage in our most critical election month? Has communalism ever been faced frontally on radio and TV? Was the Bhopal tragedy probed in all its enormity and how many teams set out to record this disaster? Is there no chance whatsoever of tangling with the terrorists, even in jail, to find out what makes them into killers? And what about probing all the sleazy and cowardly posturings of politicians gathering votes on communal and ethnic appeals? The list is endless. Is there someone around to listen?

The electronic media must face uncomfortable questions, and many more, together with the press. Only when we get these exercises under way, and move programmes and reportage out of the damnable studios and editorial officer, will we be able to create the climate for a thinking citizenry capable of seeing that the police, para-police and para-military are unable to play the role for which they were designed. Otherwise, it looks very much as if we are going to slide deeper and deeper into a mire of our own making. In terms of this internal crisis, we place too much reliance on the military. Its tasks are dramatically opposite to those being thrust upon it. If every internal disorder is to witness a police riot or breakdown, the military will soon be damaged beyond repair—and, what is worse, politicised. Then what? Here again, the press indulges in too little thought and too much patriotic mumbo-jumbo.

What is more worrying than the urban eruptions (which in normal circumstances it should be possible to control with a certain degree of coordinated force, for we are the

world's most highly-trained riot-controllers) is the spread of disorders to rural India, self-policed largely, and living under *panchayat* direction. Then, the fat will be in the fire, army or no army. I hope this truth can be pushed into the pig-headed politicians who are busy digging their graves, and ours. It is stupid to imagine that the incendiary material which ignites communal and caste passions is confined to the congested urban areas. Liquor and gambling dens, video "parlours" with their brutal pornography, the growing collusion between police and criminals, the respectability offered to this collusion by the influential families of the area, and the general acceptance of these behaviour patterns create the basis for public indiscipline and outrage. It has been suggested that the enormity of the problem of policing India needs the formation of an elite force of national guards (composed of the best cadres drawn from the multitude of para-police and para-military establishments, and mixed with selected elements of the highly trained, prematurely demobbed from the military some 60,000 each year. The national guards would assume the role that the army is called upon to play in the situations which turn ugly for the police. Whatever the merit in this proposal, at least the trained personnel retiring from the armed forces should be given preference and priority in any recruitment to formations designed to assist the police force.

We are entering an extremely dangerous phase in India. Thirty-seven years of development have transformed the aspirations of the people. The knowledge that political clout only comes from an organised presence is central to the agitational, even violent, approach to each problem because these are not carefully analysed, assessed or elaborated. A competition in populist rhetoric and muscle-power is seen as the only way because governance is messy and insensitive. In the past, what goes by the broad terminology of "government" could cope with one or two simultaneous eruptions. But, now, the eruptions are too many, and too widely scattered. Management is becoming difficult. The *mantram*, "send the army," cannot work. A backlash of dangerous dimensions can develop, much to the embarrassment of the armed forces. The response which we formulate will have to synchronise at many levels through institutions which are reforged to project behaviour patterns in keeping with a responsible democratic society. Citizen, politician, press, judiciary, police force, the administration and the professional in whatever he or she does, will have to fuse their efforts. We are very far from this consummation or even of the vivid detailing of the present divisiveness.

Young women have to battle with police to register bride-burning cases, now fairly extensive and unreported in many parts of the country. The parents of the threatened girls have yet to show some concern. The whole underworld of smuggling, drug-trafficking, liquor-peddling and gambling, is in cahoots with the police not only in Bombay city—and big money is involved. Legislation like FERA is not used against the masters of the parallel economy, but against minor offenders who have no protectors, even against the innocent, and the government of India is powerless to control its minions, or so it would appear. Undertrials rot in the jails because the press lacks the energy to pursue its exposures and to frame charges against those who are violating their powers. The courts too, cannot escape their involvement in the destruction of the basic tenets of justice. This mess of democratic thinking is then able easily to produce rationalisation for decorating military men for actions against their own people (from Nagaland to Punjab) and to spark the madness that honours assassins on some medieval notions of ethnic history. Within this web of self destruction, politicians who battle for illegalities are honoured and win votes. Priests, whether Sikh or Bohra, claim the right to ex-communicate in a democratic polity. We stand everything on its head whether it is our right to occupy the pavements (and the roads), or other people's properties, or to stretch a marriage *shamiana* across a main thoroughfare. And so it goes on, this wilful drift into chaos, with majorities and minorities only too happy to oblige on the off chance of gaining an advantage here or there.

Where will the re-focussing come from in this populist jungle? Clearly, from the media, electronic and otherwise. But the quality that must inspire it will have to be plain and simple courage. There will be bashings and killings—not only from the police force—but the media must exercise its power for triumphant assertion. Without this courage, which is the opposite of our codes of good behaviour, we will go down as a failed democracy. We are very near this point of no return.



An armyman checks the curfew pass of a doctor in Ahmedabad

With every new eruption in our massive urban sprawl, now covering some 200 million people in crowded, unhappy conditions, self-protection is becoming an obsessive matter. And in our communalised and casteist condition, self-protection usually means the ability to wallop or eliminate anyone who stands in the way...

CONVERSATION









"We are Not Pawns of the Super Powers"

Yasser Arafat told M.J. Akbar

The charismatic chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, had an extremely tight schedule when he came to Delhi for two days to attend the extraordinary ministerial meeting of the Non-aligned Coordinating Bureau on Namibia. But he made a little time to talk to SUNDAY:

Q: *The Palestinian people particularly in the last three years, have made enormous sacrifices, the worst phase being in the Lebanon war. Has your dream come any closer to realisation after all this suffering?*

A: No doubt. Dawn comes after the greatest darkness.

Q. Would you call the Lebanon war the worst period in the history of your struggle?

A. No. A part of this Lebanon war, the siege of Beirut, was the worst. Because we were facing a double siege—the Syrians from the land, and the Israelis from the sea and air. But not to forget that the other confrontation was very important for the Arab-Israeli confrontation. The siege of Beirut was one of the miracles of the Palestinian struggle, small groups of the Palestinian and their allied Lebanese, with heroic steadfast, facing this huge Israeli-American force alone for more than 88 days! And after this heroic resistance, the Palestinian-Lebanese resistance against the Israeli troops, for the first time they (the Israelis) were obliged to leave and to withdraw. And you can imagine that it was the only war, the only Israeli war, where there is no hero among their generals.

Q. Yes. In fact Sharon has been ..

A. Sharon was demanding that he be made the hero of this war. What happened? He was obliged to leave. (Menachem) Begin was imagining that he would be a hero. He was obliged to resign.

Q. Yes, psychologically he was destroyed. Do you think the PLO has been used as a pawn by the Super Powers?

A. No. We are not pawns. We have our struggle. We will continue our struggle, because we are facing this oppression, this apartheid, this terrorism, from this Israeli military junta against our people, against Palestinian people, against the Arab people.

Q: Don't you feel despondent sometimes?

A: You see, when we started our revolution we knew that it was not going to be easy. A long-drawn struggle. (But we also) know that we are not alone. People all over the world are supporting the Palestinian people and their struggle, which for us is enough.

Q: But the support does not seem to be effective when a death struggle begins, as in Lebanon.

A: Yes, yes, we were obliged to carry on our own struggle, we know that. It is not easy. That period was not an easy period. It was our own decision to carry on. In the beginning we had succeeded in making a ceasefire agreement with the Syrians. After the fourth day, we were offered another proposal for us to withdraw under the white flag. But we refused. So it was our own decision to carry on the war. I told my guards that if I became weak and accepted this proposal, they should shoot me. And we refused this proposal and we continued this 88-day difficult struggle and confrontation.

Q. Why are the Arab states continuing this effort to sabotage the Palestinian struggle?

A: Not all the Arab states.

Q: Not all of them, but most of them.

A: Even not most of them. These two regimes—we have to speak about two regimes only, the Syrian regime and the Libyan regime. But not all the Arabs. The Syrian people completely support the Palestinian struggle and the Libyan people support the Palestinian struggle.

Q: Do you think the feudal Arab kingdoms are really interested in seeing a liberated and progressive Palestine which would obviously radicalise the whole of West Asia?

A: You see, we are looking for the support of all the Arabs and all their regimes. And not to forget that we are a full member of the Arab League at the same level as all these Arab countries, be it a kingdom or republican.

Q: Why has Iran turned hostile to PLO and to you?

A: You have to ask them and not to ask me (*laughs*). Maybe they are against my mediation (in the Iraq-Iran war). The PLO is participating in two mediation committees-in the Islamic mediation committee and non-aligned mediation committee. They are against this mediation because they want to carry on their war. We are trying to stop this bloodshed between two Muslim countries two nonaligned countries—they are both in the nonaligned movement, in the third world.

Q: And that's why you think Iran has taken...

A: Yes, yes. But not Iran: only a part of the rulers of Iran. A part of the rulers.

Q: You don't think that even all the members of the ruling elite are behind Ayatollah Khomeini in this anti-PLO stance?

A: No, no, definitely not at all. You have to go yourself to Teheran to see what is the meaning of the PLO, what is the meaning of the Palestine revolutionary movement. See, we have a very good relation (with the people) You know that during their struggle against the Shah, we were co-operating with them.

Q: Do you think that support for PLO is growing within Israel?

A: After their failure of the invasion in Lebanon, after the heroic struggle of the Palestinians, (this was) the longest Arab-Israel war, 88 days, and this (current) very successful war of attrition in the south of Lebanon by Palestinians and the Lebanese against the Israeli troops: this had made a new atmosphere among the Israelis. You remember the long march of the Peace Now in Israel movement--more than 4,00,000 were participating in the demonstration. And also some groups, progressive democratic groups, began to understand that what their Egypt leaders were looking for, to eliminate and to liquidate the PLO, was a false dream. We are the most important figure in the Middle East dilemma and equation. We are there. And nobody can hide the sun with his finger.

Q: Have you changed the previous PLO policy of attacks even against Israeli civilians?

A: We, the PLO, are against any attack against the civilians We are against it. And we have declared it many times.

Q: What is the significance of the accord you have reached with King Hussein (of Jordan) recently?

A: You see, we have this agreement so that we can go together, we can cooperate together, to achieve our land for peace.

Q· Have you forgotten Black September (the massacre of the Palestinians in Jordan in September 1970)?

A: You see, we have a big target, a holy target, to liberate our holy land. And for this target, we are ready to open a new page with everybody.

Q: That was an astonishing massacre, wasn't it?



PLO chairman Yasser Arafat talking to journalists in Beirut

A. Yes. Not only there, in many places.

Q: What was Gen Zia's role during that time—in 1970?

A: You can ask them, not ask me. Okay?

Q: How do you view our Prime Minister?

A He is following in the footsteps of his great mother. He is now one of our great leaders. Not only for India, but also for the non-aligned countries movement. What had happened yesterday, with his participation in this solidarity conference for the sake of the people of Namibia and South Africa, means a lot. This is an important sign. We have to remember that Mahatma Gandhi had started there. And Rajiv Gandhi has come to back it. Which is most significant.

Q: Lastly, what is your real name?

A: (*Surprised*) Why?

Q: Because nobody seems very sure.

A: (*Smiles*) My real name? You see, my name is Mohammad Yasser Arafat al-Husaini. You see, that is my real name. They call me Yasser Arafat

We will continue our struggle, because we are facing this oppression, this apartheid, this terrorism, from this Israeli military junta against our people, against Palestinian people, against the Arab people.

INVESTIGATION

Ex-MPs in Search of Homes

Over 60 former MPs face eviction from government bungalows in Delhi

As many as 61 ex-members of Parliament living in government bungalows in the posh areas of New Delhi face the possibility of being forcibly evicted from their houses by officials of the directorate of estates and the police. Several others occupying flats may also be thrown out if they do not move out on their own. Two CPI(M) MPs from West Bengal—Sudhir Roy and Purna Chandra Malik—were evicted from a flat in Delhi's Vithalbhai Patel house even though they are sitting members of the Lok Sabha The flat had to be cleared because it was allotted in the name of a CPI(M) ex-MP, Nirmal Sinha. Sudhir Roy and Purna Chandra Malik protested, but in vain. Dozens of such evictions might have to be carried out in the coming weeks as ex-MPs are refusing to move out.

After the December 1984 Lok Sabha polls, 76 bungalows and 141 flats were to be be vacated by members of the seventh Lok Sabha who had either lost their seats or had not contested at all. All of them had been sent notices to give up their houses within one month from the date of the dissolution of the seventh Lok Sabha: 31 December 1984. But 127 ex-MPs immediately filed in requests for the extension of the deadline giving various excuses. Eighteen reported sick, another 18 wanted to retain their houses because their relatives were sick and others said they wanted to continue because their children were being educated in Delhi Makineedu, an ex-MP, wanted to retain his house because he had fever, K. Lakappa said he wanted to stay on because of the "court cases of his sons," N.K. Shejwalkar needed the bungalow for "storing luggage," N. Selvaraju because his "cousin is ill." Surya Narayan Singh had "some personal difficulties"andSwami Indravesh did not want to leave "due to certain circumstances." Six others including Subramaniam Swamy and Ram Jethmalani,wanting to be certain of a roof above their heads, filed cases to obtain stay orders.

On the other hand, the newcomers to the Lok Sabha have only temporary accommodation in hostels of the external affairs ministry and whatever accommodation was available in the Western Court. They have been pressing the house committee of the Lok Sabha, which allots houses to Lok Sabha members, for permanent accommodation. Four hundred and two MPs of the eighth Lok Sabha have sent in detailed preferences, right down to the number of the bungalow or flat they want. Almost 90 per cent of the MPs have put in requests for bungalows, which are not available in such large numbers. Besides, a large number of requests also contravene the criteria laid down for the allotment of residential quarters for members of the Lok Sabha.

According to the rules, bungalows are to be given only to those MPs who have been members of the Lok Sabha for three terms or more or who are ex-ambassadors, ex-Governors, ex-chief ministers, ex-judges, ex-speakers or ex-ministers (either at the centre or in the states). All others are eligible only for accommodation in flats. The list of requests, however, contains first and second termers who have demanded bungalows. One MP has asked for a bungalow because he has been awarded a Padmashree. Others have demanded bungalows because they happen to head committees or enquiry commissions at the state level. It is also learnt that Congress (I) MP Vyjayanthimala Bali, a first termer, has been demanding a bungalow perhaps because of her status as a top star. Some of the MPs have justified their demands by stating precedents that are readily available. Even a first term MP like Rajesh Pilot had been allotted in 1980 a big bungalow (3 Safdarjung Road, next to the former residence of the Prime Minister).Shalinitai Patil continued to occupy the bungalow allotted to Vasantdada Patil even after he went back to Maharashtra as CM. In the case of Chandrashekhar Singh, the former chief minister of Bihar, his family



Jagdish Yadav

Subramaniam Swamy (inset) and his bungalow: defying eviction orders

retained the house at Rajendra Prasad Road despite his becoming the chief minister of Bihar. Members of the House committee and the directorate of estates have been trying to set things right but more often than not, they have faced a number of problems. Raj Narain stayed at 6, Teenmurti Lane, the residence of Maniram Bagri all through the term of the seventh Lok Sabha. When Bagri lost the elections this time, he vacated the premises but Raj Narain did not. In fact, when a squad from the directorate of estates went to evict him he shouted that he had been given the house by Indira Gandhi and that nobody had the authority to remove him!

Bungalows need to be vacated as they are in short supply. The Lok Sabha pool has only 147 bungalows, 50 of which are already occupied by members who have been in the Lok Sabha for more than three terms. About 60-odd are held by ex-members. An estimate prepared by the house committee of the Lok Sabha says that even if the rules are strictly followed, at least 107 more Lok Sabha members will have to be given bungalows. The nearly-impossible situation has been made more difficult by the fact that most people occupying the bungalows beyond their terms are political bigwigs. Many of them have also not been paying their rents regularly. Leading the list of such defaulters is Bhishma Narain Singh, the Governor of Assam. His allotment order for 1, Teen Murti Marg was cancelled on 15 May 1984 but he remains in possession of the house and on 28 February 1985 he owed Rs 73,959 as rent. Others who have been occupying the coveted Type-VIII bungalows and owe rent as on 28 February 1985 are:



Raj Narain's (inset) residence at 6, Teenmurti Lane: refusing to vacate

Jagdish Yadav



Bhishma Narain Singh (inset) and his bungalow at 1, Teenmurti Lane: forced occupancy

- S.S. Sisodia: Rs 7,859.90
- Satya Deo Singh: Rs 5,103.40
- Baleshwar Ram: Rs 9,584.99
- Magan Bhai Barot: Rs 7,219.48
- Charanjit Singh: Rs 3,383.45
- D.D. Shastri : Rs 6,641.85
- P.N. Tandon: Rs 1,510.48
- A.R. Mallu: Rs 2,388.64
- R.Y. Ghorpade : Rs 8,341.84
- Rasheed Masood: Rs 9,886.43
- Samar Mukherjee. Rs 436.75
- N.D. Tewari: Rs 12,599.90
- A.A. Rahim: Rs 8,146.15
- K.V.B. Reddy: Rs 6,099.20
- A.B. Vajpayee: Rs. 6,984.84
- Mallikarjun: Rs 3,301.90
- Fatehsingh Rao Gaekwad: Rs 2,740.10

The shortage of accommodation has been accentuated by the poor condition of some of the bungalows that are available. A couple of them on Telegraph Lane have zinc-roofings which are unacceptable to any member of Parliament. There are plans for the construction of some new bungalows but at the moment the house committee is considering plans for refurnishing nearly 200 bungalows and flats. The estimate for the first phase is Rs 42,91,000. What happened to the earlier sets of furniture, nobody knows.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

GUEST COLUMN/CHANCHAL SARKAR

Venezuela's Experiments With Intelligence

The bolivar, not so very long ago, was the hardest currency in the world. And that must be all that Indians know about Venezuela. That and Bolivia being the birthplace of Simon Bolivar, Latin America's liberator from the yoke of Spain. The pricking of the oil bubble and three devaluations later the bolivar does not ride high any longer, but its past glory is visible still. In Caracas it takes a lot of searching to find an old building. Everywhere, as the oil money cascaded in, glass and chromium skyscrapers shot up. Simon Bolivar's home and the National Assembly were two of the very few relics spared and one or two lovely homes of Spanish grandees now used, with the period interiors, as restaurants.

It wasn't tourism that took me to Venezuela. I had gone to evaluate, as part of an international team, a most fascinating experiment being attempted there. About four years ago the Venezuelan government set up a ministry for the development of intelligence. Behind it was a conviction, expressed at different times by distinguished researchers in various world laboratories that, by certain stimulations and interventions, human intelligence can be heightened irrespective of the children's environment—provided, of course, one started early enough and devised an adequate programme.

In putting this experiment across to the Venezuelan public the Family Project (Proyecto Familia as it is called) has used the mass-media extensively. In fact, about 50 per cent of Proyecto Familia's total spending was on the media. Evaluating that was my special task.

Venezuela, which has the largest national and per capita GDP in Latin America, is very lucky in its media set-up. In the urban homes of its 16 million people, TVs are owned by 96 per cent (73 per cent of the people in areas other than urban own TVs). Radios are owned by 96 per cent of the homes throughout the country (98 to 99 per cent of radios are owned by those in cities). Of the four TV channels, two are owned by the government. The government (along with the public sector) is the largest advertiser on all the four channels. It is natural to assume that the TV channels would be at the government's disposal. But neither the extensive use of TV nor of radio, films and video tapes on Proyecto Familia has made a significant impression on the people. As far as we could foresee, there were several good reasons for this.

Although the scheme said it was meant for children irrespective of their economic status the marginal families are not being specially sought out. The TV programmes, for instance, reflect a setting far removed from Caracas's *jhuggi* population. There are whole hillsides jammed with slums, where sanitation, health and living conditions are bad—light years away from Caracas's Country Club or the homes of the 'Miameros,' (those who own property in Miami).

The media was being worked to a frazzle in the sense that there were frequent spots over TV and radio and a number of "talking heads" programmes of 30 minutes. One estimate has it that 1,740,000 people see every week the promotional programmes about PF put out over the cinema. The new mothers (25 per cent of them in the two districts of Venezuela where PF is being tried) received their education—on the day after the birth of their children—in hospital and were being instructed through video cassettes at the bedside. Trained "facilitators" do the instructing. We watched them at it. Some were good, some incredibly boring. And remember, a mother is not at her best 24 hours after the delivery of her baby. The results were less than what we had expected. Media can bring awareness and that, in Venezuela, was intense. But practice is a different thing. Back from hospital, most mothers did not visit the clinics where the training in stimulation was to be continued. And, anyway, world scientific opinion is not agreed on the amount of growth in intelligence that can be induced. There was little interpersonal contact once the mothers left the hospital. Radio was not used enough. The posters were attractive but again unsuitable for the slum *barrios*. Print was an underestimated medium.

We met the key figure in the concept, Dr Luis Alberto Machado. He had been the first minister in the world to head a ministry for human intelligence. That was in the previous administration which changed in December 1983. Dr Machado parried many questions put by our team of sociologists, paediatricians as well as by media people like me. He said that the laboratories of the world had a wealth of achievements that could be put to work in the field of human intelligence. We were left unconvinced. Where we felt the scheme had gone wrong was in treating intelligence separately from health and nutrition: in fact, from a programme of health and basic needs of the Venezuelan child. As part of a Programme for the Child, PF could be a forceful weapon; without that ambit it is a hothouse plant.

Media can bring awareness and that, in Venezuela, was intense. But practice is a different thing...Radio was not used enough...Print was an underestimated medium.

Five metres to stardom











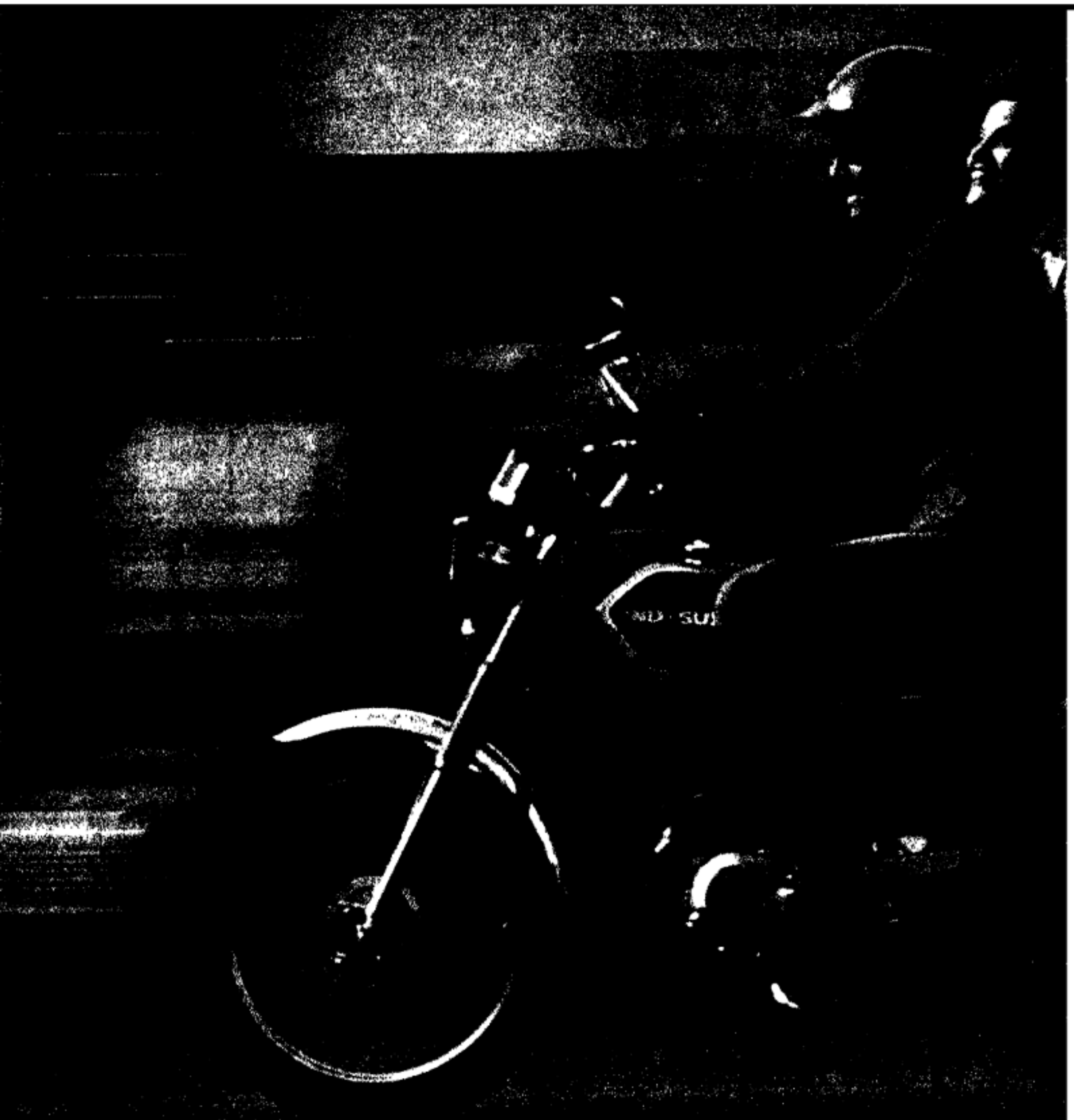
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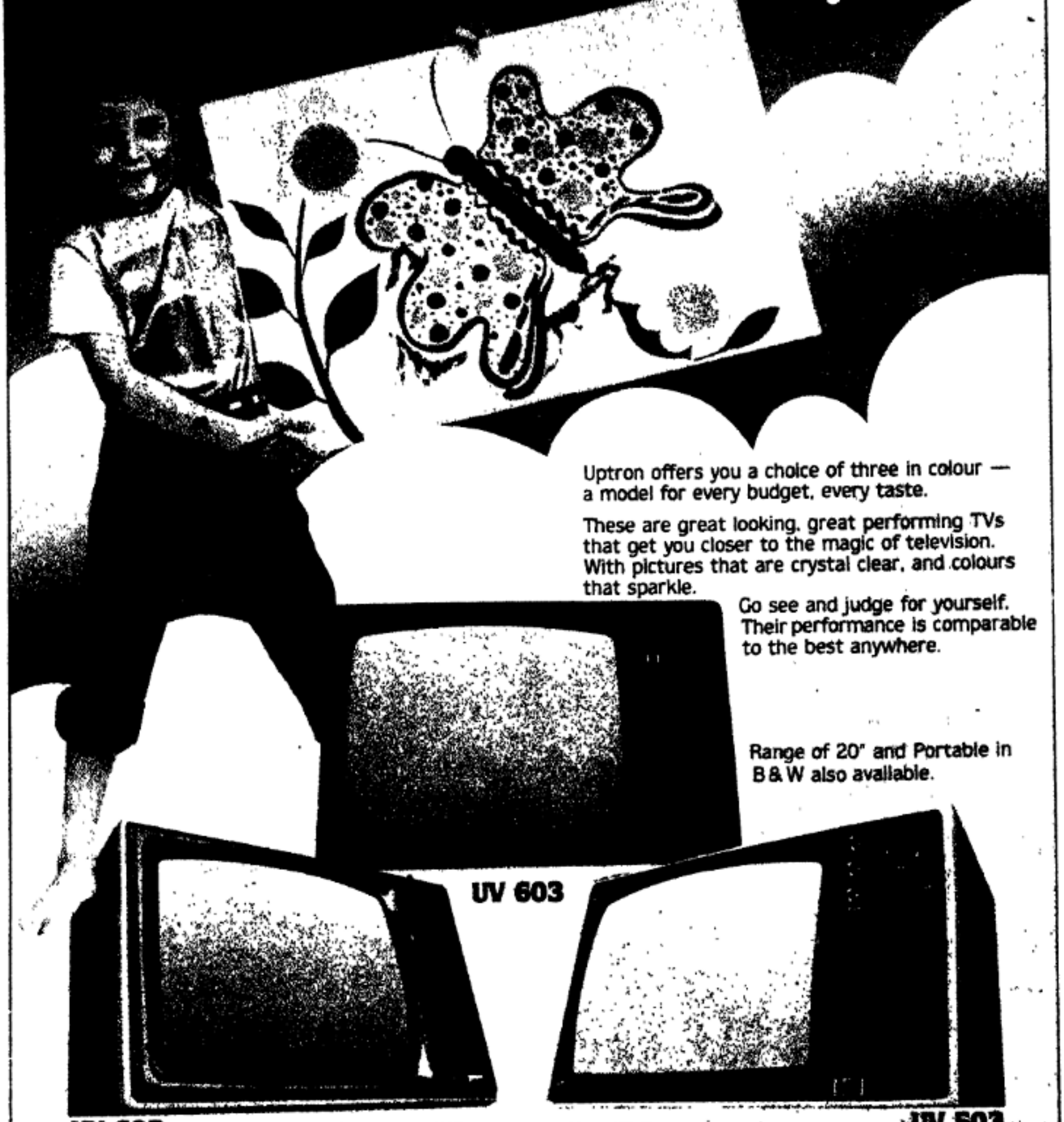
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SPECIAL REPORT

Santhals in Terror

Police firing on tribals protesting against exploitation by usurers in a Bihar village leaves 15 dead and several wounded

Fearful numbness has come over thousands of terror-stricken Santhals in Bihar's hill-dotted Sahibganj district. Ruthless oppression by a powerful *mahajan* (money-lender)-police clique has now given way to brute force: on 19 April, after a month of tension between the tribals and Dikus (the Santhal name for non-tribals), armed Bihar Military Police-men took up positions on either side of a road in the village of Banjhi, 11 kms from Sahibganj, to open fire on a mob of Santhals sporting bows and arrows. Twenty-five rounds were fired, killing 15 and injuring many. Among the dead was the revered Santhal leader and former Lok Sabha MP from the area, Father Anthony Murmu. Apparently, Father Murmu and Madan Murmu, another local tribal leader, had been called to the village *panchayat bhavan* by the district authorities for "talks" to pacify the mob. No one ever saw them again. Three days later on 22 April, the Santhals learnt that they had both "died in the trouble."

The tribals had been protesting against exploitation and a reign of terror unleashed on them by the local *mahajan*, Motiram Bhagat, whom they accused of killing one of their kinsmen from the nearby village, Savayya, and throwing his body into a pond. In a bid to avenge the murder, they had gone on the rampage, burning and demolishing a number of Bhagat's houses and the post office (where one of Bhagat's men worked) at one end of the village. It was open defiance that followed a *bit laha* —the Santhal edict to destroy a person's property as punishment for his crime against the tribe, a course the Santhals take to when they lose their faith in law.

The Santhals of Banjhi had been growing restive for quite some time. A series of quarrels between the Dikus and the district officials on one side and the Santhals on the other had led to occasional violence. The Santhals had been coming under increasing economic strain of late, thanks to a rather poor *kharif* crop and the Dikus' unscrupulous business practices. A number of them had been forced to mortgage their belongings to Motiram Bhagat. Tribal discontent over the poor prices the Dikus were offering for their forest produce—sal and kendu leaves and wood—had added to their woes. Besides, Motiram Bhagat had been unwilling to allow the Santhals to fish in the pond that had been auctioned to him by the administration.

For the tribals this was a cruel blow: normally, it is the practice for those who hold temporary ownership rights over stretches of the Ganga and tanks in Sahibganj to lift their catch just once or twice at the peak of the fishing season every year and allow the Santhals to fish in them for the rest of the time. This does not leave them with much fish. For a people who are so inextricably tied to nature and live as a part of it, fishing and *shikar* have a tremendous emotional appeal. And when Motiram Bhagat broke tradition by asserting his rights over the water the Santhals were furious. Eventually the Santhals were asked to fish in the southern end of the pond; the Santhals would not agree. They claimed he was trying to save their fish from them. So they moved up north and lowered their nets—only to find a decomposed corpse floating on the water. They immediately recognised it as Majhli Murmu, a eunuch from Savayya. The incensed tribals now say why Motiram Bhagat would not let them fish at the northern end which was thick with tall grass and jungle. It was probably he who had got Majhli murdered to steal the ornaments he wore and then threw his body into the water at the northern end where it could not be easily spotted. The call against exploitation now became a call for vengeance. The Dikus of Banjhi were boycotted, the Santhals refused to do any more business with them and would not allow them to hold the weekly *haat*—the *mahajan*'s chief weapon of exploitation. They also wanted back all the property they had mortgaged to Motiram Bhagat free of cost.

At this point, the SDO Sahibganj, Harinarayan Prasad, intervened. He promised the Santhals that he would have their property returned free of cost. The Santhals consented. The SDO also provided fair price shop facilities to the Santhals for their



K M Kapur

Father Murmu's widow with Sibu Soren and Simon Marandy of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

weekly *haat*—without the Dikus. The Santhals had also demanded a ban on the sale and consumption of liquor in the *haat*. The SDO, surprised as he was, agreed immediately. But above all the Santhals wanted revenge on Motiram Bhagat for the murder of Majhli Murmu. And revenge they would have. A call was given to the Santhals of the area; the road from Sahibganj was blocked with felled *sekua* trees; and 10,000 hate-crazed tribals set out in a bid for justice. The police, however, had got to the village after removing the barricades—but not before a number of Bhagat houses had been burnt and destroyed. Soon gunfire met the tribals' bows and arrows and a number of them were felled. Panic spread and ever since the Santhals have been wary of vehicles coming to Banjhi with visitors. Most of them do not speak about what happened on 19 April—either pleading that they did not know Hindi or that they were not in the village at that time or that they did not step out during the day.

Ranju Marandy (25) lay back on his bed on the first floor of Sahibganj's ramshackle district hospital, staring blankly at the ceiling. A stoic silence is all he can offer to a newsman's queries. His thigh was hit by two bullets. His brother who stood by his bed spoke in broken Hindi, "*Hum kutumb ja raha hai dekhta nahin hai ghar mein nahi rahta unnis tarikh ko* (I was on my way to my in-laws on the 19th). "I was not in the village when it happened," said Chunda Murmu who was also hit by two bullets in his leg. Another old Santhal had his arm in a plaster.

The Santhal quarters of Banjhi—a village where the Santhals are completely segregated from the Dikus—some distance from the post office and the *panchayat bhavan*, close to where the Bhagats live, now wears an almost deserted look.

A little distance from the school, at Father Antony's residence, an eerie silence prevailed. The Santhal leader's widow, still shocked at her husband's death, also denies knowing anything about what took place on 19 April. "Babulal Soren was with him that day. He knows the full story," she replied in Santhali to a question from a local Congress(I) MP, Mr Embram.

There did not seem to be anyone around among the tribals willing to talk. Finally we traced them to the house of Jetha Murmu, the *sarpanch* of the village. We were greeted with cold stares. In the crowded room was Babulal Soren, who served as Father Murmu's bodyguard. His tone was excited: "It was just after 8 am on the



Shikhar Hansda of Kandar village, an old Santhal injured in the firing

19th. Both Father Murmu and I were with Sadiq Miya in the village bazar. We were discussing the impending trouble. Father Murmu said that if the trouble started it would be difficult to stop it. So it was best to nip it in the bud. So we walked back to Father Murmu's house. Father said that he would take a bath and he asked me to bathe too. But just then we could hear the *dug-dugu* (drumbeats), a sign of restlessness among the tribals. Father said we would bathe and go out and pacify the crowd which had already started collecting in the village. I went off home to bathe. But then three or four boys came and told me to accompany them to the gathering. They said they needed leaders. For the next two hours a massive crowd collected. People came from all the villages nearby. Then five of us went to the authorities in the *panchayat bhavan* to reason with them—Father Murmu, the *sarpanch*'s brother Madan Murmu, two others and I from here. We told them that we did not want to fight. We discussed three points. The SDO asked Father Murmu what he wanted and why we had collected in such large numbers. Father said that three gunshots had rung out of Bhagat's house and some people had been hit. The SDO replied that they were not bullets but *patakas*. Father Murmu said he could prove what he was saying. At that time Gopal Bhagat, one of the *dalals*, entered the room. An altercation followed. The SDO was roughed up, Bhagat was thrown out of the room, our talk was over. We were about to leave. But all of a sudden without even warning us the police opened fire on the crowd outside. They trained their guns on the people as they stood defenceless. I felt a stab in my heart. People were being mowed down before we even realised what was happening. The police fired at least 60-70 shots. I ran away. People began running for their lives. I left Father Murmu and Madan there. I do not know what became of them after that. It was around 2 pm and then people ran home. Now no one even comes out. There is no *haat* any more. People do not go to the *bazar*. There will never be any more bazar in this village." The indignation was evident.

The SDO, Harinarayan Prasad had quite a different story to tell. The district official was obviously at pains to explain the killing of the 15 Santhals. The SDO said, "On the 25th when they were fishing in Motiram Bhagat's pond they found the body of an adivasi *hijra* in the water. When they saw the body they were convinced that Motiram had killed the *hijra*. They stopped fishing and went to the police station in Boreo and gheraoed the officer in-charge, R.P. Singh. A *bit laha* was done on Bhagat's house that day. While all this was going on we despatched an armed force and an executive magistrate to the village along with a DSP. It was a *hatia* day (a day of the *haat*). Excitement was running high. Some of the Santhals were attacked by a group of Dikus. But this fact came to my knowledge only on the 26th when I was negotiating with them (Santhals). This was because the Santhals had declared their intention to avenge the attack—they stuck up some sal leaves on a stick and waved it for all to see. This is a notice that trouble is coming. The waving of the leaves is followed by the sound of drumbeats. On the 26th I got to know that the tribals were gathering around 11.30 am. I spoke to the DC and SP and rushed to the spot. I found a crowd of about 5,000-6,000 of them gathered near the pond beside the Damin bungalow in the village. I stepped out of my car and walked straight into their midst.

" I reasoned with them after I got to the bungalow but they would not listen. Then I warned them that if they were bent on violence then their arrows and my bullets would ring out together. However, there were three people in the crowd, Father Murmu, Madan Murmu and the *sarpanch*, Jetha Murmu who knew what I was saying. Most of the others did not understand my Hindi. It was a communication problem; Jetha was helpful. But even as we negotiated the *diggas* were sounding. I was dragged

later for 15-20 yards by the crowd. I realised they were going to do a *bit laha* of Bhagat's house in front of me. The rest of the police force were waiting for me in the *panchayat bhavan*. The Santhals were crying for revenge. Finally, I agreed to go with the Santhals to see the dead body. I said that they deserved their revenge if one of their tribe had been killed. This surprised them. They asked me to say this in writing. I agreed. They showed me the corpse of the sari-clad *hijra* floating in the pond. And I even wrote out an undertaking. But it was something quite different from what I had told them: it said that you adivasis have lost a member who was killed. If it is possible we will see that his killer is hanged. I also wrote that the pond belongs to the *adivasis* and they reserved the right to fish in it. Their ownership of the waters would later be regularised by a court order. They had also demanded that they would not hold their market with any Diku. I assured them of all assistance."

But even as Mr Prasad was busy making these concessions to appease the enraged Santhals, some of the tribesmen from adjoining villages came and told the Santhals of Banjhi that it would be cowardice to give in; if Motiram Bhagat had killed a Santhal he should be punished. So the *diggas* were sounded again. "The Santhals told me that they did not trust me. They said if one of their members could be killed in front of me, what protection could I offer them? I got furious. I told them I was no Mahatma. I could see what I could do for them. But they must let me go. They seemed satisfied." Mr Prasad later went around the village on 26 March with Jetha Murmu distributing money to those injured in the clashes with the Dikus. "To some I gave Rs 10 or Rs 20. I took four of them to Sahibganj hospital. The attendant of one of the four was a ferocious sort. He did not understand a word of Hindi. But when I brought them to Sahibganj and gave them food, he smiled at me. I thought the worst was over."

It was not. On the 29th, which was another *haat* day, Mr Prasad visited Banjhi again to see if the *haat* was going on well. "I helped the women sell their wares and buy their food. I supervised the whole operation. But I noticed that there were no Santhal men around. I asked the women where they were and I was told they were holding a meeting in Bara Raxhau. I rushed to the village. *Diggas* were sounding. But I was greeted there. They brought me a chair." Mr Prasad was told that the Santhals now wanted a *haat*. But not with Dikus of Banjhi but the Dikus of Savaya. What if they did not come to Banjhi. "No, we will call them," the Santhals told him. Mr Prasad agreed to provide ration shop facilities. He was also told that liquor would be banned from the market—its consumption and sale—and that the Santhals also wanted back all the belongings they had mortgaged to Motiram Bhagat. Mr Prasad worked out a compromise on the demands which the Santhals were happy with. "I will help you. Do not take the law into your own hands," he told them. He continued his visits to the Banjhi Bazar to see that nothing went wrong with the arrangements he had made.

On 15 April came what the authorities call the "provocation." At a largely attended public meeting in Raxhau village addressed by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Sibu Soren, Masi Soren of Barhet, Father Anthony Murmu and Jetha Murmu, the Santhals were asked to close their ranks and fight for the tribal cause. Sibu Soren had allegedly told the gathering that Santhals in the region far outnumbered the Dikus, and that if all the Dikus were cut up and distributed, each Santhal would get "only a small piece of flesh."



Burnt house of a Diku

Sibu Soren himself does not deny having said this. Mr Prasad insists this was inflammatory language. Soren had also gone on to say that the Dikus were surviving only on the blood and sweat of Santhals and that the latter ought to strike back. The meeting had decided on an independent investigation into the trouble at Banjhi. Simon Marandy of the JMM was to file a report by 24-25 April. "On the 19th at about 11.00 am," said Mr Prasad, "I was informed that the road to Banjhi had been blocked and there had been some firing in the village. At 11.30 am we left Sahibganj. It took us two hours to reach the village where I saw flames shooting up from houses on the south side. The crowd in the marketplace was enormous. As we approached, three or four people from the crowd came menacingly towards me. I warned them to stop and retreat, but they would not listen. Arrows were flying in our direction. I asked the force to step back. Tear-gas shells were fired to cover up. There was a *lathi* charge. But this only brought down ten or twelve of them. What are *lathis* before arrows ? So I again sounded a warning and then ordered firing in four different directions to prevent the adivasis from surrounding us. The first five rounds were fired. Then another ten, followed by another ten. I ordered the police to aim at the men who were leading the adivasis. But it was only 10 minutes later that I realised that some people had been killed." A strange realisation indeed!

The dead include Anna Murmu (40) of Raxhau, Anthony Murmu (55), Madan Munshi Murmu (23) and Bara Bharwa (33) of Banjhi, Ishwar Murmu (55) and Kundao Soren (35) of Paharpur, Thakur Tudu, Dunuj Besra and Tribhuvan Marandy of Kari, Dukhna Tudu and Chunka Tudu of Savaya, Badgao Soren (20) of Kandar and Munshi Mavayya of Bara Kandwa. A number of them have left behind widows and children who are now anxiously awaiting a government decision on compensation, which till the time of filing this report was yet to be made. Even the chief minister and the inspector-general of police's visit to Banjhi was a sham from the beginning to the end: despite all the "concern" for the victims, not a single Santhal house was visited on 22 April when the two VIPs drove to the village and drove back. "We were all waiting to tell the chief minister our side of the story," said Jetha Murmu, "but he went back from the road near our side of the village."

Nirmal Mitra, Sahibganj

ANALYSIS

The Hindu Dilemma in Punjab

By Harcharan Bains

We often tend to overlook the basic fact that no enduring solution to the Punjab tangle can ever be found without taking into consideration the Hindu psyche in the state. In trying to understand the community's viewpoint it would be worthwhile to have a quick look at the philosophy of Hinduism in so far as it can help restore a sense of sanity in the circumstances. This will also help us understand the genesis of the Hindu dilemma

As a creed, Hinduism is unmatched in cultural richness. It encompasses a boundless spirit of tolerance, an infinite moral and intellectual liberalism and an astounding capacity for reform. Only the religion of the ancient Greeks and Buddhism can touch the moral and spiritual wealth of Hinduism Since it sets itself no boundaries and is essentially ethereal in nature, it tends to spill across the bounds of other religions. It is in the nature of air that flows into vacuum wherever it finds one. It is due to this that religions built around exclusivity of beliefs sometimes react violently to the presence of Hinduism at close quarters.

Because of its essential openness, Hinduism has freely imbibed influences from other religions including Islam, Christianity and, lately, Sikhism However, at times, it has also fallen a prey to avoidable distortions in the faith Paradoxically, the Arya Samaj, for instance, while being admirable in its reformist zeal and bold in its progressive experimentalism, was at the same time the first really retrogressive development in Hinduism. It tried to throw this religion within set bounds and definitions Its emphasis on Hindu identity made Hinduism—perhaps, for the first time—a religion like any other Till then, it had transcended the narrow religious confines and had always been a living, ever-renewing culture that could take extreme opposites in its fold. The Arya Samaj stress on exclusivity and "repurification (*shudhikaran*)" ran counter to the healthy comprehensiveness of the Hindu creed. After the Arya Samaj movement, Hinduism became a distinct stance, a personality rather than a soul, a certain—if glorious—spiritual zone rather than an abiding immanence.

It is interesting to note that the Sikhs were among the first to embrace the Arya Samaj. But the marriage soon broke up, for some inexplicable reason, because the Sikhs began to be described as "Hindu derelicts" who needed to be purified and brought back into the Hindu fold The Arya Samaj's call—"back to the Vedas"—was inevitably accompanied by a glorification of the Sanskrit and the Hindi languages. The Hindu Punjabi's attitude to the Punjabi language is also attributable largely to the influence of this movement and the Sikh insistence on a separate identity also dates back to the same period

The Arya Samaj was perceived as a "danger" to the Sikh identity which was answered by an equally belligerent Singh Sabha movement. The Sabha tried to counter the Samajist "invasion" through an aggressive assertion of the Sikh culture. The two movements often clashed, producing acrimonious sparks of communal violence, though these were confined mainly to a violence of minds. The Samaj's less-than-charitable references to the Sikh Gurus and their scriptures were answered with equal vehemence by the Sabha followers. Neither was true. The Hindu-Sikh alienation today is a continuation of the Samaj Sabha acrimony. This particular phase of history has played havoc with the secular spirit of the region.

Fortunately, Arya Samaj is not Hinduism. It is only one strand of the spiritual tapestry of this creed in which pantheism and monotheism, idol worship and pure meditation happily coexist. Its liberal imagination is limitless and it is futile to try to set boundaries around it or even



Hindu Suraksha Samiti volunteers: Doing more harm than good to the Hindu Punjabi

define it.

The question then is: Why does the Hindu Punjabi appear to be so unworthy of his religion? Why, of all the people, should a Hindu appear to be so intolerant, aggressive and insensitive to the feelings of his brethren from other communities? The answer lies not in bland communalism nor in hegemonistic majorityism. The attitudes and the historical factors that have shaped it need to be considered sympathetically.

We do not often understand the stress and strain of being a Hindu in Punjab. While the character of our national politics, except in the past few years, has remained generally secular with the communal Hindu parties being routed by Nehru's Congress which swore by genuine secularism, politics in Punjab has never freed itself from communal clutches. This was somewhat inescapable in view of the presence in the state of a strong religious minority and its fears of being absorbed into the dominant religion of the country. No one has ever tried to assure the Sikhs that their separate identity would be respected under all circumstances. The more the majority insists that Sikhism is not a separate religion, the greater the suspicion of the Sikh towards the motives of the majority community. This has led to a hardening of attitudes.

Some of the leaders of the Sikh community, especially in the Fifties, accused the country of a breach of trust with the community. Without going into the merits of such an accusation, one can make a guess about the impact of such an attitude on the Hindu Punjabi who has had to bear the brunt of the Sikh wrath against the centre.

The Hindu attitude to the Akali Dal, the main political party of the Sikhs, also needs to be understood sympathetically. To begin with, they complain that it never functions as a mere political party but as a religio-political front for the Sikhs. This charge is difficult to answer. In the circumstances, the other communities cannot be expected to identify themselves with the aspirations, struggles and ideologies of the party. The Hindu aloofness from the Dal is at least partly due to the Dal's own refusal to broaden its base to include the non-Sikhs. Even the intelligent and liberal Sikhs sometimes feel left out of the political mainstream of the community. The Dal should adopt an attitude by which the great secular tenets of the Sikh religion are properly projected. It can indeed be done without the Akali Dal having to change its essential character as a Punjabi or even a religious party. Fortunately, the Dal has enough secular nerve in its composition to achieve this. Indeed, it has often done so in the past. One should not refuse to acknowledge that at some crucial moments, the Dal has really transcended narrow religiosity. A very recent instance was their offer to launch a *morcha* jointly with the Hindus in Punjab to protect the cow immediately after the "beef tallow scandal"—that is, in a period marked by uncommon communal frenzy in the state. That made the gesture all the more admirable.

But the gesture was lost in the all-enveloping darkness of communal killings. The tension and insecurity of the Hindu Punjabis during those days account for their new-found arrogance now. They lived through three years of near-encounter with death and find it hard to forget their travails. This is understandable. But they should also remember that a large number of Sikhs got killed simply because they refused to adopt a communal attitude towards their Hindu brethren. A Sikh layman reacts with horror even today at the prospect of innocent people being killed. This is why the state, especially the Sikh-dominated countryside, remained free from communal riots when extremism was at its height.

The trouble now is that our perceptions have been ravaged by the disturbing nature of recent events: *When eyes are bloodshot, the vision is narrow.* If we get over our fanatical agitation and try to understand each other's problems with a compassionate approach, the solutions will be much simpler than we think. All we need is the courage to confess our mistakes and the vision to understand the reasons for those of others.

Take the language question, for example. The Hindu attitude to the Punjabi language needs to be understood in the proper perspective. It is not as if no Hindu reads or writes Punjabi. On the contrary, many of them have voluntarily opted for the language as a vehicle of serious expression. Anyone familiar with the trends in modern Punjabi literature will bear out that the Hindu contribution to the language is immense. It was a Hindu—Shiv Kumar Batalvi—who lifted this language out of its seeming limitations and restored to it its totally world-class richness. The way the Punjabi language blossomed and expanded at the touch of Batalvi is something all Sikhs are proud of. One of the greatest Punjabi playwrights is again a Hindu: Balwant Gargi. One of the most popular Punjabi folk songsters—Nand Lal Nurpuri—was also a Hindu. Again, it is not as though these are stray instances. The number of Hindus writing in Punjabi is nearly as large as that of the Sikhs doing the same. Amitoz, Dhani Ram Chatrik, I. C. Nanda, R. L. Ahuja, Lala Kirpal Sagar, Kripa Sagar, Bhushan, Lok Nath, Prem Kumar, Kanwar Chauhan, Ram Saroop Ankhi, Niranjan Sharma, K. L. Garg, Paritosh Gargi, Pritam Dass, Charan Dass,



A Nihang procession in Anandpur Sahib on the occasion of Hola Mohalla



Forgotten past: Hindu and Sikh youths on the streets together in Amritsar

Parkash Sathi—the list is endless. Can one really doubt the outstanding contribution of the Hindu writers to modern Punjabi literature and language? Sometime back, the SGPC honoured Asha Bhonsale for her rendition of the Sikh Gurbani. The Punjabi theatre is being served with a missionary zeal by two young Hindu experimentalists, Ashwani Chatley and Tripta. These are just a handful of examples of how the Punjabi Hindus have done their mother-tongue, Punjabi, proud.

This, of course, is not to gloss over the ill-advised attitude of some members of the Hindu Punjabi community who refuse to own Punjabi as their language. They are unable to give one good reason for their attitude and, consequently, they emerge communal. It is for them to do something to rebut this charge. In mentioning Hindi as their mother-tongue in the census records, these people were guilty of an outrageous lie (they know it too) and they do not even have a good enough reason for it. In addition, the exercise is self-defeating. Perhaps, it was due to an emotional attachment to Sanskrit, but how many of them have taken the trouble to learn, to read, write, speak or even understand Sanskrit?

Initially, it was born of an opposition to Punjab being reduced to a Sikh-majority area. But, ironically, by refusing to register themselves as Punjabi-speaking people, these elements ensured a communal redemarcation of the state. Had all of them spoken the truth about their mother-tongue, the vast Punjabi-speaking but Hindu-dominated areas now left outside Punjab would have remained with it, thus ensuring a Hindu majority in the new Punjab. Communalism can indeed backfire.

The language syndrome has another pitfall. By insisting on Hindi as their mother-tongue, some Hindus unwittingly bestowed on the Sikhs the status of a full-fledged separate cultural unit, something they themselves refuse to acknowledge now. The attitude also helped the protagonists of the "Sikhs-are-a-separate-nation" doctrine, because they could then claim to have clinched an important item of separation from the Hindu religion. The cultural alienation of the Sikhs from Hinduism was completed by the refusal of some Hindus to share a common language with the former.

But at the same time, it is necessary to view this attitude against the background of strong ethno-centrism of the Sikhs. Perhaps, in reaction to the proselytising mission of the Arya Samaj, the Sikhs shrank away from Hinduism into ever-diminishing boundaries. There was a time when, in essence, Sikhism was the only religion of Punjab with the Hindus being the Sehajdhari Sikhs. Many a Hindu family looked upon Guru Nanak and the Holy Granth as parts of their own cultural heritage. It was the custom for many Hindu families to have their eldest male child christened a Sikh. The two religions often overlapped producing a glowing cultural harmony.

Unfortunately, all this is now a thing of the past. The greatness of a religion should be judged by the degree to which it is acceptable to those belonging to other faiths. By this yardstick both religions pass the test handsomely but their followers do not. The Sikh religion, in its purest essence, towers above all the rest in secular appeal. It has been found to be acceptable to such mutually-antagonistic communities as the Hindus and the Muslims.

In fact, the Sikh religion is, more than anything else, a mission against the division of societies on the basis of religious beliefs. Guru Gobind Singh made a creed of spiritual catholicity describing the variety of religions as "merely a product of environmental differences." He went to great lengths to explain that his fight was not against Islam or any religion but only against "some policies of a king misled by a caucus." He showed a healthy respect for Islam and reminded his Muslim adversary that the latter was deviating from Islam. Such magnanimity to one's sworn enemy and such clarity of vision about the actual issues at stake is very rare in world history, especially in the history of religions. It was no wonder, then, that a large number of Muslims also joined the Guru's ranks.

This catholicity, this clarity of vision regarding our actual problems is missing today. There is nothing wrong with a Hindu revivalism or a Sikh revivalism as long as its pursuit is directed towards what Dr Radhakrishnan calls "discovery of the profound in the universe. The most profound is the most unique, and the most unique is the most universal.' The uniqueness of each religion is nothing objectionable. Consider the *Gita*: "Better is death in one's own religion than life in another's/The religion of another brings danger." Or, take Swami Vivekananda, for example. "The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Muslim. But each must assimilate the spirit of the other and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth." Is this separatism? Let the Hindu respect the Sikh identity and let the Sikh harness this identity towards making India the envy of nations the world over.

This is merely to say that the need of the hour is not a Hindu or a Sikh revival but a cultural revival in which respect for truth is placed above loyalty to a narrow interpretation of one's religion. People who

sacrifice truth for religion can sacrifice religion for communalism and community for their own selfish ends. A person who is not honest about truths and facts is irreligious.

First, let us be honest to facts in Punjab. The Hindus in Punjab have a point when they protest that their Sikh brethren have been presenting the state's case in strictly religious terms; all in the name of keeping politics and religion together. In order to understand their views one should imagine the existence of a strong ethnocentric Hindu political party operating from the premises of the Durgian Temple in Amritsar as its headquarters and using a strong religious terminology in presenting Punjab's case. It is interesting to consider how the other communities would react to it. To the Sikhs who are basically a religio-political community, the mixture of religion and politics seems a natural enough combination. But it will be educative to reflect on the possible fate of the nation if all religions start using the same mix. In fact, this has already started happening and the Sikhs have been at the receiving end of its impact. In a communalised atmosphere, the arithmetic of democracy will always work to the disadvantage of the minorities. Therefore, it is even more important for the minorities that politics be secularised.

Perhaps, the peculiar nature of Akali politics also poses as a stumbling block for the Hindus in understanding the Sikh viewpoint as essentially sane and rational. As a political party, the Akalis are subject to the dynamics of democracy in which every party has to face rough and abrasive criticism. Unfortunately, because of a confusion between their religious and political identities, any criticism of the Akalis appears to hit the religious sensitivities of the Sikhs. This is not to suggest that parties based on religion should be disbanded, but their roles in the two capacities should be clearly demarcated to avoid confusion. Thus, while it is perfectly right for the Akalis to launch a *morcha* for the redressal of grievances of the community from the Harimandir Sahib, agitations on political aspirations in which they want other communites and parties to support them may have better chances of success if they are launched from a secular platform. The Akalis should not find it difficult to work it out, since their political integrity and belief in secular ideals can never be doubted, regardless of the propaganda against them.

The Hindus in Punjab suffer from a minority psychosis. It is a strange kind of a psychological phenomenon in which they sometimes do and sometimes don't accept their minority status. Because of their emotional attachment to their creed sprawling across the length and breadth of the country, they find it difficult to accept with grace their inevitable status as a minority community in Punjab. But the charge that the Hindu Panjabis' attitude to the state is colonial or that they are mere time-servers is so much nonsense. Perhaps, some of them may have thought of moving out of Punjab just as some Sikhs have had to migrate to Punjab under similar tensions. But, by and large, no Punjabi can help being proud of his state. Emotionally and culturally, a Hindu Punjabi has more in common with his Sikh neighbours than with his coreligionists from other parts of the country. This becomes amply clear when the two meet each other outside the state. Punjabi sub-nationalism like Tamil sub-nationalism is a strong enough sentiment to embrace people from different communities, including the Muslims.

The Hindus in Punjab suffer from a minority psychosis. It is a strange kind of psychological phenomenon in which they sometimes do and sometimes don't accept their minority status.

The main problem of the Hindu Punjabi is that there is no one to articulate his privations in a plausible but non-communal way. As a result, his pent-up stress often explodes in communal aggressiveness The plethora of militant Hindu organisations in the state has done more harm than good to the Hindu Punjabi. The militant communalism of these organisations tarnishes the image of the common Hindu as much as that of his Sikh compatriots. Quite unnecessarily, a Hindu Punjabi is asked to prove that he is not a traitor to Punjab.

When a Hindu Punjabi goes out of the state, he often finds his Punjabi background somewhat of a handicap. This fact needs to be understood by the Sikhs. An educated Hindu Punjabi told me recently, "Outside Punjab they hate us because we are Punjabis. Here you hate us because we are Hindus. Where should we go?" He had a point. In speaking about his anguish, he also neatly summed up the Hindu dilemma in Punjab. The answer to his question lay, perhaps, in that while the Sikhs should do something to stop the Hindus from feeling like "hostages", a Hindu himself should be more a Punjabi than a Hindu. And both should understand that their common state binds them together more strongly than their separate religions can divide them.

The recent controversy over Punjab being merged with neighbouring states is likely to lead to a fresh spate of communal tension in the state. The idea is fraught with dangers and we must be vigilant against its disruptive implications. The militant Hindu organisations in the state have rushed to welcome it knowing full well that this will only deepen the wounds of their Sikh brethren. It is one thing for all of us to campaign for the national good but it is strange for a Punjabi always to be seen advocating the case of other states against Punjab, as some trouble-mongers are doing now. Its impact on the fractured social fibre of the state could be disastrous.

They allege that the Sikhs want to make Punjab a Sikh-dominated area. Of course, what they do not clearly say is that, conversely, they want to make it a Hindu-dominated area. Perhaps, in national interest and in keeping with the secular ideals that we preach, no one should really act horrified if one or two states in the country remain Hindu-minority areas. This is why the merger idea, aimed clearly against Punjab, should be resisted especially by those Hindus who want to convince the minorities that India is not a Hindu *rashtra* and that the dominant community of the country is not bent on crushing the minorities wherever they have a chance to enjoy political power within the Indian Union

A special responsibility rests on the Hindu Punjabis and the Sikhs. Otherwise, in the welter of confused and confusing factors, both will manage to get themselves misunderstood, especially if they continue to let communal elements speak for them. They need to do justice to the endearing freshness of the state's magnificent culture. The fields of Punjab and its skies are open enough for various religious sects, beliefs and aspirations to breathe and flourish in. We need to resurrect the traditional Punjabi cosmopolitanism. The future of India is being shaped in Punjab.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Entertainer Bows Out

Shireesh Kanekar of Syndicated Press profiles a singing phenomenon

Chalte Chalte
Merey Yeh Geet Yaad Rakhna
Kabhie Alvida Na Kehna
Kabhie Alvida Na Kehna

And so shall it be. Even though at 56 Kishore Kumar has finally taken his leave of the tiresome routine of Bombay's fast-paced film world, for the millions he has regaled for decades, on and off the screen, as comedian, hero, and melodramatist, he will be an unforgettable face and voice. The man whose songs were on the lips of every schoolboy and collegegoer for years, the only singer who could withstand the mighty Mohammad Rafi wave has finally decided to settle down to a quieter life in his native place Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh with his fourth wife Leena Chandavarkar and second son Sumeet. According to him, he has had just about "enough of films."

The announcement did not raise many eyebrows in the world of film music. The reason: the industry does not take the man seriously. Even the most shocking statements are not beyond him. People in the industry say Kishore Kumar had once angrily declared that he would not sing for Amitabh Bachchan because the superstar had failed to make a guest appearance in one of the films he produced. This time, however, both his wife and son are convinced that he has called it a day. When this correspondent sought an interview, Kishore Kumar was as evasive as ever. His elder son, Ameet Kumar, was more forthcoming. "Well," he said on the telephone, "my dad will retire after a couple of months once he completes all his assignments, including two of his own films which are on the floor. He will continue to sing in concerts in India and abroad. He will also record a few songs."

So, it will be a partial retirement for today's most sought after male playback singer—the only one to have made a comeback. Before one *Aradhana* (1969) was made, Kishore Kumar was an actor who sang his own songs for the films he acted in. After *Aradhana*, his voice became the voice of every hero. Three leading lights of the Hindi screen, Dev Anand, Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan, owe their success partly to him. While Kishore Kumar has been singing for Dev Anand for long, Rajesh Khanna became a box office hit with the song "*Mere sapnoki rani*" and Amitabh Bachchan with the popular "*Khaike paan Banaraswala.*"

How does one describe his singing voice? If Rafi's was metallic, Manna Dey's trained, Talat Mehmood's silky and Mukesh's melancholic, then Kishore Kumar's voice was versatile. But this was the same epithet people used for the voice of Mohammad Rafi. If Rafi was ever given a *ghazal*, a *geet*, a *qawali* or a *bhajan* to sing, he showed his proficiency equally with each. But Kishore Kumar appealed to fans of all sexes, age groups and social strata.

It was, however, strange to witness Kishore Kumar slipping back to the position of an also-ran at a time when Rafi was getting more offers than he could cope with. In fact, the film industry dealt with the two singers quite unpredictably. After a long stint, Rafi was unceremoniously ignored and sidelined and replaced



SP Photo: Parameswaran Bhaskaran

Kishore Kumar

by Kishore Kumar. *Aradhana* was a watershed in two careers: it marked the emergence of Rajesh Khanna as an actor and the reemergence of Kishore Kumar as a singer. People seemed unconcerned about the fact that there were singers like S.D. Burman, who had better records than Kumar. *Aradhana* was a hit, and with it, Kishore Kumar's versatile voice.

S.D. Burman once said of him, "His singing style is simple. He has no qualms about it. He gives every bathroom singer an impression that if he ever was to sing, he could sing like Kishore. Nothing could be further from the truth. But the reason why Kishore is stupendously successful and popular is because a common man can easily identify with his voice." Composer Anil Biswas, one of Kishore Kumar's ardent admirers, feels the same. In the late Sixties, Biswas had declared that Kumar was the best singer of the day. Not everyone agreed. But then he went on to add that Rafi was a "Bhendi bazar singer" without a seasoned voice. This infuriated Rafi's numerous fans. There was an uproar. Eventually, Kumar was forced to say that he was himself an admirer of Rafi, and he had been shocked by what Biswas had said.

There are others who dislike Kumar. Sajjad Hussain, a temperamental music director said, "Kishore can't sing. If you want to call somebody walking on the opposite footpath, he has the kind of voice you need to yell at him. I don't know why he sings." But the industry has never paid attention to Hussain's comments. (It was Hussain who once said in praise of Lata Mangeshkar, "Lata *gaati hai, baaki sabroteyhai*," meaning only Lata sings, the rest weep.)

Surprisingly, most composers found Kishore Kumar at his best when he recorded songs which he was to render on the screen himself. Anil Biswas in *Fareb*, Sajjad Hussain in *Ruksana*, C. Ramachandra in *Asha*, O.P. Nayyar in *Naya Andaz*, Shankar-Jaikishen in *Rangoli* and Madan Mohan in *Bhai Bhai*, all relied on Kishore. The results were delightful. Even the late S.D. Burman, in the days before *Aradhana* was made, always used Kishore Kumar to sing for Dev Anand.

It was in 1948 that Kishore Kumar started singing for films. Among his first film songs was *Marney ki duwaye kyon mangu*, composed by the late Khemchand Prakash for the film *Ziddi*. It was the first time Kumar had lent his voice to Dev Anand. The association lasted. Kishore's acting, however, was never taken much notice of. His desire to become a singing star like K.L. Saigal remained a dream.



The three brothers: (from l to r) Anup, Ashoke and Kishore Kumar

Nobody can sum up Kishore the way his *dada* (elder brother) Ashok Kumar can: "He is a freak. Look, I have studied classical music and he hasn't. But see where he has reached with his music. He knows his *soor* by intuition. This is not to suggest that he didn't work hard for his success."

Kishore Kumar composed the music for all the films he has made, except the first, *Chalti ka Naam Gaadi*. But today, even as a man with a large number of hits to his credit, Kishore still cannot write musical notations. As an actor, he brought rare spontaneity, humour and individual charm to the roles he played. Early in his career, he was branded a comedian, and in order to escape being stereotyped, he started making more sober films. It was a desperate attempt to change his image, but it failed. The audiences were not interested in seeing him try his hand at glum-faced roles. His comic appearances, too, were none too popular; the audience had learnt to expect only buffoonery. Often, he would be jeered at if he played a serious role. Even in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's award-winning film *Musafir*, in which he acted as an unemployed youth, Kishore's work went unappreciated—because it wasn't funny.

Kishore did not ever plan his career. He took roles when they were offered to him He was never choosy about his heroines. Working with actresses like Meena Kumari and Madhubala did not prevent him from acting opposite unknown heroines.

Although he had worked in the industry for over three decades, Kishore Kumar never really belonged to it: he jealously guarded his privacy, which made him inaccessible. With Raaj Kumar, he is one of the most eccentric persons in the film world. A *tabalchi* (drummer) once recalled the moment when the singer walked in for a recording with a toothbrush in his mouth. A leading arranger narrated a story of how Kishore had come late to a recording once, aped the composer, conducted the orchestra, walked out of the studio and driven back home. He is also said to speak rather loudly over the telephone, and set his dogs on uninvited visitors. People often said "he has gone mad." One person who does not agree is Lata Mangeshkar, who has known him since 1948 when she first sang a duet with him: "Nonsense. He is as sane and sensible as any other person."

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Battle for Freedom

On 9 May 1857, 85 sepoys at Meerut were punished for refusing to accept greased cartridges on religious grounds. The next day, their compatriots rose in revolt and released them from prison. That triggered off the bloody uprising of 1857. The notion that religious prejudices alone fuelled the sepoy mutiny could not be further from the truth, writes Bhola Chatterji

A century had rolled by since Plassey and few Englishmen, and still fewer Indians, could even imagine that the wretched sepoy might rise in rebellion against an empire on which the sun did not set. Yet that was precisely what the sepoy did when, on 10 May 1857, he hailed Bahadur Shah II as emperor. And the sepoy did it for freedom. No matter how one looks at it, in 1857, "the people of India", as K. M. Panikker observed, "made one last effort on a national scale to recover their freedom."

That urge for freedom was the basic factor which motivated the 1857 struggle is too obvious to be disputed. To suggest that religious prejudice, symbolised by the controversy over cartridges smeared with the fat of the cow or the pig (the one taboo to the Hindu and the other to the Muslim) provoked the sepoy to set the Ganga on fire would be utterly ridiculous. Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister of England, surely knew what he was talking about when he said, on 21 July 1857, in the House of Commons that the "decline and fall of empires are not affairs of greased cartridges. Such results are occasioned by adequate causes, and by an accumulation of adequate causes."

Nothing could be more correct than this. There were causes rooted deep in the soil that led to the 1857 uprising. Indians were in a despondent mood and they intensely resented the way the white man was going about his business. It did not escape the notice of whoever, black, brown or white, had not set his face against the hard facts of life. In the words of a British army officer, "there was, we repeat, in India at the time of the outbreak of the mutiny, such a breathless suspense and smothered excitement of inward feeling, among all the natives, as to what they should really do, that no human being can now at this distance of time ever realise the pent-up picture of insecurity ..that was written on every countenance. The tidal wave of the aroused feelings of a mighty nation hung as it were in the balance, not knowing exactly which way to flow. Whether it should still revert in fidelity to Great Britain...or break loose. .from the domineering spirit of haughtiness that had so long trampled upon all that was sacred to it, was, at the moment, what no man in India dared with certainty predict."



The army on the move with elephants

Britain was racing against time to consolidate its gains that had started piling up since fate and circumstances thrust Robert Clive into the possession of the subcontinent. It was in a hurry to beat into shape an empire and just did not have time to bother about the reactions of those that did not belong to the charmed circle of the recipients of largesse from it. At this stage the empire-builders were impervious to what the Indian thought and felt. They hardly took any notice of the Indian who tilled the land, slaved on the indigo plantation and for a pittance undertook to do the donkeywork for them. The white man took it for granted that India had never known what freedom was, that the Indian was unaccustomed to any existence other than that of a helot. The exhaustion of the people, their apparent servility and the demonstrative gratitude of the emerging English educated middle class convinced the Englishman that nothing could go wrong with the empire.

Unmindful of the fact that India also had a tradition of civilisation, of freedom, of rational polity, the British fondly believed, some honourable exceptions apart, that Indians were all a bunch of evil men who remained immersed in the darkness of ignorance, superstition and bigotry. They had to be rescued from this ungodly existence. Moreover, they had to be acquainted with the benign ideas of Western enlightenment. The rulers had convinced themselves that they were on a *mission civilisatrice*.

The Indian thought otherwise. He had reached the end of his tether. His patience with the intruders had exhausted and he was not particularly careful to hide it. Across the subcontinental landmass evidence kept accumulating that clearly pointed to the direction in which the wind was blowing. The Santhal rebellion and the Mopala agitation in

1855, the ferment in Oudh, and the raj's armed confrontation with the Rohillas and the Gumsurs in the Deccan and Madras respectively were only the tip of the iceberg, nine-tenths of which remained submerged. If British rule imposed a measure of superficial peace in certain areas of the country it also brought in its train the odious consequences of colonialism. There were not many takers of the idea that imperialism was the "main process by which civilisation has been diffused."

The perceptive observer could hardly fail to see that the Indians were arguing as to which method they should adopt to get rid of the British. There were "two models of political change...current in India at that time. One was the original Hindu and Muslim model" that would have the white man forcibly thrown out of the country. The other was the English educated Indian's "new and improved model" that would persuade the Briton to smoothen the country's passage ultimately to "constitutional self-government."The two sides, the native and the intruder, seemed to stand eyeball to eyeball and it was a question of time before they would clash.

A hard look at the political scene in the years between 1757 and 1857 would indicate that British rule was no substitute for peace, progress and stability. It would be idle to expect that the colonial masters came to this country only to do its children a good return. The frills and trappings on the fringe apart, British rule was given as unabashedly to tyranny and exploitation as any colonial rule anywhere. Even after nearly one hundred years of British rule this is what some missionaries had to say: "In many districts of Bengal, neither life nor property is secure, that gang-robberies of the most daring character are perpetrated annually in great numbers, with impunity, and that there are constant scenes of violence...the rural population of Bengal...commonly live in a state of poverty and wretchedness, produced chiefly by the present system of landed tenures and the extortion of *zamindars*, aggravated by the inefficiency and the cruelties of the peace-officers."

Comments are unnecessary. Nor would it serve our present purpose to dwell at length on the nature of British rule in the years preceding the uprising. Evidence could be marshalled in support of the observation that the British did not unoften put to shame the so-called oriental despot.

The fact that 1857 was a non-event in Bengal did not indicate so much the success of British arms as that of the good Lords Cornwallis and Macaulay, the authors of the Permament Settlement and English education respectively. As Lord Bentinck put it, "If security was wanting against the popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects and in most important essentials, has this great advantage, at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British dominion."

And the basic objective of the English system of education was, according to Macaulay, to create a class of brown sahibs who would operate as "interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern." The Permanent Settlement, English education and all that went with them had persuaded their beneficiaries that the liquidation of British rule would be detrimental to their interests. The fear that a successful termination of the rebellion would bring back Muslim rule inhibited Bengal from casting in its lot with the sepoys.

The 1857 struggle was an attempt at national liberation. It is just that the *dramatis personae* came from the feudal nobility and that the circumstances obliged them to rely on force to achieve freedom.

The Bengalis were apprehensive because, according to Bepin Pal, they "belonged to a generation that had seen and suffered from the anarchy and disorder of immediate pre-British rule." The establishment of British rule was supposed to have brought about qualitative changes in the situation and the Bengalis did not want that to be disturbed. Thanks to the Permanent Settlement and English education, Bengal had come to enjoy certain privileges which it loathed to risk.

It would call for a particularly warped view of history to suggest that the 1857 struggle was essentially an affair of the sepoys who had grievances of a private nature and with whom the remnants of feudalism had made common cause. There was no centralised organisation, enlightened leadership, mass participation nor any feeling of nationalism. The entire business was feudalism's last fling at recovering its lost land. As such it did not deserve Bengal's involvement.

Without going into any detailed argument it may be said that the rebellion had mass participation in a large number of places, a national leadership, though loosely constituted,and that the sepoys and their leaders readily vowed their loyalty to the rightful but dispossessed claimant to the Delhi throne. The leadership doubtless was provided by the feudal nobility. But should this be enough to merit rejection of the struggle, despite the then obtaining social, economic and political conditions, then the freedom struggles of many other countries, not excluding those of 19th century Poland, would have to be similarly treated.

In this connection one may recall what the *Hindoo Patriot*, established in 1853 and edited by Harish Chandra Mukherjee, the first Indian to distinguish himself as a journalist, from 1854 till his death in 1861, observed on 21 May 1857: "It is no longer a mutiny, but a rebellion. Perhaps, it will be said that all mutinies, when they attain a certain measure of success, rise to the dignity of rebellion. But the recent mutinies of the Bengal army have one peculiar feature—they have from the very beginning drawn the sympathy of the country. The sepoys...have hazarded all their most valuable interests; and their countrymen view them as martyrs to a holy cause and a great national cause. The mutineers have been joined and sided by the civil population .There is not a single native of India who does not feel the full weight of the grievances imposed upon him by the very existence of British rule in India—grievances inseparable from subjection to a foreign power.. At present, the conviction is ineradicably strong in the mind of every native—save the small circle in Bengal of those who have been indoctrinated into the mysteries of European civilisation—that the British government is actuated by a fixed purpose of destroying the religion of the native races and of converting them to Christianity."

The 1857 struggle was an attempt at national liberation. It is just that the *dramatis personae* came from the feudal nobility—who would deny that the "first blow to the French monarchy proceeded from the nobility"—and that the circumstances obliged them to rely on force to achieve freedom.

BYELECTIONS

A Congress(I) Debacle

A much-needed boost for the opposition

From the Lok Sabha poll to the Assembly elections in 11 states to the byelections held in April,the Congress(I)'s fortunes seem to be following a pattern of diminishing returns.The euphoria created by the triumph in the Lok Sabha, when Rajiv Gandhi bettered the record of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi and in the process battered the opposition, did not last ten weeks. When the Assembly polls wereheld, the non-Congress(I) parties had more than made up for the lost ground. In the April elections, which too were held on a national scale, with 26 Assembly and four Lok Sabha seats being contested over as many as 11 states, the Congress(I) has taken yet another drubbing.

Only seven of the 26 Assembly seats have been won by the party. While the non-Congress(I) parties have held their ground in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bengal (where the respective ruling parties have swept the poll), the Congress(I)'s showing can best be illustrated by the fact that the party was humbled at Khurda, a seat which had been won by Orissa chief minister Janaki Ballabh Patnaik in the last poll. (Mr Patnaik had won two seats, the byelection was caused by his resignation.) If chief minister J.B.Patnaik could not make the party retain a seat which he himself had won in March, then the less said about the influence of the ruling party in Orissa, the better.

Of course, in Rajasthan, after the good showing of the non-Congress(I) parties in the Assembly poll, the Congress(I) can take solace from its victory at Amber. The BJP leader, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat had won from Amber, but as he too had won two seats, elections had to be held again here. This small jubilation apart, the party's performance has been dismal. It has won two seats in Rajasthan and one each in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The Janata Party, which had emerged as the second largest national party (in terms of seats won and representation in number of states) after the Assembly poll, has won six Assembly and one Lok Sabha seat this time, thereby keeping up its number two position. The BJP has won a seat in Rajasthan and wrested the Bareilly seat from the Congress(I), defeating a former minister, Ram Singh Khanna. The Left Front's supremacy in West Bengal, the Telugu Desam's reign over Andhra Pradesh and the Janata Party's dominance in Karnataka have been reaffirmed bythe byelection results.

One opposition stalwart who has proved his standing and shown the effectiveness of United Front politics is Congress(S) president Sharad Pawar. After the Congress (Socialist)-led Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) emerged as a strong opposition party in the Maharashtra Assembly and elected Pawar as the floor leader, he resigned the Baramati Lok Sabha seat. While doing so, he proved his commitment to unity of opposition parties by letting the Janata Party contest the byelection on behalf of the PDF. The victory of Sambhajirao Kakade from Baramati is not only a personal triumph for Sharad Pawar but also an affirmation of the people's faith in United Front politics, provided the Front partners show political maturity. The Baramati results will have far reaching implications in the years to come. For one, an effective United Front approach, as opposed to a "one party-one flag-one symbol" approach may be the guiding spirit of opposition politics from now on. Moreover, the "dominant party" theory, which was the bane of non-Congress(I) party unity talks prior to the Lok Sabha poll, has received a setback, thanks to the commitment shown by the Congress(S). Apart from these, being the prominent leader of a major state like Maharashtra and a contemporary of Rajiv Gandhi in terms of age, Sharad Pawar's Baramati triumph is bound to be reflected on a national scale soon.

Sharad Pawar



The opposition parties(that is how the non-Congress-I parties have to be referred to in the national context) are in a state of total disarray. The debacle for the Congress(I), therefore, has to be seen as a sign of weakness within the party. The slow but sure erosion of the party's image is too evident: the diminishing returns in terms of recent poll performances speak for themselves. The prices have been steadily rising. The wavering over Punjab—the blow hot, blow cold approach—has given away the *mazboot hai haath, akhand hai desh*(the "hand" is strong, the nation is united) image. The tragedy of the 400-plus verdict of the Lok Sabha elections is that the Congress(I) cannot even fall back on the "strengthen the hand" slogan. The electorate had given the "hand" strength beyond the imagination of Congress(I) leaders themselves. What is needed today is a show of quick results. The spy case has blown over; the trial is being held in camera. Showbusiness may be good for sometime, but people want results.

Even more disquieting than the recent poll results are the signs of disenchantment within the ruling party. It is common knowledge among the political elite now that in March, 109 Congress(I) MPs met at the residence of a former union minister and openly criticised the functioning of the party. A close aide of the Prime Minister was the target of attack. Inaccessibility to the powers-that be is the major complaint of the party MPs. A number of old faces were dropped from Parliament and the Assemblies during the weeding out done at the time of distribution of tickets. This has also led to disenchantment in the party. The Anti-Defection Act may be able to control the elected representatives, but the party discontent can come to the forefront during the party meetings. The victory of J.K.Jain in the parliamentary party elections despite orders to defeat him is an ominous pointer. Rajiv Gandhi has to look beyond old school ties, if the popular mandate given to him has to be effective.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

PUNJAB

Uncompromising Akalis

Sant Longowal makes capital on Delhi visit



Sant Longowal

The day Prakash Singh Badal was brought to Chandigarh, the Akali Dal president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was in New Delhi, making his first scheduled visit to the capital after almost a year. Immediately after his release in March, he had passed through the capital but that was only during transit to Amritsar. This three day trip to New Delhi which began on 26 April had more political significance attached to it. Longowal had come to "see and share the grief of the Sikhs" in the areas affected by the riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984. He was also, during the course of his stay in the capital to speak at several important places including the Delhi University, the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the India International Centre, on what he thought of the situation in Punjab. It was expected therefore that Longowal's visit would be a statement of the Akali Dal's policy in the light of the latest developments itself. Major issues, it was claimed would be cleared up by the visit.

The tone was set within an hour of Longowal's arrival in New Delhi on the evening of 26 April at the house of Trilochan Singh Sarna at Punjabi Bagh in West Delhi. Amidst slogans of "Longowal *zindabad*" and "Raj karega Khalsa" Surinder Singh, the head *ragi* of the Durbar Sahib said, "Satwant Singh and Beant Singh are the saviours of the Sikh community .They killed the wicked sinner(Indira Gandhi)." He later went on to compare them to Bhakt Pralhad and said that Satwant Singh and Beant Singh had come down as God's chosen angels to rescue the Sikh community in distress. Continuing in the same vein, Surinder Singh warned that anybody who tried to harm the Sikhs would face the same fate as "that wicked sinner."

When Longowal got up to speak to the packed gathering in the Punjabi Bagh Singh Sabha *gurdwara*, he only took over where Surinder Singh had left off. "The time has come," he said "for the Sikh community to prepare for its third great battle." The first two had been fought with the Mughals and the British. Now the Sikhs must fight the "Delhi Takht," which had according to him, become prejudiced against the community and branded it secessionist and terrorist. He had a long list of complaints to make

Speaking in detail about the contributions of the Sikh community in the country, he said that they had sacrificed the most for the country: during the partition, during the wars that the nation has fought and even in peace. But he regretted that the "Dilli Sarkar" had now "systematically branded the same community as extremist and anti-Indian." He urged the Sikhs to fight this. His speech was also an indirect endorsement of whatever Surinder Singh had said before him for he made no attempt to counter or criticise the vitriolic speech of Surinder Singh. Every word of his was applauded by the people listening to him.

Sant Longowal also endorsed Gurcharan Singh Tohra's stance that the Akal Takht, destroyed during Operation Bluestar and rebuilt by Baba Santa Singh who undertook a *kar seva*, would again be demolished for the construction of a new one. He did not speak of the Akali Dal's official reaction to the steps taken by the centre. He also gave no indication whatsover of the Akali Dal's intentions to sit down for negotiations. On its part, the government too has moved in fits and starts, resorting to a concession-a-day kind of tactics which have made the Akalis wary of dealing with it. The agreement to some Akali demands have come—instead of a package deal that was promised initially— piecemeal, creating all kinds of apprehensions in the Akali mind about the "designs of the centre." The most crucial factor in Punjab is of course the restoration of confidence but far from any signs that mutual trust is beginning to build up, the centre and the Akalis are continuing to drift apart.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

ORISSA

The Beginning of the End?

Basant Biswal's revolt may prove to be costly for J.B. Patnaik

On the day the Congress(I) rebel candidate Prasanna Kumar Patsani filed his nomination papers for the crucial Khurda byelection he declared, "This is the beginning of the J.B Patnaik government's end." It was not just an emotional outburst by the saffron-clad Maharishi Mahesh Yogi devotee, who is also a reputed writer. The results of the three byelections, particularly the one in Khurda, are likely to prove to be the turning point in J.B. Patnaik's five-year-old supremacy in the state's political affairs. While the high command's attitude towards him will be a major factor, the other problem he faces is the increase in the number of disgruntled elements in the State Congress(I) who have found an opportunity to assert themselves against his leadership. The dissidents' efforts to ensure the party's debacle in all the three constituencies are too significant a factor to be overlooked by the leadership.

The strength of the dissidents increased with the entry into their ranks of Basant Kumar Biswal, once the "super chief minister" in the Patnaik ministry, who recently parted company with the chief minister when he was denied a ticket to the state Assembly. Biswal, according to sources close to him, realised that his former mentor J.B. Patnaik had joined the "plot" to oust him from power as the chief minister felt threatened by his increasing influence among the partymen including the legislators. Although Biswal has not criticised Patnaik openly, he is believed to be waiting for an opportunity to "avenge the humiliation." According to his supporters, Biswal will come out openly against Patnaik once his pressure tactics are successful.

Biswal and his supporters, including a sizable number of legislators, were happier than the opposition politicians over the Congress(I)'s debacle in the byelections. It was a way of forcing the Congress(I) leadership to recognise "the fact" that the party cannot move without them. They maintained a low profile initially but when Biswal was finally ousted they struck with all the force at their command. Biswal and his followers, particularly those who were denied renominations to the Assembly elections, did no campaigning for the Congress(I) and also worked for the



Basant Biswal

official candidate's defeat. Some of them even established contacts with the Janata Party leaders to achieve their purpose.

Patsani's candidature came as a boon to the dissidents. First, it was an opportunity for Biswal and his supporters to refurbish their images, under which Biswal, Patsani and some others were dropped from the 'candidates' list for the March polls. The Biswal faction also wanted to prove that the revenue minister Niranjan Patnaik, elder brother of the chief minister's son-in-law was no substitute for Biswal in "effective management." It was Niranjan Patnaik who was Biswal's first target. According to him, Niranjan Patnaik and a few others, including union minister K.P. Singh Deo were instrumental in ousting him from power and J.B. Patnaik sided with Niranjan Patnaik against Biswal. Unfortunately, Niranjan Patnaik's "management" of the byelections not only in Khurda and Kakatpur but also in his home district, Keonjhar, has failed miserably.

Political observers are keenly watching the next phase of relations between J.B. Patnaik and Biswal. Will the chief minister bring Biswal back as his party manager and chief adviser on government affairs? Or, will he stick to his policy and eliminate him from whatever eminent position he still enjoys in the party as the PCC(I) treasurer? If he chooses the latter course, Patnaik definitely runs the risk of losing his grip on the party which may destroy his power base. Moreover, a caste factor has begun dominating the state's political scene with the *khandayat* (farmers) uniting under the leadership of Biswal. The Biswal group's jubilation over the results of the Khurda and Kakatpur constituencies also stems from the fact that Patsani and the Janata Party candidate in Kakatpur, Surendranath Naik, are both *khandayats*.

Sarada P. Nanda, Bhubaneswar

CONGRESS(I)

A New Youth Leader

Anand Sharma succeeds Tariq Anwar

The youngest-ever member of the Rajya Sabha has now taken over as the Indian Youth Congress(I) president. Anand Sharma (32) who set a record last year by being elected to the Rajya Sabha, has succeeded Tariq Anwar, a second term Lok Sabha member as the IYC(I) chief. This is for the fourth time since 1980 that the organisation has a new head. Tariq Anwar, who had been the president since 1983, had expressed his desire to quit the post sometime back and speculation had begun about his successor two months ago. Two names which clearly stood out were those of Anand Sharma and Debaprasad Roy, both Rajya Sabha members and IYC(I) general secretaries. But an element of uncertainty crept in when a section of the party's leadership, in order to stop Sharma and Roy, put in an extraneous consideration into the selection process. It was argued that the new incumbent should be from a state which does not have a Congress(I) government, and that too preferably from the South.

In the range of choice, no such name was available. For a while, the Maharashtra youth leader, Gurudas Kamat's name was mentioned. P. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, the MP from Salem, too was considered. But Rangarajan, a former president of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) and a former general secretary of IYC (in Priya Ranjan Das Munshi's team), had been out of touch with Youth Congress affairs since 1975. He had drifted into trade unionism (and successfully led transport strikes in Madras) and a fulltime career in law. An effort was also made to induct people who were not

directly associated with the Youth Congress movement. This had the backing of a section of the leadership which had been opposed to the Youth Congress since the Sanjay Gandhi days, when the organisation had suddenly become very powerful in Congress politics.

The selection of Anand Sharma has been seen as the victory for traditional elements in the party. He has grown in the youth and student movement. Having headed the Himachal Pradesh University Union in 1973, Sharma first came into the limelight when he was made a general secretary of NSUI's central body in 1975. Three years later, in 1978, when the Congress was out of power, Sharma became the Himachal Youth Congress president. In the Janata days, he led a number of movements in Shimla. Police cases registered by the Shanta Kumar regime were not dropped against Sharma and the Himachal Youth Congress members by the regime of Ram Lal, though the Congress had returned to power. In 1981, while chief minister Ram Lal was accusing Anand Sharma of spearheading the campaign exposing forest rackets (in which Ram Lal's relatives were involved), Sharma was made a general secretary in the IYC central office. The appointment of Sharma in Delhi was seen as a triumph for the anti-Ram Lal faction in Himachal politics, headed by Veerbhadra Singh, then an union minister. After this, the anti-Ram Lal campaign was stepped up and Veerbhadra Singh was made the chief minister. (The success of the politics of this group can be judged by the fact that in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections, the Congress(I) has improved its position in 1985)



Anand Sharma (left) with Rajiv Gandhi

The choice between Anand Sharma and D. P Roy was difficult. Roy too has grown from the lower levels in the organisation in West Bengal. He has been heading the IYC's development centre, which looks after cadre training. Roy's name had come up when presidential changes were made earlier. He was also tipped for the post after Ram Chandra Rath but Ghulam Nabi Azad was appointed. Later, when Tariq Anwar replaced Ghulam Nabi Azad, Roy's name was considered again. This time, the age factor was in Anand Sharma's favour (the Youth Congress president has to be less than 35 years old). For Tariq Anwar, a position in the party's organisation is round the corner.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

FILMS

"It is a Statement Against the Criminalisation of Politics"

Ramesh Sharma, director of New Delhi Times, *tells* SUNDAY

Life can imitiate art—or even life itself—and be successful. Sitting at the India International Centre, Ramesh Sharma took out the stills from the black folder. Were they photographs of the riot scenes of Ahmedabad? Sharma's photographs were of communal riots all right. But these riots had been "staged" in Bombay's Film City, with the stills being taken by Raghu Rai.

Ramesh Sharma (34) has just finished filming his first feature film entitled *New Delhi Times* which has been described by the publicists as a political thriller. Earlier, Sharma had done a few documentaries including the prize-winning *Rumtek*, on a Sikkim monastery for which he got the President's award as well as the Commonwealth Award. SUNDAY spoke to him recently. Excerpts:

***Q**: Why is your film being called a political thriller?*

A: The film is a statement against the criminalisation of politics and the nexus between politics and industry. In India we are heading towards an insidious form of fascism without realising it—fascism in the form of democracy that is. The film tries to explore this within the structure of entertainment.

Q: What kind of democratic structures?

A: The so-called elected representatives who are supposed to serve the people make the people the instruments of their service. Whenever politicians are in trouble they end up manipulating—using the divide and rule principle—and then make it into a law and order situation. Look around: Assam, Punjab, Gujarat...in this film, Hangal who plays the father of Shashi Kapoor—he is the executive editor—tells his son that divide and rule was not a British formula: "*Hakumat ka tha*"—'and, it is being employed with as much subtlety and cleverness as during the days of the British....' *New Delhi Times* is a record of our times. The political thriller label is there as it is a murder mystery film about contemporary India.

Q: Your riots were engineered as well?

A: The riots were engineered because of the power play between two politicians. One of them realises that the best way to discredit the other group is to create a law and order situation. In small towns or in rural India the embers of communal passion are there, perhaps suppressed, but the ruthless politicians ignite them. The man in the mob or the group thinks that he is fighting for a cause, but he is being manipulated. The only rationale on the part of the



Shashi Kapoor (left), Sharmila Tagore (back to the camera) and Sharma

politician in the film is to grab power, if not through the ballot box, then by creating a division between people.

Q: Where does the investigative press come in?

A: There is this idealistic executive director, Vikas Pande, played by Shashi Kapoor. He feels that the newspaper can be a forum to expose the ruthless political chicanery. He believes that he can render a service and cleanse the country. But he ends up getting sucked into the vortex and realises, perhaps a little too late, that when men are determined to subvert democracy in order to achieve their aim, a mere journalist cannot stop their onslaught

Q: This still photograph of the politician has a very smug smile He is the winner, isn't he, in the end?

A: The film ends with a shot of him, with this smile It is a game of compromise as far as the politician is concerned—survival at all costs, in spite of the belief that the dissidents will come to certain solutions amongst themselves. Everybody else becomes the victim when the highest powers come together. They can still scream and write and think that their newspapers are mirrors reflecting the misdeeds of the politicians But that is about all.

Q: Quite a pessimistic conclusion No glimmer of hope anywhere?

A: Ultimately, people have to become aware of what has been done to them. The press can play a pivotal role by keeping a vigil... But even the most well-meaning journalists can develop blind spots, which can be exploited.

Q: Are you happy with the film?

A: Unfortunately, the structure is too commercially-oriented. I did want to reach out beyond a personal circuit Showing films in film societies or film festivals is no more than preaching to the converted. My aim is to entertain as well, and the film can be seen, I hope, on many levels I chose Shashi Kapoor and Sharmila Tagore because the former has produced some of the better Hindi films like *Junoon* and *Kalyug*, and Sharmila because she is a talented actress and has cut her teeth with Satyajit Ray. I was lucky that I had a good team. Subroto Mitra has often been accused of fastidiousness and for being slow. But then he puts in all that effort to make the film better . the stars, I think, felt that I paid more attention to the cameraman than to them but then they should realise that to me a film is as much the medium of the cameraman as much as for the actor or the director ..the director is like a conductor with a symphony orchestra, to bring out the music he wants and to integrate it at the end...the script needed a tremendous amount of visual treatment. Subroto Mitra is a perfectionist There should always be somebody in the unit who is fighting until the last moment for perfection, long after the *chalta hai* attitude creeps in

Q. Have you sold the film?

A: To overseas video and in a few territories

Interviewed by Madhu Jain

KERALA

UDF: Stronger After Survival

No-confidence motion helps UDF ministry to close ranks

Few governments have welcomed a no-confidence motion as much as the 34-month-old United Democratic Front (UDF) ministry which very effectively used the opportunity to strengthen its ranks The Congress(I), the major constituent of the UDF, has warned its minor partners that if the ministry falls, they will also vanish The strategy was more than successful as the Front gained one more member from the opposition DMKP—Sakthan Nadar—MLA—on the eve of the voting. The National Democratic Party and the Ezhava-backed Socialist Republican Party which were clamouring for the resignation of their own ministerial nominees, also voted against the motion, which was defeated.

The immediate provocation for the CPI(M) to table the no-confidence motion was the criticism against the "most corrupt ministry Kerala has ever seen," by the state Youth Congress(I) president and MLA, G. Karthikeyan. The opposition felt that Karthikeyan was only voicing the feeling of the high command. They did not guess that it was part of CM Karunakaran's strategy to end the bickering among the small but crucial constituents of the Front.

The opposition realised their folly a day before the debate was to begin and this was reflected in the performance of its debators including the otherwise acid-tongued M.V Raghavan, of the CPI(M) who had tabled the motion. By defeating the no confidence motion (the second in its three year stint), the UDF has won for itself some respite from squabbles and will attempt to whitewash its image sullied by unproved corruption allegations.

The opposition's allegations of corruption were confidently refuted by treasury benchers who challenged the opposition to go to the anti-corruption cell formed by the government What dominated the two-day debate coming at the end of the budget session was the performance of the Jyoti Basu government in West Bengal. At least four ruling Front speakers including KPCC(I) president C. Padmarajan quoted from a

recent issue of *The Illustrated Weekly of India* which had reported on the suspension of veteran Marxist leader Manoranjan Hazra following his charges against the party leadership in the Bengali daily *Bartaman*. However, the Marxist leader K.R. Gowri further weakened the opposition cause by pleading for the slowing down of revenue recovery proceedings against liquor company owners McDowell's in Palghat. Gowri argued that the government should not have let the arrears stockpile to nearly Rs nine crores. Ruling Front speakers quickly grabbed the opportunity to mock the new-found capitalist friend of the Marxist party. "I could have understood if Gowriamma was arguing the case of poor toddy tappers," ridiculed IUML member Seetni Haji.

It was left to Baby John of the RSP and E.K. Nayanar to rescue the opposition's case. Both had statistics to support their charge of maladministration and the resultant financial squeeze the state was passing through. The treasury benchers pointed to the financial situation in West Bengal as a reply. Nayanar said that his party had not accepted the anti-corruption cell as it was a facade as all their suggestions regarding its composition were vetoed. The MLAs said that the aim of their party is to establish a single party rule in the state which is the only way out from the political morass the state is now in. But with scores of parties with their own pockets of influence which are mainly communal, the chances of either the CPI(M) or the Congress(I) being able to grow out of the unholy alliances they have now, are dim. If either of them try to go it alone the other Front will sail through with communal backing. And at the moment none of them are in a mood to risk it.

Binoo K. John, Trivandrum

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Will the Abdullahs Reunite?

Behind-the-scenes moves are on for a patch-up between the estranged members of the late Sheikh Abdullah's family, although positions taken by the two warring sides suggest that these moves will not materialise, at least for the time being.

Tariq Abdullah who defied his elder brother on the eve of the latter's ouster last July and became a propagandist for the breakaway wing of the National Conference headed by their sister Begum Khalida Shah has again come into the former chief minister's fold. He has not only apologised to Farooq Abdullah for what he did during the past few months but has also sought his forgiveness. Some family members, including the Abdullahs' younger sister Begum Suraiya Mattoo, are happy over Tariq's "homecoming." But Farooq Abdullah believed that the damage done by Tariq would be hard to set right. His "homecoming" has not made any difference at least for Farooq Abdullah. It may have caused embarrassment to Shah and his Congress(I) allies who had made it a point to overplay Tariq's unconvincing utterances.

According to sources close to the Sheikh's family, Tariq Abdullah had held a series of meetings with Farooq Abdullah before formally announcing his decision to quit the ruling National Conference and as director of the prestigious Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Complex late last month. This was seen as a bid to reunite the family. But as admitted by Tariq Abdullah himself, his endeavours could not succeed "because of the positions taken by the two sides." The criticism of the split in the ruling family has been worrying some family members and their well-wishers. This is why Begum Khalida has also been trying hard to meet Farooq Abdullah and their mother Begum Akbar Jehan in order to mend fences with the two. Though she could not meet her brother as he was "not willing to see his traitorous sister," Begum Khalida succeeded in meeting her mother a few times. They met at the residence of Begum Suraiya Mattoo, who is married to a practising doctor and is also showing a keen interest in attempts to bring the family together. She also believes that the family feud has tarnished the reputation of the Sheikh's family and says she is pained because of criticism against the family in Kashmir.



Tariq Abdullah



Farooq Abdullah

But Shah's son Muzaffar Shah claims that it was Farooq Abdullah who has been trying hard to make it up with his sister and brother-in-law. Whatever be the case, the fact remains the Sheikh's family is divided today. Begum Khalida Shah, also president of the ruling National Conference broke off with Farooq Abdullah a year ago in support of her husband Ghulam Mohammad Shah, who had differences with Farooq Abdullah. The Sheikh's family was split in two groups following the parting of ways. While Begum Sheikh Abdullah and her daughter Begum Suraiya Mattoo and her younger son Mustafa Kamal, also a doctor, supported Farooq Abdullah, Tariq Abdullah sided with his elder sister Begum Khalida. Now Tariq is back into his elder brother's fold and publicly supports his cause.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

DOWRY DEATHS

When Justice Triumphed

The killers of Debjani Banik are sentenced to death

On 11 April in Calcutta, the additional sessions judge sentenced to death Chandranath Banik and his son Chandan Banik for murdering Debjani, Chandan Banik's wife on 28 January 1983. The three other accused—Ashim and Sumitra Banik and Jayanti Das—son and daughters of Chandranath Banik were given life sentences. Bitra Banik, a minor daughter of Chandranath Banik will be tried by the juvenile court.

The judgment created a sensation in the city as it was a clear case of "bride murder" which is on the rise even in a "progressive" state like West Bengal. Judge D.N. Sen, while delivering the 87-page judgment observed, "This case will go down in the history of crime... It is not only unique for its magnitude and brutality in killing a housewife of a so-called millionaire living in a multistoreyed building but also the subsequent conduct displayed by the accused. Even after killing the housewife they could merrily go on taking their food, keeping the dead body wrapped up in beddings."

Debjani Banik alias Banu was the only daughter of Dhanapati Dutta, a businessman from Burdwan. In August 1975, she was married to Chandan Banik, the owner of a multistoreyed building in Hindustan Park, a posh locality in South Calcutta. The relations between the two families turned sour in 1978 when Debjani's elder brother refused to marry her younger sister-in-law, which Chandranath Banik considered an insult to his family. Matters grew worse over the years over a clash of business interests between the two families. Tension mounted when Chandan Banik started a cold storage in Burdwan with the help of a bank loan. After the business failed and losses accumulated, Chandan Banik was left with a debt of Rs 68 lakhs. It was at this juncture that he and his father started pressurising Debjani to make her father buy 25 per cent of the shares of the cold storage. But Dhanapati Dutta, Debjani's father refused.

On 28 January, 1983 the Banik family held a *puja* at home. Chandan Banik began abusing his wife from the morning. Desperate, she rang up her father in Burdwan and pleaded with him for the money. "*Baba, tumi aamar katha rakle na.*" (Father, you didn't keep my word)," she sobbed over the phone. That was the last time she spoke to her family. The telephone was snatched away by her father-in-law who started abusing Mr Dutta. That day, at 2.45 pm both Chandan Banik and his father began beating up Debjani Banik while her brother-in-law Ashim and her sister-in-laws, Jayanti and Sumitra looked on. Hearing her cries, the servants came running but were sent away by Sumitra. Even the priest who had come to perform the ceremonies was shocked by Debjani's cries. Later, the servants and the priest gave valuable evidence before the court, unlike in other such cases where it is difficult to mobilise even a single witness.

Around 4.30 pm, Debjani Banik's lifeless body was hung from a ceiling fan. According to the post-mortem report she had died of head injuries and other injuries, ante-mortem and homicidal, and the hanging was post-mortem in nature. That evening and the next morning, Chandranath Banik turned away the maid who had come to work on the pretext that there was a *puja*. On 29 January, Chandan Banik and his father withdrew Rs one lakh from a bank and visited their family physician Dr A.K. Banerjee for a death certificate for their maid. He refused on the grounds that he had never treated her before. In fact, Dr Banerjee's evidence also played an important part in the case.

That night, the Gariahat police station received an anonymous call informing the OC that there was a dead body in the Banik's house. When the police arrived, all the lights in the house had been switched off and the door bolted. The police broke into the house with the help of the fire brigade. Guided by a foul smell, the police discovered the decomposed body under a folded cot piled up with mattresses. Debjani Banik's three sisters-in-law refused to identify the body. Chandan Banik, his father and younger brother Ashim were missing. It was Nandan Banik, another brother of Chandan Banik who identified the body of Debjani Banik as that of his elder brother's wife. Finally, on 2 February, Chandan Banik and his father were arrested. They had been hiding in a hotel in Calcutta under assumed names.

The case has created immense public interest in the city. Large crowds gathered in the court room during the proceedings. What kept public interest alive was that it was a case of "bride murder," which had taken place, in a rich and "respectable family." Various women's organisations held demonstrations in the court premises demanding severe punishment for the guilty. Members of one organisation even assaulted Chandan Banik and his father in the court premises.

Initially, Justice Sen was forced to conduct the case inside the Alipur Central Jail because of the misbehaviour by the accused, who on many occasions, tried to disrupt the proceedings. On the day the judgment was announced, large crowds gathered to hear the verdict. Representatives of the Forum for Women against Repression stood for hours shouting slogans against bride burning and oppression against women. One young man, impressed by this



Chandranath Banik (face covered) after the verdict

show of solidarity, told SUNDAY, "These women did not even know Debjani. But they stood for hours to hear the judgment. Until we have such women in our families, we will continue to see our sisters die the same way (as Debjani)." A 65-year-old court official said, "In my lifetime I've not seen such beastliness. It serves the two of them (Chandan and his father) right. They should be butchered for torturing their *bahu*."

The first time anyone accused in a "bride murder" case was given capital punishment was in Delhi, in May 1983, when Sudha Goel, then nine months pregnant was burnt to death by her husband, mother-in-law and brother-in-law for not giving a dowry of Rs 10,000 and other gifts. While giving the judgment, the additional judge, Mr S.M. Aggarwal said, "The gravity of the crime has shaken me." The Delhi High Court, however, reversed the judgment and acquitted



Debjani Banik Courtesy Aajkaal

the three persons despite the incriminating evidence given by the neighbours that had led to the conviction. Fearing a reversal of the death sentence in Debjani's case too, a spokeswoman of the Forum for Women against Repression said, "We are not blood-thirsty. But we do demand speedy trials and exemplary punishments which we hope will act as a deterrent. Our aim is to eradicate this evil. Judgments like this play only a minor role in this fight." The fight is likely to be long and arduous. Ironically, the day the judgment was given, two brides died under "mysterious circumstances" and a lecturer of the Indian Statistical Institute severely beat up his wife but she escaped with multiple fractures. Said a spokeswoman of the Forum, "Our aim is not only to seek exemplary punishments of those guilty of murdering brides. We must remember that harassment and violence do not always lead to death but often transform the lives of millions of women into a living nightmare."

Rajashri Dasgupta, Calcutta

RAJASTHAN

A Degree of Fraud

Fake thesis by senior doctor in a leading hospital

A man who obtained a doctorate degree on the basis of a fake thesis has been made in-charge of the pathological laboratory in Sawai Man Singh (SMS) hospital: the largest hospital of the state. The PhD degree, which was awarded to Mr P.C. Thanvi, a bio-chemist in the hospital in 1979, was withdrawn by the university of Rajasthan, in October last year. An advertisement to this effect was also inserted by the university in local newspapers on 24 October 1983.

The university's decision to withdraw the degree was based on the findings of an enquiry commission headed by a High Court judge: Justice P.D. Kudal. The commission was appointed by the Chancellor of the university to find out the truth about the charges made by certain complainants that the thesis submitted by Mr Thanvi was based on experiments which were never conducted. Justice Kudal specifically mentioned that the experiments mentioned in the thesis were never conducted, even the patients on whom the experiments were claimed to have been conducted were never admitted to the hospital. The enquiry commission held that not only Mr Thanvi but his guide Dr S.D. Bhardwaj, professor and head of the department of bio-chemistry in the SMS medical college, Jaipur was also equally to blame for submitting such an imaginary and false thesis.

Despite the fact that the university had cancelled the PhD degree and demoted him because of unsatisfactory work, he was promoted to the post of superintending bio-chemist, a post which has a direct bearing on the health and lives of patients through an alleged high-level conspiracy involving senior officials of the secretariat and the principal of the Jaipur medical college.

The promotion of Mr Thanvi was exposed by Dr Hari Singh, a Congress(I) MLA, in a letter to the then CM Shiv Charan Mathur on 14 November 1984. Dr Hari Singh is himself a reputed surgeon and before joining politics had worked in the SMS medical college. When the post of senior bio-chemist was being upgraded to the post of superintending bio-chemist, Dr Singh had written to the CM saying "It appears that the post was being upgraded to promote Mr P.C. Thanvi who was found guilty by a commission of inquiry headed by a sitting judge of the Rajasthan High Court." The CM had assured the MLA that action would soon be taken and called for the file from the medical department. On 23 January 1984, Dr Singh informed the CM that "Despite your having summoned the file from the department, the medical department has promoted Mr Thanvi." When the CM did not reply, Dr Singh wrote another letter to Shiv Charan Mathur on 14 November 1984 saying that "no chief minister would tolerate that his direction should be flouted by the lower functionaries in this mischievous manner." The CM then appointed a senior IAS official, Mr N.K. Verma, to go through the whole affair and submit a report.

Mr Verma's report makes startling revelations. He says that the creation of a second post of a superintending bio-chemist in the SMS medical college hospital was totally uncalled for especially because the other four medical college hospitals do not even have a senior bio-chemist. The report clearly states that the decision to upgrade the post was taken flouting all the relevant rules. The minister was completely kept in the dark in this regard and the department of personnel was also deliberately kept away from the selection process. Even the prescribed qualifications were altered to accommodate Mr Thanvi without approval from the appropriate authority. Interestingly, Mr Verma says in his report, the so-called selection committee met on 24 October 1983 and selected Mr Thanvi for the post of superintending bio-chemist even before the post was sanctioned. The board made the selection even without examining the confidential reports of Mr Thanvi. Mr Verma says in his report that "Mr Thanvi was discharged from the post of senior bio-chemist in 1980 since his performance in the post during probation was not found satisfactory. He was discharged from the junior post on the grounds of unsatisfactory performance. Ironically, on

the basis of the same record he has been considered suitable for the higher post of superintending biochemist. Moreover, Mr P.C. Thanvi has been found guilty of moral turpitude in submitting a fake thesis by a commission of enquiry."

Mr Verma categorically stated in his report that the promotion was fraudulently back-dated. "This was done cumulatively by a number of officers after the receipt of instructions from the CM's secretariat. It shows a planned conspiracy to favour Mr Thanvi. The falsification of government records and cheating the CM constitute a grave misconduct and call for deterrent action," he said.

Without noting the CM's instructions on the relevant file, the proposal was submitted to the health minister for the approval of the new post and Mr Thanvi's appointment. The minister sanctioned the proposal on 28 December but it was forged and changed to 28 October. Mr Verma's finding is backed by the report of the State Forensic Laboratory which clearly states that the original date beneath the signature of the health minister had been tampered with and altered. The conspiracy did not end with it. The orders of the creation of the post and appointment of Mr Thanvi were also back-dated to 28 October 1983. The copies of the order were shown to have been addressed to the accountant-general, principal, medical college and superintendent, SMS hospital. On enquiry, Mr Verma found that no such letters dated 28 October 1983 were received either in the accountant-general's office or by the superintendent, SMS hospital. And the ones said to have been received by the principal, medical college, were not entered in the college receipt register.

What is more intriguing is that fresh letters with the same contents were issued and sent to the same addresses again on 1 December 1983. All the addressees had received them on 3 December, 1983. Mr Verma says that the letter dated 28 October was in fact backdated to complete the formality but copies were not sent to the AG office and SMS hospital or else it would have exposed the mischief. The fresh letters were sent on 1 December to make the records complete.

Mr Verma's report is proved true from another fact that the joining report of Mr Thanvi claimed to have been signed by him on 2 November 1983 was received in the AG office on 27 December 1983 and the one with the principal, medical college had not been noted in the college register. This clearly shows that the charge report was also backdated to complete the conspiracy. "If Mr Thanvi has taken over charge on 2 November 1983, as indicated by the charge report, his salary for the month of November 1983, would have been drawn for the upgraded post in the salary bill for the month of November 1983 itself and there was no necessity of drawing the same through an arrear bill," Mr Verma observes.

The report of Mr Verma was submitted on 16 July 1984 to the chief secretary but has so far not attracted any action and Mr Thanvi continues to give reports regarding vital pathological tests of the patients.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

RELIGION

Spreading the Prophet's Word

A world Hadith and Seerath conference on the sayings and actions of Prophet Mohammed was held in Hyderabad for the first time. The four-day conference was organised by the Dar-ul-Uloom, Hyderabad, a religious centre of higher learning and the Deeni Taleemi trust. More than 200 delegates from all parts of the country as well as 20 representatives from UAE, Qatar and Jordan attended the conference. The inaugural function began with the Friday *namaz* (prayers) in the public gardens led by the chief guest, the Imam of Ka'aba (Mecca) Fazilatul Sheikh Abdul Rehman Bin Abdul Azis. The four main sessions of the conference held in Arabic, Urdu, English and a symposium in Telugu dealt with various theological aspects of the Prophet Mohammed's life and teachings. The speakers took up particular aspects of the Prophet's life, quoting various authorities in their research papers. In the concluding session, the conference passed three resolutions relating to Muslim personal law, wakf boards and an institution of religious learning in Hyderabad.

Presiding over the English language session, Hashim Ali, vice-chancellor of Osmania University said that there was a great need to make an authentic compilation of the *Hadith* (sayings) and *Seerath* (actions) of Prophet Mohammed. The Prophet's life and actions were a living testimony of what the *Quran* has taught mankind. Of the thousands of sayings that were attributed to the Prophet, only 7,000 *Hadith* are authenticated. Many sayings and anecdotes had been attributed to the Prophet by tradition, but were actually not authentic. Therefore, there was a need to collect the authentic *Hadiths* and *Seeraths* of the Prophet into a compendium to be published for the benefit of Muslims as well as non-Muslims. A delegate from Kuwait, Sayed Ahmed Al Saleh said that a true Muslim was the follower of the *Quran*, the *Hadith* and the *Seerath* and conformed to the *Sunnat* (Prophet's traditions) and the *Shariat* (Islamic law) in their real spirit. Islam was not a theoretical religion or a set of conceptual beliefs but was a practical code of conduct and character. The Imam of Mecca said that the Muslim youth of today was responsible for preserving their religious faith while the *Ulema* (theologians) had the task of equipping the youth with the necessary religious knowledge and moral values. The Imam exhorted the Muslim youth to adopt the Islamic teachings in all walks of life and to keep themselves away from the forces of discord and disunity

The conference in its three resolutions urged the government of India not to interfere with the *Shariat*. The Shariat is unalterable and the government had given an assurance that it would not bring any changes in the Muslim personal law. The conference resolved that proper protection should be available for wakf properties which were being encroached upon or being misused by unscrupulous persons. The wakf boards were not equipped to deal with the encroachers. In its third resolution, the conference said that the Daarat-ul-Maarif, the Arabic Academy of Research, Translation and Publication at Osmania University had been doing excellent work in the preservation of rare Arabic manuscripts and religious literature. It urged the central government and the state government to provide funds

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad

POLITICS

The Demand for Gorkhaland

The Gorkha Front wants a separate state within India

The Darjeeling based Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) has sought the assistance of major world powers and the United Nations to persuade India, Nepal and the United Kingdom (UK) to abrogate the Indo-Nepal and British-Nepal treaties of 1950, and conclude new ones, which would clearly specify the political and legal status of Indian Gorkhas. The ambiguity in the existing treaties have subjected them to "apartheid and genocide." according to Mr Subash Ghising , the GNLF president. Ghising has also demanded the formation of a separate state of Gorkhaland within India which he said would solve the problems of the Indian Gorkhas, and organised a "boycott" of all the Assembly and Parliamentary elections since 1980. The proposed Gorkhaland state, according to GNLF maps, would include the Darjeeling hill areas, Siliguri Terai and Jalpaiguri Dooars extending right upto Sankosh river bordering Assam. It would cover an area of 2256 sq. miles with a population of about 14 lakhs including nine lakh Nepalis.

Ghising, a Darjeeling based politician has been called a Nepali agent trying to wreck the movement on constitutional recognition of the Nepali language in India, something he has no sympathy for. Sources close to the Nepal administration claim that he is an Indian agent trying to foment trouble among the Nepalis.

Ghising's memorandum to the King of Nepal and Indian authorities m December 1983 on the treaty revision issue has failed to evoke any response from either side. He has, therefore, invited "rightful opinion and the helping hands" of China, USSR, USA, France, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan to raise the issue in the Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and the European Commission of Human Rights. He has also asked the three concerned parties—the UK, Nepal and India—to do the same. Copies of the 1983 memorandum containing a case history of the Gorkha problems have been forwarded to all these countries. The memorandum said that there were three categories of Gorkhas living in India—descendants of aboriginal Gorkhas who were inhabitants of the land in North Bengal ceded to British India by Nepal under the Sugaulee treaty of 1815, those who spontaneously migrated to India after the "humiliating treaty," and those who "officially" joined the British (and subsequently Indian) Gorkha regiments since1885. It may be mentioned here that the bulk of the Nepal nationals who are recruited in the British and Indian Gorkha regiments settle in India after retirement.

Ghising told SUNDAY that since it was virtually impossible to distinguish between Indian Gorkhas and nationals of Nepal, the Gorkhas who settle in India are treated as foreigners in India with the "damaging existing treaties" clearly making them subjects of the Nepal king. He also severely criticised the British for failing to hold a plebiscite in the "ceded land" before leaving India.

Ghising, an ex-serviceman himself, is known for his militant outlook. He has of late concentrated his efforts on some 30,000 ex-servicemen, living in this region, constantly reminding them not to forget their training and discipline and to remain alert to fight for the just cause. His message is loud and clear—the Gorkhas have been traditionally fighting other peoples' war, it may be time to fight one for themselves.

Tapas Mukherjee, Darjeeling

RAJASTHAN STATE LOTTERY

The Bubble Which Has Burst

Mismanagement has dealt a crippling blow to the scheme

The Rajasthan State Lottery which created a first by announcing a bumper prize of Rs one crore in 1983 is itself on the verge of bankruptcy. The much-publicised "Satyam" draw of the lottery has been aborted and the state government is on the point of losing crores of rupees due to mismanagement.

The Rajasthan Lottery created a sensation in the lottery world in 1983 when it first started the "Satyam" draw with a prize of Rs two lakhs on a ticket valued at Re one only. The prize money multiplied in no time and in May 1983 the lottery's 83rd Holi bumper draw had a prize of Rs 30 lakhs. For another bumper draw, the prize money was a staggering Rs one crore and one lakh for a ticket of Rs ten. The tickets sold out and had to be purchased in the black market.

The going for the Rajasthan State Lottery was too good to last. Suddenly, things started to move in reverse gear. The goodwill of the Rajasthan Lottery which was at its peak last year touched rock-bottom when the recently-introduced "Shivam" weekly draw was cancelled before two months of its operation. Take, for example, what happened to the Holi bumper draw on 3 January this year. The lotteries department had announced that 48 lakh tickets worth Rs ten each would be released for sale. The Governor, O.P. Mehra, released the first lot of tickets at an elaborate function. The second lot of tickets were subsequently released at the state department's sale camps at Calcutta, Patna, Guwahati, Lucknow, Delhi, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Vijayawada, Madras and Jaipur. This time the response from the public was not as overwhelming. Only 16.5 lakh tickets could be sold from the first lot and not a single ticket was sold from the second. Consequently, the sale of the third lot of tickets had to be called off. The department had hoped to raise money to the tune of Rs four crores but the amount earned by the government through sale of tickets was a paltry Rs 1.6 crores.

Since the once-prized Rajasthan Lottery tickets were no longer in demand, the government tried to find a way out of the imbroglio. On the department's suggestion, the state government amended the lottery guidelines of 1968, which unlike the previous rules authorised the department to include even unsold tickets in the draw. This meant that the scope of the draw was enlarged to all the tickets printed by the department, a clear violation of the earlier guideline that only tickets which had been sold would be eligible for prizes. The Holi bumper draw had, however, been announced at a time when the earlier guidelines were applicable. Aggrieved with the amendment, a buyer of the ticket approached the Rajasthan High Court and obtained a stay order on

the draw of the lottery till the case was decided. The case will come up for hearing on 8 May this year.

Whether the amendment in lottery guidelines is valid or not will only be clear once the court's decision is available, but what are the reasons which led to the lottery fiasco? SUNDAY approached Dharam Singh Sagar, director of the lotteries department to find out. Dharam Singh put the blame squarely on the lottery agents who had been approached for the sale of tickets. "Agents from all over the country had promised us their help and cooperation. Now they have deserted us," he complained.

The agents, however, blame the department. They said that the imposition of sales tax had nothing to do with the poor sale of lottery tickets. "If that is so, why are other lotteries surviving and recording higher sales?" demanded one agent.

The Rajasthan government which earned Rs 2.5 crores from lotteries in 1983-84 may end up losing an equal amount this year. The department has also been blamed for running the lotteries in a slipshod manner. According to the agents, the prize money was not being handed out in time.

If the High Court strikes down the amendment, the state department will lose up to Rs 1.5 crores. In case the court upholds the amendment as valid, the government will lose about Rs 50 lakhs besides losing the confidence of the agents and the common man. A bitter war will start between the agents, the ticket-holders and the lotteries department if the court decides to give ticket-holders back their money. If that happens, the question that will be asked is: who will refund the money to those who purchased the tickets? According to Sagar, the department is not bothered with the problem since the "public had bought tickets from agents and not from us. But we will take the matter to court.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

FRANCE

The Rise of Racism

The neo-Nazi National Front gains in strength

It is perhaps ironical that the ultra-right wing parties in France, including the neo-Nazi National Front, are strengthening their position since Francois Mitterrand, the Socialist leader was elected President of the republic in 1981. Political observers, however, feel that the election of a Socialist as President, in place of the Gaullist Giscard d'Estaing, has led to a right-wing backlash in France, which has seen a plurality of parties since World War II.

But this time, the right-wing backlash looks serious, as was witnessed by the major gains in the municipal elections made by the "National Front" last year. The demands of the National Front are simple: curbing the influx of immigrants from the non-EEC countries and the repatriation of immigrant workers. The "immigrants" in France are principally the Algerians and Moroccans.

The recent success of the National Front in the local elections has alarmed not only Mitterrand's Socialists, but the centrist parties including the neo-Gaullist party Rassamblement pour la Republique (RPR) and the centre-right party Union pour la Democracie Francaise (UDF). Two weeks ago, these two groups joined hands in the French Parliament (National Assembly) to oppose the plan of the Socialists to introduce major reforms in the law governing municipal elections. The Socialist reforms would have led to proportional representation in the local elections, thus making it difficult for the right-wing groups, especially the National Front, to gain ascendancy through direct elections,



President Mitterrand: Pro-immigrants

as they did last year. Whilst the RPR and the UDF have vowed to fight the Socialist government's reforms, they are also worried by the challenge posed by the neo-fascist elements

Meanwhile, the situation has been further complicated by President Mitterrand'ssuggestion that the immigrants (mostly Algerian and Moroccan unskilled workers) would have the right to vote in local elections. Addressing the annual conference of the League of Human Rights, the President said, "The participation of immigrants in local government seems to me to be a just and fundamental demand which should be met. It will inevitably become a law one day." This brought an immediate retort from Jean le Canuet, leader of the UDF and one of the best known right-wing French politicians apart from former President Giscard d' Estaing, who said, "However generous the French people may be, they cannot accept that their villages and towns will be run by virtue of the votes which would come from foreigners."

Giving immigrants who have lived in France for at least five years, the right to vote (as they have in Britain), was one of the "propositions" in Mitterrand's campaign for the Presidential election. However, his mention of the "proposition" has brought a sudden adverse reaction from Le Canuet and it is expected that it will provoke another virulent campaign by the National Front and other rightist elements, who have campaigned for the last 20 years for the refusal of civic rights, including the right to vote, to immigrants workers.

To combat the rise in neo-fascist feelings in France, a left-wing anti-racist group "SOS Racism" has been formed. This organisation has revealed the results of a public opinion poll conducted by an independent research body in November. According to this survey, 61 per cent of the people questioned said that there were too many immigrants in France: 85 per cent of the people felt that immigrants without work permits should be sent back; 74 per cent felt that French citizens should be given priority over immigrants in jobs and over 26 per cent agreed with the stand of the National Front on immigration.

It is unfortunate that such racist feelings have arisen since World War II in a country which gave the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity to human history. The irony is even greater when one remembers that these very countries took the lead in the war against Fascism and Nazism which stood for Racism.

Peter Pendsay, Paris

SPOTLIGHT

Another Gandhi

When he walked into the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS) office in New Delhi, clad in a white *dhoti*, wearing round spectacles, supporting himself with a walking stick, with not a strand of hair on his head, journalists thought they had had one too many. For, the person was a living likeness of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. It was only later, after they had recovered, did the journalists realise that the person was too young to be Gandhi. Naushad, who has been painstakingly cultivating the image of Gandhi, is only 29 years old. This young man from Cochin (he was a transporter in the Cochin Port Trust) has seen Attenborough's *Gandhi* eight times in an effort to emulate Ben Kingsley in the depiction of the person who led this country to freedom. Naushad even keeps his weight down to 52 kgs (Gandhi's steady weight), has become a vegetarian and has visited Porbander and travelled through Gujarat. He now plans to set up a centre for Gandhism in Kerala. But if any state in the country needs a Gandhi today, it is the Mahatma's home state, Gujarat.



Naushad: amazing likeness

Designed for Success

This time, designer Bina (Lalvani) Ramani made an exit from New Delhi. Her goodbye to India after a three-month stopover to gather her autumn stock for New York where she lives and where she offers Americans "sequence, shine and glitter," was an adventurously "ethnic" dinner. And on display were exotic *ghararas*, and beads (and some of the Janpath finery was assembled too), imaginatively arranged by Ms Ramani. Old brocade sarees had been transformed into cocoon-type coats and worn over silk *salwars* and shimmering evening gowns. This according to Bina Ramani, is "traditional delivered in a Western way." And it seems that Ms Ramani has a lot of horse sense as well—the clothes were hung on antique horse heads borrowed from a friendly antique dealer. Though glitter is still gold in the world of *haute couture*, it may not always be attractive and Ms Ramani has to continuously think of new ways to cater for the "adventurous women" as she describes her clientele. Ramani sells wholesale to Bonwit Teller, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale, but Europe is also coming on her map with Dior. Even though fashion is her business, Bina Ramani has other interests too: she dabbles in the occasional bit of journalism. Her most well-known achievement in this field was a free-wheeling interview with Mrs Indira Gandhi, in the course of which the late Prime Minister talked about her culinary talents.



Bina Ramani: fashionable

Poetic Justice

Kamala Das, whose autobiography *My Story* created ripples in the literary world, has now added another feather to her already overcrowded cap: she has won the Kumara Asan World Prize for poetry Ms Das, who writes in Malayalam under the pen name Madhavikutty, has been awarded the prize for her collection of 88 poems called *Kamala Das Collected Poems Vol I*. The award, one of the most distinguished awards of the third world, was instituted in 1981 and among its recipients are Leopold Sedar Senghor, Nicholas Guillen and John Wright. And Kamala Das' reaction on receiving this award? "After working hard for an examination you expect good results," she told SUNDAY.

Like Father, Like Son

Like father, like son. This is perhaps the most fitting way to describe Colonel S.P. Wahi, chairman of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) and his son, Captain Wahi, serving with the Indian army For, when Colonel Wahi was awarded a doctorate by the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, in January this year, his son was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal by the army The Colonel has been rewarded for increasing the production of ONGC three-fold during the three years that he has been its chairman. For Colonel Wahi, honours seem to come in pairs: he was also recently awarded the plaque of honour for his outstanding contribution to the petroleum industry by Pi Epsilon Tau: the USA's national petroleum engineering honours society. Wahi, incidentally, is now the seniormost public sector manager.

Morphine: Now in Tablet Form



Morphine will pretty soon be coming in tablet form rather than be administered by injection. Experiments at a hospital near Liverpool in England have shown that morphine can be successfully administered in the form of a tablet. But, instead of swallowing the tablet, the patient is instructed to keep it in his mouth, in the space between the front teeth and the upper lip. In this position the tablet dissolves quite slowly, in about five or six hours, and the morphine is absorbed through the mouth into the bloodstream. This unusual method is claimed to have advantages over other methods. Apart from avoiding the needle—and also the expense of a disposable hypodermic syringe—it is said to be more effective than an injection and less likely to produce side-effects such as nausea and dizziness. Although the tablet may take upto six hours to dissolve, it begins to be effective within half-an-hour and goes on working for longer than an injection. The Liverpool doctors reporting the experiment in *Lancet*, say that their below-the-lip tablet has the advantage of an under-the-tongue tablet in dissolving more slowly—and, therefore, lasting longer in its effect—and of being less likely to be inadvertently swallowed.

In the experiments, the patients did not in fact escape the needle. In the interests of impartiality, each one was given both a tablet and an injection. However, those who received real morphine in the tablet had only water in the injection, while those receiving a genuine injection of morphine got only a dummy tablet. Inthis way, all patients thought they were treated alike and possible psychological effects were avoided.

Self-medication



Chimpanzees choose the foliage of a certain plant because it contains a potent antibiotic, according to research by a group of American, Japanese and Canadian scientists. Interestingly, chimpanzees may sample as many as 300 different types of plant in a year. But chimps approach three closely related species of *aspilia*, a member of the daisy family, in an unusual manner. They carefully select a single leaf from such plants and swallow it whole. Such a behaviour prompted a team of scientists led by E. Rodriguez to analyse the foliage. Their suspicions were strengthened by reports that many traditional African herbal remedies employ related species of *aspilia*. A preparation from the roots of one species is said to be effective against lumbago, sciatica and neuralgia and the leaves of another are used to treat sores, stomach complaints and coughs. The researchers' hunch proved correct. *Aspilia* contains an antibiotic called thiarubrine A which is a powerful germicide and effective against a range of common bacteria. It is also capable of terminating the careers of parasites, such as roundworms and flukes.

Aggressive Creatures



American scientists have discovered that lobsters, known for their aggressive tendencies, may hold the key to controlling mood swings of manic-depressive humans. The neuro-hormone serotonin is found in almost all animals; while it circulates in the lobster's bloodstream, in human beings it is isolated in the brain. When serotonin is injected into lobsters it appears to cause a "postural change that has been associated with aggressive behaviour." Research on the neuro-hormone serotonin may also have a significant effect on the commercial lobster industry.

Tapping Wind Power

Britain is to establish a national test centre to speed the development of new machines that will tap what is now believed to be the most attractive source of renewable energy: wind power. The National Wind Turbine Test Centre is being set up by the National Engineering Laboratory on a windy moorland ridge 330 metres above sea level, some nine kilometres from its headquarters at East Kilbride, just outside Glasgow in Scotland. The test site now being constructed has an open outlook on all sides with the land sloping away to the coast some 50 km away. It is planned to have three universal test pads, each capable of taking machines with sweeps or blades up to 20 metres in diameter. A 50-metre high meteorological tower will have wind speed instruments spaced at various heights, and similarly equipped portable masts will be placed immediately up wind of each windmill on test. NEL plans to use the test ground for small and medium-size wind turbines of upto about 100 kilowatts output.

Understanding Labels



A team of researchers at the university of Western Australia, Perth, has been successful in helping children who cannot read differentiate between harmless and dangerous products. Teaching a child who cannot read to understand labels—red triangles, crosses, snakes and skulls—is difficult. The problem is that although young children can be taught their significance, they quickly forget what they stand for. In an experiment, the researchers, Robert Grieve and Eileen Williams, used red crosses and a rather different symbol: the unhappy face of a crying child. They wanted to find out whether a group of children who could not read, could remember what they meant. The research showed that although the children could initially grasp what both indicated with equal ease, within a week a good number had forgotten what the red cross stood for. On the other hand, none of them forgot what the unhappy face meant.

Illustrations: Subrata Gangopadhyaya

BEGINNING 5 MAY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Businessmen should not hesitate to take up challenging ventures. Creative writers and lawyers will also find this phase favourable This is also a good period for love and marriage negotiations Professionals, however, are advised not to displease their superiors. The financial front promises to remain inspiring but avoid extravagance The domestic front will remain peaceful. But do not neglect your health
Good dates: 5, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: North-east



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Friends and relatives will pull you out of difficulties this week If you are in love and intending to get married this is the opportune moment to do so This is also a good week for businessmen and professionals do not waste time on socialising and push your efforts to the utmost Students will find this phase favourable some of you may get opportunities to study abroad But those above the age of 45 should keep a sharp eye on their health and diet
Good dates: 7, 9 and 11
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: South



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Artists and sportsmen are likely to achieve the recognition they were craving for Businessmen will also find this phase favourable, but avoid risky financial deals. Professionals, especially those in the government service, will prosper a posting to a place of your choice cannot be ruled out. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans Your financial prospects will look up. A letter will bring good tidings. Your health will improve markedly.
Good dates: 6, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers: 6 7 and 9
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (15 July—14 August) An elderly member of your family may misunderstand you leading to a lot of unnecessary tension. On the professional front you will come in for severe criticism from your employers. This is also not a good period for those in love: misunderstandings may lead to estranged relations. Social engagements will keep you busy but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health.
Good dates 5, 6 and 7
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: South-east



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is not a good week for lovers postpone marriage plans Your health will add to your problems. consult a doctor at the slightest indication of illness Those in service are advised to pay more attention to their work. Students should not fritter away precious time Legal problems relating to property will cause concern However, this is a good week for writers and creative artists A journey is in the offing towards the weekend.
Good dates: 6, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) A new friendship which will blossom this week will prove very helpful in the near future The time is ideal for love and marriage negotiations Businessmen and professionals will also find this period favourable A pleasant surprise at the end of the week is in store for you Your financial prospects will look up However, avoid legal complications this week Stay away from politics and keep a sharp eye on your health and diet
Good dates: 7, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) The stars foretell a lucky week for most of you make the most of this period. Professionals will earn the praise of their employers a promotion too cannot be ruled out Businessmen will bag lucrative deals On the economic front some of you may gain money or property through inheritance The domestic front will remain inspiring. This is also the ideal time to solve legal disputes You will be cured of a chronic ailment this week.
Good dates: 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 6
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is not a good week for those in love: obstacles may lead to frustration On the financial front, you may run into rough weather. Professionals should be careful while dealing with their superiors Businessmen, however, will find this phase favourable. do not hesitate to undertake risky financial deals. This is the ideal time to solve legal problems Friends will prove to be very helpful. But do not neglect your health and diet.
Good dates: 9, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) If you are unemployed, there are bright chances that you will find a job this week This is also a good week for those in love you can go ahead with marriage plans. A letter will bring unexpected good news towards the middle of the week A journey you were looking forward to is in the offing But businessmen will find the going rough. Avoid legal problems The domestic front will create tension
Good dates: 6, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 ahd 6
Favourable direction: North-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Be prepared for set-backs on all fronts. Businessmen should check documents meticulously before signing them Professionals are advised not to neglect their work Politicians and lawyers should stay away from controversies On the financial front heavy loses are indicated you may have to borrow money to tide over this lean period Your health will add to your worries this week.
Good dates: 5, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: North-east



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Success in all your activities is a certainty this week Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress but they should guard against deceit Those in the public sector are advised not to make any changes in their career during this period This is the ideal time to carry out marriage negotiations Those looking for life partners will find one. Your financial prospects look bright but save something for the rainy days ahead
Good dates: 8, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This week promises to be a lucky one provided you check your extravagant tendencies and take care of your health. On the professional front a promotion cannot be ruled out Businessmen will make huge profits through an unexpected deal. Sportsmen will come out with flying colours in competitions. Students should utilise the opportunities that come their way. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans.
Good dates: 5, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 amd 9
Favourable direction: South-west

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debasmita Das

LUCKNOW: Flying squads visiting different centres where high school examinations were in progress have recovered from girl examinees a number of love letters, besides copying material. The flying squads, led by the district schools inspector of Unnao, Mr V. K. Saxena, recovered 16 love letters from the female examinees. Official sources said that these love letters were written during the examination hours—*The Times of India* (Saeed Akhtar, Lucknow)

BHOPAL: A senior IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh government purchased books on sex at government expense, it was stated in the Assembly on 28 March. Chief minister Motilal Vora presented the annual report of the Lokayukta, which did not reveal the officer's name, but said he had purchased six books related to "sex and yoga" when he was the director of state lotteries in 1980-81 —*Indian Express* (G. Chalapathi Rao, Sarapaka, Andhra Pradesh)

MUNGER: The just concluded examinations conducted by the Bihar Secondary Board were certainly a farce where not only money was minted but wayside "Romeos" also had a gala time trying to help their unknown Juliets, even though not called to do so. In the examination centres at Munger, Jamalpur, Lakhisarai, Jamui and other important places, in spite of pucca police bandobust and magistrates on the round, examinees, their guardians, helpers and others enjoyed utmost liberty. Specially for teachers, invigilators and centre superintendents it seemed to be "once in a lifetime" affair—everyone squeezing money right and left. Those who were able to pay Rs 500 (in advance) were offered special improvised rooms with readymade answers and persons to dictate them, sometimes even to write for them. Those who could pay Rs 300 had to manage their own "chits" and those who gave only Rs 200 were not supplied any chits; they had to pay homeguards and constables on duty to bring chits from outside the campus at the rate of Rs 5 per "trip"—*The Indian Nation* (N. C. Mathur, Patna)

NAGPUR: Can a mechanised vehicle gain weight in one year? It is just possible if the experience of the government servant at the Regional Transport Office on 16 April is any indication. It so happened that this official went to the RTO to pay his annual taxes. When the concerned clerk asked him to give Rs 84 as tax, the official was surprised as he had paid only Rs 60 the preceding year. He asked the concerned clerk the reason for the sudden hike in taxes. The answer given by the clerk shocked the official. The clerk said the weight of the Priya scooter had gone up from 95 kgs (last year) to 105.6 kgs (this year). All the pleas of the official fell on deaf ears and finally he paid the whole amount and walked away in disgust—*Nagpur Times* (Srinivasan Umashankar, Nagpur)

CALCUTTA: The custodians of the law had a hard time maintaining order within the precincts of Lalbazar on 17 April when an owl perched itself on a ledge outside the police commissioner's window. Hordes of curious passersby gathered below the ledge to watch the owl, disrupting traffic on the premises. Senior police officials were seen sneaking a glance upwards and a sergeant had to be deputed to politely disperse the crowd. In the afternoon, the police used a ladder to try and catch the owl, but hostile moves by the bird thwarted the efforts. The owl remained smugly perched on the ledge till eight in the evening, oblivious of all the excitement—*The Telegraph* (Praveen Rai, Dhanbad)

BHOPAL: The Bharat Heavy Electricals here, designed to produce equipment for thermal power stations, will now sell vegetables. BHEL's general manager has said it is growing and selling vegetables as a "diversification" of its activities. Three hundred acres of land in BHEL township here have been reclaimed for cultivating vegetables. About 6,000 saplings of fruit trees have also been planted for an orchard—to provide fresh fruits at "reasonable rates" to the BHEL township's residents—*Hindustan Times* (S. M. Jawed Alam, New Delhi)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Supposing there is trouble in Andhra Pradesh, can I intervene there? And if I do so, you will say I have double standards—Rajiv Gandhi, when a deputation of Gujarat opposition leaders urged that the centre should intervene in Gujarat, in *The Statesman*

We (Talwandi and I) are fighting for the same cause We go to jail together—H.S. Longowal, on the differences between him and Talwandi, in *Probe India*

Personally I do not know. But I only pray that he is alive—G.S. Tohra, chief of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, when asked whether Bhindranwale was alive, in *The Hindustan Times*

Gandhi is one person for whom I have so much regard that even if he talks of whoring I wouldn't be able to write about it—Khushwant Singh in *Weekend Review*

Can a man who the Prime Minister says is too 'goody-goody' manage the party of a volatile state like Bengal?—Somen Mitra, on Pranab Mukherjee's appointment as the new president of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress(I) Committee, in *India Today*



I am not a liberated woman—Shalinitai Patil in *Onlooker*

People bore me. Film people particularly bore me. I prefer talking to my trees—Kishore Kumar in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

My biggest 'high' in Bombay has been the amount of affection we have received. Affection changes everything—Begum Bilkees Latif, on the eve of her departure to Paris where her husband I.H. Latif takes over as Indian ambassador, in *Current*

VARIETY

CHESS

Although a mere dwarf compared with the Soviet Union and USA, Hungary has a wonderful tradition. Joseph Pinter is a grandmaster whose relative obscurity is difficult to reconcile with such obvious talent.
White: L. Portisch. Black: J. Pinter. Queen's Gambit Declined, Semi-Tarrasch Defence. Hungarian Championship 1984.

1 P–Q4 N–KB3 2 P–QB4 P–K3
3 N–KB3 P–Q4 4 N–B3 P–B4
5 PxQP NxP 6 P–K4 NxN
7 PxN PxP 8 PxP N–B3
9 B–QB4 P–QN4!?

10 B–K2 B–N5+ 11 B–Q2 Q–R4
12 BxB QxB+ 13 Q–Q2 B–N2!
For if 14 QxQ NxQ 15 BxP+ K–K2 Black has too many counter-threats.
14 P–QR3 QxQ+ 15 KxQ P–QR3
16 P–QR4 P–N5 17 P–R5!
Isolating Black's queenside pawns. White's strategy appears promising.
17 . . . R–Q1 18 K–K3 P–B4!?

Pinter (Black) to move



Portisch (White)

A bold but risky stroke, seeking to challenge White's central authority before it is too late.
19 PxP PxP 20 B–B4 K–K2
21 P–Q5 DIAGRAM
Apparently the culmination of White's play. After 21 . . . N–N1 or R2 22 K–Q4! and KR–K1+ Black is overwhelmed.
21 . . . K–B3!!!
Genius. On an open board with scant material White's king falls prey to a mating attack.
22 PxN KR–K1+ 23 K–B4 R–K5+
24 K–N3 B–B1!
The point. The net will close with R–N5+ and . . . P–B5. Meanwhile White must defend his bishop.
25 QR–QB1 R–N5+ 26 K–R3 P–B5
27 N–K5! K–N4!
Wonderful play. If . . 27 . . KxN, KR–K1+ K–B3 29 B–K6!!
28 N–B7+ K–R4 29 B–K2 R–Q6+!
30 P–N3
or 30 B–B3 RxB+ 31 PxR R–N6 is double check and mate.
30 . . . P–B6 31 R–B5+ R–N4+!
32 P–N4+ BxP+!
Going for a world record in consecutive checks.
33 K–N3 PxB+ 34 Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

The declarer seemed to play this hand well and it was submitted for a brilliancy prize. In fact, he made one rather poor play, and a defender made a small error as well.

Dealer West N–S Vulnerable

	♠ J 8 2 ♥ A J 6 5 2 ♦ 8 7 4 3 ♣ 4	
♠ 7 5 4 ♥ 8 4 ♦ K Q 5 2 ♣ A J 6 5	N W E S	♠ Q 10 9 6 ♥ K ♦ A J 9 6 ♣ Q 10 7 3
	♠ A K 3 ♥ Q 10 9 7 3 ♦ 10 ♣ K 9 8 2	

The bidding went:

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
—	No	No	1 ♦
1 ♥	2 ♦	3 ♥	No
4 ♥	dble	No	No
No			

West led the king of diamonds and switched to a low heart. As this might have been from K x, declarer finessed, losing to the singleton king. A diamond return was ruffed, and after drawing the outstanding trump South played a low club to the 8 and jack. After a diamond ruff, club ruff, and another diamond ruff, the position was:



	♠ J 8 2 ♥ J 6 ♦ — ♣ —	
♠ 7 5 4 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ A 6	N W E S	♠ Q 10 9 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ Q 10
	♠ A K 3 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ K 9	

South led the king of clubs, forcing a cover; then the last trump squeezed East.
The mistakes? South's trump finesse at trick two was a mistake, because if West has ♥ K he cannot also hold ♣ A; and if East has ♣ A the contract is lay-down. And East made a tiny error when he failed to insert the 10 of clubs on the first round of the suit.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. The 38th parallel divides which two Asian countries?
2. Name the hormone secreted by the pancreas, the lack of which leads to diabetes?
3. What are isohyets?
4. How is Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov better known as?
5. *Blackmail, Foreign Correspondent, Strangers on a Train* and *North by North-west* are films made by which well-known British director?
6. In World War II, who were the *Maquis*?
7. With which American President is the term "New Frontier," meaning new challenges and opportunities in politics, associated?
8. What, in sociology, is a family unit which consists of the husband, wife and children and spans only two generations called?
9. What is the study of elections, voting patterns and electoral behaviour called?
10. Name the religious organisation founded by George Fox and officially called the "Society of Friends."
11. In the course of the translation of Karel Capek's play R.U.R., a new word made its way into the English language. What word?
12. What are disorders which result from medicines given to cure another unrelated disease called?
13. Blade, bow, feathering, puddle and stroke are terms used in which sport?

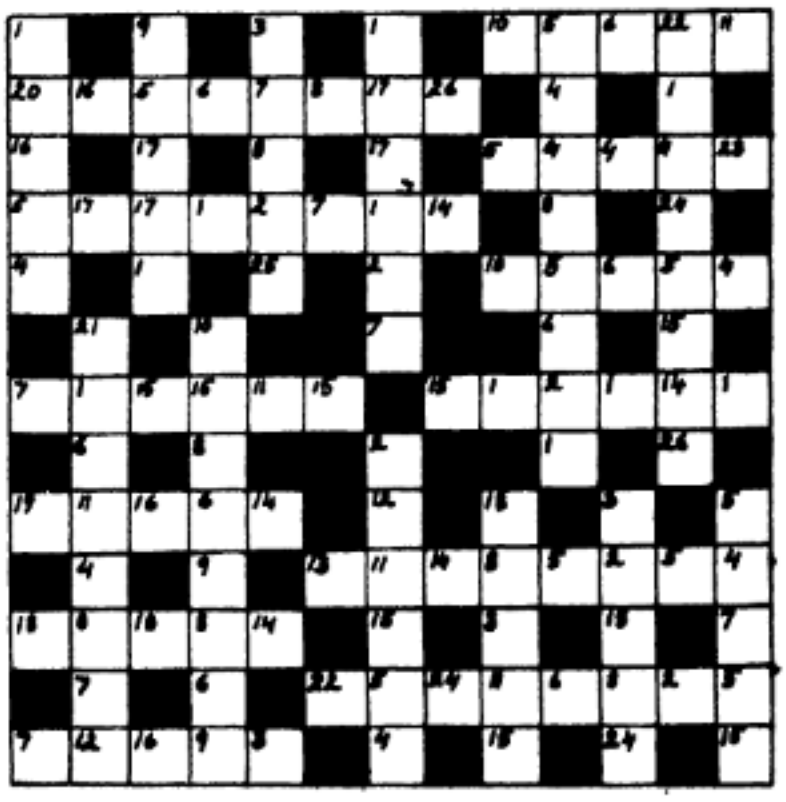
ANSWERS

1. North and South Korea.
2. Insulin.
3. Lines on a meteorological map connecting places with equal rainfall.
4. Lenin.
5. Alfred Hitchcock.
6. Guerrillas who fought the German forces in Occupied France. They were also known as the Resistance.
7. John F. Kennedy.
8. A nuclear family
9. Psephology.
10. The Quakers.
11. Robot, from the Czech word *robota*.
12. Iatrogenic diseases.
13. Rowing.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	C			A								

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	R											

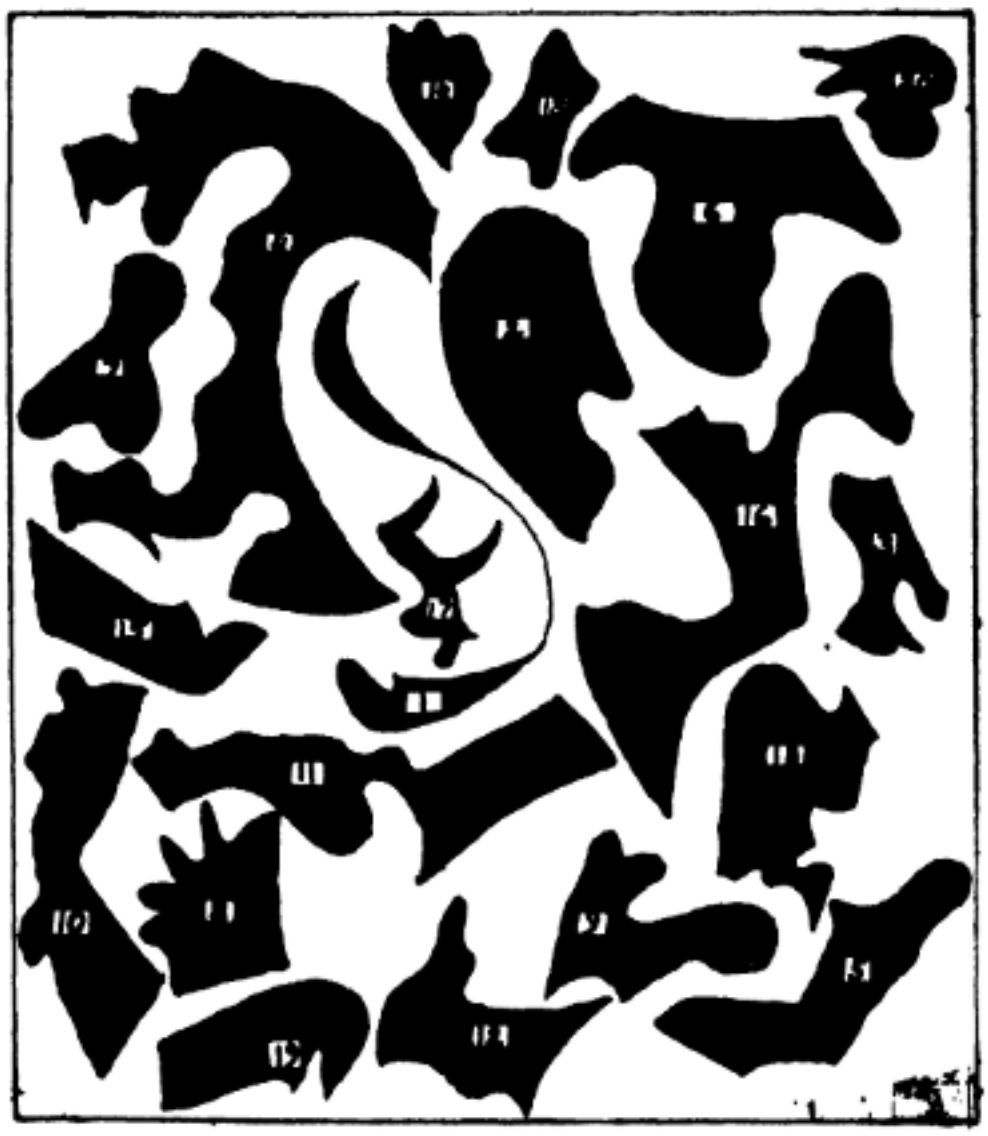
Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always stands for the same letter. To help you make a start three letters have been given. Can you now substitute the rest ot complete the grid?

What's in a Word?

FAT	( )	PAW
PRATE	( )	DREW
BEAD	( )	SOLE
DOZE	( )	SPINE
AMBER	( )	ALIVE
COVE	( )	PANE

Here are some words with brackets between them. Can you fit a letter in the brackets which, by changing the beginning, will convert the words to the left and right of the brackets into other words. When completed, the letters you have inserted into the brackets will form a word reading downwards. What is this word?

Figure it Out





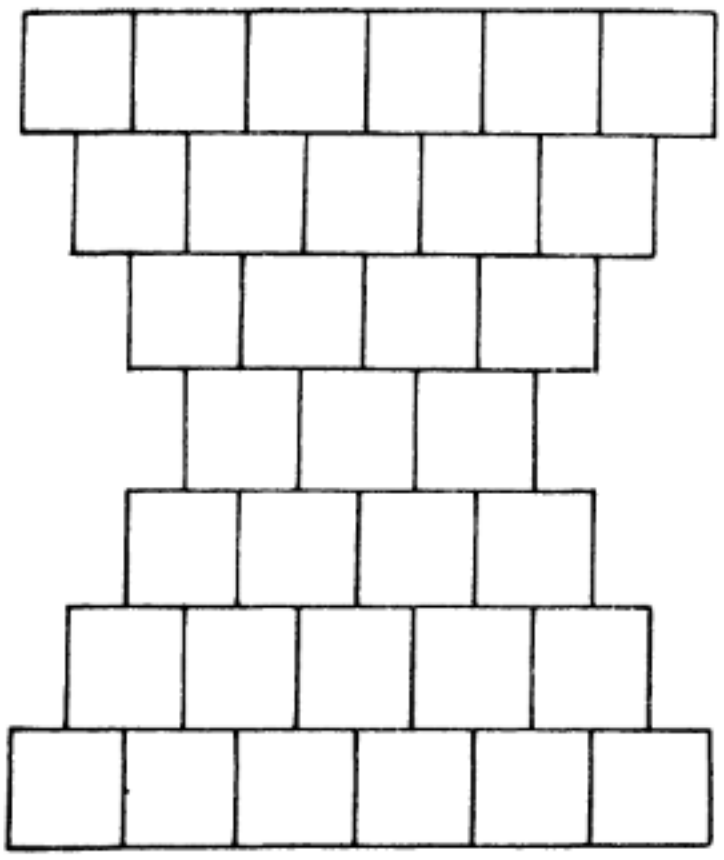
The shadow of this cow has got broken up. Can you fit the pieces together to make the shadow whole again? When you have done so, you will find one piece does not belong to it. Which is the odd one out?

Witsharpener

The economics lectures had come to an end. When they finished, it was found that of the 60 boys and girls in the class, each boy had filled four books of notes. Of the girls, who numbered more than the boys, half of them had completed five books of notes while the other half had only finished three books each.

How many books of notes were filled in all?

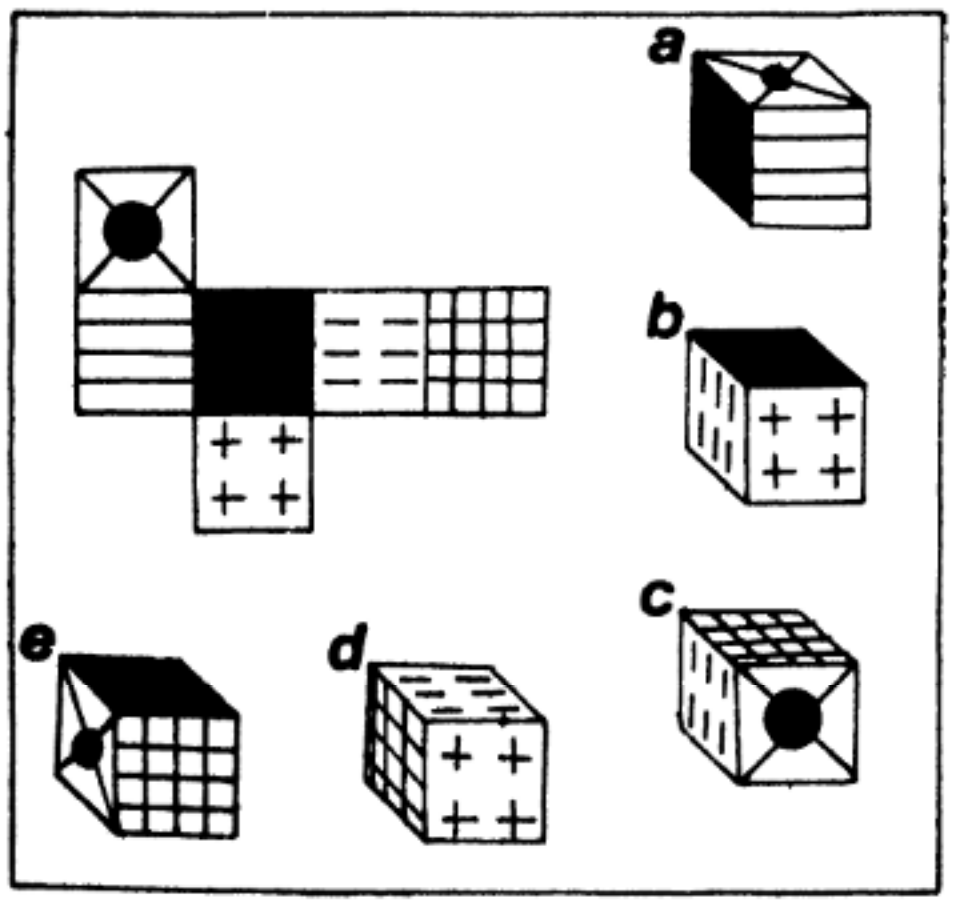
Blankagrams



Starting from the top of the figure, look at the clues given and fill in the blanks. All the words are anagrams of the preceding word, plus or minus a lettter.

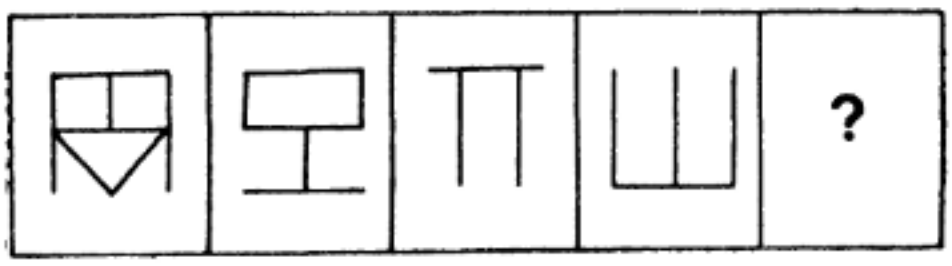
Clues
Specimen
Adequate
Jump
Take in with the tongue
Colourless
Part of coat
Shaping tool

Shape Sleuth



The pattern given can be folded into a box. Can you, just by looking, work out which of the boxes given can be made from the pattern and which one cannot?

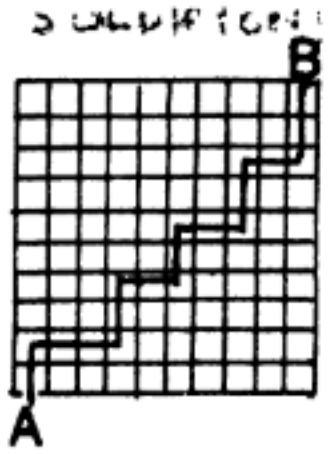
Mindbender



What should go in the missing space?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

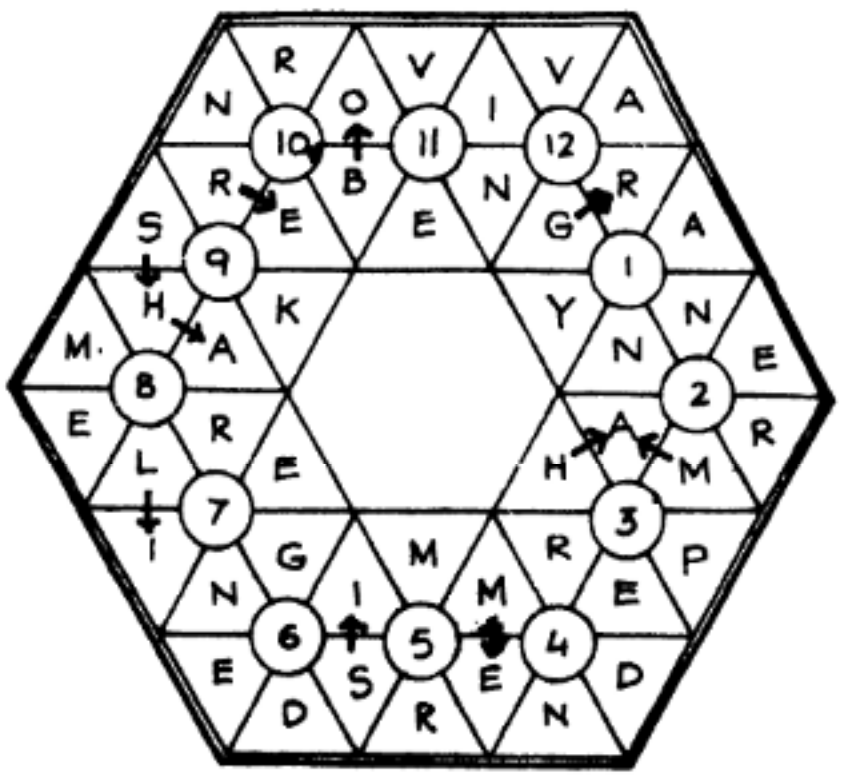
Mindbender:



What's in a Word: Bananas stands for LOVE

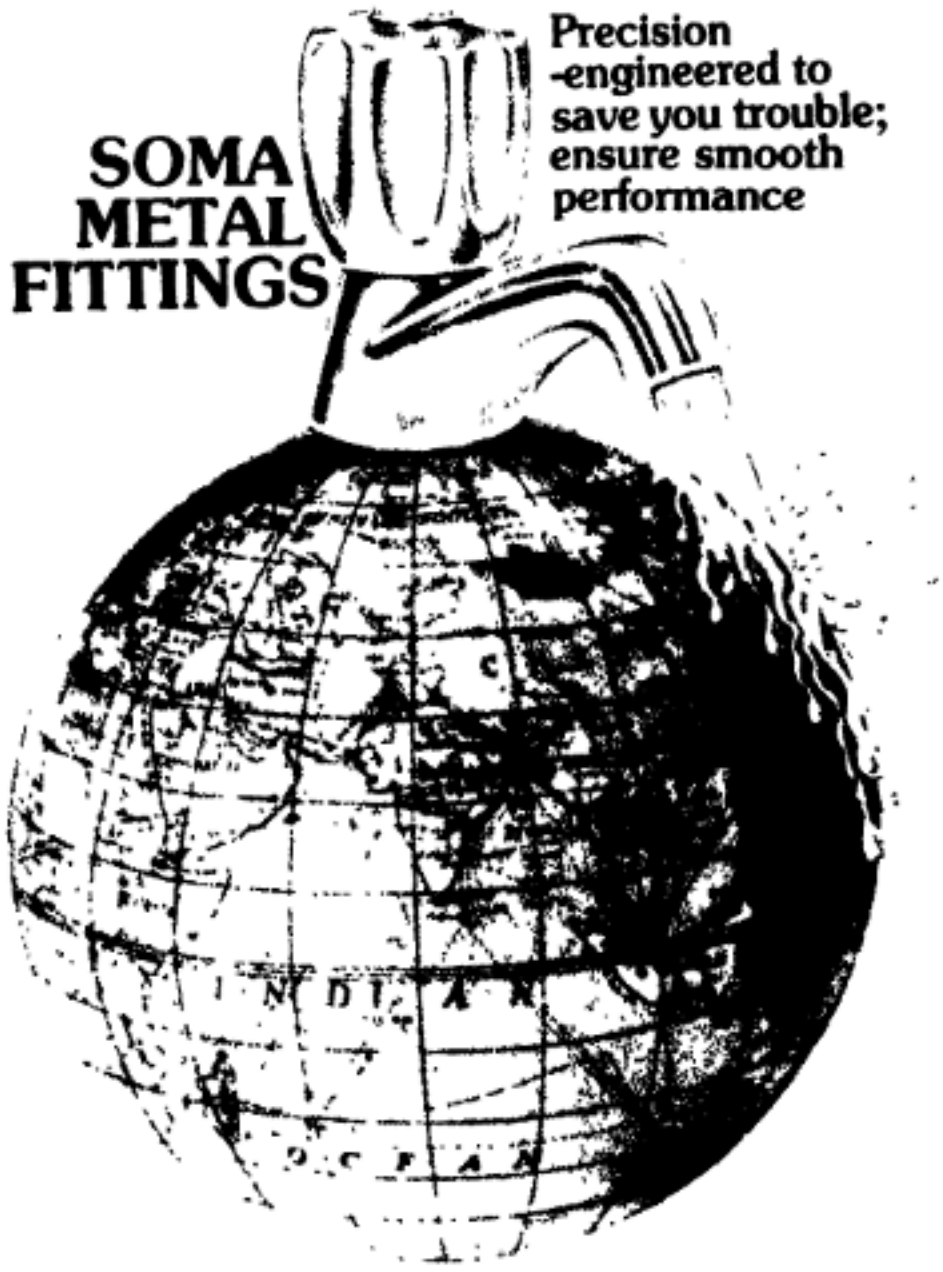
What's in a Word (Page 77): Some possible words could be: EDUCATION, MILLIONAIRE, PYRAMID, DURATION, MASSAGE
Blankagrams: Gandhi, Hudson, Elizabeth, Usha, Pearl, Neil, Helen
Quick Think (Page 77): Two hundred and thirty
Missing Link: O, P, Q. The series contains letters from the alphabet which encloses space.

Word Play:



Witsharpener: 10—Stroke; 6—Dip; 8—Float; 8—Dive.

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The Importance of Good Hearing

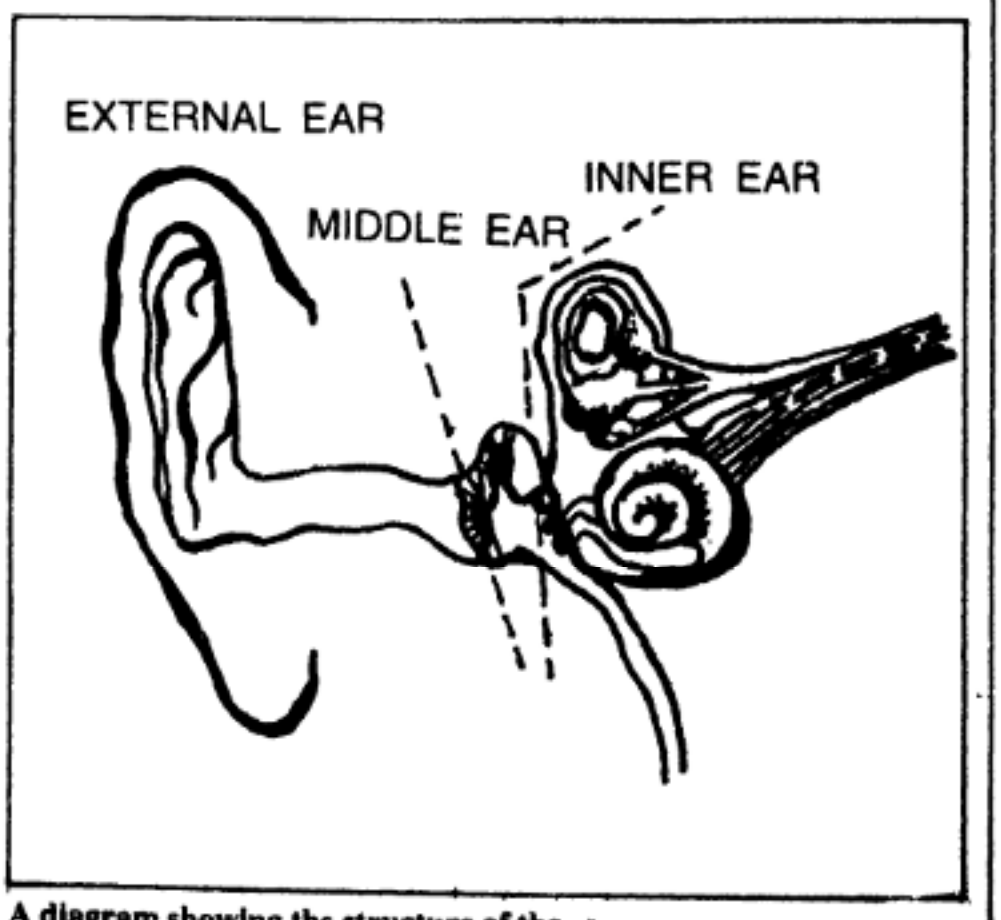
We all know how important good hearing is to our lives. Life would be difficult if we could not hear properly and understand everything we heard. People who are deaf feel that they are a burden: not only to themselves, but also to others. The situation becomes more complicated as the degree of the loss of hearing increases.

Until a few decades ago, it was almost impossible to cure deafness. Today, however, with the aid of modern medicine and advanced technology, it is possible to do so. When the first signs of deafness are suspected, one should consult a specialist who, should the need arise, can refer the patient to an audiologist for a detailed check-up. The specialist will determine:

- Whether the patient really has a hearing loss. If so, what is its degree?
- Where is the problem? In the outer, middle or inner ear?
- What can be done about it? Can his impediment be cured through medicine, surgery or electronic hearing-aids?
- If the patient needs a hearing-aid, what kind of hearing-aid will help him most?
- How should the hearing-aid be fitted?
- How should the hearing-aid be used to learn to listen, follow and express verbally?

From the anatomical point of view, the ear is divided into three parts. These are the external ear, the middle ear and the inner ear. Physiology sometimes prefers to divide the ear into a "conducting part" to which the external and the middle ear belong, and a "perceiving part" comprising the inner ear, the auditory nerve and the brain centre.

Any dysfunction of the external or middle ear in the presence of a normal inner ear is called a "conductive type" of hearing impairment (*paracusis willisii*). Those



A diagram showing the structure of the ear



A child undergoing speech therapy from a specialist

suffering from such an ailment speak in a relatively low voice, making it difficult for others to hear them. Such people hear better in the presence of noise. The patients frequently complain of subjective head noises or *tinnitus*, that may be localised in one ear, in both the ears, or may be unlocalised in the head. Many people who are hard of hearing experience *tinnitus* every hour of the day. It is one of the most annoying features of impaired hearing. In the case of conductive hearing loss, the *tinnitus* tends to be of a relatively low frequency. Such diseases can be cured, wholly or partially, by medicine or surgery. In some cases where both medicine and surgery fail, hearing-aids can help.

When the loss of hearing is due to something in the inner ear, or along the nerve pathway from the inner ear to the brain stem, the loss is referred to as a "sensori-neural impairment." The patient speaks very loudly and often hears a constant hissing noise of high frequency. He may also have an abnormal perception of loudness: in other words, a slight increase in the sound pressure of a tone is construed as an abnormally large increase in loudness. This is called "recruitment." Generally, a sensori-neural impairment causes some difficulty in understanding speech even if it is amplified.

How does a hearing impairment become noticeable? At first, it is not noticeable at all. It starts slowly, almost imperceptibly: until an accident or an infection reveals it. Since no pain is felt, in many cases, the patient dismisses the initial symptoms from his mind; sometimes, as stated earlier, the patient may blame the speaker for speaking incoherently.

When someone begins to speak indistinctly, swallows his words and changes the constancy of his speech volume, it means that his organs of control are no longer in order, because he can't hear properly. He becomes tired quickly, stops paying attention and seems to lack concentration.

Observation at a very young age can identify deafness in children. If there is delay in learning to speak in spite of normal physical development and they do not respond to sound or speech like normal children, one should suspect a loss of hearing and consult a specialist.

In many cases ailments of the middle ear and the inner ear occur together. An infection in the middle ear may be followed by an inflammation of the inner ear. In such cases a specialist will decide whether a hearing aid or an operation (or both) will be of use.

R. Basu

Headache?



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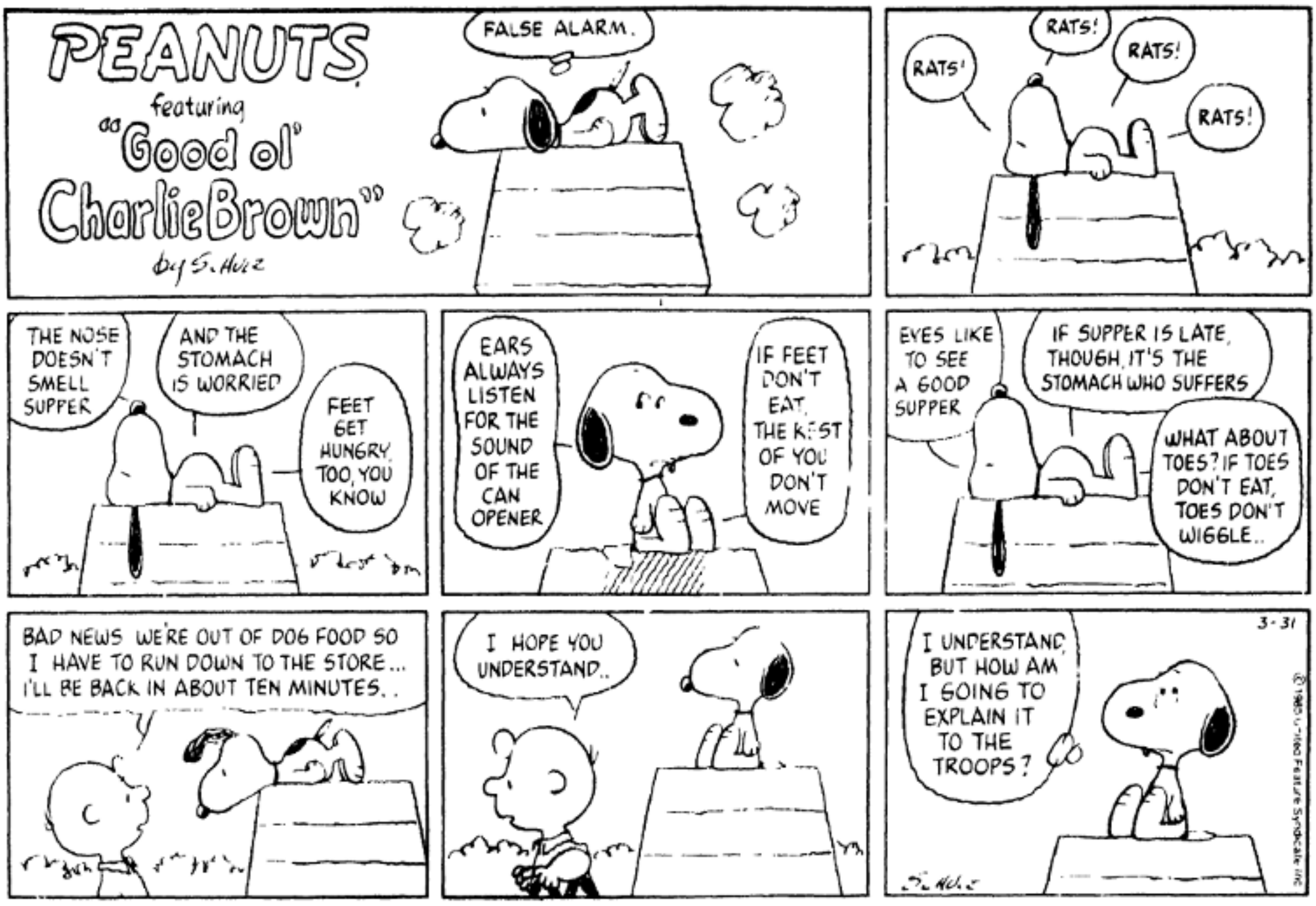


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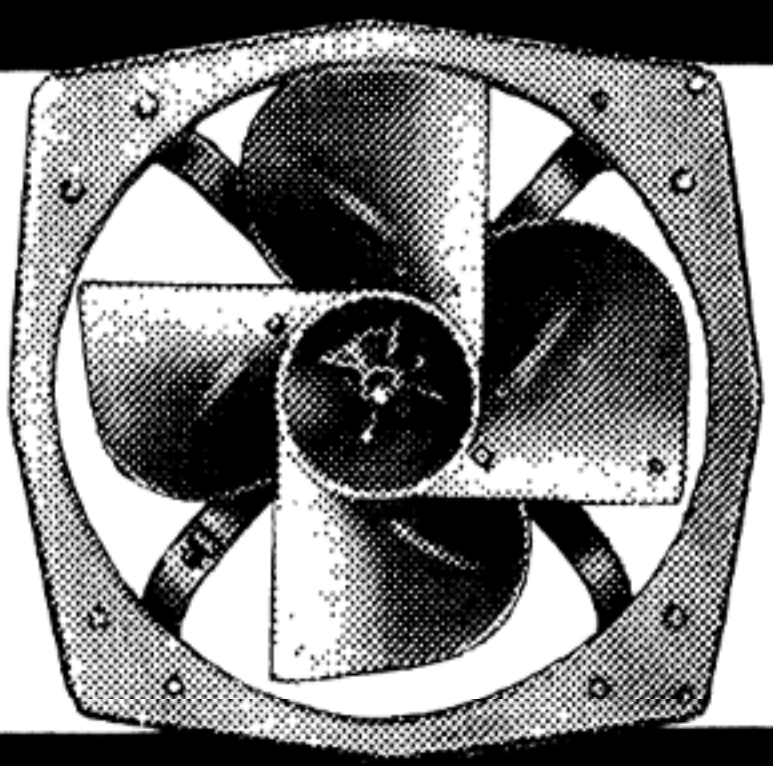
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The attack of gossip magazines against *Gulzar* continues unabated. But Gulzar is not worried and he has turned a deaf ear to what the filmi journalists write about him. The virulent attack against Gulzar began with his decision to marry *Rakhee*. "This marriage can never last," declared the Bombay press, and rejoiced when what they had presaged for the couple came true. That was, however, not the end of Gulzar and Rakhee as far as the press was concerned. A spate of "investigative stories" appeared on why the marriage did not last. Why can't the press stop meddling in the private lives of people.

Gulzar, seeing the stories in the press, retorted: "I don't know why they (the filmi press) are so worried about us." Rakhee has, in her own words, just "stopped reading gossip magazines."



Jayanta Das

Mithun Chakraborty with Vijayeta Pandit: workaholic

After the exit of *Amitabh Bachchan* from Hindi filmdom, *Mithun Chakraborty* is holding centrestage. However, a kidney stone has been bothering him for quite some time now and this lanky lad from Bengal is yet to find time for an operation. "If he goes to hospital a number of his producers will go with him," a friend close to Mithun complained.

Mahesh Bhatt and *Soni Razdan* have hit the headlines again. It all started when Mahesh was looking for a new face to play a key role in *Saaransh*. He saw many girls but fell for Soni; as the film progressed, the affair grew. In the face of criticism, Mahesh put up a stoic front: "I don't believe in hiding my woman." True, since some time back Mahesh openly boasted of his affair with *Parveen Babi* But all along there was one silent sufferer: *Kiran*, Mahesh's wife. "Why should Kiran take things lying down ...She should fight back," is the general feeling in tinsel town.

A philosophy graduate, *Priyadarshan* is now the most sought after director in Malayalam cinema. His forte is humour and most of his films have been hits He also writes the story and the script of the film he is directing thus saving producers a lot of trouble.

Prominent by her inability to act and by her generous exposure is *Rani Padmini* who started as a child artiste. From a crying child she graduated to mini-skirts and now to bikinis. But producers offered her only third-rate roles. Recently she got an opportunity to take a role opposite Prem Nazir in *Ooyarthezhunelppu* which means resurrection. Will it mark her resurrection too?



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DELHI DIARY

"Loyal" Bengal Tiger?



Pranab Mukherjee

Why was Pranab Kumar Mukherjee, who represents Gujarat in the Rajya Sabha, made head of the West Bengal PCC(I)? It is said that Mukherjee had raised a hue and cry in party circles, alleging that he was being ignored because he had been loyal only to Mrs Indira Gandhi and did not devote anytime to oil the power machines around Rajiv Gandhi. So, the loyalist, who was trying to masquerade as a rebel, was rewarded with the post in Calcutta. In terms of importance, however, Mukherjee's arch-rival in state politics, A. B. A Ghani Khan Choudhury, still remains higher. He is an all-India general-secretary of the party, entrusted with the organisational work in the state of UP.

Arun Nehru for UP?

The capital's grapevine is rife with stories about chief ministerial changes in Lucknow. The present UP chief minister, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, who was sent from the centre on the eve of the Lok Sabha polls to revamp the party's image, is being tipped for the prestigious post of India's high commissioner in London. The post has been vacant for five months, since the last incumbent, Prakash Mehrotra, resigned. Tiwari may not be too willing to go on a foreign assignment, but if he is offered the job he may not be able to refuse. Reason: the high command's choice of his successor in Lucknow may be the heavyweight politician, Arun Nehru, the minister of state for power in New Delhi. Arun Nehru seems to have made a comeback in the good books of Rajiv Gandhi. While he has lost out in the race to Arun Singh in the game of being



Arun Nehru

close to the Prime Minister, he may be rewarded by being sent to Lucknow. As a minister, Arun Nehru has become popular with the officers in his department. He has started holding monthly meetings with all officers and has been trying to memorise the officers' names. These practices can go a long way in ensuring ministerial efficiency.

The Third "P"

Rajiv Gandhi had launched his reign with three "P"s around him. His first council of ministers comprised P V Narasimha Rao, P. K. Mukherjee and P Shiv Shanker. Rao is still in the cabinet; Mukherjee has only recently been rehabilitated. But what is the fate of Shiv Shanker? As he lost the elections in Andhra Pradesh, he could not immediately get a berth at the centre. He is presently being tipped for a number of posts, ranging from the ambassadorship in Moscow to the chairmanship of the Press Council of India. (Justice A. N. Grover, the Press Council chairman is to retire this year.) Shiv Shanker, being a former High Court judge, may be considered as Grover's successor, if better things do not happen to him in the meantime.

Nomination Blues

Did you know that a person has been the deputy chief minister of Maharashtra by being a Governor's nominee in the Legislative Council? This fact would not have stood out, but for the controversy regarding the nomination of five MLCs in the state, due to which the chief minister, Vasantdada Patil, is facing rough weather from the powers that be in Delhi. Dada is opposed to the nomination of N. M. Tirpude (a former deputy chief minister) and Pratibha Patil (both are chief ministerial aspirants). He had come to Delhi with a list of five names. The list was dismissed summarily. The raw deal which Dada got in Delhi did not stop with the rejection of his list. He was not granted an appointment with the Prime Minister either. With powerful central ministers like S. B. Chavan, Vasant Sathe and V. N. Gadgil working against him, the Maharashtra CM is having a tough time.



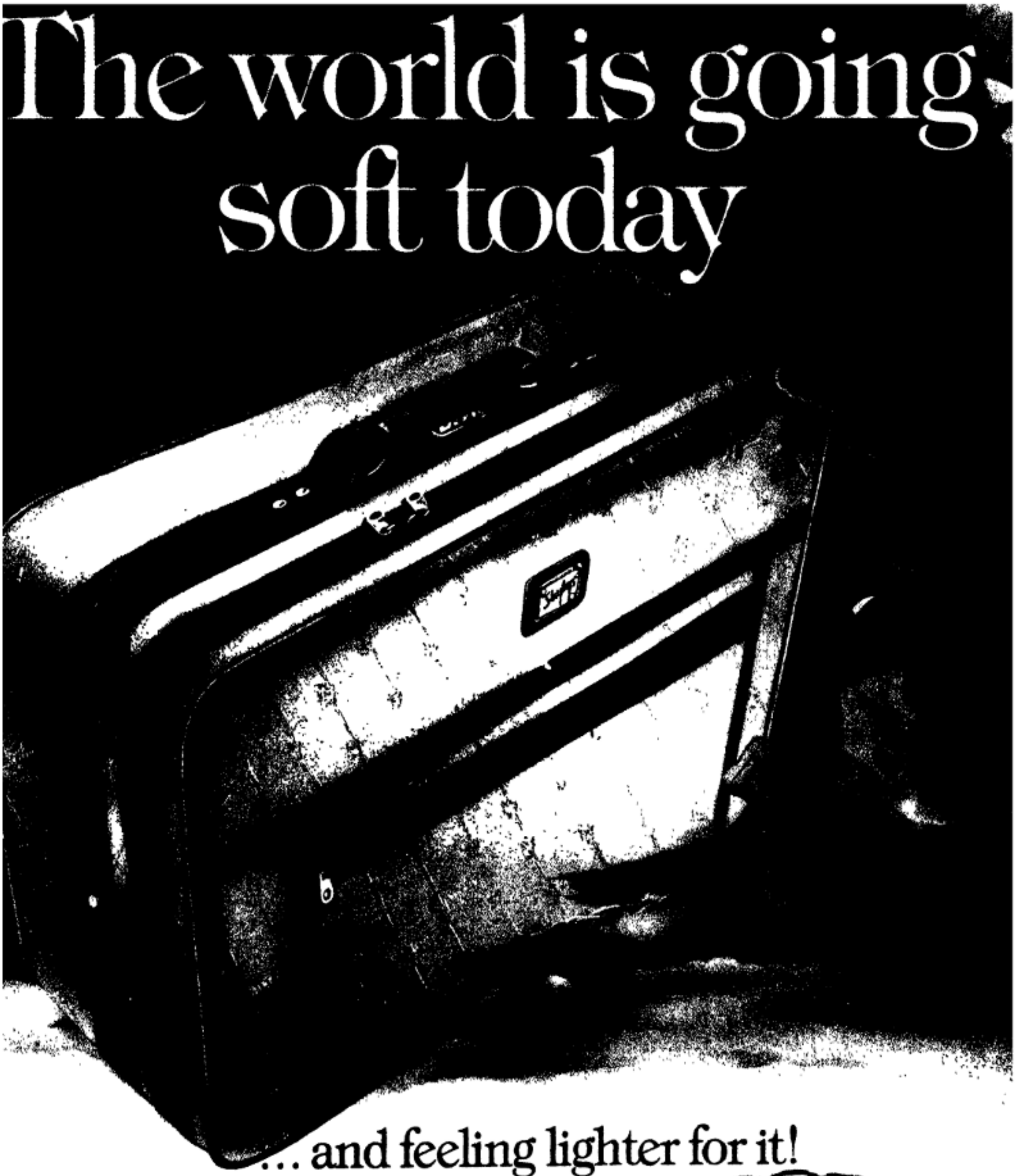
Vasantdada Patil

Temporary CM?

While the chief minister at Lucknow is uncertain about his tenure, his counterpart in Bhopal, Motilal Vora, recently sought assurance from the high command about his "permanency." Both the powerful lobbies in the Madhya Pradesh Congress(I), led by Vidya Charan Shukla and Arjun Singh respectively, had been spreading stories about the temporary nature of Vora's appointment. According to the Shukla camp, their leader would ultimately take over the reins at Bhopal after a couple of months. The Arjun Singh camp, which has as its chief patron the MPCC(I) president, Digvijay Singh, has been propagating that Arjun Singh would return as the minister after the Punjab tangle is "solved"

D. E. Nizamuddin

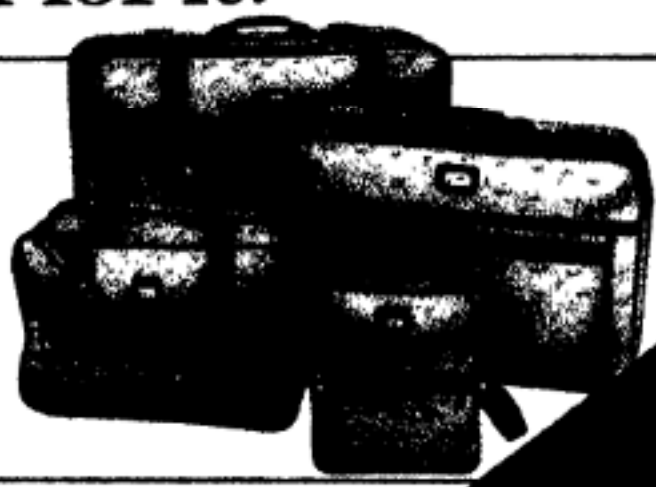
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One day in the midst of this colourful scene,
A guy at his gal, his feathers did preen
His labels yelled 'Phoren'. She wasn't impressed
'Coz she's into 'Ethnic' and he never guessed!

He tried everything, from 'punk' to pleats,
But his wolf whistles turned to sheepish bleats
When she ignored him, preferring to sit
For hours at the tailors, having a fit!

And so, he figured, he'd try a new style
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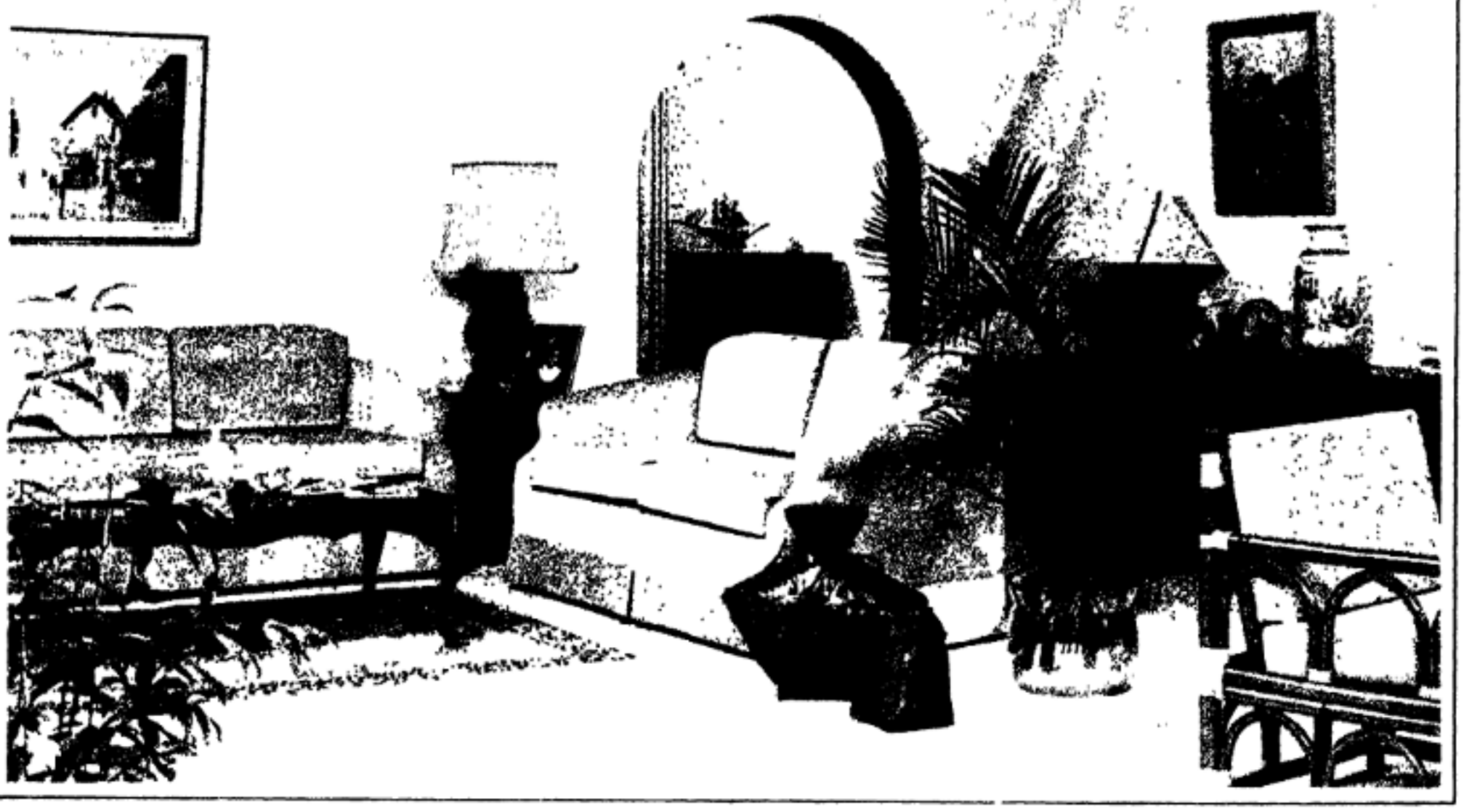
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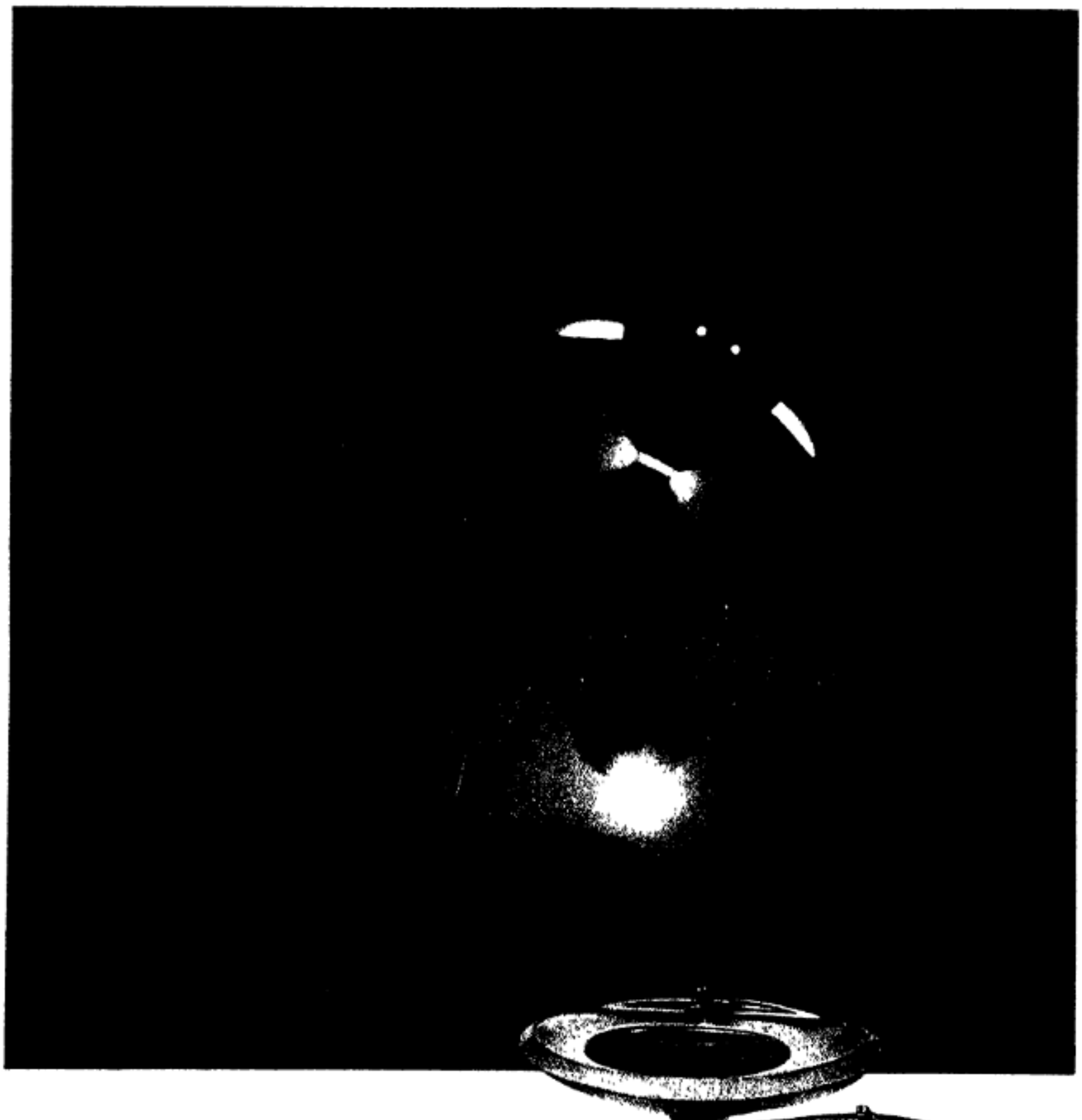
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Due to a last-minute switch in the cover story, M.J.Akbar's report from Sind has been held over.

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The Sant's Revenge

First it was the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi and now the "transistor bomb" attacks all over north India. In 48 horrifying hours, Sikh terrorists killed 80 innocent people and injured many more in Delhi and the neighbouring states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan using a novel device: the "transistor bomb." SUNDAY correspondents report on the violence unleashed by the extremists again.

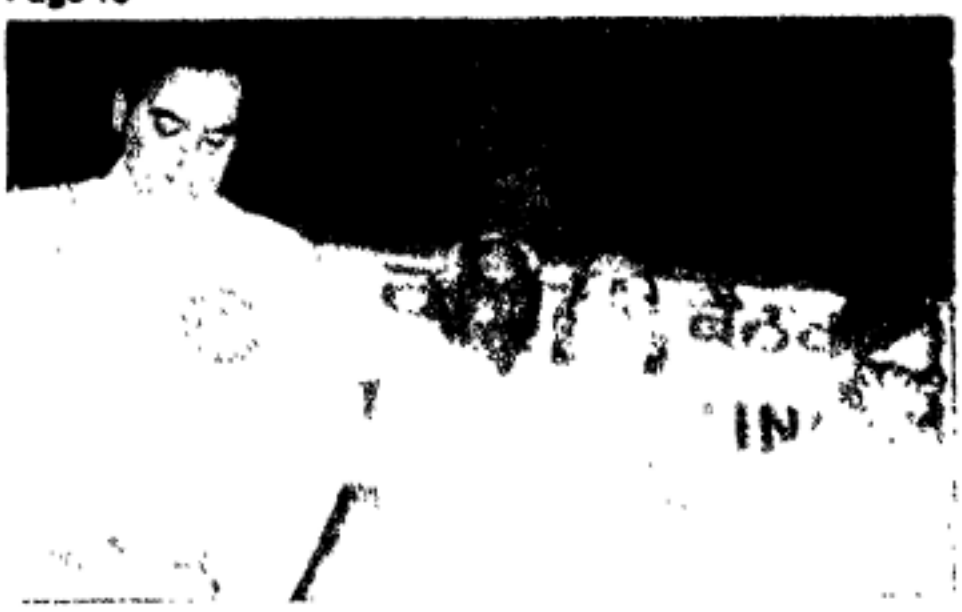
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AICC(I): The Mood After 100 Years

Sankarshan Thakur reports on the two-day AICC(I) session in New Delhi, which marked the beginning of the Congress centenary celebrations.



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Kerala's Killer Schools

The suicide of Ramani Menon, mother of Vandana, a class IX student of Trivandrum Carmel Convent Girls High School, in protest against "intentionally not promoting her daughter" since she refused to pay donations has exposed the murky dealings of the private schools in Kerala Binoo John investigates.

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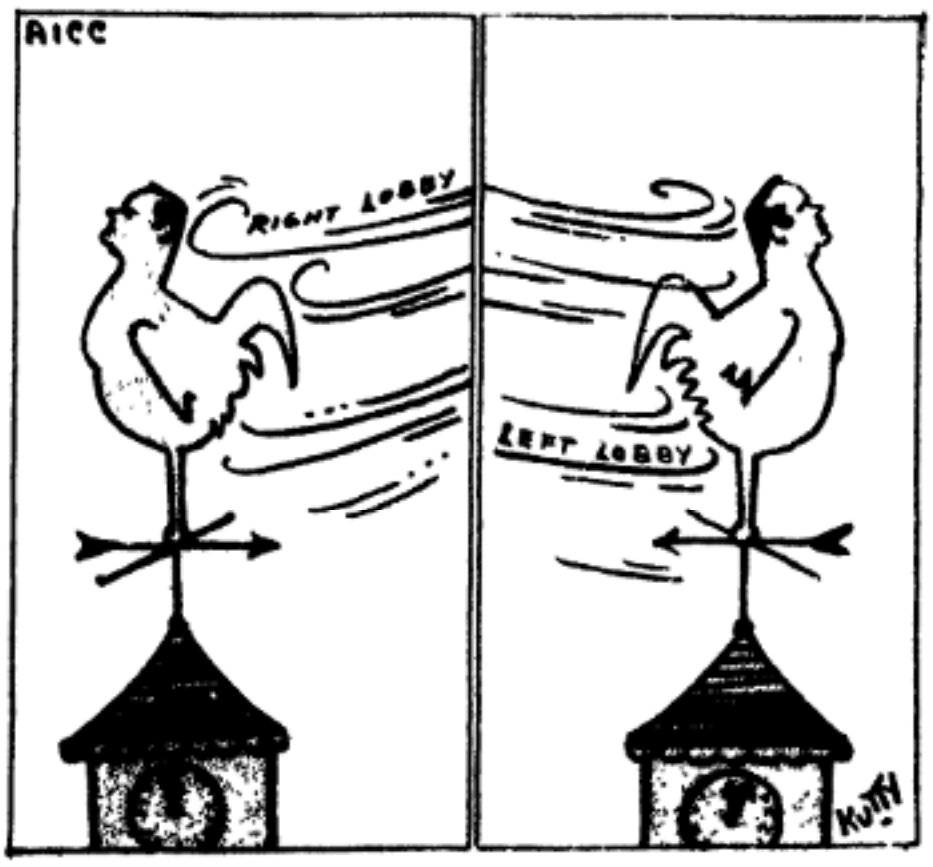
Education Ruins Merit in Bihar

The matriculation and intermediate examinations in Bihar this year were absurd as ever: handwritten question papers that had leaked out found their way to the market What is wrong with education in Bihar? Nirmal Mitra finds out.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Delhi Diary 82

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DATELINE / M.J.Akbar

Bhit Shah, Sind, Pakistan: Let me tell you a story I heard from fakirs, sitting under the stars, the *ektara* in one hand, the *kartal* in the other, abandon in their eyes, their saffron robes quietly luminous in the dark of the night, a sereneoval moon lighting up the mango trees, a pond dense with lotus to my right and a little ahead the peaceful power of the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, one of the greatest sufi mystic-poets the world has known. This is the love story of Mumal and Rano; it was put into song by Shah Latif, and captured the heart and imagination of every Sindhi generation since the master sang it in the seventeenth century. But first, repeat this line, and sing its cadence, in an undulating soft lilt: *Jeewey, jeewey tu, sada jeewey tu.*

Mumal was the most beautiful of the nine daughters of Raja Nand. One day, while hunting, Raja Nand gave chase to a bear. When they reached the river, the Raja thought he had his quarry, but the bear stepped into the river and the water miraculously dried up for the bear to cross. When at last the bear was caught and killed, Raja Nand discovered that the magic lay in the tusks. And from that day he secretly stored his treasure in the bed of the river, using the tusks to dry the river whenever he wanted to visit his hidden treasury.

No one else knew the value of the tusks. One day a beggar came to the palace door and pleaded for a gift of these bear tusks. Mumal, unaware of their worth, gave them away. Raja Nand was furious. In his anger he threatened to kill Mumal. She promised to make up for his lost wealth.

With the help of her sister Sumal and her maidservant Natar, Mumal learnt their art of sorcery. She built a labyrinth with an exquisite palace in the centre, surrounded by a river of red water, Kak, and guarded by four ferocious lions. From this palace, the beautiful Mumal bewitched the world. Kings and nobles, hearing of her beauty and this fabulous palace, came one after another to win Mumal. Each one of them lost his way in the maze, and was destroyed by Mumal who seized their riches to repay her father.

Rana Hamir Sumro, the Sodha Rajput ruler of Umarkot, was out on a hunt one day when he met a fakir in a desert, Sami, and heard the entrancing story of Mumal. The Rana and his three *vazirs*, among them Rano, could not resist the lure of Kak. They were received and entertained by Natar, who then set the trap. Each was taken to the labyrinth by Natar, who then slipped away so that they too would get lost. It was with difficulty that the Rana and his companions returned to safety. Only Rano managed to get past the trap, he had an advantage—he was squint and saw Natar slipping away. He followed the path she had taken and reached Mumal. He was as handsome as she was beautiful. Overwhelmed by his beauty and his intelligence Mumal fell deeply in love with Rano. They spent the night in each other's arms before Rano rejoined Rana Hamir in the morning and they left for Umarkot, eighty miles away.

The power of love destroyed distance; nothing could keep Rano away from Mumal. Each night he raced on his fastest camel to meet Mumal beyond the Kak. Rano's wounded wife and angry father persuaded Rana Hamir to imprison him so that he might be kept away from Mumal, but Rano was released at the entreaty of his sister who was also Hamir's wife. Rano's father then killed the fast camel, but Rano broke in the camel's child and continued his visits to Mumal.

Now Rano's wife and father turned to the sorceress Sumal to destroy this love. Sumal made Rano lose his way one night, and he had to ask a shepherd for directions. The shepherd showed him the path—and then added, as taught by Sumal, that Mumal had taken on another lover, Sital. Mumal was asleep by the time a disturbed Rano could reach her bedroom. Sumal in the meantime had put on the garb of a man and lain beside her sister. An enraged Rano would have killed both of them, but at the last moment his great love for Mumal prevented him from violence. Instead he left his weapon by her bed and went away, heartbroken.

Mumal learnt of the evil trick the next morning. She sent messenger after messenger, but Rano would not believe her anymore. Desperate, she disguised herself as a *jogi* and came to visit Rano. How could mere disguise fool a man who had loved so ardently? Rano saw through the appearance but no matter how much Mumal pleaded Rano would not be moved. Mumal her anguish beyond control, now ran to a pyre to commit *sati* according to her Hindu custom for her Rano had died. When Rano learnt that Mumal was ending her life, he suddenly realised his enormous mistake. He rushed to that pyre, where the flames had begun to envelop Mumal. He cried out for her, but it was too late. There was nothing else to do; Rano walked into the flames to Mumal and they both died in a last embrace.

Jeewey, jeewey tu, sada jeewey tu. Live, Rano and Mumal, live always with us.

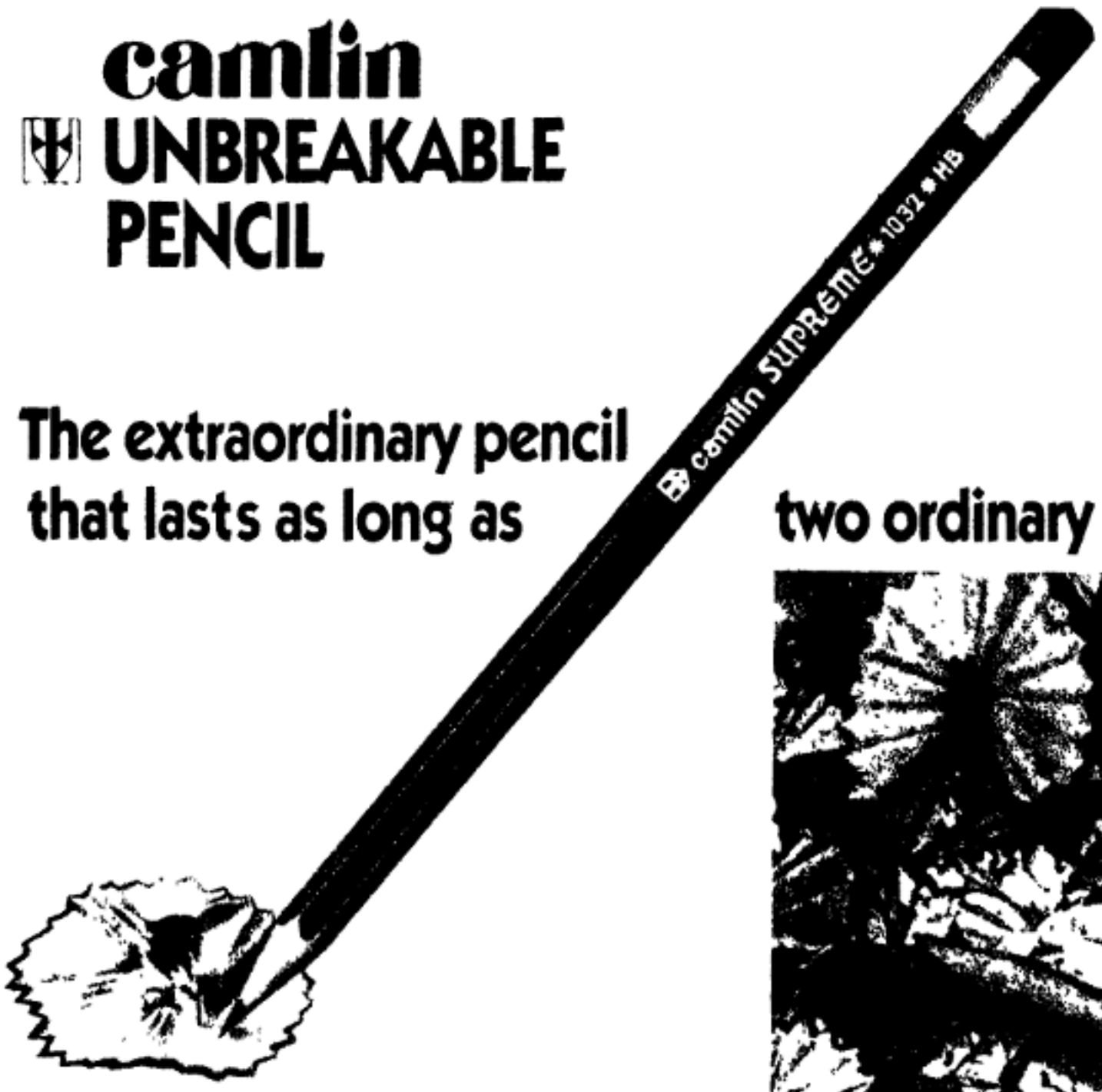
Fakir Alhan, with his thick curling beard and passion-deep eyes, his superb voice floating into the air and travelling back centuries even as it pierced forth the future, sang of Rano during that wondrous night at the village of Bhit Shah. And Fakir Ghafoor, with his lean, shaven face and arms flung open to embrace the sky, his head bobbing in rhythm with his dancing feet. They sang of Mumal the lover, the seeker of the Divine; of the Divine Rano; of Kak, the symbol of this world's lures, of the enticing snares of sorcery, of the barriers of the mind, they sang of the lamp that burns through the night in wait for the beloved; of longing, of embrace, of the heady power of a union that consumes all the senses, of distance, of separation, of that strange, insatiable hunger for reunion with the Divine; of error and repentance, and of the final passion in which life itself becomes irrelevant. And they were also singing of Sind. Mumal was Sind, and Rano the dream: and one day when the snares that had been placed by sorcerers around Sind would be overcome, this unique land of love, unity, song and poetry would embrace its dream.

Jeewey, jeewey tu, sada jeewey tu.

...And they were also singing of Sind. Mumal was Sind, and Rano the dream: and one day when the snares that had been placed by sorcerers around Sind would be overcome, this unique land of love, unity, song and poetry would embrace its dream. *Jeewey, jeewey tu; sada jeewey tu.*

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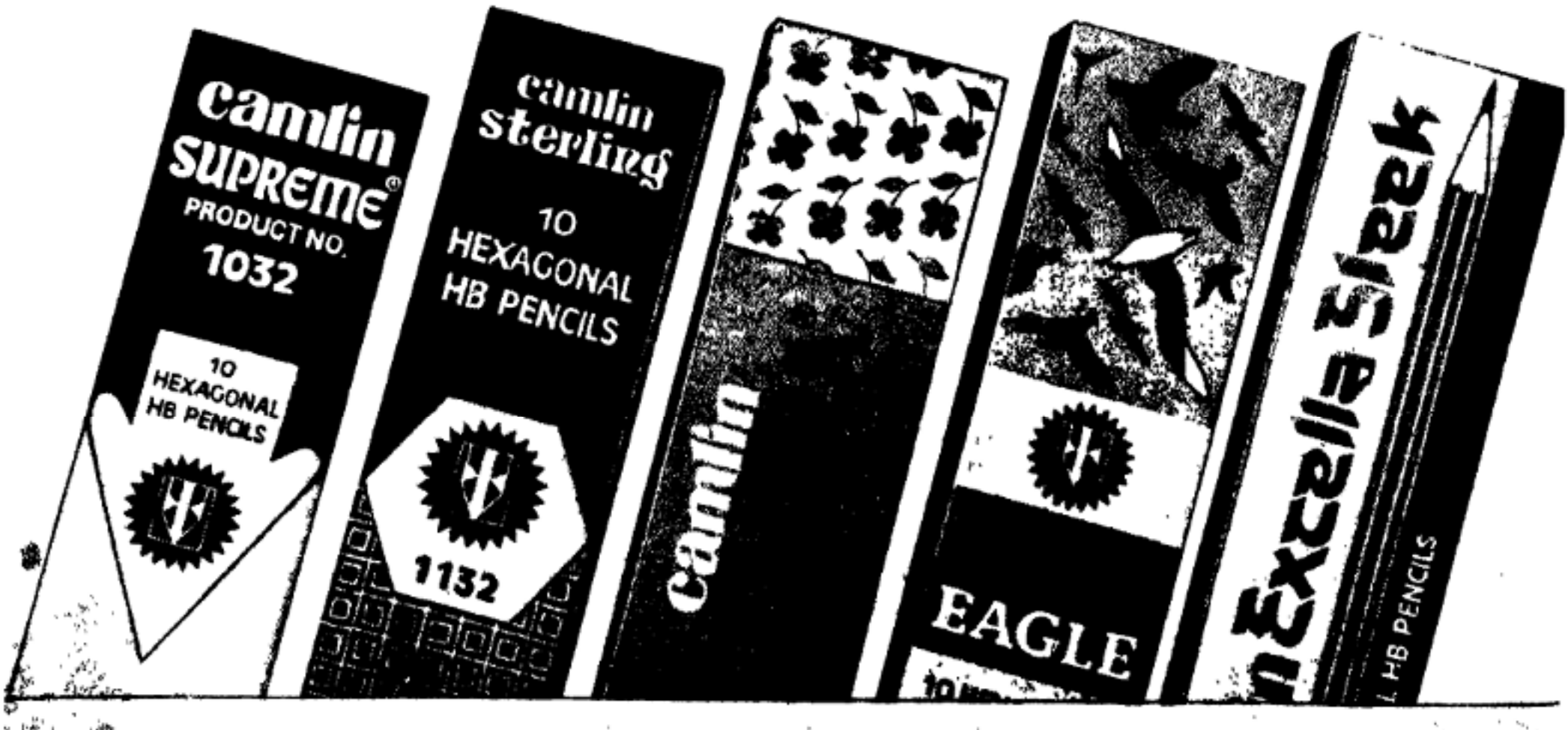
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Night of the Full Moon

We sat on the balcony of a suburban villa waiting for the sun to set. Its pale rays enveloped the turret of the revolving restaurant of the Asiad village and then released it into a grey twilight. A light went up in the restaurant. A plane emerged from the eastern horizon with red lights twinkling on its nose and tail and gradually disappeared behind a block of apartments. A few minutes later came another plane followed by yet another like large birds silently winging their way to roost at Palam for the night. The gathering gloom of dusk demanded silence and contemplation. She broke the spell: "What are these trees that have just come into flower? You know these golden-yellow blossoms which hang like chandeliers? They are beautiful," she asked.

"Laburnums," I replied "This time of the year when the sun is at its hottest, nature paints itself in the fieriest of colours: the blazing reds of the *Gulmohar* and molten-gold lava of the *Amaltas*. Gaze at them, don't talk about them."

She did not like being snubbed, "Why do you load your head with names of trees, flowers, birds, insects? Just to show off, I bet. 'A thing of beauty is beautiful without having to have a name assigned to it'."

"Indeed! For you a crow and a koel are just black birds. The Indians' total blindness to the phenomenon of nature is appalling. How can you love anything or anyone without knowing their name?"

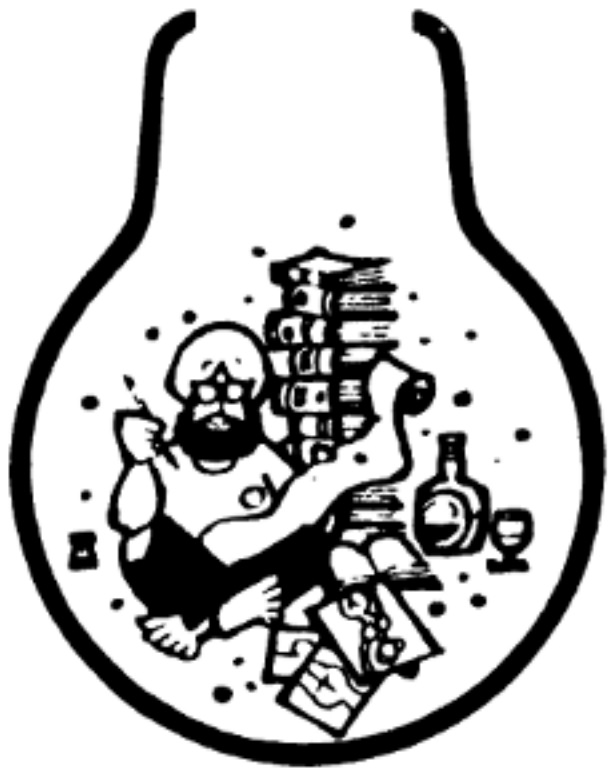
She relapsed into a sullen silence. A full moon came up over the avenue of *Saptaparni* trees and bathed the balcony in a milky white mist It was my turn to break the rapture I quoted loudly:

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank!
> Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears' soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.

She retaliated by putting the *Moonlight Sonata* on her tape-recorder. "Aren't you happy just gazing at the full moon?" I asked, "It is *Buddha Poornima*."

She looked up at the moon and remarked: "So it is. Can you see the shadow of the eclipse creepingover it?"

A wall of misunderstanding descended between us. "Let us have a drink," I said. "Then I must get home."



Sun Struck

My query about the seemingly eccentric behaviour of the sun did not evoke any response from any of our observatories (perhaps they do not know the answer) nor any astronomer. What I wanted to know is why when the days lengthen or shorten they do not do so with both sunrises and sunsets becoming earlier or later by exactly the same number of seconds or minutes? Apparently the phenomenon had foxed N.B. Hankin of the British High Commission. He has sent me what appears to be the right answer:

The longest day? 21 June of course, or it used to be at school. But have they mucked it about since? Sunrise on the 21st was at 0524, but as far back as 3rd June it was a full minute earlier. All very puzzling. From the Rashtriya Panchang, the official Indian calendar, I learned that sunrise here at its earliest is static at 0523 hours IST during the 16 days from 3 to 18 June. But the sun does not set at its latest, 1923 hours, until the period 26 June to 6 July, by which last date sunrise has advanced winterwards to 0529 hours.

On each of the ten days from 17 to 26 June we can enjoy 13 hours and 58 minutes of sunlight. Of this period, we must assume that the median day is marginally the longest and this turns out to be the 21st. thus confirming the rule—so they could count, those old boys.

Also on the 21st, the sun reaches its northern limit of travel directly overhead on the earth's surface for a few minutes at local mid-day, thus positioning the Tropic of Cancer in India on a latitude just north of Bhopal, some 360 miles south of Delhi. There are a number of reasons why the day is not tidily and equally disposed each side of noon. One is that IST is not true sun or meridional time for the longitude of Delhi (it is actually "mean" or average sun time for 82° 30 D, a north south line some 14 miles west of Varanasi, representing a proximate "time middle" of India Mean suntime midday in Delhi is 1221 hours IST) Another reason follows from the use of the word "mean." Local time noon is an average time, from which the actual moment of the sun's daily zenith can vary from month to month by as much as plus or minus 16 minutes Yet another is the atmospheric refraction of light so that when you think you are seeing the final moments of sunset, the topmost rim of the sun has already gone round the bend, about 3½ minutes earlier in fact and is 3 minutes of arc below the horizon

Mango Fever

It has broken out in epidemic form all over the country As usual it first manifested itself in Dravidistan and travelled in stages to the Konkan. What delays its spread is that southern Indian mangoes though pumpkin-sized and juicy are without character; and the much vaunted Alfonso from Maharashtra as artificial and as expensive as living in Bombay: rupees five per piece It is only when orchards in Uttar Pradesh begin to yield their harvest that mango fever is in full swing A new variety more delicious in taste and texture than the last comes in the market every week: Sandhuri, Langda, Safeda, Saharanpuri, Dussehri, Malda, Samar Bahisht, Rataul And so it goes till the end of the monsoon

Many poets have praised mango as the king of fruits My favourite is Akbar Ilahabadi (1846—1921). He was a lawyer, a sessions judge, a friend of Sir Syed Ahmed, founder of the Aligarh Muslim University and the wittiest of Urdu poets, all rolled in one I produce a rough translation of his hankering for his favourite fruit:

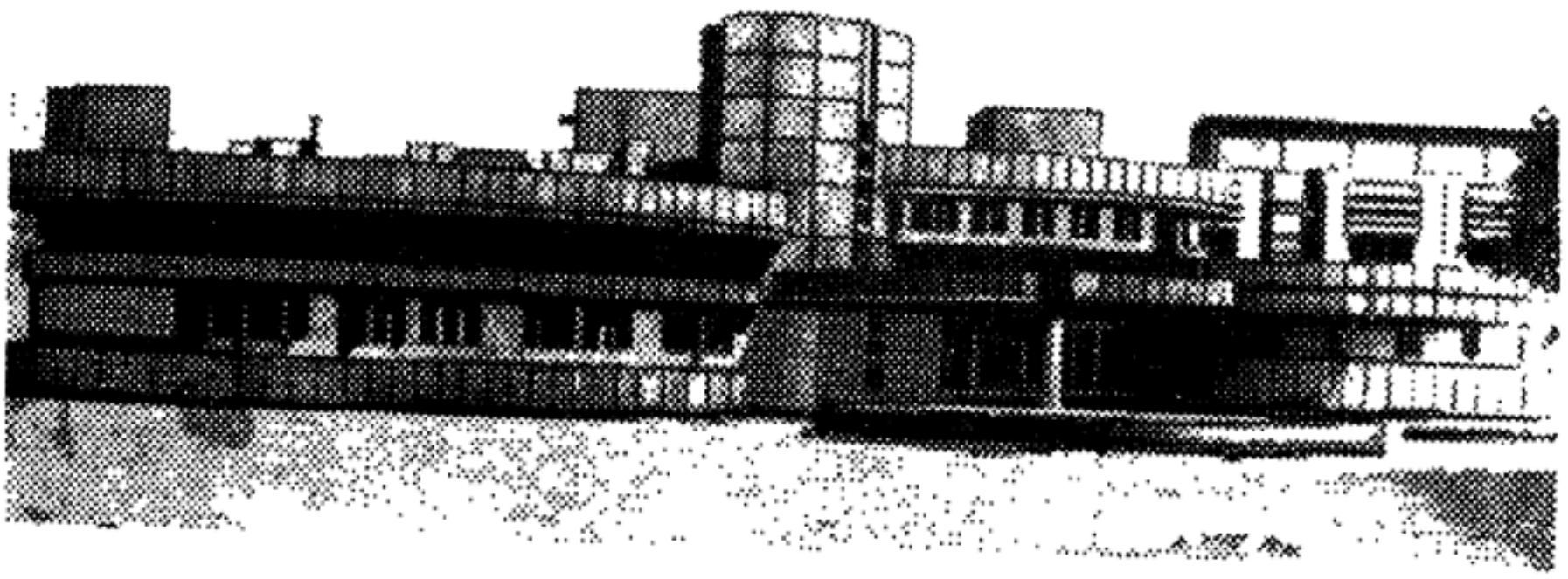
> No news I need nor messages from my beloved friend,
> This season if you must, mangoes you may send
> Some I can eat at once, others when I may,
> If twenty are ripe, ten I'll keep for another day
> Your slave's address you know; it is the same
> Send them directly to Allahabad in my name,
> But pray do not write to say and be so rash
> "Letter received; first let me have the cash."

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Why the Police Ran Amok

The Ahmedabad police control room has lived up to its name: on 22 April it ensured that the various units of the force spread out over the city moved into action, concertedly not to check crime but to commit it. Apparently messages to and from the control room are either taped or can be taped. And someone did tape them that day, for I heard them. On the tape there appeared to be only one policeman's voice.

The relevant portion begins with the information that a certain head constable had been killed in the Rajpur area and that Rs one lakh had been "sanctioned" (as relief to the bereaved family). There is a long pause and disturbance after that; then the messages, sent out to all units, instructing policemen to assemble at the Astodia police station. The voice then exhorts them to proceed from there to the office of *Gujarat Samachar*, which had been critical of the police. I checked with the police authorities in Ahmedabad if such a message could have emanated from the control room without the knowledge of senior officers. They showed me how by pressing a button on the microphone, the channel to officers could be blocked. Perhaps that was what had happened when the Ahmedabad police revolted (the state government characterises the revolt as a "commotion") between noon and 9 pm on 22 April and the entire government machinery came to a halt.

Following the message, half the city's 3,000-strong force assembled in front of the Astodia police station, most of them in plainclothes. The police union leaders (Gujarat is next to Bihar in terms of the number of police unions in a state) addressed the assembled policemen. A *Times of India* car passing through that area was attacked by the policemen; its glass panes were broken and a reporter inside the car was injured. At V.S. Hospital, where the body of the head constable was brought for postmortem, a large number of policemen had gathered. Some journalists present there were beaten up. Opposite V.S. Hospital is the town hall, where nearly 30 women, some of them from rich families, were on a one-day fast in protest against the "atrocities" committed by police in Khadia, in the heart of the city, a few days earlier. These women were beaten up: Scooters and bicycles in the area were burnt and the passing cars were smashed.

At the nearby M.J. Library a municipal Matador van driver was asked to carry a number of policemen, all in plainclothes, to the *Gujarat Samachar* office. They set the building on fire, going about their job quite methodically, as if the entire operation was pre-planned. Fire brigade men were not allowed to extinguish the fire until the press was gutted. The office of the *Western Times*, an English daily, housed in the same building was also burnt. The policemen then went to the *Indian Express* building on Mirzapur Road and shouted that the paper would meet the same fate as *Gujarat Samachar*. However, here the policemen met with resistance: both Hindus and Muslims in the area fought. Then the troops arrived.

How do the top brass of the Gujarat police explain the police revolt? The force was exhausted; they had to be on their toes since Mrs Gandhi's assassination in October last year. There had also been criticism of their conduct and when one of their men was killed, they had lost control over themselves. Hence the unruly behaviour.

There may be some truth in this version. But it still does not justify what the police did. However sensitive they might have become to what they felt was unfair criticism, and however much they might have come to live in a world of their own, having lost touch with the public, they should have known that the murder of the head constable was the act of an individual—not even a mob. Why then did they attack members of the public in such a way?

Whether it was police commissioner Jha's ultimatum that he would ask for another posting or the threat that the army would take over that brought the policemen back to sanity, it is clear that the policemen are sure that no action will be taken against them. The Gujarat police believed they were on the side of the government and that they would come to no harm if they acted against people on the "opposite side." And they seem to be right; there has been no condemnation by the authorities of what the police did; not one policeman had been questioned about the incidents, let alone be suspended.

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The question now is how to retrieve the force; how to keep it insulated from the pressures of competing ideologies and political battles between the ruling and opposition parties. Perhaps the answer lies in the concluding lines of an Intelligence Bureau note on the police's morale: "The police forces in the states and at the centre require more detailed attention. The tendency to gloss over problems and particularly the more complex ones, has to be overcome. Viable solutions in keeping with the prevailing social and political ethos need to be devised if the machinery and framework of policing in this country has to be maintained."

However, for what happened recently in Gujarat it would be hard not to condemn the whole police force. We should recognise the fact that politicians are more culpable than the policemen. They have tried to use them to serve either their own selfish ends or the interests of their parties.

Democracy Denied

The cover story on the political unrest in Kashmir was informative and thoughtful (*Outlaws and In-laws*, 28 April—4 May) Shubhabrata Bhattacharya had raised a pertinent question: Will Kashmir burn? The evil designs of the Congress(I) have ruined the economy of the state. The Congress(I)'s original plan was to split the National Conference and come to power. But the people of the state have foiled such attempts by voting *en masse* for Farooq Abdullah in the last parliamentary elections and I am sure that if Assembly elections are announced, G.M. Shah and his party will be wiped out. Rajiv Gandhi should honour the people's verdict.

Bimabihari Mishra, Rourkela

• Shubhabrata Bhattacharya exposed the double dealings of the Congress(I). The author rightly pointed out that in secular India, religion should be separated from politics.

Mansoor Ahmad, Calcutta

• The present political climate in Kashmir might provoke anti-social and anti-national elements to take the upper hand. The government should take emergent steps to restore stability in the sensitive state.

Tushar Chakraborty, Haldibari (WB)

• Farooq Abdullah is quite justified in starting a movement to persuade the central government to dismiss the government of G.M. Shah. The people of Kashmir have been forced to take to the streets since the centre is denying democratic rights to the people of the state. Farooq Abdullah had demonstrated on more than one occasion that he is the unquestioned leader of the Valley, yet the Congress(I) has propped up the government of G.M. Shah. Punjab, Assam and Gujarat are burning. Is it Kashmir's time to explode?

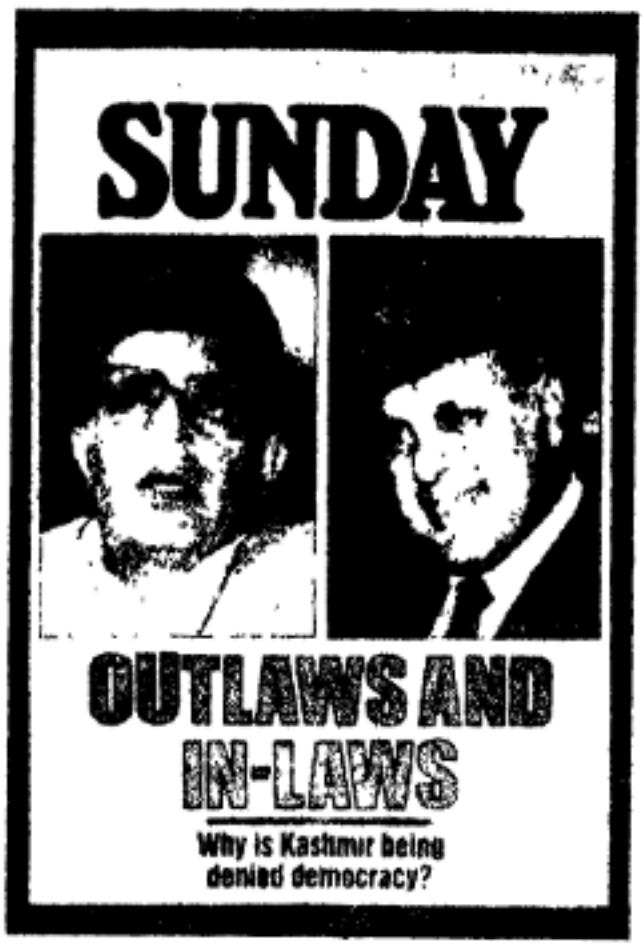
Prabodh Govind, New Delhi

• When political expediency is placed above propriety, then the resentment in Kashmir must be expected to take its course.

Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• G. M. Shah's days are numbered and he should quit in an honourable way. Farooq Abdullah represents the aspirations of the people of Kashmir and it is only fair that he should be restored as the CM of the state. The Machiavellian tactics of the centre have been exposed.

Arvinder Singh Walia, Calcutta



Sex and Morality

The Cloistered Passion of Radha and Krishna (21—27 April) was a delightful diversion from hackneyed politics. The atmosphere evoked in the article, punctuated with lyrics, was indeed a treat.

Arindam Sen, Karimganj (Assam)

• The article surpasses all limits of morality. Such pieces where adultery, pre-marital sex and homosexuality have been glorified will pollute the minds of the young.

H.T. Hussain, Hyderabad

• I took exception to the article and the highly provocative pictures. The authors should have sent the piece to a western pornographic magazine. The paintings were also objectionable. Islam rightly forbids paintings of the prophet and bans any article or book which might defame the religion. Hinduism should follow suit.

Ranita Ray, New Delhi

Privileged Firms

That SUNDAY is always a few steps ahead of its competitors was once again proved by the brilliant exposure, *A Sweet Deal in Orissa* (14—20 April). In Orissa firms which are in the good books of the government are allowed to go away with not only not paying electricity dues but other taxes also. The sufferer is the common man.

Manikyeswari Mohanty, Rairangpur (Orissa)

Popular Columns

In his letter captioned *The Answer Within* (*Opinion*, 28 April—4 May), Swraj Paul ventures to ask whether the weekly columns of Khushwant Singh and Kuldip Nayar are thrust upon the readers of SUNDAY. I wonder what made Mr Paul think that the writings of the two seasoned columnists were losing popularity. Many SUNDAY readers do love the sweet and sour gossiping of Khushwant Singh and the mature comment on political events by Kuldip Nayar. SUNDAY readers of my locality nourish a similar opinion.

K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• If going through the write-ups of Khushwant Singh and Kuldip Nayar is a suffering, as Swraj Paul calls it, then I welcome such suffering in future. Most of the intellectuals in our country today enjoy the patronage of the ruling party with the result that most of the crimes committed by the party in power go unreported. It is only because we have such persons like Mr Nayar and Mr Singh that a semblance of justice is meted out. Maybe Mr Paul's book, *Indira Gandhi*, emphasises his convictions to oblige the power that be in New Delhi.

S. Ganesh, New Delhi

Dispensable Beings

The detailed report on the Bhopal tragedy and its implications made absorbing reading (*The Cover-up*, 7—13 April). In effect the tragedy can only be compared to the Hiroshima catastrophe. It seems that the giant US multinational has no heart and it is deliberately prolonging compensation.

K.V. Nalinakshan, Hoshiarpur

• The in-depth cover story on the aftermath of the Bhopal gas tragedy was timely. It was surprising that a reputed multinational like the UCC has scant regard for human lives. I wonder what the fate of the company would have been had the incident occurred in the USA. I think that they rate the people of the Third World as dispensable. Stern action should be taken against the UCC so that the multinationals operating in India would be more careful in future.

S. Umesh Naidu, Sindri

• The photographs of the victims of the gas tragedy were touching.

Bhakta Pandey, Dibrugarh

A Bluff Master

SUNDAY wasted valuable space by giving undue publicity to a known fraud (*Swami Sadachari: The Fraud Machine*, 28 April—4 May). The swami's so-called miracles or his meeting with the British and American heads of state are all absurd.
Subhojeet Bose, New Delhi

• The special report on Swami Sadachari exposed the fraud. The blind faith and illiteracy of the Indian people are responsible for the Swami's popularity. However, the fake godman may use the article in his favour. The new Prime Minister has taken the right step by deciding not to patronise *swamis* and saints.
Surya Narayan Singh, Bombay

• The special report was amusing. The great bluff master has no equal in the world. Indians are known for their blind faith and hence the mushrooming of fraud *swamis*.
V.N. Narayanaswamy, Madras

• It is a pity that frauds like Swami Sadachari enjoys political patronage. If he had the powers to convert water into petrol then India would have been a far richer nation.
B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur

• At a time when our country is agog with political activity, I wonder why SUNDAY chose to give publicity to a cheat. The government should take appropriate steps against such *sadacharis* and *brahmacharis*.
S.C. Malakar, Agra

Wanted: Laws to Control Pollution of Ganga

SUNDAY's concern for the Ganga was justified and timely (*The Polluted Ganga: From Eternity to Here*, 21—27 April). The warning in the article should be noted by all concerned. However, I was happy to learn that Rajiv Gandhi had taken personal interest to clean the Ganges.
Dinesh Kumar Choudhury, Digboi (Assam)

• There was a time when the waters of the Ganga possessed curative powers. But that is past: now the reverse is true. Any one using the waters of the sacred river is sure to contact some deadly disease, such is the extent of the pollution. Hundreds of thousands of people live along the banks of the river and use its waters and it is only natural that the government should do something to clear up the mess. The formation of the Central Ganga Authority is a step in the right direction.
M.H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

• It is time the ancient saying, 'As pure as the Ganga' underwent a modification. It should now read: 'As dirty as the Ganga.'
S.S. Raju, Bombay

• The health hazards posed by the polluted Ganga as reported in SUNDAY were alarming. Laws should be enacted to prevent pollution of the Ganga.
Subal Chandra Saha, Malda (WB)

• Man more than anything else is responsible for polluting the Ganga. It is indeed ironic that we are misusing a river from which we draw sustenance. Unless the people, the pilgrims in particular, are made conscious of the ill-effects of the pollution, no plans can ever restore the purity of this river.
Pradeep Kumar Basak, Karauli (Rajasthan)

• Varanasi has time and again been hit by epidemics as a result of the pollution of the Ganga but the authorities have so far turned a Nelson's eye to the problem. I appeal to the government to set up a commission to enquire into the pollution of not only the Ganga but other rivers as well.
G.V. Phanirajkishore, Hyderabad

• This has reference to Yubaraj Ghimire's report on the pollution of the Ganga in Bihar (*A River in Peril*). It seemed that the author was not fully aware of the integrated programme on the Ganga basin. Bhagalpur university has undertaken a detailed ecological study of the Ganga since 1976. The pollution caused by the industries around Mokama-Barauni has been highlighted by the Bhagalpur university team and the state government has served notices to these industries under the prevention and control of water pollution act. The correspondent was also unaware of the fact that the study of Ganga from Munger to Farakka has been entrusted to the Bhagalpur university.
Sunil Choudhury, Bhagalpur

• A river considered sacred and worshipped by millions is being desecrated by man. The thousands of people living along its banks as well as the industries is polluting the Ganga. One need just visit Varanasi to see how blind faith can play havoc.
Kartikeswar Behera, Keonjhar (Orissa)

Bhagwan's *Bhavna*

The news report, *Is Rajneesh Coming Back?* (28 April—4 May) was disappointing to say the least. Ritu Sarin is not aware of the philosophy and teachings of Bhagwan Rajneesh. In the course of the article, the author writes that the followers of Rajneesh are trying to recruit members from India. This is not true since the Rajneeshes do not believe in conversion.
Swami Jaiprakash Bharti, Chandigarh

• The article is full of distorted facts. The author writes: "The Bhagwan has plans to set up a commune in India." There is already one commune, the Neo-Sannyas Commune at Rajneeshdham. Moreover, the Pune ashram was not vacated because of "vituperative attacks from Indian authorities," but due to the failing health of Bhagwan Rajneesh.
Swami Satya Anuragi, New Delhi

Communal Colour

This has reference to Balraj Madhok's caustic letter in response to M.J. Akbar's article, *The Spreading Kesari* (*Opinion*, 28 April—4 May). Thank God that we belong to the same 'tribe' as Mr Akbar. At least we do not sport *Kesari*, the 'colour of the soldiers of Hindustan' and then sell our country's secrets for a handful of money and a bottle of booze. Thank God that we are not coming 'nearer to our Hindu roots,' like the Sikhs who can revel by gunning down a defenceless woman.

Yes, Mr Madhok, we are Muslims as well as Indians, and proud of that. The green that we see is that of the towering mountains and the vast fields of our country, unlike you and your tribe.
Ali Reza Zaidi, New Delhi

A Clarification

This has reference to Stanley Pinto's letter, *Misquoted* (*Opinion*, 12—18 May). Our apologies to Mr Pinto, Mr Alyque Padamsee and Hindustan Lever. The mistake occurred in the transmission of the copy. The original quoted Mr Pinto as saying, "Alyque Padamsee is the father of as many Hindustan Lever successes as the Hindustan Lever itself." In the transmission the word "successes" was missed and Mr Pinto was quoted as saying that "Alyque Padamsee was the father of Hindustan Lever itself."
-- Editor

COVER STORY

THE SANT'S REVENGE

M.J. AKBAR explains the background to last week's outrage in Delhi



Boulevard Road in Delhi is lined with many kinds of justice. There are the Tis Hazari courts where each day hundreds of criminals, both alleged and proven, are given some measure of punishment or relief. On the street are the bungalows of the judges, houses which are one kind of compensation to a judge for having exchanged the lucrative pastures of a legal practice for the modest salary given to one who must make decisions. And not very far from the courts and hospital and bungalows is a building which symbolises the chaos of street justice: the morgue. It is here that the cadavers thrown up by the many forms of violence in the city are gathered so that the record of anger and revenge can be entered in the books before the body is lost to dust or fire. It was in this morgue that the victims of last year's riots were brought in piles, and impromptu shops selling white linen sprang up overnight. On the second Friday and Saturday of May another round of bodies came—victims of the terror perpetrated by the children of the dead Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the secessionists who are determined that there will be no peace in the Punjab except the peace of the graveyard.

The most dangerous phase in the Punjab crisis is always the eve of a settlement. This is when the Khalistani element within the Akali spectrum must make yet another move to sabotage any hope of an agreement since harmony would both isolate it and make it irrelevant. By late April, the Punjab crisis was finally moving towards a resolution. Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, in the weeks since his release, had become the voice of Sikh anger at Operation Bluestar and the riots following the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. But even as in gurdwara after gurdwara and village after village he rallied the Sikhs, he also enabled the community to give expression to its pent-up feelings—a necessary precondition to any settlement.

On its side, the government ignored the pressure from the hard anti-Sikh lobby within its own party and did all that it could possibly do to assuage the community's feelings. The relief that had already been handed out was the largest ever given since 1947, and the crores that had been spent were beginning to have an effect. (A comparison with the thousands who suffered in the Assam violence for instance would show the difference.) A judicial enquiry was ordered into the riots, the ban on the All India Sikh Students Federation lifted and the Akali leaders were gradually released. Sant Longowal, in the meantime, rounded off his tours with a visit to Delhi which became a personal triumph for him and showed that he had become a genuinely popular leader of the Sikhs. This is when the alarm bells began ringing furiously in the Akali Dal. The extremists realised that Sant Longowal, who had consistently rejected any idea of separation, now had generated the confidence to reach a settlement with Delhi And of course some of Sant Longowal's peers in the Akali Dal simply became jealous of the fact that he had become the most popular Sikh leader He had, so far, been given the title of "Dictator" of the Akali *morcha* but in practice was far from being one: the decisions were collective. Now he could, in fact, live up to his title.

By April, quiet consultations between Sant Longowal, the opposition leaders and the union government had set the stage for a settlement of



Dead bodies lie in a corner in Hindu Rao Hospital while others injured in blasts are taken in

◀ Policemen remove the corpse of a young man killed in an explosion

the Punjab problem. The Prime Minister's initiative in bringing opposition leaders, and genuinely concerned independents like Khushwant Singh into the negotiation process was paying off When he came to Delhi Sant Longowal assured everyone that he would send a letter outlining the final Akali demands by 6 May This letter would have been discussed at the meeting between the Prime Minister and the opposition leaders and a solution found by the end of May– that is, before the first anniversary of Operation Bluestar. This was the situation which the extremists were determined to destroy.

The game had two purposes. The first was to sabotage Sant Longowal's preeminence, and bring him down enough pegs to ensure that he did not settle with Delhi. The second part of the plan was to resurrect fear and hate in Hindu-Sikh relations. Baba Joginder Singh, father (and heir!) of Sant Bhindranwale was the principal weapon in the first operation. And the "transistor bombs," aimed not only at arbitrary murder but also communal riots, were the weapons of the second plan.

Sant Longowal, in his efforts to appease even the extremists, had himself given credibility to Baba Joginder Singh—and it was not the first time in his life that the Sant had made such a mistake. However, Baba Joginder Singh used the "authority" he had been given to bring about *panthic* unity to pull the rug from under Sant Longowal's feet. In a statement which took most people by



A victim of a bomb blast undergoing treatment in Hindu Rao Hospital late at night on 10 May













A sequence showing how a transistor bomb was defused in Sarojini Nagar in South Delhi on 11 May: 1. Ballistic experts detect a transistor bomb hidden in a bush; 2. Close-up of the bomb in the bush; 3. Experts cover the bomb with a safety bag as a precautionary measure; 4. Experts begin work on defusing the bomb; 5. The battery of the bomb is disconnected from the "transistor"; 6. Experts take pictures of the two units of the transistor bomb.

Photographs R K Sharma/Indian Express

surprise he "dissolved" the Akali leadership and announced an *ad hoc* committee Sant Longowal fought back, and it was quickly clear that the overwhelming majority in the Akali Dal was behind him, and he would easily win the showdown marked for 17 May. Rather than expose their weakness a compromise was effected which saved extremist face. But there was no doubt that the Sant had been sabotaged, he was not the leader he was before the Baba Joginder Singh move.

And then the bombs took over. At nearly three dozen points in Delhi, Meerut, Sirsa, Hissar, Ambala, Alwar and Kanpur death came to unsuspecting poor people who thought that providence had sent them transistors. But, as in their effort to unseat Sant Longowal, they were only half successful. This time the people defeated the extremists. They had calculated that this outrage would inflame Hindu passions sufficiently to cause a communal back lash. The children of Bhindranwale are in desperate need of another communal riot now—they need a fresh demand, they need fresh sores, they need fresh material for the rhetoric which can fuel their dream of Khalistan, they need a fresh excuse for the continuation of the golden pipeline of funds from the rich gurdwaras in London and America and Canada But there was no backlash—except of the necessary kind, a tougher crackdown on those who would mistake generosity for weakness.

But in one thing the secessionists have succeeded: enough confusion has been created to stall any solution. The Akalis are in disarray, unsure of who is who, or indeed, who is where. The talks with Delhi, nurtured so carefully by the government, the opposition and the Sant, must now be rearranged. The inheritors of the venom of Sant Bhindranwale have once again prevented a chapter from being closed.

The Communalists Who Failed

Despite the provocation, Delhi remained calm

When the sun set over the capital on Friday 10 May, no one could have guessed that by sunrise on Saturday terrorists would create panic in the city. In an action reminiscent of the tactics adopted by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the United Kingdom, Sikh extremists set up a series of booby traps which exploded at 15 places all over the city on the evening of 10 May. Some more "transistor bombs" exploded in the early hours of Saturday. The death toll, which was 25 on 10 May rose to 42 the next evening. The victims were not on the extremists' "hit list." They were ordinary people, commuters in buses and slum-dwellers. With the extremist elements, represented by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's father, Baba Joginder Singh taking over the reins of the Akali Dal, the bomb attacks in Delhi were an indication of the shape of things to come.

The extremists have never reflected the popular mood in the Sikh community. But the gurdwaras were allowed to be misused till Operation Bluestar in June last year. Unfortunately the activities of the Sikh extremists ultimately cost the Sikh community dearly. The scars of the madness which overtook human sensibilities following the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi being too fresh, more than the panic of the "transistor bombs," the fear of communal clashes gripped the capital. This time the government was extra-vigilant. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi personally took charge of the control room and in swift manoeuvres, the government outwitted the terrorists. The Sikh extremists' plans were not merely to create arson in public transport buses and in the slums, but also to create communal tension in the city. When Rajiv Gandhi had taken over as the Prime Minister on 31 October 1984, for a while his administration could not come to grips with the situation and the resultant chaos in the capital and in many cities of north India followed in early November. Not so in May 1985. The army was swiftly called out of the cantonments and told to stand by to aid the civilian administration. In some spots, which had witnessed communal frenzy in November, army patrols were also sent out. Delhi remained calm and peaceful though the embers of communal hatred, legacy of the incidents after Mrs Gandhi's death, still smouldered.



Army patrols moving into Delhi on 11 May

The day after the blasts, 11 May, was a second Saturday, a holiday for central government offices. The impact of the bomb blasts on the commuters in public buses, therefore, could not be judged that morning. By the afternoon, however, the buses were overcrowded. Since the auto-rickshaws of Delhi had been off the roads for sometime due to a strike, the buses were the only means of transport for those who did not own vehicles and could not afford the taxi fares. The occupancy of the buses on 11 May afternoon showed that the Delhiwallah had not been scared by the "transistor bombs." However, while the people cooperated fully with the administration, confusion in the city was created by official sources only. On Sunday morning, newspapers carried reports that no packets, not even lunch boxes, would be allowed inside the public buses. The newsitem had the authority of sources in the Delhi Transport Corporation; fortunately, Monday's papers contradicted the news, this time on the authority of Prem Kumar, the DTC chairman. On Sunday, however, commuters complained that they had been harassed by the bus conductors, who would not allow any handbag-gage, despite the commuters submitting their packets and bags for inspection. Confusion created by official agencies on grim days like the one which Delhi witnessed on 11 and 12 May, cannot be overlooked. Apparently, despite the Prime Minister having taken charge of the control room, someone was goofing up downstream.

The booby traps set up by the extremists in various places in north India went off almost simultaneously. The November riots had been attributed to the slum-dwellers of Delhi. That explains why the

"transistor bombs" were planted in bushes near the slums. In Kanpur and Meerut, riots had taken place. The bombs went off there too. Patna and Calcutta cannot be ruled out as possible targets of the extremists now, as well as every city where the riots broke out last November. Clearly, on 10 May, the children of Bhindranwale had sought their revenge. But revenge against whom? The pro-Khalistan elements do not enjoy the support of the Sikh masses. They cannot impress the saner section of the Akali Dal (of which Sant Longowal is a leader).

When Jagjit Singh Chauhan held a conference in London's Shepherd's Bush Gurdwara, near Kensington, on 6, 7, 8 April, he was able to attract pro-Khalistan Sikhs from Canada, UK, Italy, Holland, Germany, Thailand and Singapore as well as elements like Phizo (the rebel Naga leader living in London), the Kashmir Liberation Front (KLF), the Afghan Mujahidins and of course his own supporters in London. But the average Sikh devotee who visits the Shepherd's Bush Gurdwara was not interested in the three-day deliberations of the 400-strong gathering. George Fernandes, the Janata leader, addressed a meeting in the same gurdwara a few days later. While his speech drew applause and even evoked "Khalistan Zindabad" slogans, the president of the gurdwara, Manjit Singh Selhi went on record with his disapproval of the proceedings at the gurdwara that evening. The Khalistan elements, therefore, have a long way to go.

And that precisely is the reason why the terrorists struck on 10 May. To begin with, the Punjab state president of the Lok Dal, Chaudhary Balbir Singh, a former MP, was assassinated in Hoshiarpur that morning. In the November riots, the Jats in and around Delhi had not participated. The assassination of Balbir Singh, therefore, cannot be viewed in isolation from the grand plan which had been set into motion on 10 May. The Jamaat-e-Islami prefers the Muslims to be persecuted, so that their brand of communalism is able to seep in. Fortunately, so far their popularity among the Muslim minority in this country is negligible. By fomenting trouble, the Sikh extremists apparently are trying to alienate the Sikh masses from the mainstream. The madness of November has left many scars. The provocation now is designed to scratch and make the scars bleed.

The government's handling of the 10-11 May situation has been commendable. If the people are not in-

The Trap

Within 48 hours of the "transistor-bomb" outrage on 10 May, the Delhi Police claimed to have made a vital breakthrough in investigations. Acting on a tip-off from a resident of West Patel Nagar, a locality in Central Delhi, the police arrested three persons including 54-year-old Kartar Singh Narang, a Delhi-based lawyer from house number 26/83 in West Patel Nagar. The police also recovered from the house several bombs identical to those used in the blasts, a .9 mm pistol, some manuals on the manufacture of bombs and a list of several names and addresses which could provide clues about the network of terrorists behind the series of explosions. So also would the interrogation of the arrested persons who were immediately taken to the Deshbandhu Gupta Road police station, some distance away, under heavy guard. The police station, where the three were being questioned, was itself converted into a maximum security area ringed by policemen equipped with automatic weapons.



The house in Delhi's West Patel Nagar from where police arrested three extremists

The events that led to the arrests had all the drama of a high-tension thriller. The person who provided the first clue to the mysterious goings-on was Kartar Singh Narang himself. For most of his telephonic conversations, Kartar Singh Narang used a cordless instrument, which, according to some residents of the colony, he carried around with him openly. His neighbours were even otherwise suspicious of what went on in the Narang household because they used to receive "mysterious guests" from time to time; they had specially begun to mark this trend after the riots in November 1984 during which Kartar Singh's house had been slightly damaged. Their suspicions were confirmed when one of Kartar Singh's close neighbours picked up a conversation he was having with someone on 11 May.

The police was immediately informed and Amod Kanth, the Central Delhi district police chief, laid his trap, placing plainclothesmen around the house that evening. Late in the night, they moved in, arrested Kartar Singh Narang and lay in wait for his accomplices who were expected to visit him. It was a long wait but the two suspected terrorists did come—around two the next afternoon. Smelling trouble one of them immediately pulled out a pistol but before he could shoot he was overpowered by a plainclothesman outside the house. A five-minute scuffle followed during which the suspects tried to knive their way to escape. Three sub-inspectors, Dharam Pal Singh, Vijay Manchanda and Sushil Kumar and one constable, Sukhpal, suffered knife-injuries but the police were too well-entrenched in the house for the suspects to run away. By this time almost the entire locality had collected in front of the house and the three arrested persons had to be whisked away to the Deshbandhu Gupta Road police station. People around the area at the time of the incident said that they heard several shots being fired during the short resistance the two had put up but the Delhi Police maintain no shots were fired at all.

The police has refused to divulge any details of the operation; not even the names of the other two suspects arrested—in the interest of the investigations—but they hope that the clues they have already picked up would lead to several other arrests and uncover the terrorist ring behind the 10 May blasts not only in Delhi but also in other parts of northern India.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

Is There an IRA Connection?

It was a pre-set plan signalled into action almost as if by remote control—30-odd blasts one after another in different parts of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The explosions of 10 and 11 May could not have occurred without a level of coordination between the men who were behind them. Indeed the pattern of the operation was markedly similar to the modus operandi of a group operating far away in northern Ireland and Great Britain—the Irish Republican Army (IRA), still the nightmare of the Scotland Yard and the British intelligence service Founded in 1919 as a successor to the militant nationalist organisation called Irish Volunteers, the IRA is one of today's most well-knit terrorist organisations which has struck time and again with success not only in the war for the independence of northern Ireland but also giving assistance to other terrorist groups scattered around the globe. As part of its operations the IRA has on various occasions given armed assistance, imparted training to undercover units and even circulated what has come to be known as the "IRA terrorist manual" to other terrorist organisations all over the world.

One of the reasons why the IRA has acquired such an important place in the world of terrorists is the phenomenal rate of success it has had in its operations Sixty-seven years after it began spreading terror in the British Isles, it is still an organisation alive and strong enough to make a strike anywhere, anytime. Last October the IRA had attempted to wipe out almost the entire British government when it planted a high-explosive bomb in the Grand Hotel at Brighton where the British Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, was staying along with 13 other cabinet colleagues. It was sheer luck that nobody was seriously hurt despite the collapse of the entire facade of the multi-storeyed hotel.

The IRA after the failure of the war of independence it waged from 1919 to 1921, shifted to guerrilla tactics, ambushing personnel, raiding targets, planting bombs in selected areas, killing people either in hit-and-run operations or with booby-trapping devices. A characteristic of their operations has been its success-rate. Once they have marked a target, they see to it that it is removed. Selective elimination, specially in Northern Ireland has been their forte Terrorist operations in Punjab, Delhi and other northern states over the past year and a half have followed roughly the same pattern. Army carriers, even public transport vehicles, have been ambushed and people killed. People, supposedly on the terrorists' hit list, have been exterminated one after the other. There have been sporadic bomb explosions and now, the first series of organised detonations. The method is the same innocuous packages left for unsuspecting people to pick up, bringing death to people who in most cases have nothing to do with the politics behind the violence.



Sandeep Sharma

Grief-stricken relatives of those killed in bomb blasts outside Hindu Rao Hospital

Another feature of similarity between the IRA and the terrorist groups operating in India is the way both have slipped out of the hands of political organisations they initially belonged to. The break between the IRA and the Sinn Fein, its political wing, came a long time ago, for try as they might, they could not contain the IRA's violent, terrorist tactics. And almost everytime there were moves for an agreement on the political level, there was inevitably a spurt in the IRA's terrorist activities. Something very similar is happening in Punjab today.

The Akali leadership has lost control. There was a time when the Akali Dal had the terrorists under its belt. Very soon, they were pampered and finally Bhindranwale became the unchallenged chief of the Golden Temple. Today, almost a year after his death and Operation Bluestar during which the backbone of terrorism was supposedly broken, the terrorists seem to be as strong and unassailable as ever. They have come out into the open precisely at a time when it seemed opinion was building up in favour of a reconciliation.

It is of course true that terrorism in India is nowhere near the levels of sophistication reached by the IRA or other terrorist organisations in the West and the Middle East. Booby-trapped vehicles or remote-controlled explosives have not made their appearance in India, yet. The mechanisms used in the recent blasts were rather crude—five inch by two inch bombs encased in lead and concealed in transistor radio bodies whose operation switch worked as the exploding device—but what is more serious is the planning that had gone behind the entire operation. Terrorism with the face it has appeared today, cannot be treated lightly. These were not stray incidents sparked off by a rustic gang of fanatics. Behind them is certainly a brain trained in techniques of terrorism and tutored to launch a successful strike. Has the IRA trained Sikh extremists? Considering that pro-Khalistan elements are active in the United Kingdom, the IRA angle to terrorist attacks in Delhi cannot be ruled out.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

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(Indian Medical Gazette 118 223, 1984)





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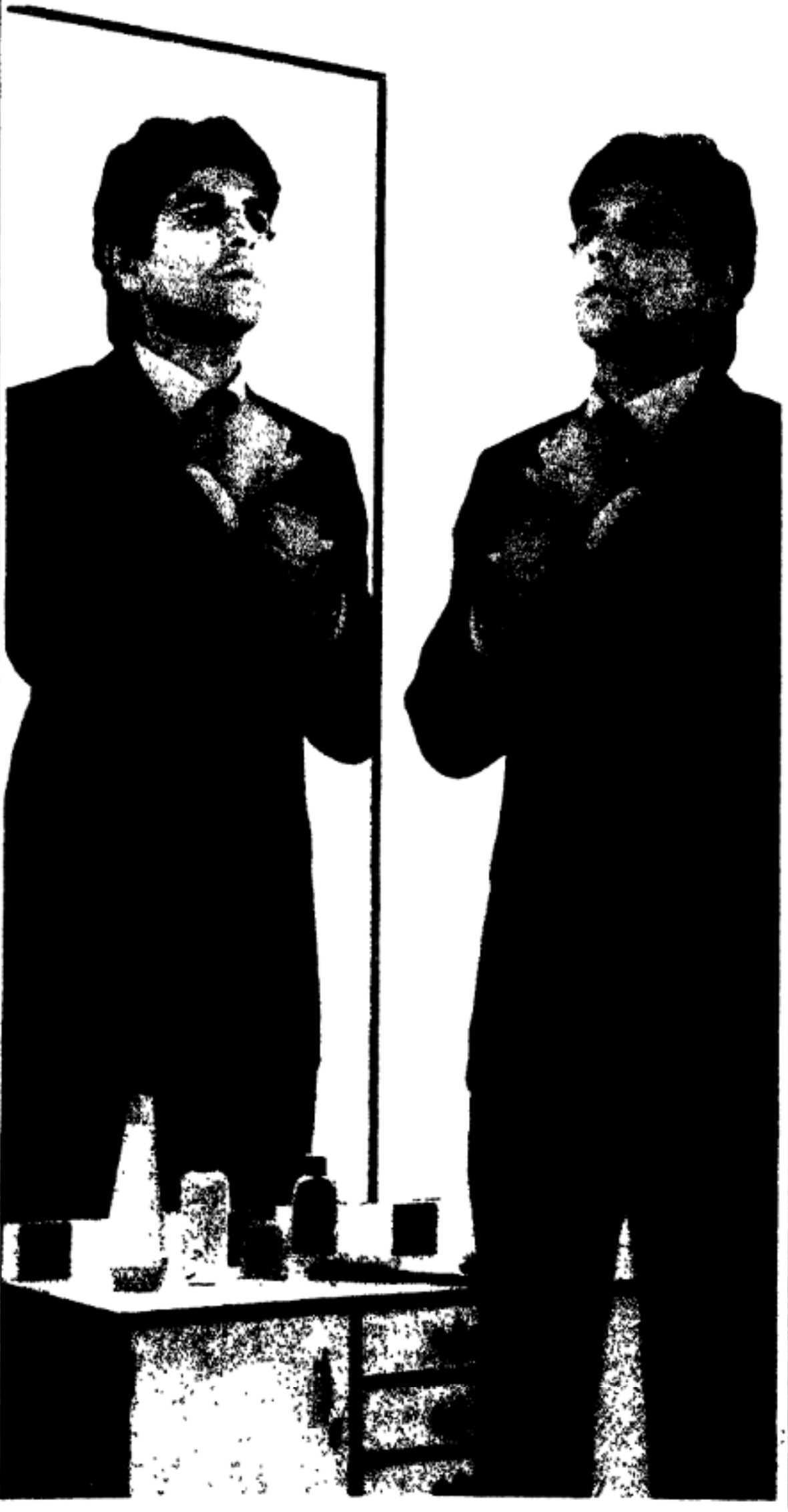
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Arc of Terror

The explosions of 10 May formed an arc in the northern Gangetic plain. Places in Haryana, the union territory of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh became the flashpoints as terrorism extended its frontiers. In Sirsa, Hissar, Ambala, in various colonies of Delhi, in Meerut and right up to Kanpur the terrorists' trigger worked. They had concentrated on Delhi—which was the worst affected—but that they had been able to set up transistor-traps at so many points only indicated the increasing reach of the terrorists Not only have they developed new techniques of disruption and covered new areas, they continue to pilfer supplies from the armed forces, as was clear from a few incidents in Haryana. Three persons were killed at a Haryana Roadways bus terminal in Hissar when a high explosive 36 (HE 36) hand grenade exploded, sending the people scampering for cover. In the adjoining district of Sirsa bombs went off in three buses killing four and injuring 15. At village Sadhaura near Ambala, there was yet another explosion in a bus; it killed the conductor and a woman sitting beside him. The incidents, which occurred almost simultaneously, set the Haryana administration on its toes· the police sounded an alert, prohibitory orders were imposed in several areas (even in those where no incidents had taken place), warnings about transistor-bombs were sent out to the people, vigilance on the borders with Punjab was stepped up and, in a move that reminded one of the pre-Operation Bluestar days, the Haryana Roadways suspended all bus services after sundown.

The following day, as the death toll in Haryana rose from 10 to 17, the police swung into action



Sarabjit Singh

A doctor treats one of the injured

arresting more than a hundred persons in connection with the crime. They searched all vehicles and trains leaving and entering the state. In Chandigarh, during a meeting called by the Haryana Governor, S.M.H. Burney, and attended by the chief secretary, P.P. Capcihan, the home secretary, L.C. Gupta and the director-general of police, M.S. Bhatnagar, further steps to prevent the breakdown of the law and order situation were discussed: intensification of patrolling, the placement of security forces at vantage points in various cities and beefing up the security arrangements of VIPs.

In Uttar Pradesh, too, the government had to call a high-level meeting to take steps to deal with the situation. One of the first decisions it took was to place the police and the intelligence networks on "red alert." The director-general of police, J.N. Chaturvedi, directed his forces to take preventive measures — including the imposition of Section 144 and searching of vehicles— wherever they could. The terrorists had struck Uttar Pradesh harder than Haryana. In bomb explosions spread over six districts of the state—Unnao, Aligarh, Meerut, Moradabad, Ghaziabad and Rampur—more than 20 people died on the first day itself. Subsequently, the toll rose even higher.

Meerut district was the worst hit, the culprit everywhere was that harmless looking plastic transistor that held the deadly bomb. One explosion in the Himachal Express while it was passing Partapur, killed seven passengers. Some distance away, in Khekhra, three were killed when a similar bomb exploded in a bus. At Unnao in Kanpur district, the transistor bomb went off in the office of the cashier of the bus stand; one of the victims was the bus conductor who had picked up the transistor bomb left in his bus and carried it to the cashier's room. The other, of course, was the cashier himself. So far and wide have the terrorists struck this time, that it really indicates how well entrenched they are and how deep they have penetrated—even into the districts of Uttar Pradesh which till sometime ago had only known the terror of dacoits. Now there is the terrorist from Punjab too.

cited by the communal provocation from the Sikh extremists, then the government's job can be said to have been well done. The quick arrest of the three suspects by the Delhi police also helped to restore the people's confidence in the state machinery. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, apart from taking a personal interest in the operations, requisitioned the services of a young politician, who has an impeccable record in secular politics, to help out in the home ministry's work. On the night of 12 May, Arif Mohammad Khan, who had become the youngest-ever union deputy minister in January 1982 and the youngest-ever minister of state a year later was given the additional charge of home affairs besides being the minister of state for industry and company affairs. Khan had been elected for the first time in his life on the Janata ticket He had resigned his ministership in Uttar Pradesh in the Janata days in protest against the government's failure to control a communal riot in Lucknow. Later, he joined the Congress(I). When politicians with a proven record in secularism are drafted into home ministry in the face of a crisis, the people's faith in the government is bound to go up. The task ahead, however, is not easy. The arrests made on 12 May have certainly reassured the people. But the Sikh terrorists are much more in number. Vigilance against communal tensions will have to be maintained in the coming days.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

A Blow by Blow Account

Twenty-two explosions rocked the capital on 10 and 11 May. The first blast occurred at 6.18 pm on Friday, 10 May. The last was reported at 7.25 am on Saturday morning. The sequence of events on the fateful night was as follows.

• 6.18 pm. The first bomb exploded near Gandhi Nagar. Two women, Omwati and Sundari, both aged 35, were killed The bomb went off when Omwati was tinkering with a "transistor radio" which she had picked up from the road. Three other persons, including a child were critically wounded.

• 7.35 pm: Two blasts, in quick succession were reported at the inter-state bus terminus near Kashmiri Gate. The blasts, triggered off by "transistor radio" bombs took the highest toll of life: killing seven persons and injuring 30. The blasts took place inside two UP Roadways buses at platform numbers 27 and 28. The first bus (UHN 1008) was bound for Muzaffarnagar and the second (UHI 1541) was to go to Ramnagar. Minutes after the explosions, the injured were rushed to the Hindu Rao hospital. Within hours the emergency ward of the hospital was full of injured passengers from the ill-fated buses.

• 7.50 pm: A Delhi Transport Corporation bus (on route 610) was rocked by a powerful explosion when a bomb planted inside a transistor radio detonated inside. Two persons were killed and five injured in the incident. The conductor of the bus, Khajan Singh, who had picked up the "transistor radio" and placed it below his seat was killed instantaneously. Among those found dead in the bus was sub-inspector Balbir Singh of the Delhi police The injured were rushed to the Safdarjung Hospital where two more passengers succumbed to their injuries.

• 8.10 pm: A bomb exploded in a rickshaw near the Tagore Garden area, killing two persons and injuring others. Almost simultaneously another blast was triggered off, this time at Nehru Vihar, near Timarpur. Police officers termed the explosion as the most serious. The explosion occurred when a bomb was lobbed in the area, in an attempt to blow up the water pipeline station of the municipal corporation of Delhi.

• 8.30 pm: A bomb concealed in a transistor set went off in a country



One of the injured being brought to hospital by friends and relatives



A young victim of a bomb blast

liquor shop in Jahangirpuri, north Delhi. Three men were killed in the blast including a Delhi police constable, Rachpal Singh.

• 9.07 pm: A blast was reported from Mangolpuri, a West Delhi colony. The bomb had been placed at a crowded bus stop. The incident occurred when one of the commuters picked up a "transistor radio" lying at the bus stop. Part of the concrete surface of the bus stop collapsed due to the impact of the bomb blast.

• 9.12 pm: Another blast was reported from the Banda Bahadur Chowk, near Himmat Nagar, injuring five persons. No deaths were reported. The blast took place in a moving DTC bus (route 81) plying between Moti Nagar and Mukherjee Nagar. The explosion followed a pattern similar to those inside other DTC buses: a "transistor radio"bomb had been placed below the conductor's seat, which went off on being tuned.

• 9.36 pm: Explosions rocked another DTC bus at the Ashram Chowk, in South Delhi. Four passengers were killed in the explosions which took place in the bus which was plying from ISBT to Faridabad.

• 11.08 pm: At the Dichaum Kalan bus depot, near Najafgarh, three persons died and one was seriously injured. A few minutes later, another explosion was heard at the same depot in which two more persons succumbed to injuries caused by explosives.

• 11.33 pm: In the last explosion, close to midnight of 10 May, one person died as a bomb blast reverberated near the Mohan Garden bus stand.

• 11 May 12.08 am: Soon after midnight, two persons were killed and two injured in a blast at G Block of Madangir, in the extreme south of Delhi. Almost at the same time, another bomb detonated several kilometres away inside a house in Uttam Nagar, in West Delhi.

• 12.35 am: Two persons were killed and three wounded in similar bomb blasts in the Tilak Nagar area. The reasons for the blasts could not be ascertained by the police.

• 6.15 am: The first blast of Saturday morning (11 May) occurred outside the Jagat cinema killing two persons and injuring one. The bomb had been lobbed by terrorists inside the cinema house.

• 7.10 am: In a slum dwelling close to Chittaranjan Park in south Delhi, five persons died when a bomb inside a transistor radio detonated. The transistor had been picked up by Bhola, a resident of the slum behind Deshbandhu College from bushes nearby. The bomb exploded when he turned the switch of the transistor inside his *jhuggi*. Three children died in the explosion and two other persons died due to the blast in the hospital.

• 7.25 am: Another took place in a slum dwelling close to Chittaranjan Park. Two labourers were killed inside their hut when a bomb exploded. Later pieces of shrapnel from a "transistor radio" were found outside. At about the same time at Raghubir Nagar in Delhi cantonment two persons were killed in a similar incident.

'Suddenly, a Bomb Went Off'

How innocent people paid with their lives for a war they never understood

"*Ekdum bam phut gaya.*" Each patient in ward number seven of the Bara Hindu Rao Hospital repeated the same words. Each of the patients in the casualty ward of the hospital situated on the ridge near the university campus in north Delhi was an innocent victim of the "transistor bomb." From late in the evening, the hospital began registering patients with severe explosive injuries. Soon the trickle of patients became a stream and by midnight blood-smeared bodies lay strewn on the floors of the ward. Three mutilated bodies had been brought in of persons who had died on the spot. The body of a young boy, a resident of Shakti Nagar was brought in on a stretcher, his right arm dismembered by a bomb explosion. His face and chest bore wounds from the shrapnel of a "transistor bomb." An unidentified boy died the next morning. His body was sent to the Sabzi Mandi dead house, the city mortuary close to the Bara Hindu Rao Hospital, where by the morning of 11 May eight such bodies of unidentified victims of bomb blasts had been dumped.



A bus damaged by a bomb blast at the Inter-State Bus Terminus

There were those in the ward who could be called the living dead. Two patients in the ward were declared "critically injured" the next day. According to doctors, there were very few chances of the victims surviving. Besides, both the patients Madan Lal and Jayanand Sundariya should have immediately been transferred to the intensive care unit (ICU) of the hospital, where they should have been given emergency treatment. The victims were not shifted into the ICU because the unprecedented rush of patients suffering bomb blast injuries had filled up every bed in the unit.

Madan Lal lay in bed number 13 of the ward, with thick bloodstained bandages around his waist. The blast had ripped open his liver. His right hand had been smashed by the explosion. In a voice that was barely audible, Madan Lal described the sequence of events: "I boarded a DTC bus number 810 from Kingsway Camp to go to Mukherjee Nagar. As soon as I approached the conductor for a ticket I heard a deafening noise and lost consciousness as a sharp object hit me in my stomach. Later I found that I had been brought to this hospital with others in an ambulance."

Another patient in the same ward, Nafis Ahmed, aged 24, described how the bomb exploded inside a UP State Roadways bus which he had boarded at the Inter-State Bus Terminus (ISBT): "At 6.30 pm I and my family boarded the bus from ISBT to go to Khatoli." Nafis Ahmed was travelling with his wife, Firtoz and two children. "We were sitting in the third row of the bus. Before the bus

could start I noticed a young Sikh enter the bus and place a briefcase-like object on the bonnet. Earlier he had asked other passengers where the bus was going. After asking this question, he got off. Ten minutes later, the whole bus shook with the blast. Later, I came to know that the object that the Sikh had placed on the bonnet was a transistor bomb. The bomb exploded when a child picked up the transistor from the bonnet." Nafis explained that for 30 minutes following the explosion there was panic and confusion inside the bus. Two persons in the front seats died immediately. All those who were injured were brought in an ambulance to the Bara Hindu Rao hospital.

The pattern of the terrorist attacks in most parts of Delhi had been the same as the one which Madan Lal and Nafis Ahmed had seen. Eyewitness accounts of the explosions reveal a similar pattern—of bombs being planted in inter-city or inter-state buses, which exploded while either being switched on or placed on the ground. Suraj Ram, the driver of a DTC bus inside which one such transistor bomb exploded described how it happened: "When the bus (route number 610) was near the Sarojini Nagar depot stop, I noticed two Sikhs suddenly pushing aside the other passengers to get off. By the time the bus started to move, I heard a loud bang in the rear of the bus. The conductor and another passenger were killed. The glass panes of the bus were shattered and several passengers were wounded."

While in the evening of 10 May the pattern followed by the terrorists with clinical precision in different parts of the city was to plant the explosives inside buses, the following morning blasts were triggered off by "transistor bombs" which had been left in open spaces in parts of South Delhi. This time, too, victims (12 persons died on the morning of 11 May) were innocent and unsuspecting citizens, and what is worse, among the poorest. Death traps lay scattered for them on the night of 10 May itself. By the morning ten persons had picked up the bait left by the terrorists, meeting a tragic death.

Bhola, a resident of a slum colony close to 'C' block of Chittaranjan Park was one such victim. Bhola was oblivious of the string of violent incidents that had rocked the city the previous night. He was unaware of the danger ahead when he picked up a transistor radio from the bushes near his *jhuggi*. Delighted with his find, Bhola brought the transistor home. As soon as he switched on the tuner, the bomb inside detonated. Bhola was killed immediately along with his two nieces, seven-year-old Guriya and 12-year-old Saroj, who were playing inside when the explosion occurred. Said a resident of the slum area: "When Bhola brought the transistor from the *jhaari* (bush) we warned him it was not good to pick up other people's things. But he took it inside and it exploded." By the time the police reached the spot and the bloodied bodies of Bhola, Guriya and Saroj were lifted, a local politician was making announcements on a megaphone in the area: "Do not pick up any *lawaris* (unidentified) objects that may be lying around There may be bombs planted inside." The warnings were too late for Bhola. He had already become the unsuspecting and innocent victim of a carefully executed plot.

Within minutes of Bhola's death, three others were killed in similar incidents in parts of south Delhi. Ramu (20) and Mahesh (28) were killed when a bomb exploded, this time in a slum situated close to Tara Apartments, Kalkaji. Both Ramu and Mahesh were labourers from Bihar They had come to the capital to look for work only a few months ago. On the morning of 11 May, residents of other slums were astounded to find Mahesh's *jhuggi* blown off by a bomb and Ramu's body thrown three feet out of the *jhuggi* by the explosion. "*Bachao mujhe! Bam phut gaya* (Save me. A bomb has exploded)" were the only words Ramu could utter before he died. Later, residents found broken pieces of the plastic container which either Ramu or Mahesh may have picked up. The findings confirmed that both men were among the last of the victims of the carefully planned bomb attack on the capital.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

The "Transistor Bomb"



Sondeep Shankar

Additional commissioner of police H.C. Jatav shows a transistor bomb

The opinion among forensic experts who have examined the "transistor bombs" is that it was quite a crude mechanism—a five inch by two-and-a-half inch pack of explosive "locally cast" in lead and connected to a nine volt cell by a three inch long wire. This mechanism, in turn, was locked on to the switch on the plastic body of the "transistor." As soon as the switch was tuned to "on" position, there was contact and the device exploded. But so unsophisticated was the mechanism that the bomb could even have gone off if the "transistor" was given a sharp jolt or a knock The bomb had a powerful range though—it could damage things within a radius of fifteen feet Scientists of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) who were summoned to the various blast sites by the south Delhi police chief, Maxwell Pereira, have taken several samples from the bombs back to their laboratories They would soon be presenting their report on the exact nature of the components to the Delhi police. But some of the experts are already certain that some parts used in the bomb were imported.

There is still some confusion about how the bombs actually exploded. Initial reports had suggested that there was a timer device fitted to the transistor unit and the bombs were timed to blast off in five minutes, in some cases ten. But an examination of the bombs showed that there was no such sophistry in their mechanism. They went off only if the transistor switch was fiddled with or in case the bomb was given a jerk. The recovery of more than a dozen unexploded bombs from several places in Delhi only supports the theory that there was no timing device in the tiny villain.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

COVER STORY

Akali Dal: A Victory for the Hawks ?

Sant Longowal's resignation is seen as a surrender to the extremists within the party

Akali politics took a dramatic turn when the Akali Dal leader Sant Harchand Singh Longowal resigned from the presidentship of the party. Almost simultaneously the former Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal also announced that he was quitting his party post. These new developments in the Akali Dal not only shocked the party workers but a large majority of the people in Punjab felt that both the Akali leaders had surrendered to the hawks within the Dal because they did not want to stand up to the new leadership of Baba Joginder Singh father of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and presently the convener of the nine-member *ad hoc* committee of the Akali Dal.

It is generally felt by Punjab-watchers that Sant Longowal and Prakash Singh Badal have thrown a challenge to the new *ad hoc* committee and to the hardliners by resigning from their party posts. Both the leaders are popular. Badal, for example, is even popular with a section of the Hindus. It is generally felt that though the hardliners do not have much of a numerical strength in the state they are nevertheless in a position to exploit the sentiments of the Sikh masses.

The confrontation between the moderates and the hardliners came to the fore when the 83-year-old Baba Joginder Singh suddenly announced the formation of the *ad hoc* committee. Nobody had paid much attention to Baba Joginder Singh when he arrived in the Golden Temple on 1 May. He moved into a room adjoining the *langar* (community kitchen) within the temple complex. Newsmen who talked with him that day returned convinced that Baba Joginder Singh was no Bhindranwale

But they were proved wrong. Around seven that evening, the father of the man who had ruled Punjab for nearly three years before he died in June last year, decided to grab the headlines for the next day. Sitting in the obscure room adjoining the *langar*, the old man issued a statement dissolving the different factions of the Akali Dal including the two headed by Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi. He then appointed the nine-member *ad hoc*



Baba Joginder Singh



Sant H.S. Longowal

committee with himself as the absentee convener to run the affairs of the Sikh *panth*. In the cleverly worded statement in Gurmukhi, Baba Joginder Singh said: "I am a humble *dass* (servant) of the *panth*. I am grateful to Sant Longowal and Jathedar Talwandi who entrusted a small man like me to forge *panthic* unity." The statement was accompanied by photocopies of two brief letters written by Longowal and Talwandi to Baba Joginder Singh. In their letters the two Akali Dal leaders offered to accept "any decision taken by you" for *panthic* unity. Talwandi, heading the rival faction of the Akali Dal and an arch-enemy of Longowal, however, had inserted a condition in his letter. He mentioned that he would not be prepared to work under the presidentship or the convenorship of Longowal. Baba Joginder Singh obviously obliged Talwandi. He appointed SimranjitSinghMann, the dismissed IPS officer currently under detention in Bharatpur jail as a suspect in the Indira Gandhi assassination case, the convenor of the *ad hoc* committee Till his release, Baba Joginder Singh would himself be the convenor of the committee.

The composition of the committee was interesting It comprised Longowal, Tohra, Badal and Talwandi. The other four members are Gurtej Singh, a former officer of the IAS who had resigned, Harinder Singh a former Indian diplomat in Norway dismissed by the Indian government for making a statement against Operation Bluestar, Manjit Singh, the younger brother of the former president of the All Indian Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) Bhai Amrik Singh who had been killed during the army action and Inderjit Singh Sekhon, an advocate from Faridkot.

The convener of the *ad hoc* committee, Simranjit Singh Mann is in jail while Gurtej Singh is underground. The Punjab government had declared him a proclaimed offender. Harinder Singh is in Oslo and Manjit Singh is also in jail. The four belong to the pro-Bhindranwale militant camp. Undoubtedly, the action of Baba Joginder Singh being termed a bloodless coup by some observers came as the biggest surprise to the moderate Akali leaders. The next day, Longowal at a press conference in Jullundur categorically rejected both the dissolution of the party as well as the appointment of the *ad hoc* committee but later altered his statement with the amendment that a delegates' session of the Akali Dal would consider the proposal of Baba Joginder Singh on 17 May. On 8 May, Longowal under pressure from the hawks in the party cancelled the 17 May meeting. Even his critics said Longowal lacked the courage to stand up against Bhindranwale's father. But his supporters are of the opinion that the Akali chief started feeling disillusioned when a majority of the party leaders started supporting the proposal put forward by Baba Joginder Singh quite openly. Even Akali leaders like Atma Singh and Ujagar Singh Sekhon belonging to the moderate Badal camp "welcomed" Baba Joginder Singh's proposal. Finally, Longowal surrendered completely to Baba Joginder Singh on 8 May when he agreed to meet him in a gurdwara at Sultanpur Lodhi, about 100 kms from Amritsar. Tohra was also at the meeting. The coup engineered by Bhindranwale's father had not only dethroned Longowal but had made him the supreme head of both the Akalis and the Sikhs.

The question that is now uppermost in the minds of the people in Punjab is: Will Longowal and Badal force the hardliners to step down? Whatever the outcome, there is a feeling that it is men like Badal and Longowal who can negotiate with the centre. Since the others in the committee are non-political (some are in jail; others are underground and even the convener, Baba Joginder Singh does not have any political background), the new committee might not be acceptable to the people of Punjab.

Although the situation in the villages of Punjab is normal, it is anybody's guess when things might take a turn for the worse and communal violence erupts. The tension between the two communities is discernible in the cities where Hindus and Sikhs do not talk to each other.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar and Jagmeet Uppal, Chandigarh

Death on the Farm

The first indication of what was to come later on 10 May. perhaps appeared near the Sadhu Ashram on the Hoshiarppur-Una road in Punjab. It was nearing six in the morning and 63-year-old Chaudhary Balbir Singh, former Member of Parliament and president of the Punjab unit of the Lok Dal, was riding down to his farms on a moped. He did not notice the two men following him on a scooter till they came too near for him to escape. They pulled their scooter alongside and shot him at point-blank range—three bullets in his neck and Balbir Singh fell dead on the spot. His assailants sped away.

As news of his death spread, people came out on the streets of Hoshiarpur and indulged in large-scale violence and arson. In the Dal Bazar, Bahadur Chowk, Kanak Mandi and Guru Chowk areas of Hoshiarpur, mobs set fire to more than three dozen shops and one person was stabbed to death. They even violated curfew restrictions to attack the Sikhs in the town. Two constables of the Punjab police were also roughed up by the angry crowd moving through the streets of the town and their motorcycles were burnt down. The murder of Chaudhary Balbir Singh had created public outrage. Although the police took control of the situation—it fired several rounds in the air and resorted to a lathi-charge—tension gripped Hoshiarpur and indeed most other parts of Punjab. till the next day when a "Punjab bandh" was declared. It was also the day when Balbir Singh Chaudhary was cremated with full state honours and in the presence of several senior Punjab government officials and Lok Dal leaders, including Devi Lal, Sharad Yadav and Ram Bilas Paswan

Chaudhary Balbir Singh is the second important political leader to be attacked by terrorists in a month's time Some weeks ago, there had been a similar attack on R. L. Bhatia, the general secretary of the All India Congress Committee (I). He escaped with bullet wounds and is now on his way to recovery. Chaudhary Balbir Singh was not so lucky. Balbir Singh, a highly respected man in Punjab, has been raising his voice against the Sikh extremists for the last three years. In fact, over the past few months the Chaudhuri had been receiving a number of threats from the extremists, but he had chosen to ignore them. Last month, his daughter, who is married and settled in America, sent him a bullet proof jacket, but he refused to use it despite his wife's request. If he had done so, perhaps he would have been alive today.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar



Sandeep Shankar

At the AICC(I) session: (from l to r) Party president Rajiv Gandhi with working president Kamlapati Tripathi, Pranab Mukherjee and K. Karunakaran

The Mood After 100 Years

The AICC(I) centenary session demonstrated the enthusiasm of the young, and frustrations of the old

Closing the two-day session of the All India Congress Committee(I) at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium in New Delhi the Congress president, Rajiv Gandhi, remarked that the "level of debate all through had been very high." In 22 hours spread over 4 and 5 May, 71 members of the AICC(I) had spoken from the pulpit on various resolutions—on politics, economics, on international affairs and on affairs of women and the youth. All resolutions were passed unanimously. Not that there was no opposition. As many as 14 amendments were suggested by the speakers. Time was short, hence many could not speak (169 members were deprived of the opportunity to speak because of the "paucity of time"); there would have been many more. But when the time for voting came, it was assumed by the chair that all amendments had been withdrawn. Hands raised here and there against resolutions were shooed down. The party clung to the fetish of unanimity. Debate yes, said the Congress(I) leadership, dissent no. Of debate, too, there was little. For most members, the session was only a platform for sycophancy. The main talking-point was either the greatness of Mrs Gandhi or the vigour and dynamism of Rajiv Gandhi. So profuse were the members in their praise that at times the Congress president was himself flush with embarrassment—he would indicate it with a jarring sound of the time-bell in his hand. He did this once when H.K.L. Bhagat was at the microphone. Bhagat spoke little on the political resolution—his subject—and more of the glorious tradition of the Nehru-Gandhi family, calling Rajiv Gandhi the "fourth great immortal leader of independent India after Gandhi, Nehru and Mrs Indira Gandhi." But that criticism in the Congress(I) is still intolerable was clear. It remained outside the indoor stadium and came only in whispers—from people who had nothing much to lose.

R. Mohan, member of the Coimbatore district Congress committee made a complaint that has long been worrying many a Congressman. "Organisational elections in the par-



Arun Singh (left) at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium

Sondeep Shankar

ty must be held soon," he said, "because dissatisfaction is filtering down to the lower levels in some areas. The effect of the central party working has not reached us as yet but once it does, we shall have to find a way to fight it."

Harbachan Singh from Haryana, another district-level worker, said how difficult it had become for "an old man like me" to say anything in the party. "I agree youth should be given its place...It is good but we also have worked for the party, we have some experience but the Congress seems to have closed its doors on the older generation." There was, among the older generation of Congressmen, the distinct feeling that this session had marked a turning point, the "erosion of basic Congress values had begun." The disappearing *khadi* and its replacement by polyester, the vanishing Gandhi caps and safari suits were visible all around. "Sometimes," said a veteran of ten AICC sessions, "when I look around I feel I have come to the wrong place."

There was another group that felt rather misplaced during the entire session; they were once known as Sanjay Gandhi's storm-troopers, now they are a tribe in disarray. At the Guwahati Congress session in November 1976 the then Congress president, Mrs Indira Gandhi, had complimented them by saying: "You have stolen our thunder." This time the thunderbirds cooled their heels either in the viewing galleries or outside the session itself. Sanjay Gandhi was completely blacked out of the AICC(I) meeting on 4—5 May. Not a photograph, not even a word on him anywhere. Leaders who had once carried his *chappals* in their hands and called him their "rehnuma" (the only hope of India's future) were not prepared to make a mention of him on record. This session, for all practical purposes, has buried his memory. Indeed one Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee member went on to remark, "There is already an entire party running in his name, why should we have him here?"

There were also those who have been quite openly challenging the party leadership in every forum, like Bhagwat Jha Azad, the former union labour minister. He has, in the last few weeks, crossed swords with the government even on the floor of the Lok Sabha, having taken ministers to task and grilled them with surprising ferocity. Throughout the session, Azad remained dispassionate. For the general member of the AICC(I) this session had nothing much to offer—only a political *mela* where he ate and drank and clapped after long speeches. The lucky one also got to present a petition to someone important. But he did not go back any wiser on the Congress' policy or its functioning. For P. Lingadhraman of Cochin this was the first AICC session. What did he feel? "Nothing much. My only great satisfaction is that I saw the great leader Rajiv Gandhi." How many debates on resolutions did he listen to? "What resolution? My state leaders wanted me to come to see Delhi so I came. So here I met a few other Congressmen. So the two days passed." But there were always enough people at hand who were singing the praises of the "historic session" of the AICC(I). Said K. Brahmananda Reddi, who had from the podium, made the most laudatory of speeches, "I have seldom seen an AICC session pass such well-thought-out resolutions. The new leadership under Rajiv Gandhi is really set to take the country towards the twentyfirst century-...What could be a more welcome sign than that."

On a white platform, under the glare of arc-lamps and the gaze of portraits of Gandhi, Nehru, Mrs Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi him-

self, sat an array of Congress leaders Party president Rajiv Gandhi was flanked by the aging working president, Kamlapati Tripathi and AICC(I) general secretary, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai. Other leaders—Pranab Mukherjee, Narasimha Rao, Gundu Rao, K. Karunakaran, P Shiv Shankar, A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury, Sitaram Kesri and Darbara Singh took turns to sit behind the party president and whisper into his ears. Everytime his company changed, the photographers went on a clicking spree. Lesser lights, those who did not have the sanction to sit with the big league, came leaning onto the podium time and again to say something or the other to Rajiv Gandhi. And again the photographers clicked. Behind the podium stood parliamentary secretary Arun Singh and political adviser Makhan lal Fotedar, overseeing the proceed-

A helping hand: Working president Kamlapati Tripathi being helped by Congress president Rajiv Gandhi and treasurer Sitaram Kesri (behind) to stand up during the lunch recess on 4 May



ings. And in front—in the large arena which more often witnesses games of basketball and table tennis—the members of the AICC(I) whose seats mostly remained empty.

Attendance was persistently embarrassing. Spokesmen of the AICC(I) tried to explain it away saying the tight security arrangements had deterred many people from coming in. But one could find the reasons elsewhere—in the luncheon pandal, on railways and air lines ticket counters, everywhere in the stadium compound. Members, it seemed, preferred spending time drinking tea and coffee and munching snacks, or queueing up at the ticket counters or just gossiping in clusters here and there. It was the boys and girls of the Sewa Dal who filed indoors to give the session a more respectable look. And when Rajiv Gandhi was away, even they took time off, leaving the 1200 capacity stadium almost empty.

This could easily be called a session of defences and denials. Most members, including the Congress president, spent time clearing "misconceptions" about Congress policy in recent months. Senior partymen were put in a bit of a spot by the criticism of the party's economic policy. The economic resolution which was largely ready at the last moment, reiterated the Congress(I)'s commitment to socialism and its faith in the public sector which the changed resolution described as the "sheet-anchor" of the economy. Former union finance minister Pranab Mukherjee who moved the economic resolution, and the present finance minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who interjected in the debate, were at pains to stress the Congress(I)'s unwavering commitment to socialism and the public sector. V.P. Singh, in fact, spent most of his time defending the budget. Also on the defence was the Gujarat chief minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, under attack after the recent violence in his state. All the disturbance in his state, he said, had been prompted by "vested political interests", namely, the BJP, whose leaders had "planned a conspiracy" against him. And once again, he attacked the Gujarat press for fanning passions at a "sensitive time." Those who spoke after Solanki congratulated him for his "tough stand" on the issue.

Criticism—which did not matter in the end at all—came only from lesser-known members. Ram Dhan had a word to say about the Congress organisation which, he thought, needed to adopt a "satisfactory and respectable" policy. "If someone is nominated to a post," he said, "he is not allowed to remain there. He is replaced by someone else even before he can understand the nature of his job. And that someone is an incompetent person who cannot do justice to the organisation." He added that the Congress, at a few places, had given the go-ahead to "criminals" to fight the elections as a result of which the party lost seats and its image. Kamaluddin, speaking on the economic resolution, remarked that organisations like the state electricity boards were the most mismanaged institutions in the country. They were not even producing fifty per cent results. Others had more general complaints to make—the inefficient implementation of the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), shortages of water supply, the need for more industrialisation in a particular area etc. All these were sidelined by the AICC(I) on the plea that it was adopting only a resolution, not a declaration which would incorporate all matters, big and small.

Irritation, if any, to the Congress leadership came only from outside—from the press. In his opening remarks, the Congress president, referring to the arms race on the subcontinent, had said: "We feel that they (Pakistan) are developing a nuclear weapon...This has compelled us to look into various aspects of this question and to see what action we should take." A news agency had interpreted the remark to suggest that India was ready to review its nuclear policy. "Is that responsible journalism?" Rajiv Gandhi asked tersely, looking towards the press gallery. He then went on to restate India's nuclear stance— in the well-known words of Mrs Indira Gandhi, the person, who *in absentia* had most dominated the first session of the AICC(I) after her assassination.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi



Gundu Rao (right) talking to Yogendra Makwana during the AICC(I) session

Old Hands, New Policies

For Congressmen, the party's recent past has been momentous. 31 October 1984 and 31 December 1984 are current history and the two dates are indelible in the memory of the Congressmen. The abrupt departure of Mrs Gandhi and the two tempestuous months which were followed by the emphatic arrival of Rajiv Gandhi. On these two factors stand the hopes and fears, expectations and apprehensions of Congressmen today. But surely the dark shadow cast on 31 October is beginning to be dwarfed by the spirit of 31 December. Mrs Gandhi has almost become a part of bitter memory. Rajiv Gandhi's leadership is the reality in which the party lives today. Where does it go from here? The two-day AICC(I) session at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium in New Delhi proved to be a gauge for the members of the party. SUNDAY spoke to a cross-section of Congressmen, big and small, from all parts of the country. The response, inevitably, reflected a range of opinion. There was no dearth of members—specially those who wanted their comments recorded, who showered nothing but praise on the leadership and saw nothing but a bright future ahead for the party. "Never before," said H. K. L. Bhagat, minister for parliamentary affairs, "has there been such a feeling of buoyancy and enthusiasm. And all this has been achieved by our party president. He is the only man who can give the country stability, and that is why his party is so successful." Another ministerial colleague of Rajiv Gandhi, K. P. Singh Deo, minister of state for personnel and administrative reforms, felt that his party was led by a man who had the unflinching support of the Indian populace. "In such a situation, nobody is in a position to challenge the Congress today...it is stronger than it ever was." The vigorous health of a party blessed by Mrs Gandhi and led by the dynamic Rajiv Gandhi was a common refrain. There was a general feeling among Congressmen that the party was destined for a more historic role. But there were as many warning notes during the session. In fact, some came even from the official platform. One of the first to do so was K. Karunakaran, the Kerala chief minister, who spoke on the political resolution of the Congress(I). "If there is one enemy that the Congres has today, it is the Congressmen themselves," he said. "Congressmen should conquer infighting...they are trying to climb on each other's backs to get prominence." His remarks, perhaps, came in the light of the changes that the party had to make in its political resolution on protests from a group of Congressmen.



Sandeep Sharma

Veteran Congressmen and freedom fighters at the AICC(I) session

But those who spoke off the record were easier with their views. The most common concern seemed to be the organisational elections in the Congress which the leadership has been putting off for almost 15 years. "We cannot understand why the party is doing so...Why cannot they have elections and reinforce the confidence in the party cadres? We have worked so hard for the party, got such good results, why cannot the leadership now do something for partymen?" asked a senior party member from Bihar. Another party hand from Maharashtra felt that the delay in elections was leading to "some disillusionment in the ranks. People had thought that Rajiv Gandhi would at least announce quick elections but..." A member of Parliament from Rajasthan gave a good explanation: "Only those who do not hold any positions today want elections...take my example. I control the party organisation in my dis-

trict. Why should I want things to change with party elections? It is simple."

With a change at the helm, new grounds for complaint have been prepared. Among the older members of the party—those who claim to have begun work for the Congress during the freedom movement—a distinct level of disenchantment was evident. One gentleman, bent with age, bespectacled and unable to walk without assistance had braved his way to the Talkatora indoor stadium on the first d[illegible] dressed in fresh *khadi* and a Gand[illegible] The session had [illegible] yet be[illegible] Seva Dal worke[illegible] escorted [illegible] 'pandal' and got him a cha[illegible] there through out the day. Nobody helped him go to the hall where the proceedings of the AICC(I) were going on. The next day the old Congressman was not seen. He seemed to have become irrelevant like most old Congress members. "There is too much importance being given to the youth," said Vidyasagar Goswami, a "special invitee" from eastern Uttar Pradesh. "Too much is left to them without ever taking into count the experience that we have," said he. Another section, however, maintained that youth in the Congress was only a misnomer. "Where is the youth?" asked one youth Congressman angrily. "Look at the cabinet of Rajiv Gandhi-...look at the chief ministers he has all around the country...barring a few they are all from the old lot. The only important youths the party has, are the Prime Minister and his close circle of advisers." Complaints inevitably centred around the "centralism" in the party, the absence of "enough discussion," the question of "inaccessibility of the party president," and the new "power centres" that have built up around Rajiv Gandhi. But nobody protests openly.

The change in the Congress(I) leadership and the reshuffles here and there that followed, have created new groups in the party. They mostly comprise new disgruntled elements. Even leaders of the Congress(I) agree that in a party like their's lobbies and opinion-groups are inevitable. But did matters come to a head during this session of the Congress(I)? It is now only too well-known that the original draft of the economic resolution to be adopted by the AICC(I) had almost precipitated a crisis in the party. A last-minute redraft, emphasising socialism as the basic philosophy of the party and underlining the importance of the public sector, saved the day. Those who had opposed the original resolution—already being talked about in political circles of the capital as the "radical group"—had their say, which only proves their strength. Has the new leadership of Rajiv Gandhi already begun to face the push and pull of internal pressures? A former union minister, now only a Member of Parliament remarked: "Partymen will bring on pressure every time the leaders try to deviate from the basic principles of the Congress . A small group of leaders cannot take so many partymen for granted."

But then another section maintained there had been no change at all in the party leadership's thinking. They are only trying to "suit the basic principles with the changing times." A statement that was corroborated, though in an entirely different tone, came from a partyman from Delhi. Said he: "The Congress in the time of Mrs Gandhi was criticised for being dominated by a family. Have things changed today? Are they any better? What were the criticisms in Mrs Gandhi's time? No inner-party democracy and no dissent. Things are very much the same today." He was, however, sporting a Rajiv Gandhi badge on his *kurta*.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

Media Photo



A tribal woman and her grandson from Madhya Pradesh at the AICC(I) session

Congress for Socialism

The economic resolution at the AICC(I) session sought to clear all doubts when it declared "unequivocally" the party's commitment to socialism and the public sector. Paragraph after paragraph in the document presented at the meet reminded the delegates and everybody concerned that the Congress was still firm on its avowed path of socialism and gave the public sector a pivotal role in the development of the economy. It vehemently denied that the Congress(I) had moved away from the socialistic path. Lest anybody still have any doubts, the resolution elaborated, "Socialism has been our goal because in India's social and economic conditions, no other way was conceivable for solving the problems of the people."

Yet, this was not the message conveyed in the original draft of the resolution presented by finance minister V.P. Singh to the Congress Working Committee (CWC). The finance minister's resolution had, in fact, sought to justify the change in stance by the government in its economic policies by stating, "In the process of continued development, the policy instruments relevant to one stage cannot be treated as permanently sacrosanct. Nor are they ends in themselves." It is obvious then that the rewriting of the resolution was a last minute attempt to preempt the anticipated outburst from several Congressmen perturbed by the government's "rightist leanings" evident in the union budget, the export-import policy, the electronics policy and the innumerable policy changes effected by the new team at the helm.

The rumblings against the government's pro-capitalist and "pro-rich" economic policy had begun soon after the budget. It is learned that as many as 130 Congress(I) MPs had expressed strong opposition to the budget and subsequent concessions to the private sector. About a week before the AICC session several MPs had even begun to openly voice their intention to hit out against the government's economic policy at the two-day meet. Reports to the effect had begun trickling in from several newspapers. The discontent was plain and it was obvious that any resolution seeking to justify the change in economic thought would be hotly debated, possibly culminating in a showdown between the pro and anti lobbies.

It was therefore decided at the eleventh hour to recast the entire resolution to bring into focus a renewed commitment to socialistic values. It is now learned that the draft committee of the CWC comprising Pranab Mukherjee, Darbara Singh, Narasimha Rao and Srikant Verma, worked till the early hours of the morning even on the last day to redraft the entire resolution. The effort was not in vain, as was apparent the next morning. After the first three paragraphs which were retained from the original draft, the committee had added five long paragraphs taking nearly three pages in the 12 page-long resolution emphasising the "socialist strategy of development" of the Congress(I). "Beginning with a firm commitment to socialism," it went on to stress that it had "followed this path steadfastly despite the strong opposition of vested interests."

The AICC(I), the resolution stated, reiterates its strong commitment to the fundamentals of the social and economic strategy laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. On the public sector, the phraseology was even more emphatic. "The public sector is the sheet anchor of India's progress," the resolution maintained. "It is only by strengthening the public sector that the objective of self reliance (can be achieved)". And if that was not forceful enough, the document went on: "If the working class today feels that it is in the vanguard of national development, the credit goes to the visionaries who conceived of the public sector as the engine of growth and equity."

The next paragraph dwelt on the merits of the 20-point programme which "symbolises the growth with social justice objective." The Congress(I), the resolution maintained, "has never believed in the trickle down effect of growth."

Perhaps, what is even more significant than the additions made to the draft, is the part deleted from the original. While there were several sentences rephrased or deleted in part, there was only one paragraph which was struck off in toto. It read: "Strengthening of the growth impulses of the economy through absorption of modern technology and through appropriate fiscal and legislative changes was imperative to sustain the tempo of industrial development. In the process of continued development the policy instruments relevant to one stage cannot be treated as permanently sacrosanct. Nor are they ends in themselves. The AICC(I) is convinced that in taking steps to modernise the economy, the government has acted on the policy premises that had matured during the period 1980-81 to 84-85."

To be fair to V.P. Singh's document, the original draft did call for maintaining the outlay for the public sector at the size outlined in the seventh plan approach paper. This was endorsed by the working committee. The original document also gave a "crucial role" to the public sector in development (which was changed to "central role" in the final paper). Finally, the first draft had also made a fleeting reference to "our avowed socialistic objective." But what the finance minister did not do then was to hammer in the point repeatedly. Yet on the day when the new look resolution was finally presented at the Sunday session, the finance minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh's intervention in the debate was significant. He talked at length about the very points that he had left out of his draft and which the working committee had added—social security, crop insurance, retrenchment compensation, higher wages for bonus calculation. His defence of the public sector and reiteration to the commitment to socialism was even more emphatic than the rephrased resolution. "Forget it if you think that the policies towards the public sector have changed under Rajiv Gandhi," he told the packed stadium. "The private sector cannot exist for a single day wihout the public sector on whose shoulders it stands," he asserted.

The finance minister had clearly succumbed to pressure. But the question that is far more relevant today than whether he bowed to pressure or not, is: Does the desparate last minute change in the economic resolution really reflect a rethinking on the part of the government? Or, was it plain rhetoric to camouflage the changes brought about over the past months?

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

SPECIAL REPORT

Hall of Fame

The venue of the first session of the Congress will be commemorated in December

Tejpal auditorium in Bombay's Gowalia Tank is a favourite haunt for theatre buffs. Adjacent to the auditorium is the Sir Mathuradas Vissanji Memorial Hall, which is now rented out for marriages. The Tejpal Memorial complex is more than a hundred years old. In fact, the importance of the green-coloured complex, which overlooks the August Kranti Maidan (the Gowalia Tank maidan was the spot from where Mahatma Gandhi delivered the historic "Quit India" speech on 9 August 1942) is not known to many Bombayites who go there round the year either to see plays or attend marriages.

Hidden behind some green bushes in front of the memorial hall is a marble plaque, which has the inscription: "In this historic hall on the 28 December 1885, a band of loyal patriots laid the foundation of the Indian National Congress which during these 50 years has been built up, stone by stone, tier by tier, by the faith and devotion, courage and sacrifice, of countless men and women, as the pledge and symbol of the invincible purpose to secure India their motherland, her legitimate birthright of *Swaraj*. This tablet is placed to commemorate the occasion of its golden jubilee, 28 December 1935."

The Congress centenary celebrations have begun. In the hundredth year of the party, the 42-year-old president of the Congress(I), Rajiv Gandhi, who like the Indian National Congress, was born in Bombay, has set the ball rolling for the historic commemoration. When the inauguration took place on 6 May in New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Sports Complex (formerly known as the Indraprastha Indoor Stadium), there was space for 25,000 people. The first meeting of the Indian National Congress on 28 December, 1885, however, was not such a grand affair. When the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College Hall (it was later renamed Vissanji Memorial Hall, to honour a president of the Gokuldas Trust) was the venue a hundred years ago, "very close to 100 gentlemen" attended (as stated in the *Report of the first Indian National Congress, 1885*, a

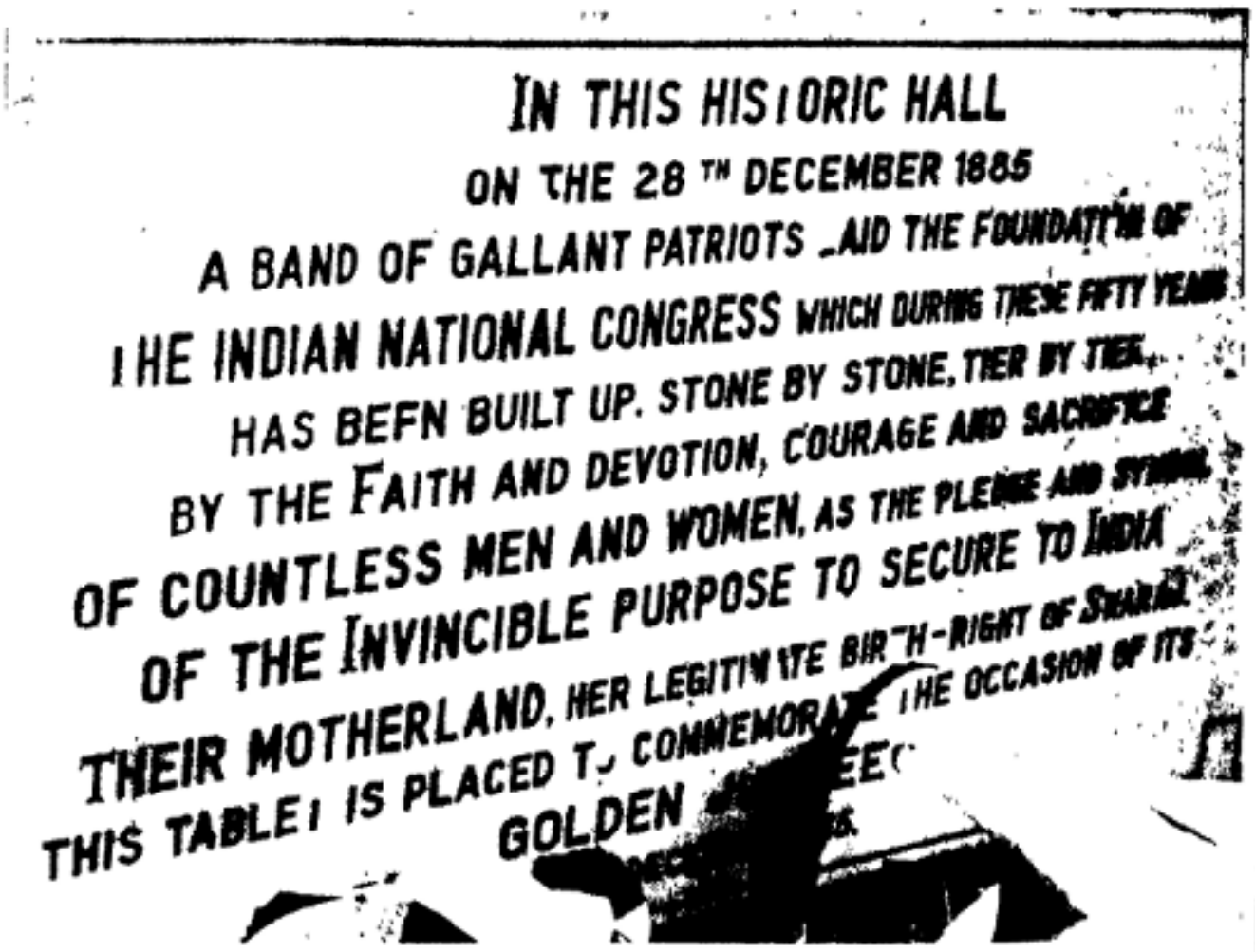


Pradeep Chandra

The entrance to Sir Mathuradas Vissanji Memorial Hall

party publication). The Hall in Gowalia Tank had become the venue by accident. The meeting was originally scheduled to be held in Pune. A sudden cholera epidemic in Pune brought the patriots to Bombay's Gowalia Tank area. The hall of the Sanskrit College was made available for the meeting by the Tejpal Charities free of cost. (Even now, the trust does not charge money for religious functions. A Durga *puja* is held in the hall every year) The Congress(I) had decided to hold a meeting of the Congress Working Committee in the hall on 28 December this year, in which certainly more than one hundred gentlemen will be present (though the CWC does not have so many members, including the invitees, the strength of a CWC meeting these days reaches over a hundred).

The Tejpal Charities incidentally came into being due to a will left behind on 19 November 1867 by Sir Gokuldas Tejpal, a cotton and textile merchant from Kutch, Gujarat. (Incidentally, exactly 50 years after this, 19 November 1917, Indira Gandhi was born.) The trust is engaged in philanthropic activity and the 100-year-old complex is well looked after.



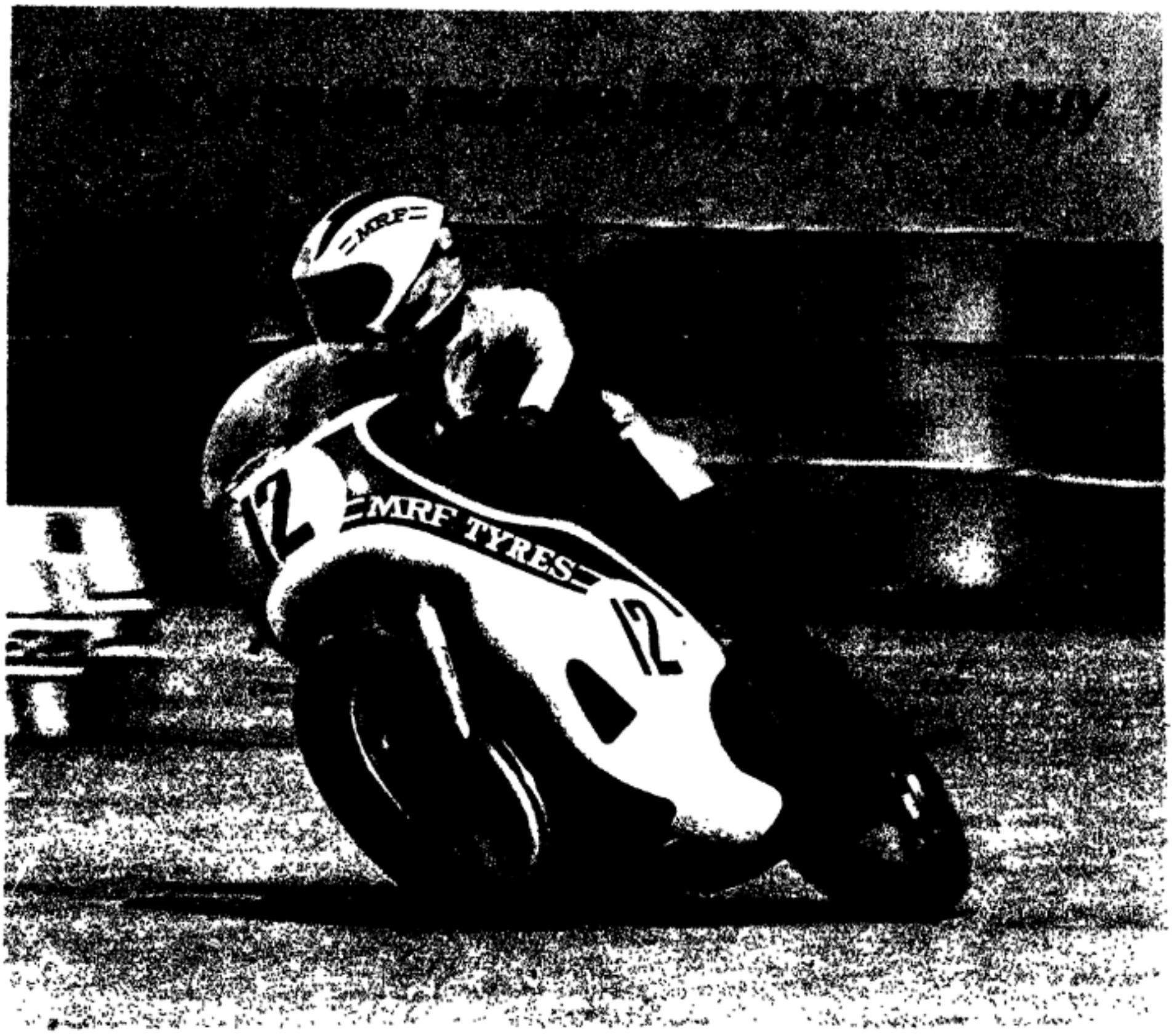
The inscription on the marble plaque in front of the Vissanji Memorial Hall — Pradeep Chandra

But the question is, can the Congress centenary celebrations afford to just commemorate the foundation by holding a meeting in the memorial hall? In any other country, such a spot would have been turned into a national monument. If national spirit is to grow, then hallowed spots like these cannot be neglected. That the August Kranti Maidan and the Tejpal complex are located close to each other has apparently not struck anyone's imagination so far. A rare combination of the spot where the Indian National Congress was born and the spot from where the "Quit India" clarion call was given cannot be ignored from the point of view of a national monument. In India, however, history is not given due importance. There is a memorial column in the August Kranti Maidan, erected in 1970. While the plaque commemorating the first Congress session at the Tejpal complex and the one commemorating the "Quit India" call at the Gowalia Tank Maidan are not easily visible, what strikes the eye at the memorial column in the August Kranti Maidan is the way in which city fathers of Bombay have immortalised themselves. Prominently visible are two plaques: "Gandhi Memorial Column, inaugurated by Shri V.S. Page, chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Bombay, 2 October 1970. *Bhoomi puja* by Dr M. N. Desai, municipal commissioner for Greater Bombay, 5 August 1970". These plaques, in English and in Marathi, perhaps show Indian mentality at its lowest. Even while commemorating the great leaders, names unconnected with history are sought to be immortalised.



Sheth Goculdas Tejpal Auditorium — Pradeep Chandra

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, Bombay



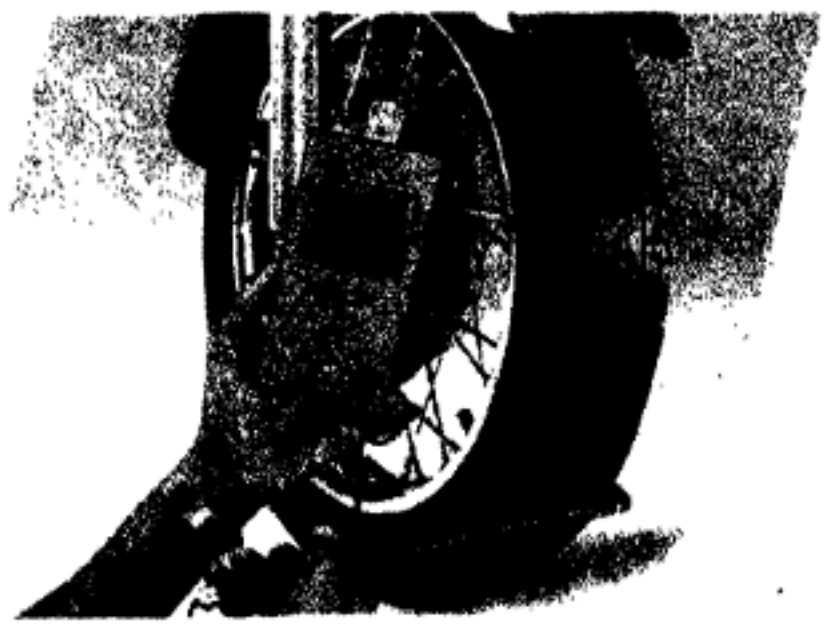
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SPECIAL REPORT

The Koran Controversy

A writ petition to ban the holy book is filed in the Calcutta High Court

Between March 18 and 22 1985 the secretary, department of home, government of West Bengal, received a letter from Chand Mal Chopra dated 16 March 1985 from 25, Burtolla Street, Calcutta 700007. The home secretary, Rathin Sengupta, did not pay much heed to the letter. In fact in his own words, he does not remember that such a letter had come to him.

This letter among other things made a "request for the forfeiture of the Islamic book Koran." The letter said, "In terms of section 95 CrPC read with section 153A and 295A IPC every copy of the book is liable to be forfeited by the government if the book contains words or sayings which promote, on grounds of religion, disharmony, enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious communities or which outrage the religious feelings of any class of citizens of India or insult the religion or religious beliefs of that class of people."This is so," the letter claimed, "whetherthe book is a classic or an epic, religious or temporal, old or new."

It went on to claim that the "Islamic book Koran was blatantly guilty of each one of the above offences and thus squarely deserves to be declared forfeited by the government in terms of the above provisions of law." The letter then quoted English translations of the Koran stating *Surah* and *Ayat* (it did not say which translation; there are a number of such English translations in the mar ket) and said that the Koran "incited violence, religious enmity, hatred and ill-will."

The home secretary did, what any normal person would have done; he ignored the letter. After all a lot of cranks keep on writing such letters to the government. In the words of a senior civil servant, "the home department continuously receives crank mail. Unless it is something very serious we simply put it on our files and forget about it."

In fact, this was not the first of such letters received by the home department on the subject. Another letter dated 20 July, 1984 written by one Himangshu Kishore Chakraborty of 12/A/A, Pasupati Bhattacharya Road, Behala, Calcutta 700034, was

- 2 -

I, TIMIR HARAN SEN GUPTA Deputy Secretary, Home Department, Government of West Bengal, residing at [illegible] solemnly affirm and say as follows :-

1. ... I state that according to the Islamic belief the Holy Quran is a Divine Book. It contains the words of God Almighty revealed at His Last Prophet Muhammad. The verses of the Holy Quran were revealed on the happenings of particular events and its each and every verse has a connotation of its own and on different and separate background.

2. ... I further state that as the Holy Quran is a Divine Bo no earthly power can sit upon judgment on it and no Court of la has jurisdiction to adjudicate it. The Holy Books like the Qura the Bible, the Geeta, the Granth Sahib, etc. or their transla-tions cannot be the subject-matters of adjudication in a Court law. All Holy Scriptures are immune from judicial scrutiny.

3. ... I submit that this Hon ble Court has no jurisdiction to pronounce a judgment on the Quran, the Holy Scripture of the Muslims all over the World, each and every word of which, -- according to the Islamic belief, is unalterable.

4. ... There is, as far as known to me, no country in the Wo where there are no Muslims practising their religion, not to menti the countries where the whole population believe in Islam and the Holy Quran, From the time of British Rule and since Indepen dence, inspite of the Indian Penal Code being in existence, the has never been such an application in any Court in Indi .

In

Photocopy of West Bengal government's writ application in the Koran case

also received by the department and when it was not replied to another reminder was sent by the same person on 14 August 1984.

However, Chandmal Chopra's letter held a threat which the department did not take into account . The last paragraph said, "Now you are finally requested to take necessary steps in this behalf within seven days of the receipt hereof, failing which such legal steps may be taken as advised to us. This may please be treated as a notice demanding justice."

It became clear within a month to Chopra that the government did not think much of the letter or the scheme of action. So he decided to move and did something unprecedented in Indian legal history: challenged the Koran in a court of law and nearly got away with it due to a judge who felt sheought to give ear to what any petitioner says because she would not turn anyone down.

On 29 March 1985, the advocate on record, government of West Bengal, R.C. Deb, received a notice from Chand Mal Chopra stating that he wished to move a writ petition in person before Justice Padma Khastagir on 1 April. He also enclosed a copy of the writ petition. It was jointly moved by Chand Mal Chopra and Sital Singh who stated his address was 1, Munshi Sadarudding Street, Calcutta 700007. Both claimed to be "engaged in various kinds of social work." According to a report submitted to the government of West Bengal by the special branch of the Calcutta police, Chandmal and Sital are not permanent residents of the addresses mentioned by them.

Chandmal Chopra, who said he resided at 25, Burtolla Street, did not stay there. According to the police report Chandmal (55), had a room in the above-mentioned premises. This was at present occupied by L.L. Dhokania, an income tax lawyer. Chandmal was known to have frequented this room between 8 and 10 am in the morning. Sital Singh (50), is an ex-armyman and a resident of Hyderabad According to the report, he occasionally came to the city to stay at Munshi Sadaruddin Street in north Calcutta in the Jorasanko area which is actually an Arya Samaj Mandir. He was also known to visit the temple from time to time to participate in *kirtan* and *katha* sessions. Both of them did not have any police records norwere their names on the special branch files.

The 14-page petition filed by the two systematically cut through an English translation of the Koran and pointed out that it actively incited communal animosities. To give some examples:"In *Surah* 9, *Ayat* 5, the book says, 'When the sacred months are over, slay the idolators wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them and lie in ambush everywhere for them.' In *Surah* 48, *Ayat* 29 it says, 'Mohammed is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another.' In *Surah* 49, *Ayat* 15, it says, 'the true believers are those who have faith in Allah and His apostle and never doubt: and who fight for his cause with their wealth and persons.' In *Surah* 8, *Ayat* 29, it says, 'Make war on them (idol-worshippers) until idolatory is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme.' In *Surah* 2, *Ayat* 216 it has made fighting 'obligatory for every Muslims.' In *Surah* 47, *Ayat* 4 to 15, the Koran calls upon Muslims to strike off the heads of non Muslims when they meet on the battlefields, without minding risking their own lives for if any of them are killed fighting in the name of Allah, they are assured of admission in paradise."

The petition continues in the same vein for the rest of the pages.

After a number of adjournments the case was finally heard on 12 April in the court of Justice Padma Khastagir. After hearing Chopra's plea, Justice Khastagir in an unprecedented move asked the state government, who were cited as the main respondents, to file an affidavit by 3 May. Expressing his dismay, a High Court

Government every copy of a book which incites violence; disturbs public tranquility; promotes, on ground of religion, feelings of enmity, hatred and ill-will between different religious communities and insults other religions or religious beliefs of other communities in India.

3. The Koran, also spelt as 'Qur'an', the so-called religious book of the Muslims the world over, written originally in the Arabic and available throughout India in the original Arabic or in its translation in Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, English etc. is ex facie guilty of each one of the above offences.

4. For example, in Surah 9, ayat 5, the book says, "when the sacred months are over, slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them and lie in ambush everywhere for them". In surah 48, ayat 29, it says, "Muhammad is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another. Through them Allah seeks to enrage the unbelievers". In Surah 49, ayat 15, it says "The true believers are those who have faith in Allah and His apostle and never doubt; and who fight for His cause with their wealth and persons". In Surah 8, ayat 29, it says "Make war on them (idol-worshippers) until idoloty is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme". In Surah 2, ayat 193, it again says, "Fight against them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme. In Surah 2, ayat 216, it has made fighting "obligatory" for every Muslim.

In Sura 9, ayat 41, it exhorts Muslims to "march on and fight for the cause of Allah" whether unarmed or well-equipped.

In Surah 9, ayat 123, exhorting Muslims to make wars on infidels 'who dwell around you' says, "Let them find harshness in you". In Surah 66, ayat 9, an exhortation is given to

Photocopy of a page of the writ petition filed by Chopra

lawyer, who did not wish to be named said."It was clear that the petitioners were upto some mischief and this should have been clear to the judge too. The case should have been dismissed immediately."

When contacted by SUNDAY, Justice Khastagir said she had only been following the natural course of justice. "It is my duty to listen to every petitioner who comes to my court. He may be a madman but I must give him a chance," she said. According to her, she had not admitted the case but only asked the state government to submit an affidavit explaining its stand on the issue. Her statement created another storm. While the Chief Justice, Mr Satish Chandra as well as Justice Khastagir insisted that the case had not been admitted by the court, the advocate-general, Snehangshu Acharya, insisted that she had definitely admitted it. While this created misunderstandings within the Calcutta High Court, reportage of this matter by the Urdu press made sure that the issue was broadcasted to the Muslim-dominated countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan. Protests were promptly lodged at the embassies in these countries.

Meanwhile when the matter came up for hearing on 2 May 1985, Justice Padma Khastagir, due to reasons best known to her, released the case from her court. Said another lawyer of the High Court, "it was quite clear that the judge had developed cold feet, otherwise why did she not have the guts to see this to the end. I don't see how this case could have affected her personally." It was, therefore, left to Chief Justice. Satish Chandra to decide which judge would deal with the case. Justice Chandra has allotted the case to Justice Bimal Basak, who is expected to clean up the mess, according to High Court sources.

The Calcutta High Court's bar association called an extraordinary meeting where it moved a resolution saying they note "with deep concern that a writ petition... praying for a mandate upon the state for forfeiture of the copies of holy Koran either in Arabic or any other language in the country was entertained by Justice Padma Khastagir who directed the state to file a counter-affidavit... This association feels deeply concerned at an attempt to make a holy scripture a subject matter of dispute in a court of law and/or to make the same justiciable." This resolution, though signed by more than 70 lawyers of the court was, however, not passed at the meeting.

While lawyers of Calcutta High Court were restrained in their condemnation, the West Bengal chief minister, Jyoti Basu, called the entertainment of the case a "despicable" act. He said that the case should not have been admitted by the court in the first place. The union law minister, Ashok Sen, was sent on an express mission from the capital to deal with it. Keeping in mind the international ramifications of the issue, sources at the High Court said that in all probability the case will be dropped quietly.

However, the state government who are the sole respondents in the case, have already prepared their defence. According to sources, the state will plead that the Holy Koran is a divine book and no earthly power can sit upon judgement on it and no court of law has jurisdiction to adjudicate it. "The holy books like the Koran, the Bible, the Geeta, the Granth Sahib, or their translations cannot be the subject matter of adjudication in a court of law. All holy scriptures are immune from judicial scrutiny.' According to the defence lawyers it is strange that from the "time of British rule and since independence, in spite of the fact that the Indian Penal Code existed there has never been such an application in the courts of this country." What prompts these people to take up the matter now, they ask.

A Special Correspondent, Calcutta

"The Koran insults other religions..." says Chopra in his writ petition

The book [illegible] religions or religious beliefs [illegible] unbelievers as [illegible] Surah 17, it says, "Unbelievers are those who declare, 'Allah is one with [illegible] Christ], but what might they could prevent Allah from destroying the Messiah, the son of Mary, together with his mother and all the people of the earth ?" In Surah 4, ayat 157, it says 'They declare the truth and uttered monstrous falsehood against Mary.' We declare, we have put to death the Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah'. They did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did". In Surah 98, ayat 6, it says, "The unbelievers from the people of the Book (i.e. the Christians and the Jews) and the pagans shall burn for ever in the fire of Hell. They are the vilest of all creatures". In Surah 33, ayat 10 to 13 it says, Give no heed to the Muslim women they desire you to overlook their doings that they may overlook yours. Nor yield to the wretch of many oaths, the mischief taking slanderer, the opponent of good, the vicious transgressor, the bully who is of doubtful birth to boot". In Surah 22, ayat 19 to 22, it says, "Garments of fire have been prepared for unbelievers. Scalding water shall be poured upon their heads, melting their skins and that which is in their bellies. They shall be lashed



Justice Padma Khastagir

Kerala's Killer Schools

The suicide of Mrs Ramani Menon, because her daughter was not promoted, reveals the shameful way in which many schools are run



Vandana Menon with her father C.C. Menon

Courtesy: Mathrubhumi

In the most literate state in the country education is a booming business. Most of the students coming out of the hundreds of government-aided and unaided schools that sprout in every corner of the state will have paid at least five to ten times the prescribed fees. In all such non-government institutions, run mostly by Hindus, Christian and Muslim organisations, collecting and mostly forcing money out of students is as much a part of curricula as dispensing knowledge. So after Ramani Menon, the mother of ninth standard student Vandana Menon of the Trivandrum Carmel Convent Girls High School committed suicide allegedly because her daughter was detained in class nine, a big question mark has appeared on the ethical and moral aspect of the most widespread educational system of the country. Parents, the public and teachers are now up in arms against the ruthless and unethical commercialisation of education in the state and the state government has its back to the wall as licenses for private schools have been liberally granted by successive governments and also because it had encouraged the practice of forced donations being resorted to by these schools. The government has, however, asked the crime branch to investigate the suicide of Ramani Menon.

Vandana Menon had secured more than 55 per cent marks for all the subjects except mathematics for which she got 28 out of 100, seven marks short of the pass mark. Vandana fell short of a first class distinction by only eight marks (352/600) and in most schools such promising students are not detained and the rule is observed in the spirit and not in the letter. But private schools never waste an opportunity to use the 'all-subjects-pass-rule' against students whose parents have been asking uncomfortable questions abqut donations and special tuition fees.

Vandana's father, C. C. Menon, in a written complaint given to the director of public instruction, stated that his daughter was being harassed and humiliated in her class as he had refused to pay Rs 1,000 for the school bus fund. Unable to bear the ignominy Vandana had forced her father to finally part with Rs 500 which the sisters who run the school accepted rather half-heartedly. He also pounced on the contradictory statements of school authorities about Vandana's performance in mathematics. "First they said she failed and

now they say she did not get 90 per cent," Mr Menon said before leaving the city for Trichur with Vandana shortly after Mrs Menon's death. After Mr Menon's complaint, the government has seized all answer papers of class nine of the Carmel Convent School which will be revalued by professors. But Mr Menon maintains that Vandana's progress card given to the government is forged and that his signature does not appear in it.

Sister Renee, the headmistress of the Carmel Convent told SUNDAY that they were being victimised for no fault of theirs. "I met Vandana's mother on 15 April about a week after the results were announced and I told her that Vandana should sit for a re-test after the school reopens. But she was apparently not willing," said Sister Renee. According to Mr Menon the headmistress told his wife that under no circumstances would Vandana pass the re-test.

Booming Business

The forced donation syndrome is not limited to private schools. Even private colleges have their own way of collecting money. Colleges run by religious organisations are many but after the massive strike launched by student organisations about eight years back fees were unified and all teachers came under the government scale. But private managements make up the excess amount paid to the teachers by demanding huge donations ranging upto Rs 30,000 from any post-graduate aspiring for a lecturer's job. This is an accepted practice and even first class post-graduates are overlooked for jobs when people with second-class degrees, but willing to pay a large amount, are waiting.

Another canker that is biting into the state's educational system is the tutorial colleges which mushroom at every turn. These colleges are meant to coach students who have failed in recognised colleges and schools. They have become so successful that they frequently carry full-page advertisements in newspapers to announce their 'superb performances in public examinations ranging from SSLC to post graduate course'. A rough estimate shows that more than 50 per cent of SSLC students, even those studying in recognised schools, attend private tutorial colleges before or after school hours. Some tutorials have better equipped laboratories than recognised colleges. A recent boon for such colleges is the announcement by government that there would be admission tests for joining medical and engineering colleges. A parallel college in Trivandrum, Universal College, charges Rs 600 for preparing a student for the admission test. A student who recently went there for admission told SUNDAY, "They behave as though they are doing us a great favour by admitting us for the course. There is such a rush for admissions that they don't even look at your face. They can't take their eyes off the money."



One of the numerous tutorial colleges that have sprung up in Kerala Gopal Krishnan

Binoo John, Trivandrum

The tenth standard secondary school leaving certificate examination (SSLC) results are used as advertisements by private schools to draw students. The better the SSLC results, the more the rush for admission and more the demand for donations. In Carmel Convent, all those who had appeared for the SSLC examination last year had passed. On the notice board of the St. Joseph's High School in Trivandrum, which is government-aided, a notice asks for a donation of Rs 500 from every parent aspiring to have his child admitted to the school. The notice is signed by the headmaster and outside his room one can see meandering queues. But Sister Renee of Carmel Convent justifies the demand for donations by saying, "We are an infant institution and it is a period of growth for us. We need a lot of money."

Not all of the huge sums thus collected is accounted for. For instance, Vandana Menon paid Rs 176 as fees for the first month of the year. Fees for the following month range from Rs 30 to Rs 50, depending on the class. But in the account book Vandana's fee is recorded as Rs 50 (receipt no 9338/paid on 12 June 1984). The remaining Rs 126 is recorded in the receipt slip written in her own handwriting and is kept as a loose slip in the office without any carbon copy or any identifying number. This makes jugglery easy.

Even before Vandana's mother's suicide came to light, the government had begun taking action on complaints of forced donations from parents. The education minister, T. M. Jacob, had announced that the government was withdrawing recognition to two private schools in Trivandrum, because of complaints of corruption. But the school authorities later said that their recognition had not been formally withdrawn and the minister maintained a strange silence. It soon became obvious that some bureaucrat was playing his game. Incidentally, on the board of directors of one of the de-recognised schools, Vidhyadiraja High School, is Ramachandran Nair who also happens to be the culture secretary of the government.

Even the district educational officer, P. Saradamma, who has to



One of the many tutorial colleges in Trivandrum

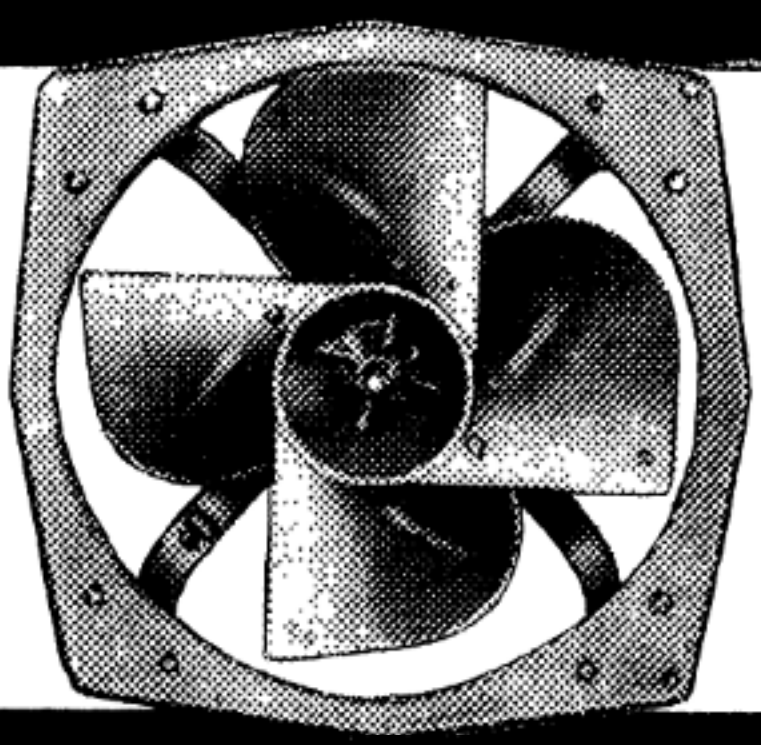
Gopal Krishnan

formally recommend derecognition was vague about the issue but told SUNDAY that the two schools (the other is Lourdes Mount School) did not even have the specified area of three acres for running a school. "And it is high time that such forced donations are stopped," Saradamma said.

The chances of the government ordering a thorough investigation into the functioning of all private schools are not bright as most of the private schools are run by religious orders and sects like the Society of Jesus (Catholic priests), the Nair Service Society (of Hindu Nairs) and Muslim Educational Society. All the religious communities have their representative parties in the UDF government. The education minister, T.M. Jacob, of the Kerala Congress which is the political expression of Christians has refused to accept responsibility for the goings-on in the schools by saying that he did not sanction any private school and that it was all the work of the previous governments. But a list of new licenses granted to private schools was released recently. A senior priest of the Society of Jesus told SUNDAY that the party handling the education portfolio has to be given huge sums before a license is granted. Then why blame the schools alone for collecting money? It is all a vicious circle. It is little wonder then that the products of such an educational system should consider making money the most effective motivation in life.

Binoo K.John, Trivandrum

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SPECIAL REPORT

How Education Ruins Merit in Bihar

Question papers sell for Rs 100 to Rs 1,000 in roadside shops, depending on 'accuracy'

Going to school or college in Bihar has become a cruel farce for thousands of boys and girls struggling for a foothold in life: the fifteen years in school and college have turned into a chaotic ritual everyone has to sit through to avoid being labelled an unemployable illiterate, but not necessarily to get a job. Education being rather low on the government's priorities, little attempt is made to improve its quality; hardly anything is spent on such luxuries as teaching aids. The ambitious ten plus two scheme, based on the dual concepts of job-oriented education and delinking of degrees from jobs, is a victim of governmental indecision and neglect seven years after it was introduced, there is still no official policy on intermediate education that spells out the qualifications and service conditions of teachers and the facilities to be provided to schools and colleges which have the course. What is worse, the government refuses to take financial responsibility for these institutions. So there is a free-for-all; private managements set up new and curiously named (preferably after an important political leader) 'inter-colleges' overnight with the money they have gathered from unqualified lecturers who have paid for their jobs—in thousands of rupees.

Even otherwise, the whole purpose of job-oriented education has been defeated by objective socio-economc conditions—unemployment and corruption—which are worsening every year. Apparently, the students are learning from it all: hardly does a year pass without several papers of the matriculation and intermediate examinations having to be cancelled either because the question papers are found selling in roadside *dhabas* and *paan* shops days in advance, or because the students take to cheating, or impersonating each other *en masse*. In desperation, the authorities are now using the police against examinees to prevent malpractices, convinced that this would solve the problem once and for all.

The fact is, it does not. There was proof enough in the matriculation and intermediate examinations this year. In Sitamarhi district, for instance, shops in crowded bazars were reported selling conveniently-sized 'cheating slips' in sealed envelopes, imaginatively captioned 'Atom Bomb' priced between Rs 2.50 and Rs 4. Also on the market were pocket-sized books containing questions and answers which covered as many as 15 subjects in both the matriculation and intermediate examinations. In fact, the answer-books came from sources who were competing with each other for a bigger market, and bore copied brand names. If one was called an 'Atom Bomb' another was called an 'Anand Atom Bomb.'

On 19 April, around seven in the morning, three student activists of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) learnt that the mathematics question paper in the intermediate examination had leaked out. They even got hold of a handwritten copy of the question paper. Since work in the intermediate council building starts only at 10.30 am, the students decided to go to the examination controller Harinarayan Mishra's house, and show him the paper before the examination commenced. "We were pushed out of his house, and told to meet him in the office," one of the boys said. Then they tried the council's financial officer M.M. Kazmi at his residence at 9.37 am. They drew a blank there, too. Finally, they reached the council building at noon. They stormed the chairman, Dr Saligram Singh's office, and not finding him in, occupied his chair. Soon, a number of officials including Mr Kazmi, arrived with the education minister Uma Pandey and ordered the students out of the room. They told the minister about the question paper, and left only after Dr Singh assured them that he would look into the leak. They discussed the matter with the chairman and showed him the 'slips' of paper they had got. The questions did tally with the ones which figured in the examination that day. The English paper had leaked out, too. Finally, the chairman decided to cancel Geography Paper II (which had been mistakenly interchanged with Geography Paper I), English Paper II and Mathematics Papers I and II.

A few days later on 22 April the students again visited the council office with a slip of paper which they claimed was the Political Science Paper II, scheduled for 24 April. But since Dr Singh told the students to withdraw the allegation of corruption they had made against him or else he would not listen to their complaint. "Before we knew what was happening," said one of the students," a number of toughs trooped into the room and attacked the three of us, Chandrashekhar Prasad Sinha, Sanjay Kumar Sharma and Gajendra Prasad Singh. They



Police arrest student demonstrators

Photographs by Krishna Murari Kishan

chased us away. There were six of them, three on an Enfield motorcycle (BHQ 3499) and three on a scooter which followed." The boys filed an FIR in the Patna Kotwali (No. SDE 650).

The matriculation examination this year was held in 1,038 centres of which nearly 300 were in the jurisdictions of sub-divisional district headquarters, where, according to the chairman of the matriculation examination board, Mr Sudarshan, the presence of policemen prevented mass copying. "But in rural areas," he said, "in a very large number of centres, there was good use of unfair means." Out of the 1,038 centres, in more than 300, examinations in one or more subjects, and a total of 700-odd papers were cancelled. "Because of the repeated use of unfair means," Mr Sudarshan went on, "the centres were frequently changed to neighbouring district headquarters where there are restrictions on the movements of the examinees' attendants; they are not allowed beyond a certain distance of the examination centre." Mr Sudarshan was happy enough that there was no question paper leak in matriculation this year, although 75 per cent of the centres were in mofussil areas where there is hardly any way of checking malpractices.

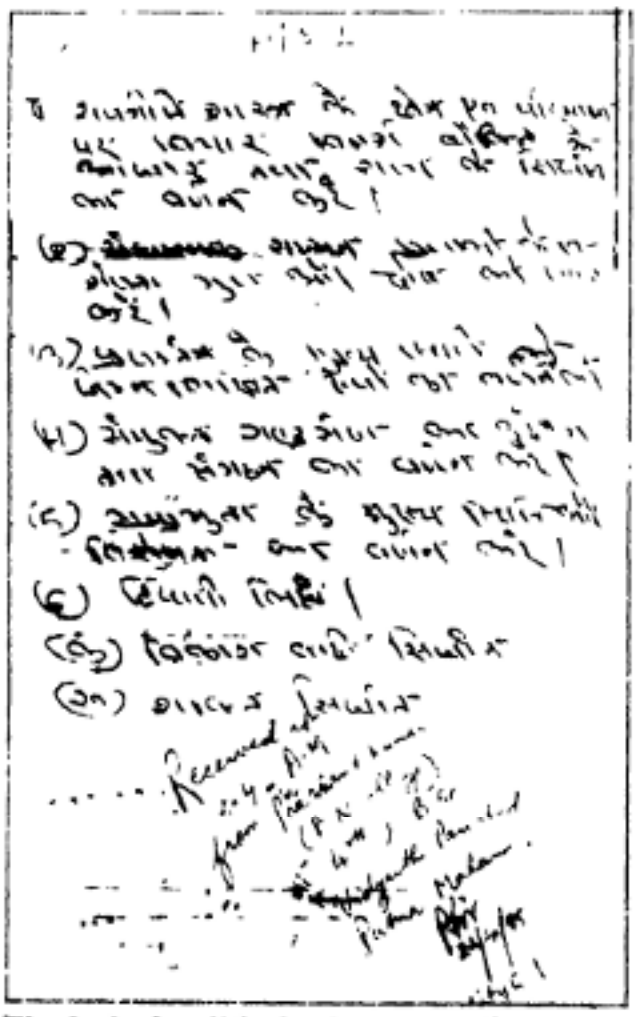
He could be wrong. This year, people in a number of schools in Muzaffarpur sold handwritten questions from eight in the morning on every examination day; photostat copies of the answers to these questions could be bought from touts in the city's Hari Sabha Chowk for Rs 10 each. On 27 March a group of persons involved in the racket were arrested. Not that the police were much help: on 23 March, 24 matriculation examinees were arrested in the Katihar Marwari Patshala for entering the hall with fake admission cards; but they still managed to take the examination! In Muzaffarpur hundreds of examinees and their 'helpers' were arrested; they were released after being fined Rs 100 each. In 19 centres in North Champaran, invigilating teachers actually helped students to cheat openly.

According to Mr Sudarshan great care is taken to ensure that the questions remain a secret till the last minute: "The papers are delivered to the superintendents at each centre only one hour before the examination starts. Till then they are stored in banks under the charge of the bank managers." As for the intermediate questions, the chairman of the council assigns



'Helpers' outside an examination centre busy writing out answers for friends inside

professors from various universities of Bihar to draw up a rough list of questions for each paper, and then gets them moderated by senior academics. Seniority however does not rule out corruption: once a rough list of questions for a particular paper that had been lost was finally traced inside the bag of a moderator! Several influential men and women are allegedly involved in the question paper racket—if not for anything, at least for the money it fetches. The going rate for an



The leaked political science question paper countersigned by intermediate council authorities when it was presented to them hours before the examination

'original' list of questions is Rs 100 - Rs 1,000. The few who can afford this, buy the 'original' and then sell off the list in varying degrees of accuracy, for anything between Rs 10 and Rs 75. One of the chief sources of the question papers, of course, is the registrar's office at Punai Chowk, Patna. For a desperate student, a clerk in the intermediate council office is always a great help.

Some privileges are reserved for the important: there is the case of a matriculation answer script (No. 80510) signed by the invigilator which was found outside the Mahila Prathamik Shiksha High School in Chandwara, Muzaffarpur, where it should have been under lock and key. The allegation is that hundreds of such papers are smuggled out and 'improved upon' in order to ensure a higher grading for rich or influential examinees.

Why is there such despair? Has Bihar's educatiion system collapsed? Asked to explain mass copying on such a scale, Mr Sudarshan said, "All sections of society are party to it; no section is free from blame." Perhaps, because the root cause of student delinquency and recklessness is the spectre of unemployment. "Education at all stages," the official continued, "has become unpurposive. None of the objectives of education seem to be served, whether at the school or university level. It only helps to make people literate. This applies more to higher education than secondary education. There are engineers without jobs, first class master's degree holders in physics and chemistry who roam the streets for years." And one cannot even put much faith in their abilities: "People who pass these examinations do not even possess the knowledge expected of such degrees." A large number of the students who study and train in Bihar's nine medical colleges, industrial training institutes, engineering colleges and polytechnics have to wait endlessly for jobs. The state has a total of 7,000 government doctors of whom 495 do not hold any post. And even if literacy is the aim of education, not much can be said of its worth: Bihar still has one of the lowest literacy rates for any state or union territory, 26.01 per cent.

A most unforgivable fact is the government's lack of an education policy. Although it is seven years since the ten plus two plus three scheme was started, the government is still undecided about the position

of intermediate institutions in the system. It is not clear how exactly intermediate colleges are different from schools or degree colleges; what the qualifications, salaries and service conditions of the teachers should be and where exactly intermediate education takes a student.

After the failure of the earlier system, in which the plus two stage was partly incorporated into the school syllabus and partly into the pre-university syllabus, the national pattern was started to take the load off higher education, and space out the rush for jobs. Following the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, a separate intermediate council was formed to take care of institutions and examinations related to the plus two course. A decision was taken to start a new variety of 'inter colleges.' But till there was a complete transfer to inter colleges the plus two course was to be taught in degree colleges. The students, however, would be under the charge of the intermediate council, which would decide the syllabus and hold their examinations, while being taught by university teachers. The council was also responsible for giving affiliation to new inter colleges (against monetary deposits which varied with the number and nature of faculties). But once the council began holding the examinations, there was pandemonium. Even with computers being used, the results were full of errors, and invariably kept pending for years. Eventually, from 1984 the government decided to entrust the examinations to different universities. The council's functions were limited to drawing up the questions and declaring results, besides according affiliation to new colleges. The universities would evaluate the papers. Everything went off well last year—only to go awry this year. The question papers were leaked, and the examinations proved a hoax. Now teachers and students are calling the council a white elephant that has no right to exist.

Meanwhile, inter colleges have been sprouting all over the state. There are already about 500 of them in Bihar now, of which nearly 250 are affiliated to the council. The rest are waiting for affiliation—which is not always given in the most deserving cases. Many colleges have already deposited money with the council, expecting to get affiliation, and have started operating. Most of the institutions are working as purely



Students protesting against the purchase and sale of degrees

commercial establishments: many of the staffers, who number 20,000 to 30,000, have actually 'bought' their jobs after making generous 'donations' to the colleges. The prices were fixed: Rs 10,000 for a teacher's job, Rs 5000 for a non-teaching post. In many cases, it is these deposits which provide the colleges money for affiliation to the intermediate council. This also rules out agitations and strikes. Said Prof. Parmanand Singh Madan, MLC, and a member of the Federation of University Teachers' Association of Bihar, "But for a few good colleges, most private institutions are merely doing business. We have been agitating for the abolition of private management from education. In 1972, as a result, the then CM Kedar Pandey ordered the takeover of primary education." The move paid off. Bihar has won a Rs 30-lakh award for its commendable drive for enrolment of girls in elementary schools. There are already 64,000 primary and middle schools in the state with a teacher for every 64 pupils in the former and a teacher for every 40 pupils in the latter. A total of Rs 264 crores is spent every year on primary and middle school education in Bihar.

But the pressures on Bihar's education system are taking their toll. Just as there are hardly any jobs for the thousands who pass out of intermediate and degree colleges every year, there are few seats in college and university to compete for. There has, over the years, been a tremendous increase in the enrolment of students at all levels, making examinations, admissions and even teaching a mammoth task. In 1983 about three lakhs took the matriculation examinations; in 1984 the figure rose to over three lakhs; this year the number was 4,90,000. Of the three lakhs last year, a little over two lakhs passed. As a result, inter colleges which were finding it difficult to run at one time are now doing brisk business. "If around 3,50,000 of those who appeared this year pass the examination, the whole of Bihar's education system will collapse," said Prof Madan.

What is important is that the facilities in schools and colleges, even at their existing strength, are grossly inadequate and of poor quality. "Most of the schools do not have proper accommodation or academic facilities," said Mr Sudarshan. "There are over 4,000 schools under the matriculation board, with more than 50,000 teachers. Out of these 4,000, the ones which have proper accommodation for students (classrooms etc) number only 600-700." A natural result is poor teaching. As for the use of unfair means, Mr Sudarshan added, "It can be minimised with adequate help from the administration. I have two suggestions: there should be executive control over students—they should be arrested if caught cheating; and magistrates should be empowered to imprison students indulging in malpractices." Can draconian measures solve the problem? If social conditions have caused student morbidity, something had better be done about them first.

Nirmal Mitra, Patna

PUNJAB

Akal Takht to be Rebuilt

S G P C president G.S. Tohra claims "divine sanction"

The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) ex-president Gurcharan Singh Tohra could not have asked for anything more. On 20 April, Tohra declared in Amritsar that the Akal Takht, the highest seat of the temporal and spiritual authority of the Sikhs would be demolished and rebuilt. Exactly 16 days later, Tohra,to quote him, got "divine sanction" to demolish and rebuild the Akal Takht when a three metre by one metre part of the projection of the holiest Sikh shrine broke off on the evening of 6 May.

When the chunk collapsed, Tohra was in his room in the Teja Singh Samundari Hall and as soon as he heard the news, he rushed there. It was around six in the evening and a number of Sikh pilgrims and visitors were in the complex. Within no time a large crowd around the Akal Takht had gathered. Tohra's first reaction after seeing the debris was, "It is a miracle of God who has approved the rebuilding of the shrine." He told SUNDAY later, "the sudden collapse of the portion of the Akal Takht has expressed the will of the *gurus* who have approved the decision of the Sikh *panth* to rebuild it."

The senior Akali leader also ridiculed the government claiming that the incident is a rebuff to those who were claiming that the best material was used in rebuilding the Akal Takht."Imagine,it has started collapsing within eight months." On 21 April, at his first press conference in Amritsar, Tohra had announced "the *panth* will have to rebuild the Akal Takht. The present *sarkari*-built (government-built) Akal Takht can't be acceptable to the *panth*. It will have to be demolished and a new one built through *kar seva*. Religious buildings constructed by the *sarkar* can't be accepted by anyone."

The sudden collapse of a small part of the decorative awning from the topmost floor on 6 May is bound to quicken the launching of the rebuilding of the shrine through *kar seva*. The SGPC has already started contacting eminent architects and engineers about plans for the demolition and rebuilding. The five high priests led by Giani Kirpal Singh, the *jathedar* of the Akal Takht had earlier endorsed Tohra's decision.

The SGPC secretary Bhan Singh told SUNDAY, "The *kar seva* is likely to be entrusted to Baba Kharak Singh."However,hedid not say from when *kar seva* would begin. Baba Kharak Singh, the octogenarian Sikh saint lives in a *gurdwara* on the outskirts of Amritsar. To Akali leaders as well as the Congress(I) stalwarts like the union minister Buta Singh Kharak Singh is the most revered Sikh saint today and even Bhindranwale "obeyed" his commandments.

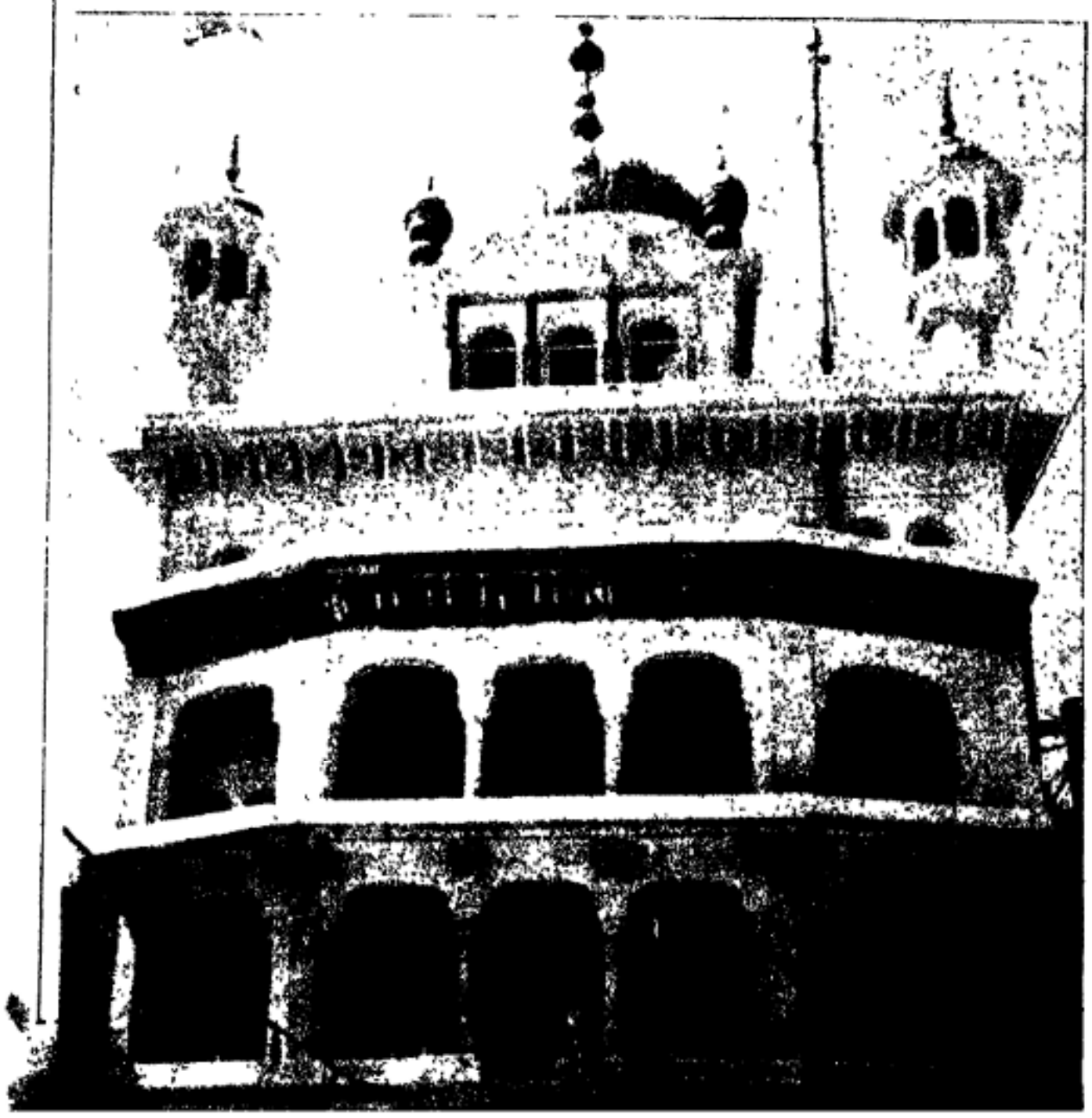
For the Sikhs, says Harbhajan Singh Brar, an Akali leader of the Talwandi faction, the Akal Takht is even more sacred than the Harimandir Sahib because it was built by the sixth Sikh *guru*, Shri Hargobind Sahib who built the Akal Takht in 1606. Says Manjit Singh, a former president of the All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF) who is said to be close to Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. "Only three persons were involved in the construction of the Akal Takht Guru Hargobind Sahib, Baba Budhaji and Bhai Gurdas--the two most respected Sikh Saints. According to Manjit Singh, the attack or the desecration of the Akal Takht has never been tolerated and is always avenged by the Sikhs. He explains, "that is why Beant Singh and Satwant Singh have become instant heroes of the Sikhs today. Their families are being honoured. That is all Sikh tradition and a part of Sikh history."

After the 6 May incident, hundreds of Sikhs have been visiting the Akal Takht every day. They are not as much interested in seeing the shrine as they are in looking at the debris. The Sikh devotees openly curse the government, Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi for the destruction. Many of them pick up the debris and tell the others standing by, that the government used the "worst material" to rebuild the Akal Takht.

The Akal Takht was badly damaged during the June army action in the Golden Temple and later rebuilt by the government through the *kar seva* undertaken by the controversial Nihang chief Baba Santa Singh for whom there is nothing but contempt among the Sikhs today.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

The Akal Takht



WEST BENGAL

The Trigger-happy Minister

Ram Chatterjee is indicted by the CID

Ram Chatterjee, West Bengal's minister for civil defence has recently been indicted by the CID. He has been found guilty of opening fire on some people in his hometown, Chandannagar (40 km from Calcutta). There might be unity among the constituents of the Left Front in Writer's Building, Calcutta but in Chandannagar it is Ram Chatterjee who wields the maximum amount of clout. Reasons other than being a political leader (he is the chairman of the Forward Bloc-Marxist), he is also the person who wields the gun. Chandannagar, a CPI(M) stronghold for many years (it is represented by Bhabani Mukherjee, West Bengal's minister for environment) has resisted the musclepower of Ram Chatterjee and over the last few years the CPI(M) cadres have been trying their utmost to break the hitherto unchallenged supremacy of Chatterjee's men. The quarrels between the political parties get bitter when the spoils of power are at stake. And the political quarrels are often settled on the streets of the small town. It is no wonder then that Ram Chatterjee always carries a gun.

Matters came to a head of 8 July last year when Dipak Mukherjee (alias Babla, Ram Chatterjee's nephew) was surrounded by members of Ashok Patra and his gang, all supporters of the CPI(M). Babla warned Patra that he would not be spared by his uncle if anything happened to him. Soon afterwards, one of Babla's men pushed through the crowd from the back and shouted out to Babla: "*Guru guli chalai?* (Boss, shall I fire?)" Patra had no other alternative but to flee from the scene, While escaping he told one of his men, Ashish Roy, who was standing nearby, to run away since Babla and his gang were coming to get them.

Roy, however, could not escape. He was caught, taken into a blind alley and beaten up. Meanwhile, someone informed Ram Chatterjee in his home at Garbati that Babla had been kidnapped by Patra. Quick to react to such situations, Ram Chatterjee took his gun and his two securitymen, Madhusudhan Panda and Sitaram Misra and drove in his official car to Jelepara, where Babla had been attacked. Hearing from the



Ram Chatterjee

residents of the area that Ashish Roy was in the blind alley, the minister brandishing his gun ran towards the dazed Roy who was still whimpering in pain. Then shoving the barrel into Roy's face, the minister wanted to know the whereabouts of his nephew. Roy could not answer. Then Ram Chatterjee tried dragging Roy to his car but the local people objected. In the melee which followed, the minister fired a round in the air. So did his two security guards. A short while later, the officer in charge of the Chandannagar police station, Harun-al-Rashid, arrived on the spot and advised the minister to leave the place since it was not safe for him. Moreover, advised the police officer, since Babla was safe, there was no need for Ram Chatterjee to stay there.

Roy was taken to Chandannagar police station and he filed a FIR there (case no 7, 8 July 1984). He said that he was hit on the back with a rod. He fell down and was helped up by the OC of Chandannagar police station. Ram Chatterjee, meanwhile, arrived in a T-shirt and a *lungi* and shoved the barrel of his gun in Roy's right eye and shouted, "*Salakey guli korey phele dey*" (Shoot him). Roy also mentioned in the FIR that the minister wanted to kidnap him. Two days later on 10 July 1984, on coming to know that Roy had filed a FIR, Ram Chatterjee filed an application for anticipatory bail. He was granted bail by the Hooghly Sessions Judge on 20 July.

The CID before indicting the minister had interrogated the OC of the Chandannagar police station. The intelligence men had even tried to question the minister but they had been unsuccessful In spite of the indictment, Ram Chatterjee is not sorry about his behaviour. *The Telegraph* which had reported the incident in detail on 22 July 1984 in its 9 May editorial headlined, *Ram Chatterjee must go* (written after the CID indictment) said: "The criminal background of Ram Chatterjee is hardly a secret. If this charge is not verified by the police and their files, then all one has to do is check with the people of Chandannagar who have been at the receiving end of Mr Chatterjee's extortion and bullying for decades...The (8 July 1984) incident was reported in all the newspapers and created a major furore which Mr Chatterjee tried to escape by less-than-convincing disclaimers. The surprise lay not in Mr Chatterjee's inept defence, but in the fact that (chief minister) Jyoti Basu apparently believed his version. Nothing happened to Mr Chatterjee; he continued in his ministerial chair, more confident than ever that his political alliances had put him beyond the reach of the law...Will Mr Chatterjee escape justice again (after the indictment by the CID)?"

Perhaps he might; for soon after the editorial when a *Telegraph* reporter Barun Ghosh, went to interview the minister in his home in Chandannagar, Ram Chatterjee was his usual arrogant self. Snatching Ghosh's press card, the minister told him, "Ask your editor to come to rescue you." He then took out his revolver and threatened the reporter: "Nobody can save you, neither your editor nor anybody else. If you leave this room," he warned, "my people will finish you off." The reporter was only let off after the minister had cooled down a bit. When the incident was reported to the Left Front chairman Saroj Mukherjee on 12 May he is supposed to have said that the minister's behaviour was "being looked into." It remains to be seen whether Ram Chatterjee continues to be retain his ministerial berth in the West Bengal cabinet.

Tirthankar Ghosh, Calcutta

MAHARASHTRA

Operation Demolition

Monsoon shed of Vasantdada Patil's son is brought down

Will he, won't he, be permitted to put his monsoon shed back? There is speculation regarding the monsoon shed put up last year at the entrance of his restaurant 'Step-In' by Chandrakant Patil, alias Nandkumar Jadhav, step-son of the chief minister Vasantdada Patil and son of Shalini Patil the CM's currently estranged wife. The shed was demolished by 37 labourers and six officers of the Bombay municipal corporation under the supervision of the 'G' north ward officer, G.R. Khairnar, on 7 May. "We had given him a warning in April that we would demolish his unauthorised shed on 4 May and that he should remove it by 3 May," said Khairnar who had to face the fury of Shalini Patil's PA ,Mr Singh, and repeated phone calls from the municipal administrator, J.G. Kanga and the arrival of two sub-inspectors sent by police chief D.S. Soman after a complaint was lodged by Chandrakant Patil, during the two hour demolition. According to Soman, he received a complaint that some labourers who were demolishing the shed were drunk and so the sub inspectors were sent to check.

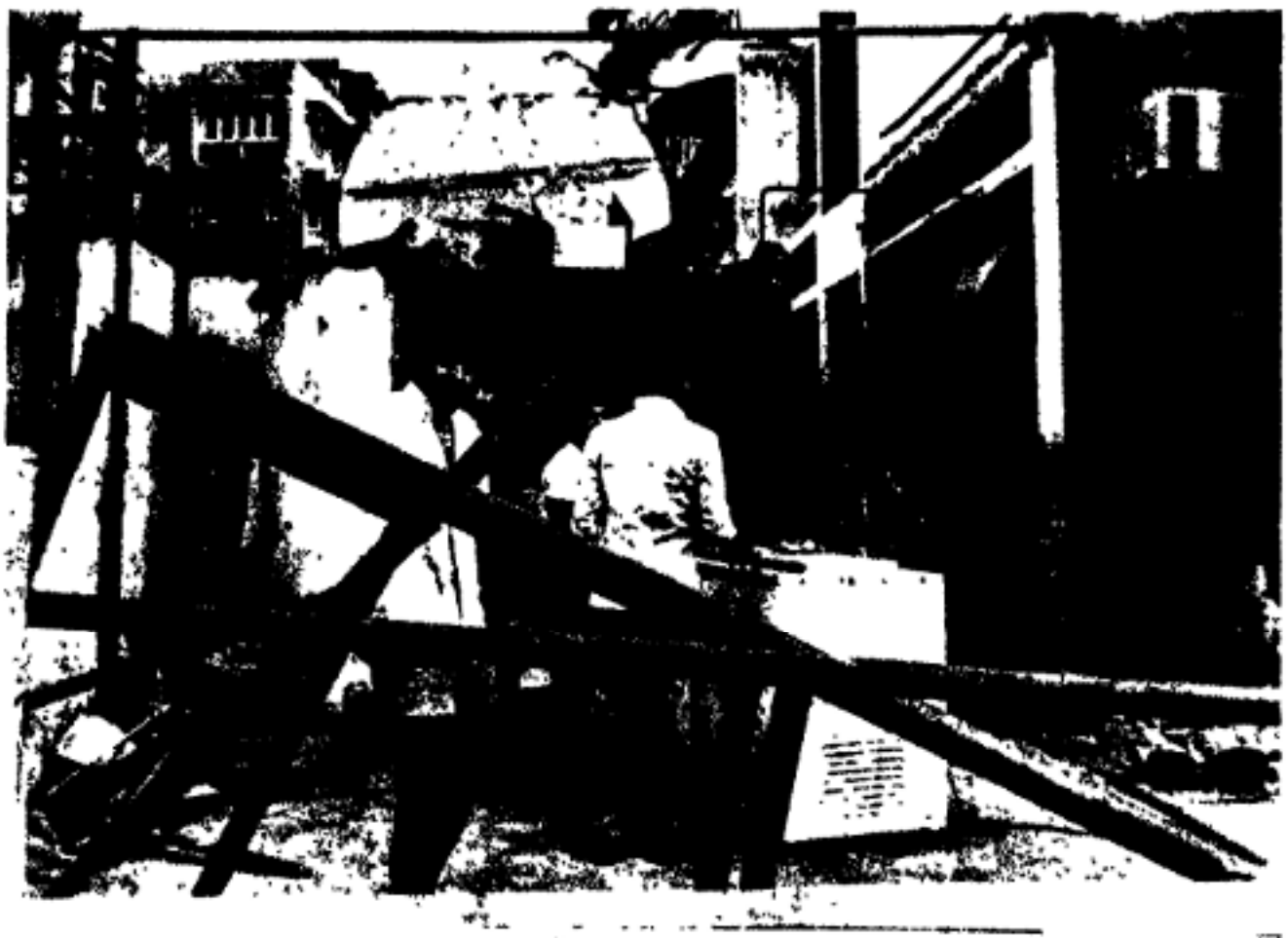
Chandrakant Patil told SUNDAY that the labourers had broken a steel rack and taken out crates of beer. He said he had handed over to the police 50 bottles of beer that the labourers had consumed. Mr Khairnar dismisses this as an attempt to make a false complaint to harass the labourers. He said, "First, Mr Patil accused them of having taken whiskey. When I pointed out that surely workers could not have drunk whiskey straight from the bottle without collapsing, Mr Patil changed it to beer." Mr Khairnar said he refused to hand over his labourers to the police. Instead, he first asked the police to tell him what they would do if the labourers were found not guilty,

Patil has been running his restaurant, Step-In, on three *galas* he "purchased" from Rizvi Builders in a housing society called Greenlawn Cooperative Housing Society. The area is 1,000 square feet but the area that he covered with a shed at the entrance of the hotel gave him 340 sq. ft more. He had applied for temporary permission for the monsoon period and had given an undertaking on a Rs five stamp paper that it would be removed after the monsoon, that is on 31 October. However, when he was sent a notice to demolish it in October, Patil refused and instead forefeited the security deposit of Rs 250, the demolition charge deposit of Rs 100 and Rs 250 for allowing the shed to remain during the monsoon period. He thought that by giving Rs 600 rupees, he could get away. But Khairnar persisted. Even though he could have demolished the shed without further notice, he did not want to precipitate the issue since the son of the chief minister was involved. So under Section 351, he sent a notice for demolishing the shed in January, and then a self explanatory letter in March, saying why it had to be demolished and why permission could not be given to let it remain. Finally, after giving Patil a hearing in April, he went ahead. Meanwhile, all these months Patil tried to get the urban development department to give his permission to keep his shed permanently. They did not agree, but he persisted. After the Assembly elections, when his father formed his own government and Rammanohar Tripathi was made the urban development minister, Tripathi considered Patil's case and on 16 April, gave a stay. Patil said, "They gave me a stay and asked the corporation to give me a personal hearing. What was wrong in giving me a hearing along with my architect? What is the harm in giving a personal hearing under the principles of natural justice? They could then deny me the permission. After all, the government didn't tell them what decision to take."

Khairnar retorted, "There is no need for a hearing and the Bombay municipal corporation being an autonomous body, there is no need for the corporation to follow instructions of the minister. "Mr Khairnar added that he did not receive Mr Tripathi's stay order. In fact, it came to his notice only on 9 May. On that day Patil sent a notice to the corporation asking them to reconstruct the shed and the weather frame which was also demolished. He said that the weather frame was put up only after permission was received and so it was demolished illegally. Khairnar, however, says that Patil had illegally welded the tin shed with the weather shed and the shed could not be removed without disturbing the weather frame. He further maintains that they gave Patil 20 minutes to remove the weather frame but he wanted two days. According to Khairnar not only did Patil put up the shed but he also sub-let the space to a coconut vendor and a *paanwala*.

Patil thinks he will automatically get the permission for the monsoon shed this time. Khairnar, however, says that once a licencee has infringed the conditions attached to the permission for such temporary sheds, it is normally not given again. But Chandrakant Patil is the son of the chief minister and may still manage it somehow.

Olga Tellis, Bombay



The demolished shed adjoining the Step- In restaurant

POLITICS

A Return to the Fold?

Congress(S) chief Sharad Pawar dismisses speculation about his joining the Congress(I)

Speculation about Congress(S) leader Sharad Pawar joining the Congress(I) started after his very pro-Congress culture speech at the Vasant Vyakhyan Mala lectures in Pune. Pawar who was speaking on the situation in the country today ruled out the possibility of a national alternative to the Congress(I) and said that only the Congress culture which is secular and national in outlook could solve the problems of the country. While appreciating Rajiv Gandhi's political outlook Pawar criticised his economic policies as they had nothing for the farmers, the unemployed and the poor who form 70 per cent of the people of this country.

As Pawar later explained to SUNDAY, the opposition parties can never form a national alternative. "For instance, our views on Punjab and Assam are different to those of the BJP. So how can we agree on a solution to those problems. Then again we are all regional parties, let's face it. In this context I said that it was only the Congress culture that could solve the problems of the country. If in Karnataka they have a good government, it is because that gentleman (Ramakrishna Hegde) belonged to that culture. The situation has changed since Indira Gandhi's death. Rajiv Gandhi has brought in a qualitative change. He did not give tickets to Gundu Rao, Antulay and Jagannath Mishra. He has started a dialogue with the opposition parties while Mrs Gandhi had an attitude of confrontation with the opposition."

A few days after Pawar's Pune speech, one of Pawar's senior colleagues, the former Rajya Sabha member Abbasaheb Kulkarni's statement led to more speculation when he justified Pawar's speech. He said that Pawar was right in taking a national perspective towards national issues. He asked why Pawar should have to confine himself to opposition politics which is concerned only with seat and ticket sharing. This ruffled opposition feathers. The chief whip of the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) in the Assembly, Datta Patil immediately wrote to Sharad Pawar who was holidaying in Kashmir, asking him to explain the "misunderstandings" created by his speech in Pune. Releasing the letter to the press even before it could have reached Pawar, Datta Patil said that as Pawar was the leader of the Progressive Democratic Front, he owed an explanation to the legislators and so "should call a meeting of all the legislators for this purpose." Pawar had earlier told SUNDAY that he was enjoying reading about the controversy, and said that it had no basis. He also clarified that "I have not been invited to join Congress(I) nor have I given any thought to it."



Sharad Pawar

Pawar, however, has for some time been under pressure from his rank and file members to join the Congress(I) This pressure increased particularly after Indira Gandhi's assassination. Several members whom this correspondent had met,many of whom have joined the Congress(I) said that Sharad Pawar's antagonism was to Mrs Gandhi's style of functioning. "Now that she is not there we should go back,' one of them said. Many of them did not want an alliance with the opposition parties, particularly the BJP. Even Sharad Pawar has realised that the alliances proved counter-productive for the Congress(S), especially in the Assembly elections. He said that they could have got more than 54 seats, had they not bartered away seats to the alliance members who lost them.

Arun Mehta, another Pawar lieutenant was definite that Pawar had not met Rajiv Gandhi in connection with his return to the Congress(I) but in the course of Mr Gandhi's meetings with opposition parties. He said, "Our disagreement with the Congress(I) is on two counts, namely, the structure and functioning style of the party and its economic programme." The name of their party, he said, still smacks of individualism. They do not have regular elections so there is no scope for good workers in the party to get any party positions as these are reserved for sycophants. The party's economic policies are industry-oriented and their planning would have to be reoriented with emphasis on the farmers, the unemployed and the poor, Mehta said.

He added that unless these two differences are reconciled, there will be no merger with the Congress(I). When asked if discussions have started on reconciling the differences, Mehta replied with a categorical "no."

Olga Tellis, Bombay

MRS GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

Bimal Khalsa Files Charges

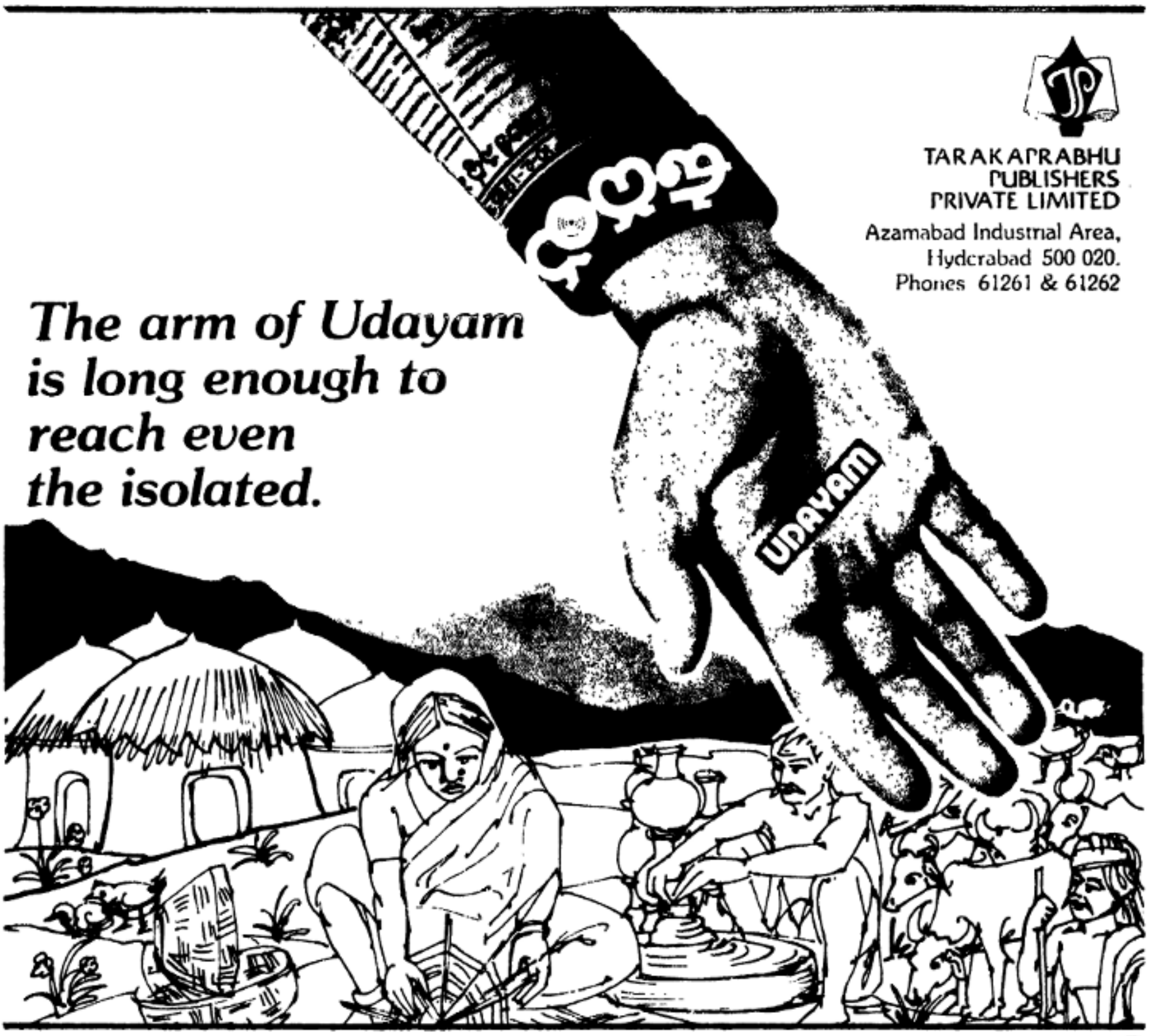
Policemen who shot Beant Singh are charged with murder

The police guards who shot Beant Singh dead, the accused in the Indira Gandhi murder case, have now been charged with "murder." Beant Singh's widow, Bimal Khalsa, moved an application in the Delhi High Court on 30 April, alleging that her husband had been "murdered" by two Indo-Tibetan Border Police(ITBP) guards: Tarsem Singh Jamwal and Ram Saran. With the filing of this application not only has a new twist been given to the case, but an interesting point has been put forward for adjudication.

The prime accused in the case, constable Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh were charged with being party "to a criminal conspiracy to commit an illegal act, to wit, to commit the murder of Smt. Indira Gandhi." The charge-sheet concluded that the other accused assassin, Beant Singh, had died on 31 October and, therefore, criminal charges against him could not be put up. No further details of how the death occurred or how the prime accused, Satwant Singh, was critically wounded were disclosed. The lawyers of the accused, at that time had declared that they intended pur-

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suing the case of Beant Singh's murder

Bimal Khalsa's application was filed in the court of the additional chief metropolitan magistrate, S.L. Khanna charging the two commandos present in the guardroom at the time of the shoot-out with the murder of Beant Singh. The petition was filed under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code and Section 27 of the Arms Act by Bimal Khalsa and Shamsher Singh, elder brother of Beant Singh, an advocate practising in Chandigarh. The petition has questioned the circumstances under which the late Prime Minister was killed and the subsequent sequence of events once again. The teams investigating the assassination, namely the Anand Ram enquiry team and the Thakkar Commission (both of which have not presented their reports yet) have been delving deep into the events that followed the action of Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. Eyewitness accounts of the incident and the charge-sheet clearly states that both Beant Singh and Satwant Singh threw down their weapons and put up their hands in surrender after they had fired at the Prime Minister.

Bimal Khalsa and Shamsher Singh allege "that it is clear from the events that followed that Beant Singh was murdered in the same transaction in which Mrs Gandhi was murdered." The application also states that the fact that the security guards of the PM were escorted inside the guardroom of the PM's house was corraborated by the statements of the prosecution witnesses including D.K. Bhatt, additional commissioner of police, R.K. Dhawan, personal assistant to the Prime Minister and M.L. Fotedar, the political aide to the Prime Minister, all of whom figure in the list of 144 witnesses in the case.

The application seeks to negate the version given out by the investigating teams that Beant Singh was killed and Satwant Singh wounded after a scuffle ensued between them and the ITPB commandos. The applicants have pointed out that at the time of the shoot-out Beant Singh had already surrendered and he had thrown down his revolver from which he had shot the Prime Minister. They have also demanded that the two commandos, Tarsem Singh Jammal and Ram Saran, be called before the court so that criminal proceedings against them can be initiated. They have also demanded that the records of the investigation of FIR No. 241/84 be called and the circumstances of the shoot-out presented before the court

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

STOCK MARKETS

The Galloping Bull

Share prices of TISCO continue to shoot up

"Shares are not essential commodities that one would like to peg their price down to a certain level," says the controller of capital issues, D. S. Mehta. But when a scrip shoots up by more than Rs 250 in just two months, there is obviously cause for concern, he admits. This is what happened to the Tata Steel (TISCO) shares following the announcement of the steel price hike on 20 February. Initially, it appeared to be a temporary phase. The growth factor was predominant with anticipated profits of the firm being Rs 150 crores for 1984-85. But after the union budget was presented this year and the price spiral began, TISCO was undoubtedly the market leader but share prices of TELCO, Reliance, ACC, and Premier Automobiles too began to show a rise.

By the end of April, the TISCO scrip had touched an all-time high in Delhi at Rs 650 and in Bombay at Rs 621. The persistent price rise was a result of frenzied buying at the markets, and there seemed to be no stopping the strong bull pressure. It was then that the finance ministry decided to intervene. The worry was not so much the rise in prices but the fear of such an abnormal increase precipitating a sudden crash or a payments crisis. The controller of capital issues rushed to Bombay on 2 May to convene a meeting of the prominent members of the Bombay Stock Exchange. At an earlier meeting, he had appealed to the brokers for an "automatic self-regulatory mechanism," which obviously had not worked. This time, he was wiser.

It was decided at the meeting that the TISCO scrip would be shifted to the cash list. With this changeover, all transactions in the TISCO scrip would have to be in cash thus putting an end to all speculation. The Bombay Exchange gave an immediate notice that after the stipulated three months, the scrip would be transferred to the B list on 2 August. There were murmurs of discontent among the bulls and some people are even known to be lobbying with the Tata management to protest against the discrimination. Finance ministry officials say that the decision to transfer TISCO and no other share was meant as a signal to the rest. According to them, it should not matter to the management which list the share is in since the Tatas, unlike some other business houses, do not trade in their own stock. Besides the curb imposed on the TISCO shares, it was also decided at the meeting that a 25 per cent margin would be imposed on all transactions on 12 particularly volatile shares in the specified group.

The outcome of these decisions was a downward trend in prices. The very next day the TISCO share prices declined by Rs 40 to stand at Rs 570. At Delhi too, the situation was going out of hand. The stock exchange had even imposed a frantic margin of 100 per cent on the purchase of the TISCO scrip for a few days. Although the Delhi market quietened down relatively following the Bombay meeting, it was decided to hold a joint meeting of all the presidents and executive directors of the Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras stock exchanges

This was convened at the office of the controller of capital issues at the finance ministry on 7 May. It was decided that any action taken on any share scrip by its principal stock exchange would automatically be implemented by the rest of the exchanges where it was listed. Such concerted action, it was felt, was necessary to control the stubborn price spiral. On the same day, Delhi brought into effect a 25 per cent margin on five scrips at its exchange: TISCO, TELCO, Reliance Textiles. Hindustan Lever and Century Spinning.

With the combined effect of the meeting along with the fresh margins, the TISCO price, which suffices as a barometer of the trend, fell from Rs 590 at the last closing to Rs 560 on the very same evening. But the effect was shortlived. Over the last few days, the prices at both Bombay and Delhi are rising again. While in Delhi, TISCO is hovering just below Rs 600, at Bombay, just two days after the Delhi meeting, it closed once again at Rs 604.

There is one section in the stock exchange that believes that no amount of margins of buyers would

help matters until these margins are also imposed on the sellers. The present margin on sellers is just three per cent. According to these circles, the sellers are committing far beyond the stock at hand and usurping the money from the *"Badla"* without having even a tenth of the stock committed at hand. (*badla* is the part-payment pending delivery.) According to one estimate, while the total transactions at the Bombay Stock Exchange in the TISCO scrip have been to the tune of seven lakh shares, the deliveries have been just 70,000. They form a strong lobby for restrictions on the sellers, or bears, who they feel are fuelling speculation.

According to finance ministry officials, the very members of the stock exchange who are in a position to curb the speculative activity are themselves party to it, thus leaving little scope for self control. "Some objective regulatory system has to be evolved," says Mehta. With the unprecedented growth in the resources being generated at the stock markets, some basic reform has to be conducted, he feels. But the resistance to these measures is stiff. One finance ministry official trying to get a telex installed at a stock exchange for instant communication between different markets was astounded by the opposition from some of the bigger brokers. The perplexed official was later told that the influential brokers did not want to lose the edge he had over the others since he had a personal telex installed at his office.

These initial obstacles have to be overcome if the stock markets have to tackle the growth in the volume of money pouring into them, Mehta stresses. Besides, there has to be close monitoring to check defaulters which is next to non-existent today. The resources generated at the stock market are expected to total Rs 2,000 crores in the financial year 1984-85.

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi

NICCO-WEBEL TIE-UP

Workers at War

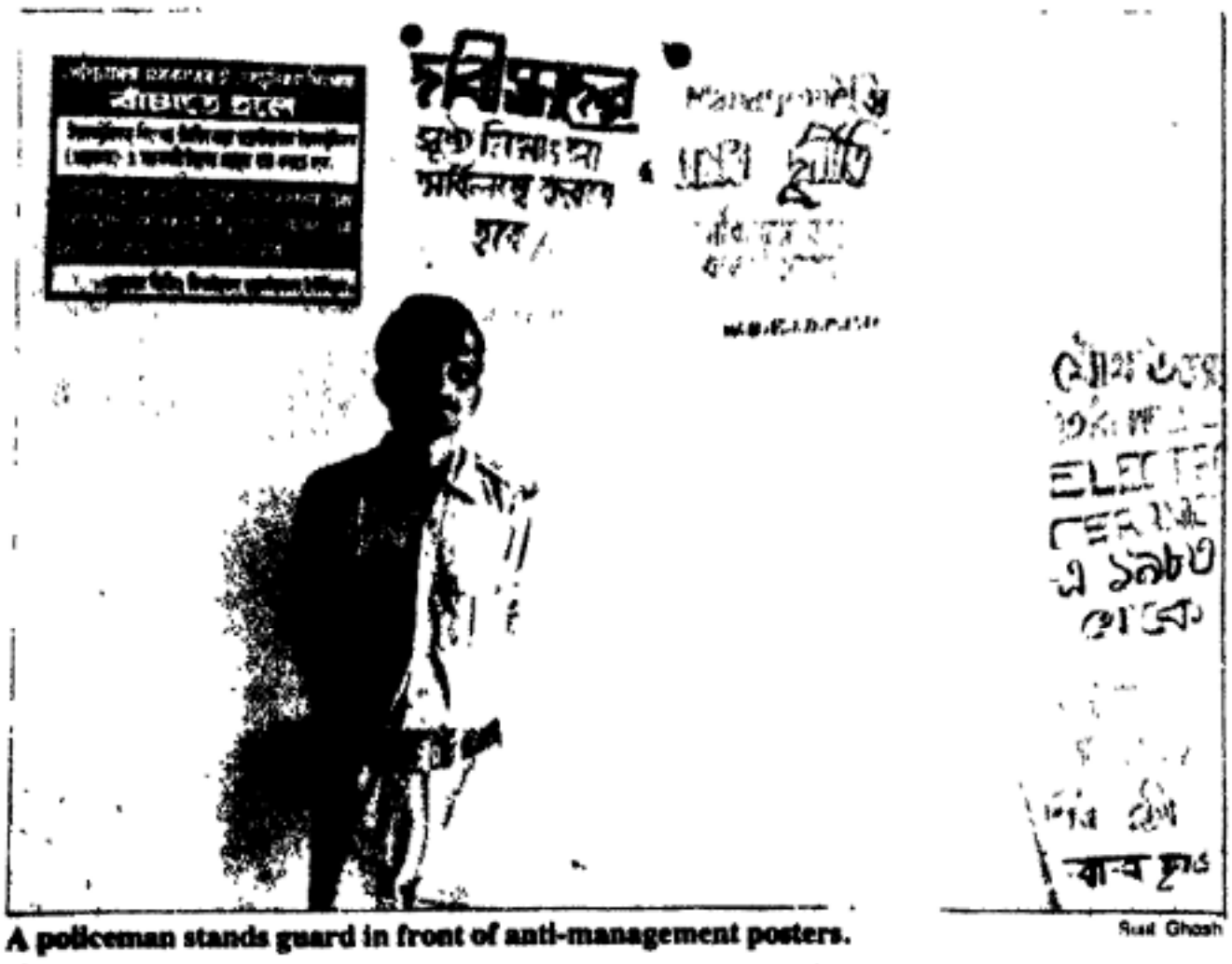
The Left Front's new corporate experiment runs aground

It seemed like a pragmatic step or so claimed the West Bengal industries minister Nirmal Bose. Despite ideological contradictions, the decision to offer 26 per cent of the equity of the totally government-owned WEBEL TV manufacturing unit to the National Insulated Cable Corporation (NICCO) of Calcutta and convert it into a joint sector project was necessary "to save Webel from the onslaught of foreign companies in the field of electronics," explained the minister at a recent press conference. The Left Front government as a policy had always supported the expansion of public sector industries in the state. But now, the scope for expansion at the state level was limited because of financial difficulties explained Nirmal Bose defending this novel corporate experiment. Despite such rationalisation the attempt to revive one of its loss-making units—an estimated cumulative loss of Rs 20 lakhs on a capital of Rs 25 lakhs—has been strongly criticised.

Dissident party members and a hurt and angry labour force have described the decision as a sellout, a desertion of socialist values and more forcibly as attempts at privatisation. But the architects of this tie-up, chief minister Jyoti Basu and his industries minister have both reiterated their stands and blessed this unorthdox alliance. Thus, in spite of requests by the Webel TV workforce to withdraw the appointment of Subrata Paul, the NICCO-appointed general manager of the reconstituted company, both ministers have stuck to their guns and given full support to the Webel board. With its promised "dowry" of Rs 8.34 lakhs which NICCO brought along at the time of signing of the memorandum of agreement, the capital base of the reconstituted company has gone up from Rs 25 lakhs to Rs 32 lakhs while Rajive Kaul and Dr Abhijit Sen, chairman and managing director and vice-chairman of NICCO were inducted into the Webel board.

The terms of the tie-up are clear. Of the paid up capital of Rs one crore of the reconstituted company, the West Bengal government will hold 26 per cent of the equity, NICCO 25 per cent and the balance will be offered to the public. The new company plans to increase production from 800 black-and-white TV sets a month to 2,000 sets a month and by 1987 an ambitious target of 8,000 TV sets has been set. There are also plans of foreign collaborations and talks with Sharp of Japan to provide state-of-the-art technology are on. Yet the 90-strong Webel TV workforce are unhappy with NICCO as well as the the new alliance.

Since 8 April although there has been no officially declared strike or cease work, employees have been holding the Webel TV Taratolla headquarters under seige. It was initially led by the then general manager of the company A.K. Mukherjee (who subsequently resigned in early



A policeman stands guard in front of anti-management posters.

Ruel Ghosh

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April), but the resistance petered out on 26 April when the management, reluctant to take everything lying down put up notices warning that if indiscipline continued, wage cuts would have to be resorted to. The workers reported back the next day (27 April) but refused to talk or negotiate their grievances with the NICCO representatives. In fact on that day, Subrata Paul, the NICCO-appointed general manager was not allowed to carry out his duties and was forced to quit his chair under threats of physical violence. However, with Nirmal Bose's assertion to the members of the Indian Chamber of Commerce on 20 April that no irresponsible trade unionism should be tolerated, a head-on collision was inevitable. Thus, backed with police protection Subrata Paul entered the premises the next day and suspended four employees on charges of gross indiscipline.

Since then, a curious situation prevails. The factory still under police protection, is technically open: Paul is given access to the managerial chair, the workers report to work but production is at a standstill. The only consistent activity is the lunch time *morcha* during which some Webel TV employees together with those of contiguous units denounce the government for selling out.

On their part, the workers seem to be divided on the issues that they are fighting for. The six-member CITU team, the only recognised union according to the Webel board, claims "the deal was made secretly and there was no communication regarding the working environment, service conditions, etc." "Nothing has been given to us in writing and unless we see what the new package of services has to offer, how can we agree or disagree" said a CITU spokesman.

However, the 300-strong Webel Employees Federation, an unregistered organisation, which claims the membership of a large number of employees of the other Webel units is fighting on ideological grounds. There is no justification for converting a 100 per cent government-owned unit into a joint sector venture, they claim. The arguments of financial and managerial paucity is not one that the federation is willing to buy.

The management predictably, has a different story to tell. Repeated attempts to get the warring factions to negotiate and air their grievances have failed, claims the Webel TV board. According to Subrata Paul, a meeting convened at the Lower Rawdon Street headquarters of WBEIDC at the behest of the striking employees with the Webel TV chairman to explain the consequences of the restructured board dissolved into a slanging match when instead of the four representatives of the employees, ten turned up and the meeting had to be abandoned. On his part Subrata Paul on behalf of the new management has offered the olive branch. "Except for non-issues, we are prepared to discuss any grievances and I am certain any anomalies that exist due to service conditions can be worked out amicably once we sit together."

However, such an assertion seems to have done very little to quell the fears of the Webel TV workforce. As things stand today, a curious impasse prevails with the warring factions—the Webel TV workforce and the management surveying each other


Staff Photographer

Workers protesting against the move

across the battlelines with the police on hand to intervene should things hot up. But unless a sense of mutual trust and confidence is built up between the management and workers and the workforce is convinced of the efficacy of the joint sector agreement, NICCO's dream to manufacture 8,000 TV sets by 1987 could well be a pipe dream. Worse still, the continued cold war and lack of production could precipitate drastic measures—and embarrass the government. Should a lockout be declared, it would not only mean a large number of red faces amongst the government ranks but also the sounding of the death knell for any industrial innovation in the state.

A Special Correspondent, Calcutta

FRANCE

Odd Man Out

Mitterrand changes his stance

Throughout his career as President of France, General de Gaulle had earned the reputation as the odd man of the Western Alliance, at least in the eyes of the Anglo-Americans (or the "Anglo-Saxons," as De Gaulle himself called them in derision). Since he became the French President three years ago, Francois Mitterrand has built for himself the reputation of a conciliatory partner, certainly more pliable than his predecessor, Giscard d'Estaing, a Gaullist; so much so that most Europeans and especially the left-wingers in France and Britain had almost come to the conclusion that Mitterrand had become a tool in the hands of the Americans.

But in the middle of May, the French President's image underwent a radical transformation due to his stand at the Bonn summit of the seven industriaiised countries. Mitterrand refused to discuss any reforms in the trade policies of the seven countries or of the EEC or of GATT (General Agreement on Tariff and Trade) unless the Americans discussed reforms in the international monetary system. He made it clear that France would not approve or participate in the Reagan administration's "Strategic Defence Initiative" (Star Wars Research programme) in its monopolistic form because he (Mitterrand) himself was sceptical about America's willingness to share knowledge about the Star Wars research programme with her allies. Mitterrand also expressed concern that the US research programme into space-based defence could jeopardise the concept of nuclear deterrence.

Mitterrand's detractors, however, criticised this on the grounds that his independent line both on trade and defence is primarily for home consumption, and a vote-catching gesture keeping in mind the legislative elections in France early next year. They also point out that Mitterrand, was pandering to the farmers' lobby when he pointed out that the liberalisation of trade, as wanted by the Anglo-Americans would threaten the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EEC.

It is too early to evaluate the long-term effects (on domestic politics in France) of Mitterrand's "intransigence" on trade and defence.

However, commentators in England have reacted adversely to the newly acquired independent line of France's socialist President There is no doubt that it produced enough impact on the heads of government and delegations who attended the Bonn summit to prompt Margaret Thatcher of Britain to launch an all-out attack on Japan for its protectionist policies, to which the British press gave so much publicity that it obscured the full impact of Mitterrand's views.

Nevertheless, as the summiteers left for their home countries, it looked as though other countries will not forget easily two points made by Mitterrand. First, the trade and financial problems of the Western countries need a more fundamental approach than the superficial remedy of another ("Reagan") round of GATT negotiations. Secondly, a more fundamental remedy is a reform of the international monetary



President Mitterrand

system, a point which was made by Indira Gandhi during her last visit to Washington

Meanwhile, the uneasiness over America's Star Wars programme is spreading not only in the Eastern (Soviet) Bloc but among European countries, because they cannot trust the Americans at a time when both France and Germany are striving to build up their own defences. It is important to note that Mitterrand made his views on defence known only in a private meeting with President Reagan and not in a plenary or closed session of the economic summit because defence was not an item on the agenda of the summit.

Predictably, a majority of the Anglo-American papers have tried to play down this aspect of the Bonn talks. But it is evident that the misgivings voiced by Mitterrand over America's Star Wars programme would attract attention among the nonaligned nations and the countries of the Eastern Bloc. Thus, although the Bonn summit has been ridiculed in Britain and America, perhaps the net gain of it was the emergence of Mitterrand as the "Doubting Thomas of Europe."

Peter Pendsay, Paris

WEST GERMANY

Furore Over Past Horrors

Nation-wide controversy over Reagan's visit to Bitburg

While the rest of Europe celebrated their victorious roles in World War II, West Germans remained preoccupied, being at the same time their own prosecutor and defender. 8 May, the 40th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) day found West Germans acknowledging their burden of guilt for the horrors and barbarities of the war. The last days have, however, also seen a growing assertion, symbolised by Chancellor Kohl's frequent utterance "I was 15 in 1945," that two-thirds of the West Germans are post-war stock.

There was no cringing about the German role during the war and the President of the Federal Republic, Richard von Weizsaecker told his countrymen during his special speech in the *Bundestag* (legislature) to commemorate the day that "every German could have seen what Jewish fellow citizens had to suffer from cold indifference to hidden intolerance to open hate. Those who had their eyes and ears open, those who wanted to inform themselves could not have failed to see that the deportation trains were rolling." He also added, "There is no guilt or innocence of a whole people because guilt like innocence is not collective."

For most Germans, 8 May is something between the *stunde der kapitulation* (hour of capitulation) and *Die stunde der liberation* (hour of liberation) Hence, the agonising soul searching and the awkward balancing attempts at solidarity with the Western Alliance and pride in the new democratic country which has risen from the rubble of Fascism. That the shadows of the past still exist was apparent over the furore surrounding President Reagan's visit to a German military cemetery in Bitburg during the American President's state visit to West Germany last week. Critics condemned the visit since the cemetery contained among others 47 graves of SS soldiers (this elite force was responsible for running the concentration camps) but Reagan went ahead with the visit, by saying "They were victims of Nazism too." Mr Reagan said that many SS soldiers were young boys forcibly drafted by the Nazis. "Most middleaged Germans rather liked this Presidential explanation and opinion polls have shown that 72 per cent of West Germans were happy that President Reagan did go to Bitburg. The mayor of Bitburg, Herr Theo Hallet spoke for many when he said Reagan was going to honour the unknown soldier and if there are any guilty buried there, they have already been punished by the ultimate punishment: death. The government spokesman, Herr Boenisch was even more blunt and said he "found it grotesque that people were thinking of war crimes and not about things like American-German friendship."

On the other end of the political spectrum, the ecologically conscious and anti-nuclear party, the Greens refused to attend the special address by Weizsaecker, saying it was too non-commital. They travelled instead to Auschwitz, in Poland, to portray a younger generation of Germans who were ready to remember Hitler's infamous holocaust and to publicly demonstrate that the new German generation is deeply ashamed of what happened and to acknowledge that concentration camps will always be on Germany's conscience. The major opposition party, the Social Democrats organised a huge peace march in West Berlin, their leaders having publicly condemned Reagan's visit to the German military cemetery.

Remembrance services took place throughout the country where Germans perhaps asked themselves quietly about their involvement. There is little doubt however that most Germans are beginning to resent the publicity surrounding a nation's coming to terms with its darkest hour. A respected German daily, *Die Suddeutsche Zeitung* wrote: "The shame of having waged and carried on the most horrible of all wars, fighting for an unjust cause and for criminal goals is something the Germans have to deal with .... leave us Germans alone with it."

The West Germans, unlike the East

Germans who have never acknowledged their part in the atrocities of the Nazi dictatorship, have apart from acknowledging the historical and moral responsibility made financial payments to the victims of the holocaust. It is however, not the financial burden of the war which reminds Germans of their historical legacy but the geopolitical reality of their old country being divided into two with a wall cutting the old capital into East and West Berlin. Another unpleasant reminder is the fate of the refugees who had once lived in the eastern territories. Over 14 million of them fled to the west as the Red Army swept through East Prussia. Many of them live in West Germany, still hoping to go home one day. Chancellor Kohl has promised to speak to an association of such refugees in June, something which is bound to stir things up once again.

Kohl's attempts to focus attention on West Germany's present and loyal membership of the Western Alliance has the official backing of the three western victorious nations. Hence Margaret Thatcher's unwillingness to have any form of victory celebrations in Great Britain and then a compromise commemoration service in Westminster Abbey. This is why Ronald Reagan has been ready to prove his spirit of reconciliation stretching to the Bitberg cemetery despite pressure from home; and hence the famous handholding ceremony in Verdun with President Mitterand last year. All of them are gestures which West Germans have not failed to notice or be heartened by. Summit observers at Bonn noticed that Chancellor Kohl seemed particularly intent at pleasing the US President. It was a concerted though clumsy attempt at not letting the new, democratic West Germany be crippled by the sins of the old Reich. But it still left many of the younger generation Germans saying "I don't think it should ever be forgotten (the past) but I wonder if I should feel guilty or not?"

Kanta Talukdar Bonn



President Reagan (second from left) at the Bitburg military cemetery

SRI LANKA

A Call for Military Intervention

TESO wants India to liberate the Tamils

Two schools of thought have emerged in India regarding the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils. One group feels that India should strive for a negotiated settlement between President Jayewardene and the Tamils. The other is of the opinion that India should intervene militarily in Sri Lanka to "liberate" the Tamils. The latter school of thought has now crystallised into a full-fledged organisation called the Tamil Eelam Supporters' Organisation (TESO). Spearheaded by the DMK, it has drawn support from many local political parties like the Tamil Nadu Kamaraj Congress (TKNC) headed by P. Nedumaran, the Namathu Kazhagam headed by S.D. Somasundaram, the Dravida Kazhagam headed by K. Veeramani and a host of private citizens and industrialists.

One of the fundamental beliefs of TESO is that Eelam (a separate state) is the only solution and too much precious time has been wasted on talks. The need of the hour is an armed intervention by India along the lines of Bangladesh. "If India could do it then, she can do it now, provided of course there is the political will to do it."

As TESO is still in the formative stages, the promoters are not sure of its functions and objectives and the final shape of things will probably depend on the response it musters. The organisers, however, are firm on a few issues. The primary purpose would be to mobilise support from Eelam on an international scale and dispel the misconceptions about Eelam. TESO would also undertake to establish, among other things, that it is not a secessionist, separatist struggle but an oppressed people's fight for liberation. Propaganda would be undertaken on a global scale so that the world is given a true picture of Tamils being victims of genocide. TESO is also committed to providing moral and financial support to the 'Tamil patriots' who are engaged in their "war of liberation."

One reason why Rajiv Gandhi is not as strong as Mrs Gandhi about pursuing a solution to the Lanka problem is because Punjab is clearly the PM's priority. The centre has allowed the Lanka problem to 'drift' and the kind of urgency Mrs Gandhi had shown in her efforts to find a political settlement for the Tamil problem seems to be missing. Apart from domestic priorities, there is a feeling that Mr Gandhi is disinclined to make an issue of the Tamil problem because of his pro-West stance. In an interview with SUNDAY, Nedumaran admitted that he sensed a distinct dilution in Mr Gandhi's stand vis-a-vis the Tamil problem. Moreover, he himself was new to the problem and that too was creating

several hurdles. Nedumaran pointed out that Romesh Bhandari was a poor emissary compared to Mrs Gandhi's special envoy G. Parthasarathy who had a profound knowledge of the situation and a historical perspective of the Tamil problem. Prior to his missions to Colombo, he always made it a point to stop at Madras, to hold discussions with Tamil leaders like Amirthalingam, M.G. Ramachandran and M Karunanidhi. But Bhandari did not consult a single Tamil leader before his departure. Nedumaran believes that the cause of the Sri Lanka Tamils received a setback in the "sidelining" of "GP" (as G Parthasarathy is known). According to Nedumaran, the impact of the loss of Mrs Gandhi's "triumvirate" is already being felt. During her time,



S.D. Somasundaram

Parthasarathy, P.C. Alexander, her principal secretary and external affairs minister P V. Narasimha Rao were all deeply involved with Sri Lanka. All three had a natural sympathy and understanding of the problem, he said.

TESO has dismissed the advisory committee on the Tamil problem appointed by Rajiv Gandhi as an 'eyewash.' They point out that the committee is not powerful enough because it comprises junior ministers and officers, who have neither authority nor clout. Moreover, most of the committee members are new to the problem. Nedumaran could not help comparing it to the powerful cabinet committee appointed to look into the Punjab problem. He pointed out that during the Andhra agitation. Nehru had appointed a powerful committee that comprised himself and Sardar Patel apart from other prominent personalities. TESO also resents the fact that Mr Gandhi chooses to be eloquent about Namibia while he maintains a diplomatic silence on issues that are far closer to home.

SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that the DMK and the TNKC had planned to hold an opposition conclave on the Tamil problem. They wanted to keep the AIADMK and Congress(I) out because they were "insincere." All major political parties in the opposition would have been invited for the conclave which was to have been held in Madras. The plans, however, fizzled out because the local units of the CPI and CPI(M) (who are members of the DMK-led opposition front in Tamil Nadu) firmly opposed the concept of Eelam because it would mean the division of Sri Lanka.

The Indian government is also unlikely to encourage TESO as the only



M. Karunanidhi

factor behind TESO is Tamil chauvinism. It was revealing that the DMK MLA of the Pondicherry Assembly D. Ramachandran (who was the former CM) while sponsoring a resolution on Eelam said that as a "true Tamil," chief minister Farooq should impress upon the union government to intervene effectively to protect the suffering Tamils. This is a dangerous parochial attitude, for the issue at stake in Sri Lanka is not Tamil chauvinism but human rights. One is sympathetic to the Lanka Tamils not because of communal affiliations but because of the violations of human rights. Raising the issue of Tamil chauvinism is self-defeating because by the very same argument Mr Gandhi need not do anything because he is not a Tamil.

Mr Karunanidhi's recent statement that the Prime Minister's indifference to the Tamils would drive the Tamils in India to demand secession is a dangerous one. In fact, one of the main reasons why the union government was firm on a political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka was that talks of Eelam would revive the forgotten demand of secession this side of the Palk Straits However, at present, the saving factor is that the people of Tamil Nadu no longer want a separate state for themselves.

Provided it is able to steer clear of chauvinism, the TESO is a healthy development because only a meaningful, effective and dynamic democracy can accommodate a wide range of views. In its own way, the TESO (representing the Indian hardliners) can be useful to the Indian government Just as President Jayewardene blames the hardliners in his cabinet and outside whenever convenient, Mr Gandhi can also demand an early resolution to the problem to keep his 'hardliners" at bay.

The overwhelming majority of Indian opinion is in favour of a political settlement which would give a measure of regional autonomy for the Sri Lanka Tamils. Everyone concedes that India has a role to play in resolving the problem.The major political parties including the Congress(I), DMK, AIADMK, CPI, CPI(M), the Janata Party and the recently formed TESO, concur on seven points. They are: India should persuade President Jayewardene to withdraw the army from the Tamil areas and hand over the administration to the civilian authorities in the north and east as part of the efforts towards normalisation and hold meetings of the non-aligned countries to discuss this issue According to some hardliners, Sri Lanka should be threatened with expulsion from the non-aligned movement if it does not show an inclination to settle the problem soon and amicably. Other points are: a committee of Indian MPs should go to Sri Lanka to hold discussions with the Sri Lankan parliamentarians; and that India must internationalise the issue on two counts—the problem of Sri Lankan refugees (estimated to be a lakh in India) and the violations of human rights. These aspects of the problem have to be raised by India in various international forums, the United Nations and also with the super powers. India should initiate an economic blockade of Sri Lanka if the latter continues to be unresponsive to a negotiated settlement. Finally, the Tamil rebels should be accorded the recognition given to SWAPO and the PLO. Perhaps, the advisory committee appointed by Mr Gandhi could focus upon this seven-point charter if it wishes to disprove the theory that "the best way to shelve a problem is to appoint a committee."

Anita Pratap, Madras

Image-maker

There is nothing cosmetic about the grand Image India award instituted by the Indian Institute of Marketing Management, despite the choice of the recipient for 1985, the graceful Shahnaz Husain. A woman of extraordinary drive, she was recently presented the accolade by the union minister of state for external affairs, Mr Khurshed Alam Khan, for her contribution to the improvement of India's image in the world of cosmetics, by popularising herbal beauty aids. Among the luminaries at the ceremony were Chief Justice Y.V. Chandrachud, and union minister for health and family welfare Ms Mohsina Kidwai, who presided. All the speakers showered praise on Ms Husain for her work.

Shahnaz Husain receives the Image India award from Khurshed Alam Khan



An Officer and a Politician



Praveen Davar

Capt Praveen Davar, one of the new office-bearers of the Indian Youth Congress appointed by the IYC president Anand Sharma, has come a long way: he was the former *aide de camp* to Prabhudas Patwari when the latter was Governor of Tamil Nadu during the Janata days. Born into a family of politicians, the young army officer simply could not resist the temptation of joining politics. As the Governor's ADC, he was seen driving to Congress leaders' homes in the Janata days whenever his official duties brought him to the capital with the Governor. When the Congress(I) finally came to power in 1980, Patwari complained against Davar to the defence ministry and the controversy saw him out of the army. Till recently, the bespectacled Youth Congressman was a close confidant of Arun Nehru. In the Anand Sharma team, he has been entrusted with the foreign relations and publications departments of the IYC.

Eyes on Phoolan

At any wedding, the cynosure of attention is usually the bride. But the wedding of Bhoori Ram and policeman Ram Ashray was different. All eyes were fixed on the bride's elder sister, none other than one-time queen of the Chambal, Phoolan Devi. The former woman-dacoit, who has been undergoing detention in the Gwalior Central Jail ever since her surrender in 1983, was let out on parole and escorted under heavy guard to the wedding. Naturally, it was a strange wedding party that consisted mainly of armed guards deployed to protect Phoolan—and prevent her from escaping. Over 400 uniformed and plainclothes guards were positioned around the pandal, on treetops and terraces of surrounding structures.

It was the first time that Phoolan had stepped out of prison since her sensational surrender in March 1983. The day of Phoolan's brief sojourn with the world outside, however, ended disappointingly for her: for months she and her paramour Man Singh were planning to get married along with Phoolan's sister, according to Hindu rites. But the jail authorities did not grant Man Singh parole, lest the two attempt to escape. Man Singh's application for parole was rejected at the eleventh hour and Phoolan's period of freedom reduced from 24 hours to eight hours. According to reports, she spent most of the time during her journey to and from the wedding flinging abuses at all the policemen around her—save her new brother-in-law.



Phoolan Devi

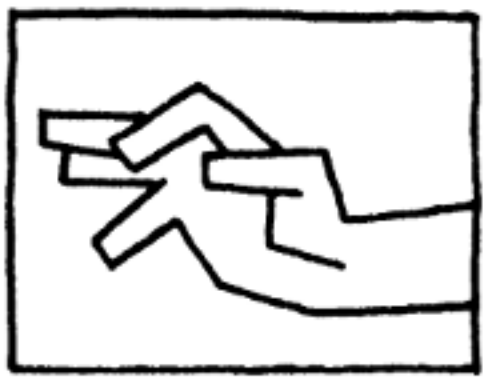
One in a Lakh



CNS

Acharya Raghunath Sharma, who won the coveted Rs one lakh Viswa Sanskrit Bharati Puraskar for his contribution to Sanskrit literature received the award from Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at a function in New Delhi's Teen Murti House. Looking on is the UP chief minister N.D. Tiwari.

Robots for Surgery



It could be called the first application of robotics in human surgery. In an operation performed in California, a robot arm of the size of a kitchen mixer, described as safer and more accurate than a surgeon's hand, has helped doctors remove a tumour from a 52-year-old man. Dr Yik San Kwoh, who developed the computer programme that makes the arm work, said the machine would never replace a surgeon but was a major improvement in the way brain tumours are located and removed.

The arm holds a probe that guides the surgeon through a hole drilled in the patient's skull and down a narrow tube to the tumour. The patient's head is held in place by a frame that contains the coordinates of the tumour The robot is accurate to within 1/2,000 of an inch.

Slow but Sure

People who stammer should first learn to speak slowly; only then can they speak fluently No one is certain why this technique works but it seems that it compensates for the difficulty that stammerers have in coordinating their thinking, breathing and using their vocal cords. Most normal speech is controlled by the left side of brain; stammerers according to one theory, suffer from interference from the right-hand side

A Remarkable Feat

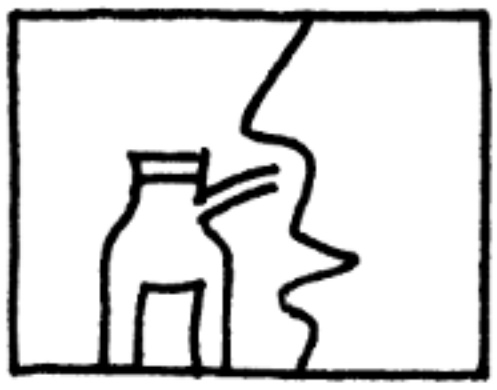
Scientists at the university of California, San Francisco, have redesigned an enzyme to alter its function, which could eventually benefit the chemical and food industries as well as medicine. According to Prof. Robert Fletterick, chairman of biochemistry and biophysics, the feat "represented" one of the first steps in custom-designing enzymes to do highly specific tasks with high efficiency.

No Between-meal Snacks, Please



Children, if you don't want to have tooth decay, just keep away from between-meal snacks and eat only at mealtimes. According to Dr Martin Curzon, head of Child Dental Health at Leeds university, England, all foods can potentially cause tooth decay in susceptible individuals. Many foods, which would be a natural alternative to sweet snacks—cakes, french fries, biscuits, bananas and raisins—were likely to cause tooth decay. That is what was discovered in animal tests. Sugar may not be the only culprit. Although regular brushing is important, Dr Curzon warns against sticky foods which are high in refined carbohydrate.

Insulin Through the Nose



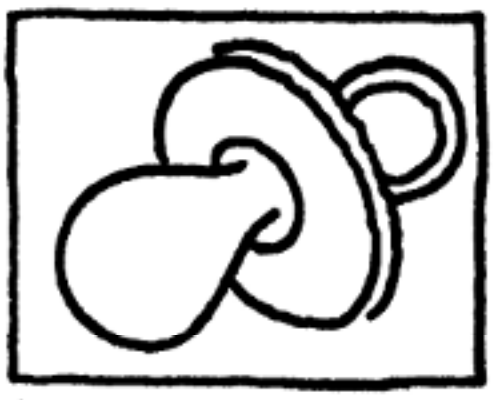
A new method of administering insulin—a nose spray used before meals—may largely eliminate the need for insulin injections in severe diabetics, according to a study conducted by a team of researchers at Boston, USA. In their experiment, eight people used the spray at home for three months. One of the researchers, Dr Renate Kimmerle, said that "this study shows that it can be tolerated, and you achieve the same amount of glycerine (blood sugar) control as the patient can achieve with injections." The key to the new technique is an aerosol pump that sprays insulin mixed with detergent into the nose. The detergent helps the insulin penetrate the membranes in the nose. The defect of this technique was that it caused an irritation in the nose in some patients; diabetics would still need the injection a day to provide insulin while they sleep. Insulin cannot be swallowed because it is destroyed by enzymes in the digestive system.

Hope for Arthritics

A new ray of hope now emerges for arthritis patients. Researchers at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) in north-west England believe they have made a major advance in the "golden shot" treatment of this crippling disease.

Gold-based compounds injected into the blood stream have been used by doctors for several decades to relieve severe inflammation in affected joints. But until now the precise mode of action of the "golden shot" has never been known. The "golden shot" injection takes the form of a colourless liquid with a gold base. Some doctors have been reluctant to use it too frequently because of the unknown action and the occasional side-effects of dermatitis and vomiting. The researchers have now devised a measurement technique which for the first time makes it possible to follow the course of the injection, to study the changes, if any, it undergoes in the blood and to see how it works.

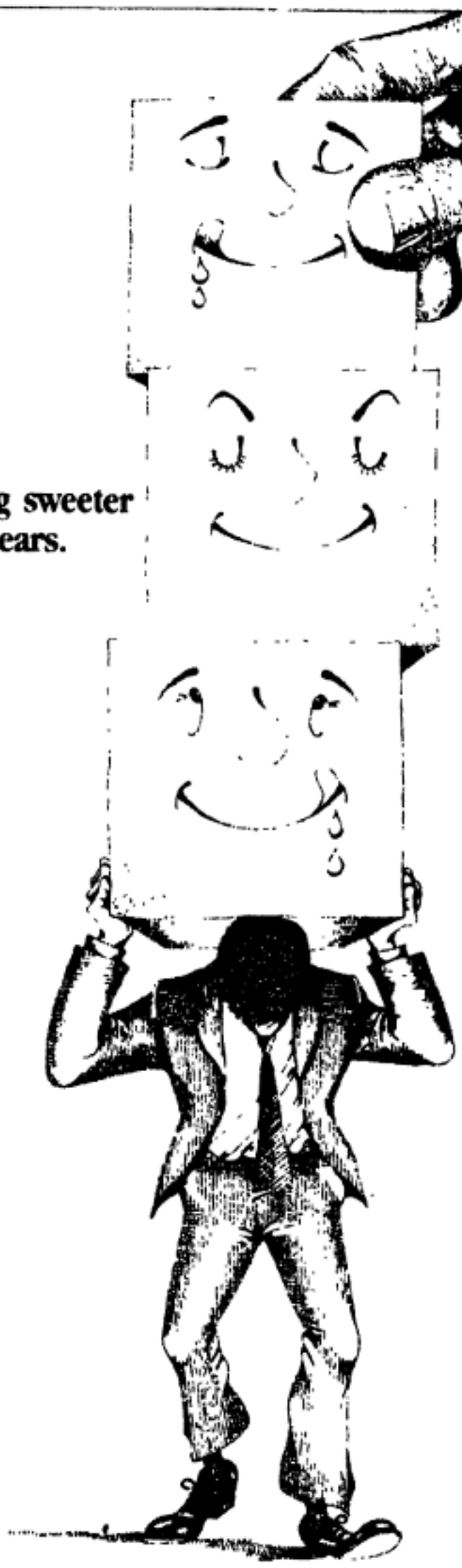
Problematic Dummies



A dummy or a rubber teat may stop a child from crying but it may be problematic: it could be the source of a troublesome fungal infection. Babies with oral thrush (a disease affecting the mouth and throat) have a "white mouth" caused by the growth of a yeast called *Candida albicans*. This is usually a minor infection but can get severe enough to affect a baby's ability to feed. Fifty per cent of the dummies can carry the infection and children who suck a dummy are much more likely to suffer from it. In an ideal world, says a doctor, babies shouldn't have dummies at all.

Illustrations: Prabir Sen

Sugar has been getting sweeter over the years.



And cheaper.

If sugar prices had kept pace with inflation, sugar would cost over Rs. 10 a kilo today.

Guess who's behind this sweet state of affairs?

The facts, just the facts

In the last decade, prices in general have shot up 142%. And in the case of sugar? Only 77%.

In effect, sugar has been getting cheaper over the years. One thing accounts for this seemingly sweet state of affairs.

A crushing annual subsidy of Rs. 300 crores. By the sugar industry.

The Govt. picks up 65% of the sugar in India, at prices well below the cost of production. This is sold through ration shops. Here, prices are kept artificially low because the sugar industry subsidises them. To the tune of Rs. 300 crores.

The industry is expected to make up these losses by selling 35% of its produce in the open market. In practice, these losses seldom get made up.

The Govt. controls prices in the open market also, simply by dictating how much sugar should be dumped into it, and when.

One way road to disaster.

Of the 339 sugar mills in India, 166 are in the cooperative sector, 103 in the joint stock sector, and 70 in the public sector.

The outlook for all of them is bleak.

Losses in the last three years—suffered by mills in all sectors and all regions—are upwards of Rs. 800 crores. To finance these losses, the industry has had to borrow sizeable sums from the banks and State Govts. This is having a crippling effect on its finances. Consequently, payments to sugarcane growers are regularly getting delayed. A cash crop has become a credit one. Cane growers are suffering for no fault of theirs, and are naturally growing less and less sugarcane. Production of sugar has plummeted from a peak of 8.4 million tonnes in 1982-83, to 5.9 million tonnes today. India, which once exported Rs. 800 crores of sugar (1975,76), has now spent Rs. 200 crores (1984,85) of precious foreign exchange on imports.

This is the state of an industry which, by any international parameters, is productive and efficient! An industry which is the second largest in the country.

Is this in the interest of India?

INTERFACE-1001

Issued in the national interest by the Indian Sugar Mills Association.

BEGINNING 19 MAY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a week of mixed fortunes Students should devote more time to studies Your financial prospects look bright At home you will be called upon to shoulder more responsibilities Professionals should avoid arguments with their colleagues Those in business should be wary of deception

Good dates: 23, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 5 6 and 7
Favourable direction: East



LEO (15 August—14 September) Sportsmen and poets will find this period favourable A pleasure trip you were looking forward to is in the offing However, this is not a good week for businessmen do not undertake financial risks and postpone expansion plans Professional should stay away from office politics

Good dates: 19, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: North-east



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a particularly lucky week for businessmen do not hesitate to execute new plans. Professionals will also make steady progress This is the ideal time to get married. The domestic front will not cause fresh problems. The stars shine brightly on the financial front A letter will bring good news.

Good dates: 21, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) All your efforts will be crowned with success this week If you are in love and intending to get married, this is the ideal time to do so Professionals and businessmen will make steady headway but avoid speculative ventures Students will also find this phase favourable At home your family members will give you a lot of joy A pleasure trip is in the offing.

Good dates: 20, 21 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2 3 and 8
Favourable direction: South-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is a good period for those in love and intending to get married Those looking for jobs may find one this week, while those in service may look forward to a promotion Policemen will receive awards for gallantry Lawyers will also find this phase favourable However, your financial prospects are not very bright Keep a sharp eye on your health and diet

Good dates: 19, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Creative artists and writers will find this period favourable rare honours are in store for them But your success is likely to arouse the jealousy of your relatives. You will need tact and patience to overcome embarrassing situations at home This is not a good phase for professionals and businessmen Your deteriorating health will add to your worries.

Good dates: 21, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: South-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) The stars shine brightly on the financial front this week. you will be able to repay most of your debts Love and marriage are well signified. A letter from a long lost friend will give you a lot of pleasure However, this is a good week for professionals or businessmen At home an elderly member of the family may suddenly fall sick Do not neglect your health.

Good dates: 19, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: North



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) Law suits will cause a lot of anxiety to you this week Your financial prospects are not very bright. you may run into debts At home problems will keep piling But do not get depressed as this bleak phase will soon come to an end However, this a good week for love and marriage negotiations Your health will improve

Good dates: 20, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) If you are looking for a job there are chances that you will find one this week. If you are planning to change your career, do so only after consulting your well-wishers. Friends and relatives will be particularly helpful to you this week Your financial prospects look bright. The domestic front will remain peaceful But do not neglect your health or diet.

Good dates: 20, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North-east



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This week social engagements will keep you busy but do not neglect your official duties. There are chances that professionals will come in for severe criticism from their employers. Businessmen should deal with their customers carefully. This is, however, a good period for lovers. Law suits will be resolved amicably in your favour. Your health will improve markedly.

Good dates: 22, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Financial gains are in store for you this week, but avoid extravagance and save something for the rainy days ahead The domestic front will remain inspiring This is also the ideal time to settle law suits relating to property matters. Professionals and businessmen will forge ahead. Lovers will find their parents extremely compromising But watch your health closely.

Good dates: 19, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Friends and relatives will keep you occupied this week. This is a bright period for all concerned. Professionals and businessmen will make steady progress Politicians and lawyers will also find this period favourable. On the financial front some of you will gain money or property through inheritance. However, those above 50 should keep a vigilant eye on their health and diet.

Good dates: 22, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: West

For those born between 15 April and 14 May:

Your desire to excel in life makes you ambitious by nature. At times you do not hesitate to resort to unfair means to reach the top You are also proud and you tend to neglect the feelings of others. Most of you are also endowed with a rare aesthetic sense. You may choose the creative arts as your profession. Women born during this period are usually very fair and they make good housewives.



The way sugar prices fluctuate, you'd think somebody manipulates them.

Who could it be?
The sugar barons?
The sugarcane growers?
The wholesalers?
Or the retailers?
Perhaps it is something altogether different

It is a fact that sugar prices in India have simply not kept pace with inflation

It is also a fact that sugar prices in the open market fluctuate like nobody's business, something the sugar industry is totally against

One thing accounts for this oscillating behaviour

A correct policy, but ...

It is this policy that makes the sugar industry subsidise controlled prices — to the tune of Rs 500 crores

As a result of the wrong implementation of this policy the Govt has dumped excessive sugar into the open market This has further increased the losses incurred by the sugar industry

For instance this year, the industry has been forced to release 75% of its open market quota, in the first six months, at artificially low prices Naturally shortages loom on the horizon And prices are bound to shoot up

The role of imports

The Govt is planning to import sugar because of expected shortages Fair enough

But what's more crucial is how this sugar is brought to the end consumer

If it is through State agencies a repeat of 1980-81 can be expected Then shortages persisted, despite imports Prices shot up to Rs 15 a kilo Black marketeers flourished

If it is channeled through ration shops, it will serve the purpose That in fact, is what the Govt has been doing for the past two years It works

Apart from correctly utilising imports, the very state of the industry needs to be looked into

One way road to disaster.

Of the 349 sugar mills in India, 166 are in the cooperative sector, 105 in the joint stock sector and 70 in the public sector

The outlook for all of them is bleak

Losses in the last three years—suffered by mills in all sectors and all regions—are upwards of Rs 800 crores To finance these losses, the industry has had to borrow sizeable sums from the banks and State Govts This is having a crippling effect on its finances. Consequently, payments to sugarcane growers are regularly getting delayed A cash crop has become a credit one Cane growers are suffering for no fault of theirs, and are naturally growing less and less sugarcane. Production of sugar has plummeted from a peak of 8.4 million tonnes in 1982-83, to 5.9 million tonnes today India, which once exported Rs 800 crores of sugar (1975,76), has now spent Rs 200 crores (1984,85) of precious foreign exchange on imports

This is the state of an industry which, by any international parameters, is productive and efficient! An industry which is the the second largest in the country

Clearly, a lot needs to be done

And time is running out

Issued in the national interest by the Indian Sugar Mills Association.

INTERFACE-1002

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



MORADABAD: A novel way of copying has been adopted by an examinee who was caught redhanded at the Inter College examination centre in Narauli town. The examinee, Naveen Agarwal, had placed a polythene bag filled with small slips in his mouth. To show that he was eating a betel he kept on chewing the bag. This aroused the suspicion of the invigilators who pulled out the bag and found the slips which contained handwritten notes from which the examinee was copying—*Northern India Patrika* (Anjali Khare, Lucknow)

CALCUTTA: Mr Shekhar Biswas, a resident of Jubilee Park, has received a telephone bill for Rs 800 15 years after returning the instrument. According to Mr Biswas, he had deposited the instrument in 1970 when he moved house, along with a request to shift the telephone to his new residence at 47 Jubilee Park, Calcutta 33. However, despite repeated reminders, the authorities did not transfer the instrument and in a letter informed him that as the 47-exchange was fully booked, it would be impossible to carry out the transfer. But Mr Biswas was surprised when a few days back he received a bill charging him Rs 800 for calls made on an instrument which did not exist—*The Telegraph* (B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur)

FAIZABAD: Coin shortage should have pinched his pocket at most, but it left an unpleasant impact on his cheeks, instead. It was too late when the victim, a shopkeeper of Akberpur town in this district, realised his mistake in offering Nirodh to his customers in lieu of small coins. The shopkeeper had invented his own method of getting over the problem of coin shortage and his customers would cooperate with him by accepting the contraceptive. Recently, however, when, by force of habit, he offered a packet of Nirodh to a woman customer, she instantaneously lost her temper and left the shop after raining slaps on his cheeks. By the time the nonplussed shopkeeper regained his composure, she had disappeared—*Indian Express* (S.S. Raju, Bombay)

RAIPUR: On 23 April, a youth from a village in Bilaspur district came to the rescue of a Muslim girl who was rejected by her fiance on the eve of the marriage. The bridegroom's party reached the bride's village on 21 April and immediately started wrangling for more dowry. The girl's parents, unable to meet the demands, approached the village elders who, with the consent of the bride, decided to send back the marriage party. However, the girl's disappointment did not last long as a youth of the same community came forward and agreed to marry her without any dowry. Inspired by this chivalry, another youth sought and won the bride's younger sister's hand in marriage—*The Times of India* (Ajai Bhalchandra Kher, Allahabad)

SHIMOGA: A lineman of the Karnataka Electricity Board, who streaked down a street here on 22 April, won a bet of Rs 25 with his colleagues but ended up by being suspended for the "indecent act." The executive engineer of Shimoga has ordered an inquiry into the episode—*The Statesman* (Mitu, New Delhi)

MADURAI: Visitors to the collector's office at Ramnad move carefully with their eyes fixed to the ground for fear of stepping on a snake. The building, where a number of departments including the collector's chamber have been located since 15 March, is haunted by snakes. Invariably, class four servants either drive away the reptiles or kill them. On 19 April a snake coiled itself among the files in the corner of a room. The bewildered staff members ran about the town and caught hold of a snake charmer who took away the reptile—*The Hindu* (R. Venkatesan, Tiruchirapalli)

BOMBAY: Believe it or not, a pregnant woman arrived at the Sahar international airport here from Dubai on 20 April, entered the ladies' cloakroom, delivered the child and walked off, leaving behind the newborn—*Indian Express* (B. Meenakshi Sundaram, Trichy)

WITHOUT COMMENT

In a mine of diamonds, how can one find glass?—Kamlapati Tripathi, referring to the illustrious Nehru family, in *The Times of India*

If there are differences between Dada (Vasantrao Patil) and the high command, I'll stand by the high command—Shalinitai Patil in *The Sunday Observer*

Who hasn't made a house? Are all 22 chief ministers of states houseless? Mine is a kitchen compared to theirs—Nar Bahadur Bhandari, Sikkim CM, in *Herald Review*

I am not willing to cooperate with a Prime Minister who brands opposition parties as anti-national and then seeks their help when in need—Chandra Shekhar in *The Telegraph*

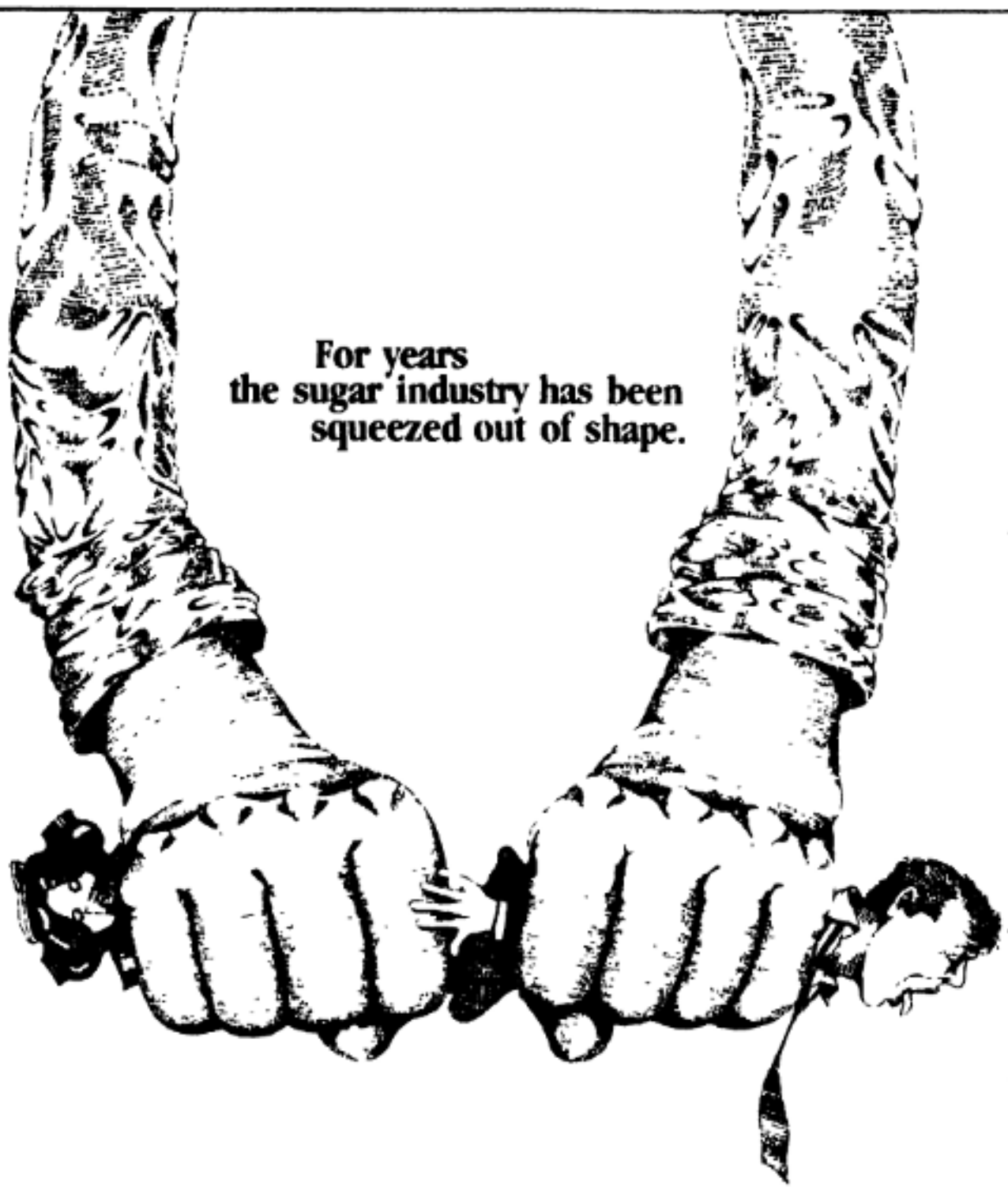


Some people are feeling that we have become too soft and meek on Punjab But the way of love does not mean weakness Those who think so must know that the tone of love can toughen and the soft hand can become hard—Rajiv Gandhi in *Indian Express*

I am not afraid of the Japanese. They don't have any more gray cells than we do—Helmut Kohl in *Time*

I have known (Ronald) Reagan slightly for a hundred years. If he came into a room, people would gallop like gazelles to avoid him. He is the most boring man that ever drew breath, but a superb actor. All this stuff about him being a B movie actor is bullshit—Gore Vidal, playwright and essayist, in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

I would have liked to live in the Victorian age. That age was naughty; today's age is nasty—Om Puri in *Sunday Mid-day*



For years the sugar industry has been squeezed out of shape.

Now the crunch is coming. Soon sugar could become very scarce in the open market. And even if it is available, it'll be at prices nobody will find sweet

How could this happen?
Can anything be done?

The problem lies in the open market That's where severe shortages loom And that's where prices are threatening to sky-rocket

Who's responsible?

The sugar industry is allowed to sell only 35% of its produce in the open market. This is to make up for the losses it incurs in subsidising sugar in ration shops — to the tune of over Rs 300 crores

Unfortunately, the Govt has forced the industry to release 75% of its open market quota in the first six months

The result? Not enough sugar for the future Hence the impending shortages, and hence sky-high prices

Something needs to be done Immediately

What can be done?

First increase the open market quota to 50% This will help in stabilising prices, and in reducing the expected shortages Enough sugar in the open market will also keep the speculators at bay

The Govt is already importing sugar This can make up for whatever shortages occur in ration shops

But much more needs to be done if the sugar industry is to survive

One way road to disaster.

Of the 349 sugar mills in India, 166 are in the cooperative sector, 103 in the joint stock sector, and 70 in the public sector

The outlook for all of them is bleak.

Losses in the last three years—suffered by mills in all sectors and all regions—are upwards of Rs 800 crores To finance these losses, the industry has had to borrow sizeable sums from the banks and State Govts This is having a crippling effect on its finances Consequently, payments to sugarcane growers are regularly getting delayed A cash crop has become a credit one Cane growers are suffering for no fault of theirs, and are naturally growing less and less sugarcane Production of sugar has plummeted from a peak of 8 4 million tonnes in 1982-83, to 5 9 million tonnes today India, which once exported Rs 800 crores of sugar (1975,76) has now spent Rs 200 crores (1984,85) of precious foreign exchange on imports.

This is the state of an industry which, by any international parameters, is productive and efficient! An industry which is the second largest in India.

So has the time come to do something about this?

Issued in the national interest by the Indian Sugar Mills Association

INTERFACE-1003

VARIETY

CHESS

In the absence of Karpov and Kasparov, who were otherwise engaged, Tony Miles staged a magnificent coup in winning the Interpolis tournament in Tilburg, the premier event on the chess calendar It is not only the fact of his victory but the margin, 1½ points clear of a world class field including all the Candidates except Korchnoi, which leads one to suspect that the prospect of a British world champion is no longer in the realms of fantasy

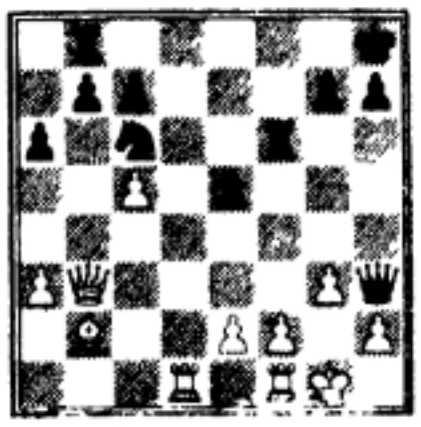
For Tony the vital breakthrough may well have been victories over his two arch tormentors, Portisch and Timman His game against the latter, a crisp cut-and-thrust affair, shows the immense potential of an unopposed queen's bishop

White A Miles Black J Timman English Opening Tilburg 1984.

1 P–QB4	P–K4	2 N–QB3	N–KB3
3 N–B3	N–B3	4 P–KN3	P–Q4
5 PxP	NxP	6 B–N2	N–N3
7 0–0	B–K2	8 P–QR3	B–K3
9 P–Q3	0–0	10 P–QN4	P–B3
11 N–K4	Q–Q2	12 B–N2	P–QR3
13 Q–B2	B–R6		

A move with far-reaching consequences which turn out to be unfavourable for Black Better therefore was the quiet 13 ..

Timman (Black)



Miles (White) to move

KR–Q1.

14 N–B5	BxN	15 BxB	QxB
16 Q–N3+	K–R1	17 PxB	N–Q2
18 P–Q4!			

The move Timman had evidently under-estimated when playing 13 B–R6 instead 16 QxP Q–K3! 19 QxB? NxP+ would have left the white queen in difficulties but now the QNP really is threatened

18 ...	QR–N1	19 PxP	N(Q2)xKP
20 NxN	PxN	21 QR–Q1	R–B3

DIAGRAM

22 P–B4!

Not only defending against the threat of R–R3 but paving the way for his own kingside attack

22	RxP		

Exploiting the pin which has opened up along the third rank

23 RxR	PxR	24 Q–B7	R–N1
25 R–KB1!			

introducing a theme which will recur If 25 PxP 26 Q–B8+ RxQ 27 R–B8 mate

25	Q–N5	26 RxP	Q–N4
27 K–N2	QxBP	28 R–K4	

Repeating the theme White threatens 29 Q–R5+

28	Q–B1	29 Q–R5	N–K2
30 Q–N5!			

Desperately Black's last chance of defence If 30 N–B4 31 R–KB4 wins the knight, else Black's only defence against simply R–R4 N–B1 (or b) 32 Q–R6

30	N–N3	31 QxN!	Resigns

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

The New Zealand veteran, Bruce Bell, praised the declarer's play on this deal against Mexico in the Olympiad Wisely, perhaps, he refrained from comment on the bidding

Dealer West Game all

	♠ A K 7 3 ♥ A K J 9 8 4 ♦ — ♣ A 10 9	
♠ Q 9 ♥ Q ♦ K Q J 10 7 3 ♣ J 8 5 3	N W E S	♠ 10 8 4 2 ♥ 7 6 5 3 ♦ A 9 6 ♣ 7 2
	♠ J 6 5 ♥ 10 2 ♦ 8 5 4 2 ♣ K Q 6 4	

With Wooles North and Wignall South, the bidding went:



South	West	North	East
—	1♦	2♦	No
3♣	No	3♦	No
3♠	No	4♦	dble
No	No	5♠	No
6♠	No	No	No

It was quite likely that South's spades would be short, North's failure to mention hearts was ridiculous.

South ruffed the diamond lead in dummy, cashed ♠ A K, then a top heart He next played ♣ K Q very important before touching the hearts This was the bidding

	♠ 7 ♥ 6 4 ♦ — ♣ A	
♠ — ♥ — ♦ Q J ♣ J 8	N W E S	♠ 10 8 ♥ — ♦ A 6 ♣ —
	♠ J ♥ — ♦ 8 ♣ 6 4	

North's winning heart, and East could make only one trick Excellent play; at the other table North went three down in the same contract

TERENCE REESE

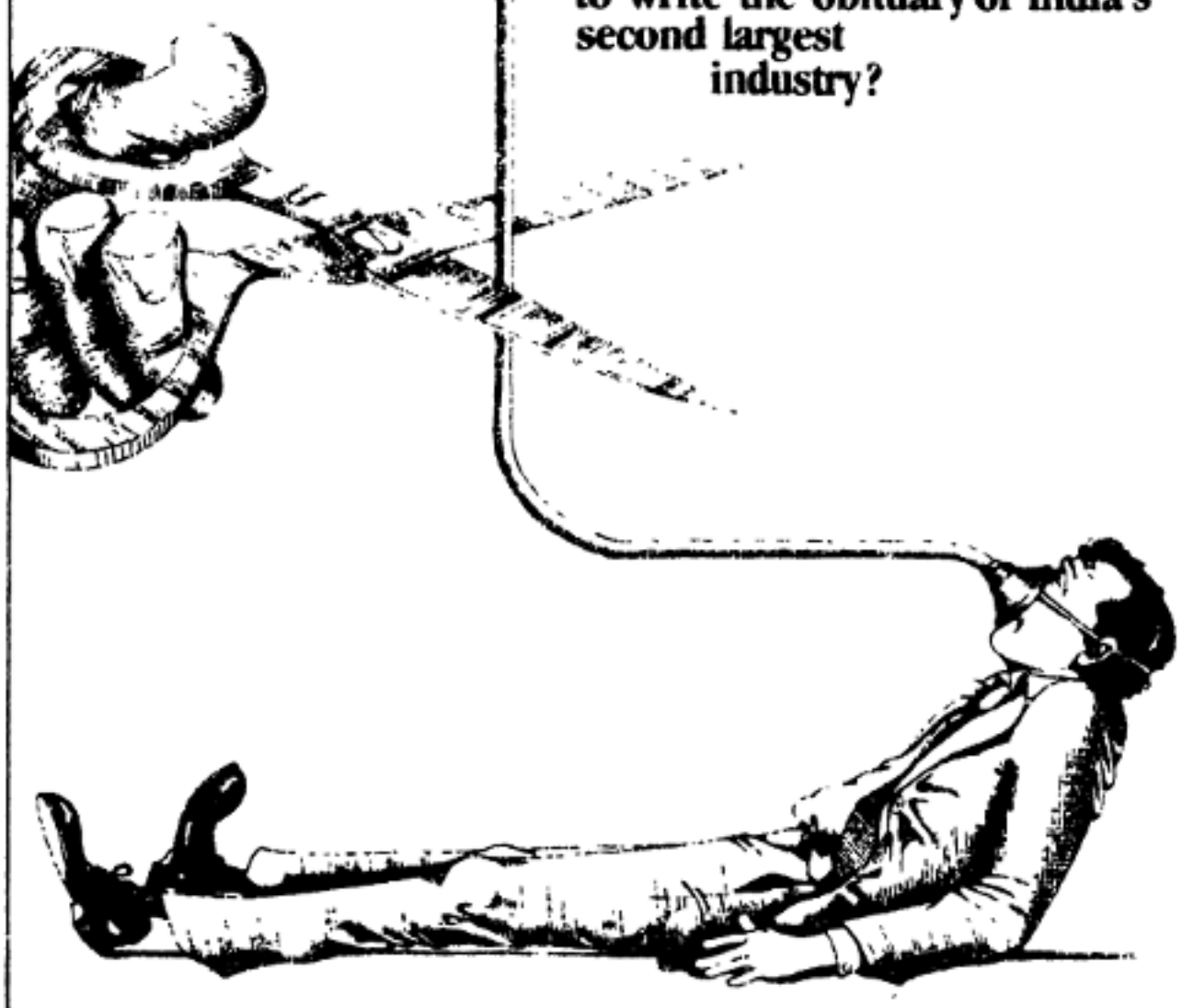
QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What is the science of poisons called?
2. In meteorology, what is the lowest and thickest layer of the earth's atmosphere called?
3. Charles Fourier, Robert Owen and Etienne Cabet belong to which school of political thought?
4. What is catalytic war?
5. What do the following cricketers have in common: Jack Simmons, Larry Gomes, Sidath Wettimuny, Martin Crowe and Geoff Humpage?
6. Name the laboratory instrument which was first constructed by Max Knoll and Ernst Ruska in the 1930s.
7. What are abyssal fauna?
8. The Damodar Valley project in Bihar and West Bengal have been modelled on the lines of which American river valley scheme?
9. Anuradhapura was the ancient capital of which Asian country?
10. How is the actor Arthur Jefferson better known as?
11. In Indian history, the Sikh leader Banda Bahadur was captured and executed during the reign of which Mughal emperor?

ANSWERS

1 Toxicology.
2. The troposphere.
3. Utopian Socialism.
4. A conflict between two states brought about by the deliberate actions of the third.
5. They have been nominated by *Wisden* as the five cricketers of the year 1984
6. The electron microscope.
7. Animals which live in oceans at depths greater than 1 km
8. The Tennessee Valley Authority
9. Sri Lanka
10. Stan Laurel.
11. Farukhsiyar; in 1715



Has the time come to write the obituary of India's second largest industry?

The facts suggest so
Sugar industry losses in the last three years are upwards of Rs 800 crores
Production has plummeted from 8 4 million tonnes in 1982-83 to 5 9 million today India, which once exported Rs 800 crores of sugar (1975,76), has now spent Rs 200 crores (1984,85) on imports

Worse still, to finance these losses, the industry has had to borrow sizeable sums from the banks and State Govts This is having a crippling effect on its finances Consequently, payments to sugarcane growers are regularly getting delayed A cash crop has become a credit one They are suffering for no fault of theirs, and, are naturally growing less and less sugarcane And that's what is really scary No sugarcane no sugar

This is the state of an industry which by any international parameters, is productive and efficient!

So has the time come to write its obituary? **The new economic order.**

There is a mood of optimism in India

The new Govt. has shown every intention of liberalising controls, removing irrational and counterproductive policies

That is precisely what needs to be done in the case of the sugar industry

The solutions.

First, and immediately, the industry should be allowed to sell 50% of its produce in the open market

This will take care of the impending shortages in the open market, and the consequent sky high prices This will also keep the speculators at bay The Govt is already importing sugar This can easily make up for whatever shortages occur in ration shops

But for the industry to survive, much more needs to be done

Make sure sugarcane growers find it profitable to cultivate sugarcane APC (Agricultural Prices Commission) recommendations in respect of cane prices should be implemented without delay A national policy needs to be formulated

No industry can survive in the face of regular and staggering losses Make sure it becomes profitable to produce sugar Rationalise prices

This will help the sugar industry in getting out of its present nosedive Over a period of time, this will also help in building up buffer stocks

Then, and only then, will the Indian sugar industry become stable And only then can India go back to earning precious foreign exchange by exporting sugar

To know more about what can be done to save the cane growers and the sugar industry mail this coupon to
Indian Sugar Mills Association 49 Nehru Place, New Delhi 110019

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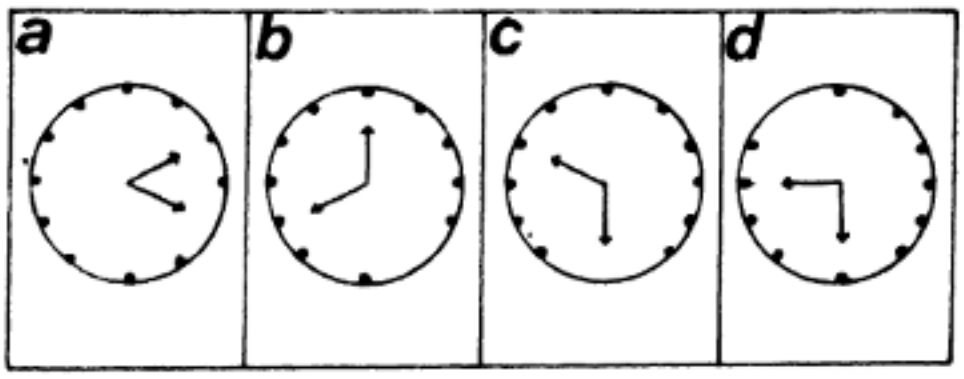
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Issued in the interest of the Indian Sugar Mills Association.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Witsharpener



These four clocks have only dots where the numbers should be. What is more, the hour and minute hands are identical, so it is rather difficult to tell the time. To make matters worse the clock faces have been rotated by various amounts, and, as you can see, each face has lost one dot. But we know that:

a) Two clocks are missing the dot for 12
b) One clock is exactly one hour slower than two of the others
c) None has lost the dot for 2
d) Two faces show the same time.

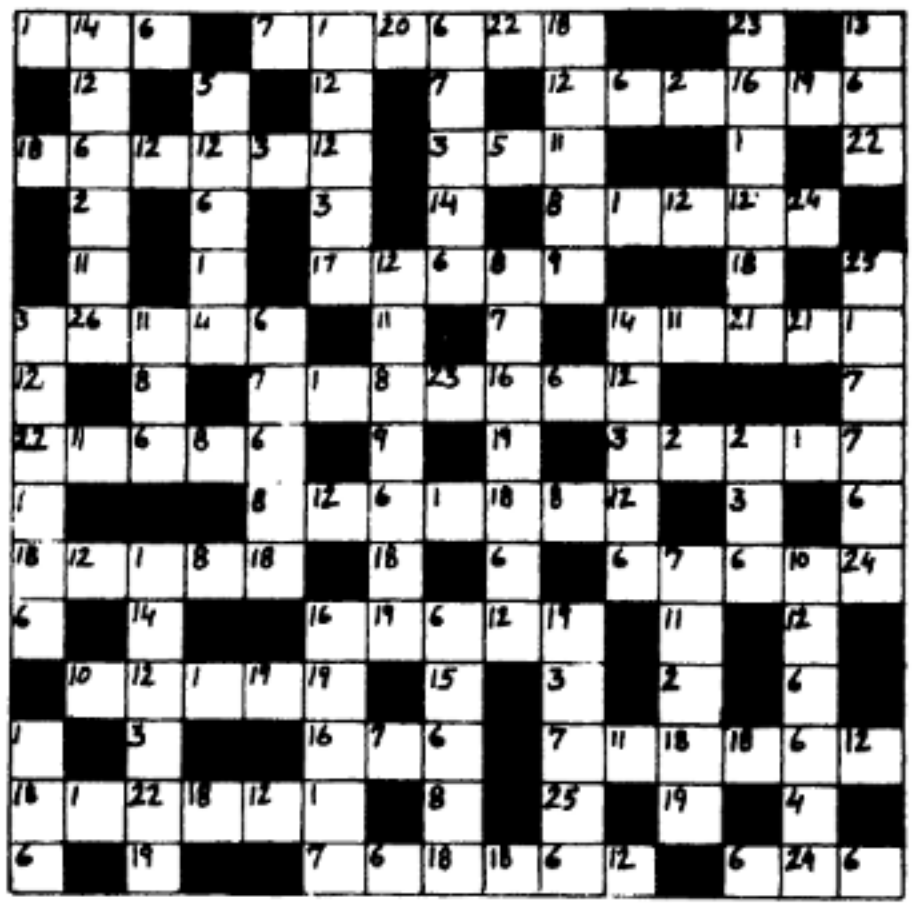
Can you work out the times that the clocks show?

Shape Sleuth



Where in the large picture are the five fragments reproduced above? Remember that the fragments may be turned around in various ways.

Cryptocross



	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
							C				R	

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
										Y		

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always represents the same letter. Three letters have been given to help you make a start. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Quick Think

	A	B	C
	B	C	A
	C	A	B
A	B	B	C

In this addition sum the letters A, B and C all stand for non-zero digits. Can you find the numerical answer to the sum?

Mindbender



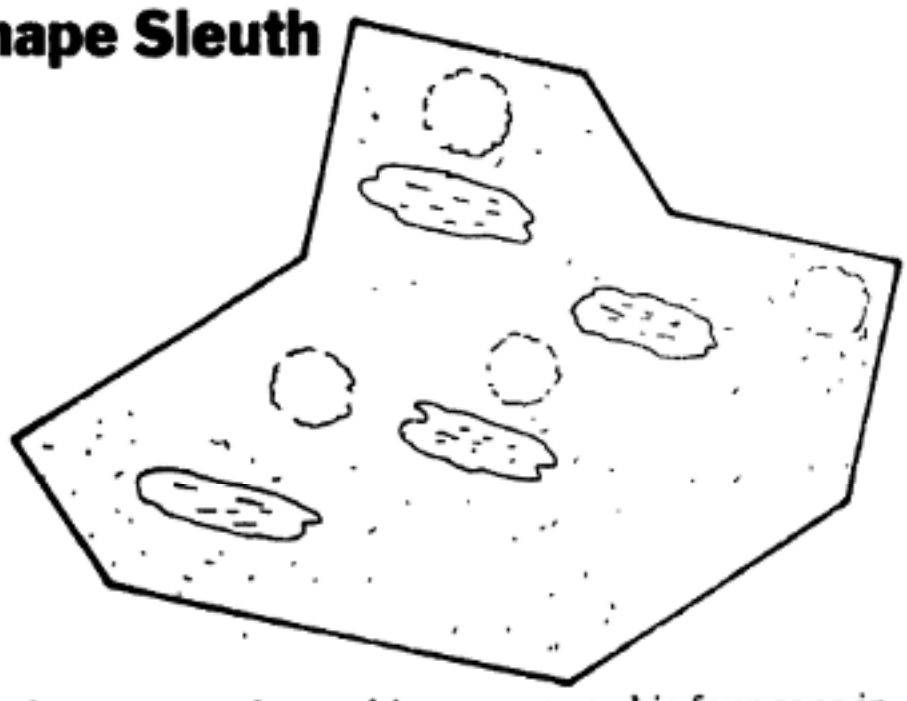
These square are made with matches Can you rearrange five unbroken squares, and distribute the four matches of the sixth square to make nine squares of the same size?

What's in a Word?

PORT		to frolic
RUDE		unfinished
NOSE		loop
PINT		letters in a book
BATH		set
ASP		clasp

Add a letter to each of the words so that they fit the clue. If you get the right words, the six added letters will spell another word which you want to avoid happening to your clothes.

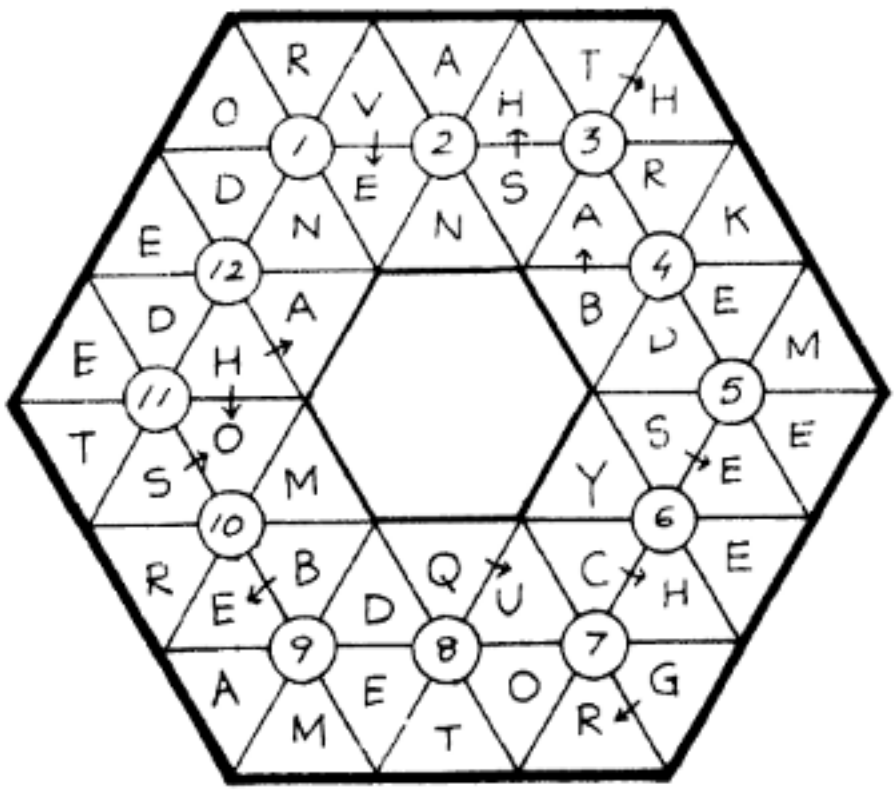
Shape Sleuth



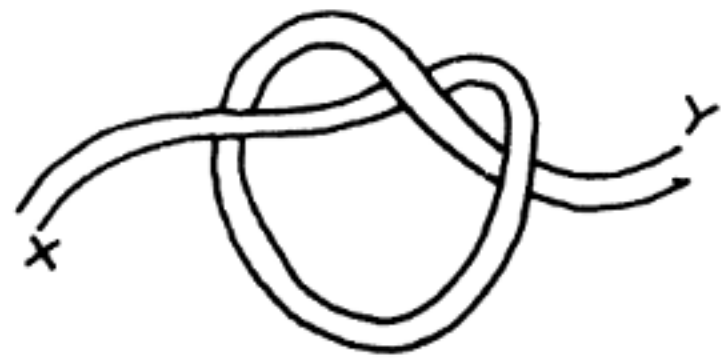
Father wants to leave this property to his four sons in such a manner that each son gets a mango tree and a pond and the shape and size of all the four plots is identical.

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Word Play:



Shape Sleuth:

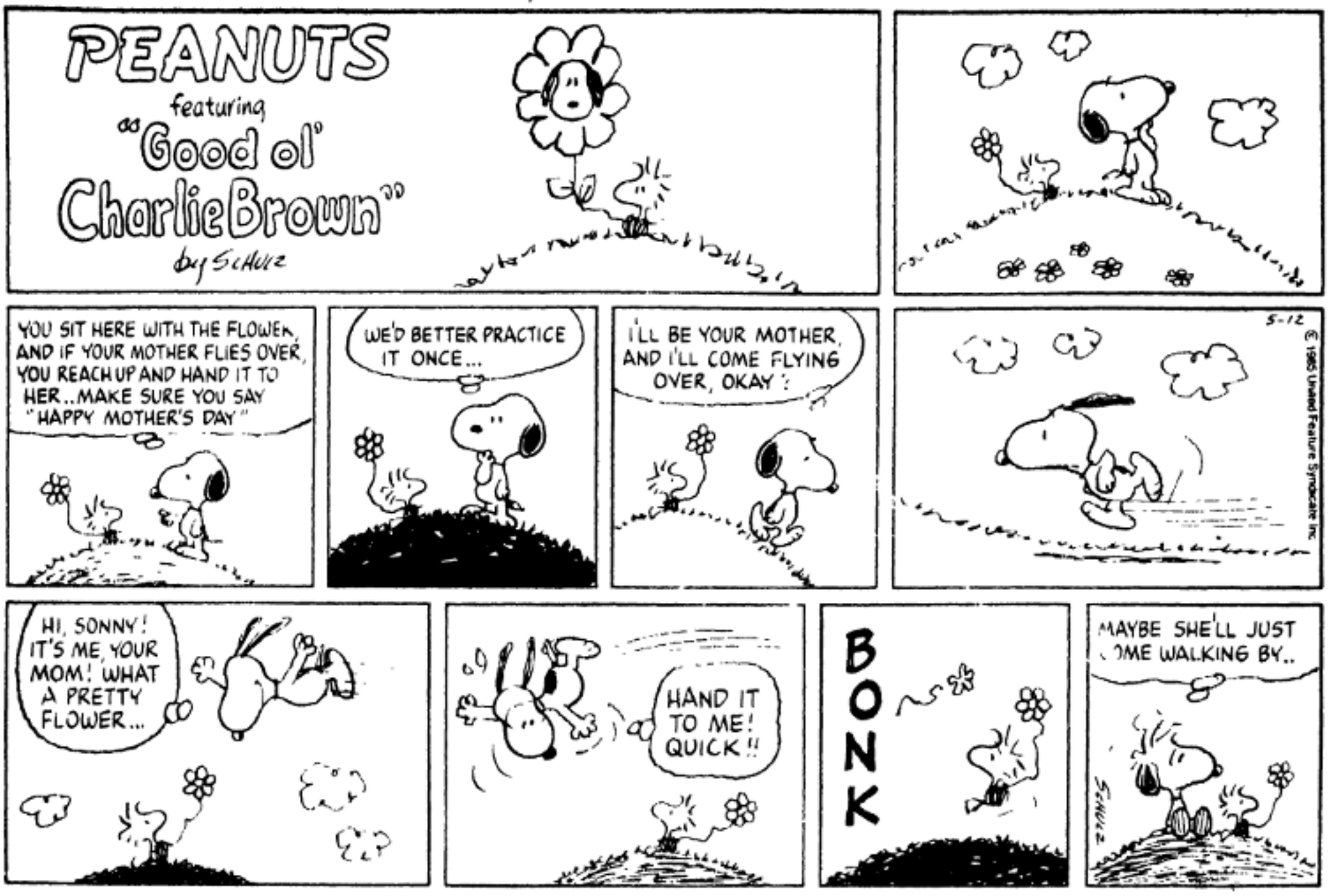


Join the Dots:



Quick Think (Page 75): Minus 40

Witsharpener: Miss Sarala Singh, 20, First; Miss Maya Lal, 19, Second; Miss Brinda Puri, 18, Third; Miss Rashmee Das, 21, Fourth.
Figure it Out: Squares: 14; Rectangles: Squares are also rectangles! So, the total number of rectangles is 14 + at least 18 rectangles of different sizes.
Blankagrams: Praised, Despair, Diapers, Aped Sir.
Quick Think: The answer, is, obviously, no.



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The resurrection of *Sunjay Dutt* is now the talk of the industry. *Prakash Mehra* set the trend by signing him up to play the leading role in *Imandaar* and a number of other filmmakers followed suit. Sunjay has already signed eight films and is awaiting the release of *Jaan ki Baazi*, which will determine his future as an actor.

The success of *Pyar Jhukta Nahin* (which is as big a hit as *Sholay* and *Jai Santoshi Maa*) has given *Padmini Kolhapure* a fresh lease of life and made her take her career very seriously. Prior to the release of this film, she was down in the dumps while she watched other actresses climb up the ladder of success. Now, things are brightening up for her. Says Padmini, "I am lucky this film came along. I don't know what I would have done or where I would be."

Akbar Khan is a very disturbed man these days. His first film, *Haadsaa*, was a fiasco after years of hard work. Akbar is getting more offers but the only film which he is now going ahead with is his brother *Sanjay Khan's Kaala Dhanda Goray Log*. His brothers, *Feroz* and Sanjay, are worried about his future. Even his marriage with *Ranjeeta*, the actress whose career is facing a crisis, is also on the rocks. "I have had enough for at least five years. I am now going to concentrate on my career as an actor," says Akbar.



Padmini Kolhapure: a new lease of life

Jayanta Das



Silk Smitha: Hollywood's loss

After achieving a good deal of success in the Kannada film industry, *Pavithra* is now flooded with offers from Telugu filmmakers. A confident Pavithra replies, "Now I am all set to prove that I have both glamour and talent." Only the future will tell whether she means what she says.

Money appears to be the sole cause of a misunderstanding between the singer *S.P. Balasubramaniam* and *Krishna*. Balasubramaniam no longer sings for Krishna. Now other male playback singers are vying with each other to fill up the slot.

Silk Smitha, the south's reigning sex symbol, has turned down an offer from a Hollywood film maker to act in his film. The reason, according to her, was lack of time. She had to give six months of her time, which was a very tall order. So she told the filmmaker that if he wanted her so badly he could shoot her scenes in India!

Has *Dasari Narayan Rao's* position weakened considerably in Hindi cinema? Four of his films, *Prem Tapasya*, *Aaj ka MLA* (based on his own Telugu hit, *MLA Vedukondalu*), *Haisiyat* and *Sarfarosh* have flopped in a row. Now he has two other films to prove himself.

As character artistes, *Sujatha, Sarada and K.R. Vijaya*—the trinity—are fine actresses. Competition among the three is always intense. But recently, Sujatha scored an edge over her rivals when she won the Savithri best actress award.



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DELHI DIARY

Ministerial Jealousies



Arif Mohammad Khan



Mohsina Kidwai

Cabinet minister Mohsina Kidwai and union minister of state, Arif Mohammad Khan, seem to be drifting apart Someone has gone and told the senior minister that as both she and Khan are Muslims from UP, sooner or later Khan will try to usurp her position in state politics The jealousy dates back to the Lok Sabha elections. Mrs Kidwai, who represents Meerut, had her eyes on Bahraich, the constituency to which Khan shifted after representing Kanpur for five years Behraich is next door to Mrs Kidwai's home district. Barabanki In the March Assembly polls, while six out of the eight Bahraich seats were won by the Congress(I), in Barabanki, the party lost in five of the eight seats Three party candidates in Barabanki have complained to the AICC alleging that Mrs Kidwai did not help them. This has further enraged her Suspicions between Mrs Kidwai and Khan have grown since then and a spate of complaints and counter complaints have followed

No Successor to Alexander?

Will Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi abolish the post of principal secretary to PM? Since the resignation of Dr P C Alexander, following the involvement of his office staff in the spy scandal, the post has been lying vacant. Arun Singh the seniormost parliamentary secretary, is in charge of everything in the PM's office: he combines in himself the roles formerly taken up by Dr Alexander and special assistant R.K Dhawan in the Indira Gandhi days. The other two parliamentary secretaries, Oscar Fernandes and Ahmed Patel, are in fact aides of Arun Singh While Fernandes is assigned some government work, Patel mainly deals with party matters. The most important bureaucrat in the new setup is G K Arora, an additional secretary A former aide of Gulzarilal Nanda and D P Dhar (in their heyday in New Delhi), Arora is trusted with matters related to the cabinet secretariat. Montek Singh Ahluwalia is in charge of economic matters V S Tripathi, who quit the IAS to serve Mrs Gandhi's team, is entrusted with the home ministry. The new special assistant, Venkatraman, has gone on long leave. The aide trusted most by the Prime Minister apart from Arun Singh is V. George, his private secretary He has been in Rajiv Gandhi's staff from the very first day he started taking interest in politics Among the AICC staff, political adviser Makhan Lal Fotedar is the most trusted Rajiv Gandhi seems to prefer dealing with the bureaucracy directly through the cabinet secretary. With the principal secretary to the PM enjoying equal rank as the cabinet secretary, there used to be a lot of confusion in the past Now the supremacy of the political bureaucracy (the parliamentary secretaries), coupled with due weightage to the cabinet secretary, seems to be the rule

Dearer Friendship

The Russian Rouble has become dearer No, the international value of the Soviet currency has not shot up suddenly But in the bilateral trade between India and the USSR, the Rupee has been devalued. On 15 March the government fixed the exchange rate at Rs 11 3442 per Rouble as against the prevalent rate of Rs 10 9934 The Rouble, however, was not so strong in the international market at that time: Whereas in January 1984 one US Dollar was quoted at 0 75 Roubles, in January 1985 the exchange rate was 0.87. When the Rouble had depreciated in the international market, how could it have appreciated against the Indian Rupee? The fixing of the exchange rate between the Indian and Russian currencies has been a controversial subject since long During the Janata regime a formula was evolved linking the exchange rate to the value of the Rupee in terms of a specific basket of currencies Already, due to the Rupee trade arrangement, the USSR enjoys considerable leverage in the Indian market. With "friendship" making the Rouble dearer, the leverage has been enhanced.

Changing Colours?

The 66th birthday of Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna (the many-party politician of the opposition) was celebrated on the "green lawns of the Constitution Club" on 5 April. A 33-member committee was constituted for the 66th birthday celebrations Dr Sarup Singh, Lok Dal leader and former Delhi University vice-chancellor headed the committee which had many eminent Lok Dal personalities. The Lok Dal chief, Charan Singh, addressed the gathering. The Chaudhary concentrated on attacking Jawaharlal Nehru, while feting known Nehruite, H N Bahuguna with the Lok Dal's green flag.

Housing Problems

First-term MPs usually are not given bungalows in the capital (though there were exceptions in the past when Rajiv Gandhi, Arun Nehru, Jagdish Tytler, Kamal Nath, Rajesh Pilot and a host of others got bungalows). This time, the rule seems to be followed judiciously. As a result, a modest flat in South Avenue was offered to the MP from Allahabad, Amitabh Bachchan. The filmstar-politician has responded by moving into a private posh bungalow in Vasant Vihar. With this, the Bachchans have three private houses in Delhi now.

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The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims by Rafiq Zakaria

SUNDAY



A scene from *Saagar*, the first big budget film where video is being released before the regular movie

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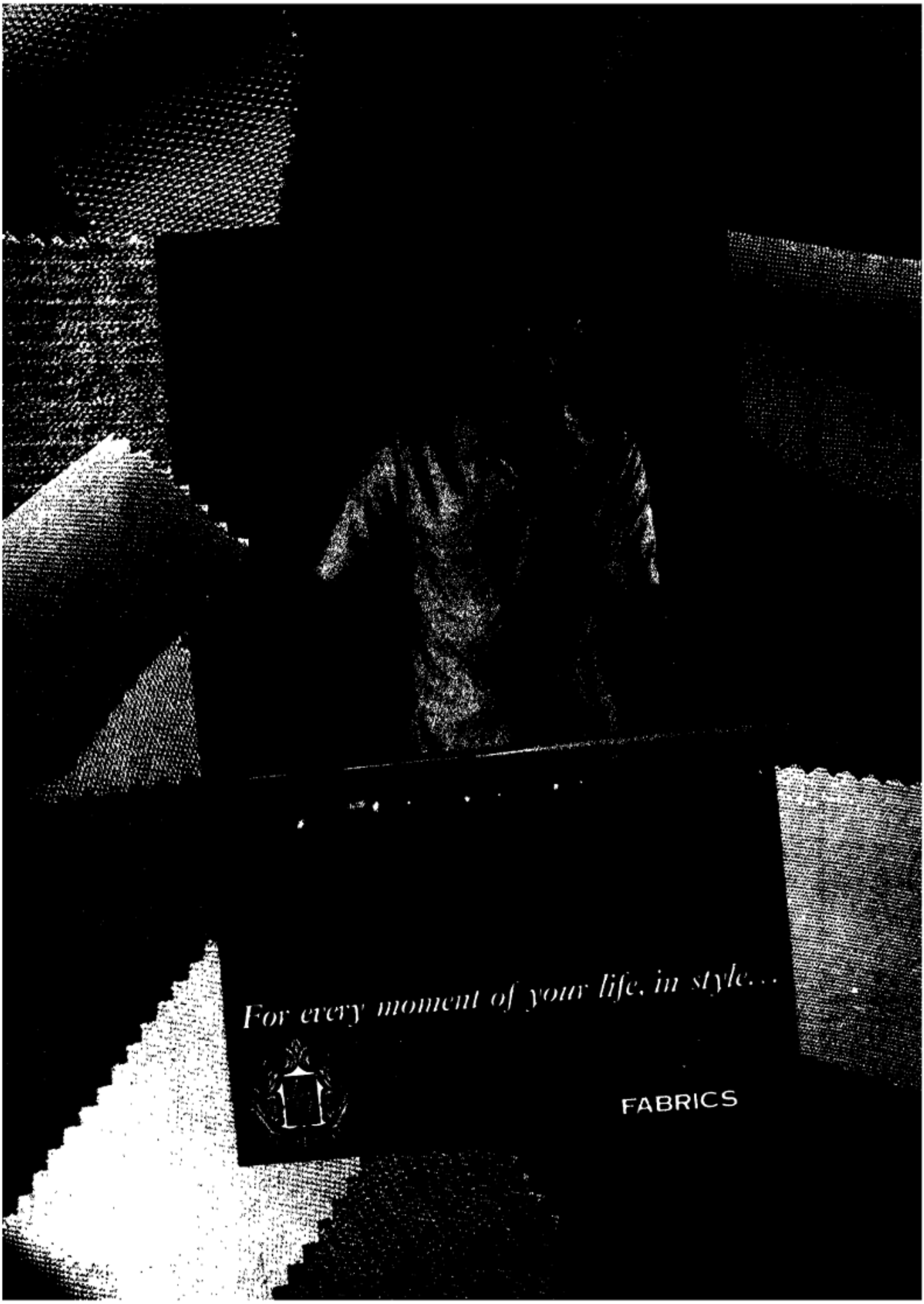
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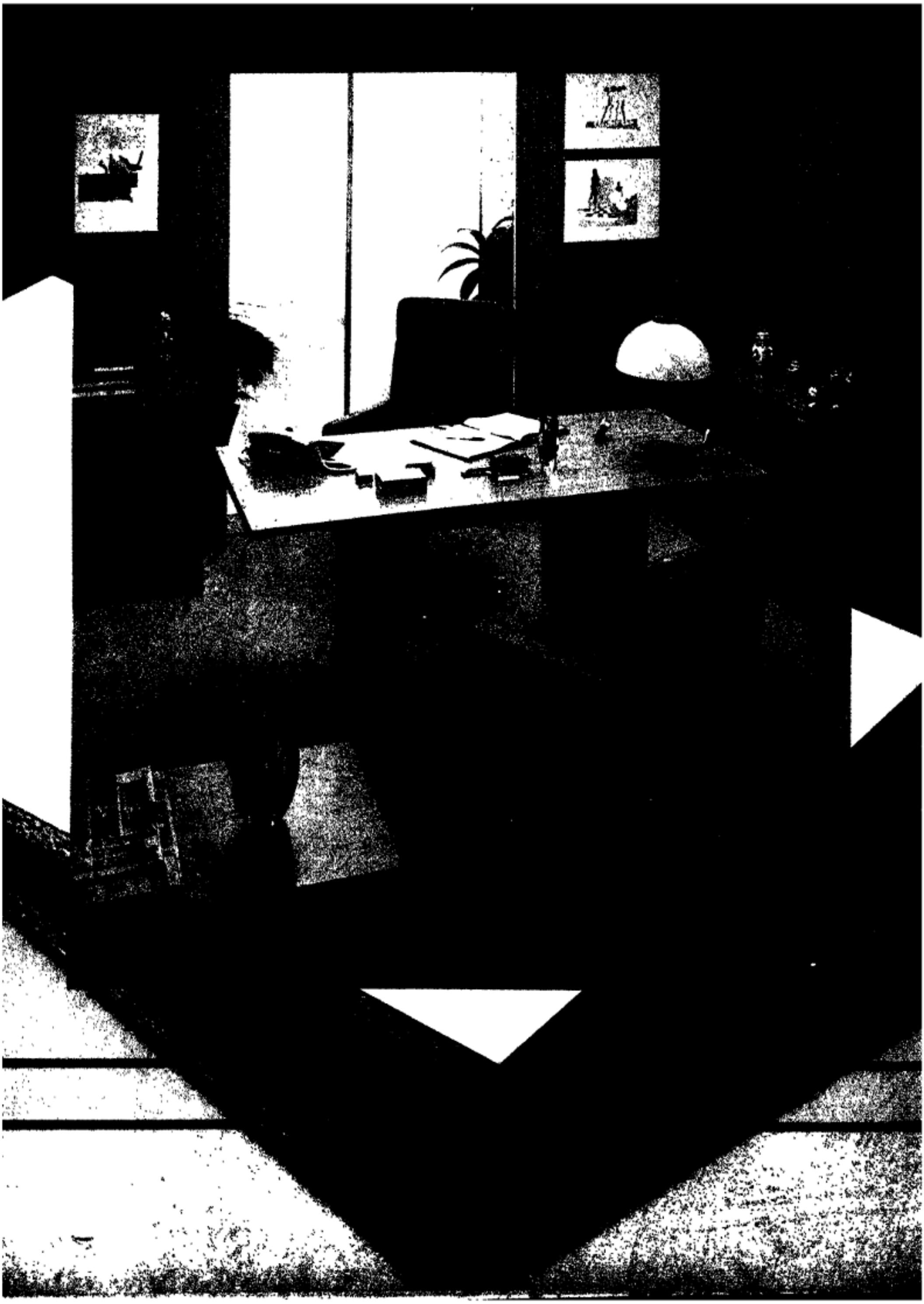
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Is Video Killing Cinema?

With television bringing the cinema screen into the drawing room and with video piracy on the increase, more and more people are staying away from the theatre halls. How will the multi-crore film industry face the threat from the video? Is the selling of the video rights of *Saagar* even before the release of the film any indication of the future course of things? Lekha Dhar finds out Plus an interview with Ramesh Sippy.

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Punjab: One Year After

What do Sikhs feel today, one year after Operation Bluestar? Sanjeev Gaur met people from different walks of life to assess the mood of the people of Punjab. Plus an interview with Baba Joginder Singh.



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SUNDAY SPECIAL 34

The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims

The attitude of the Koran towards the followers of other faiths is of respect and not hostility as claimed by those who filed a petition in the Calcutta High Court seeking to ban the holy book, writes Rafiq Zakaria.

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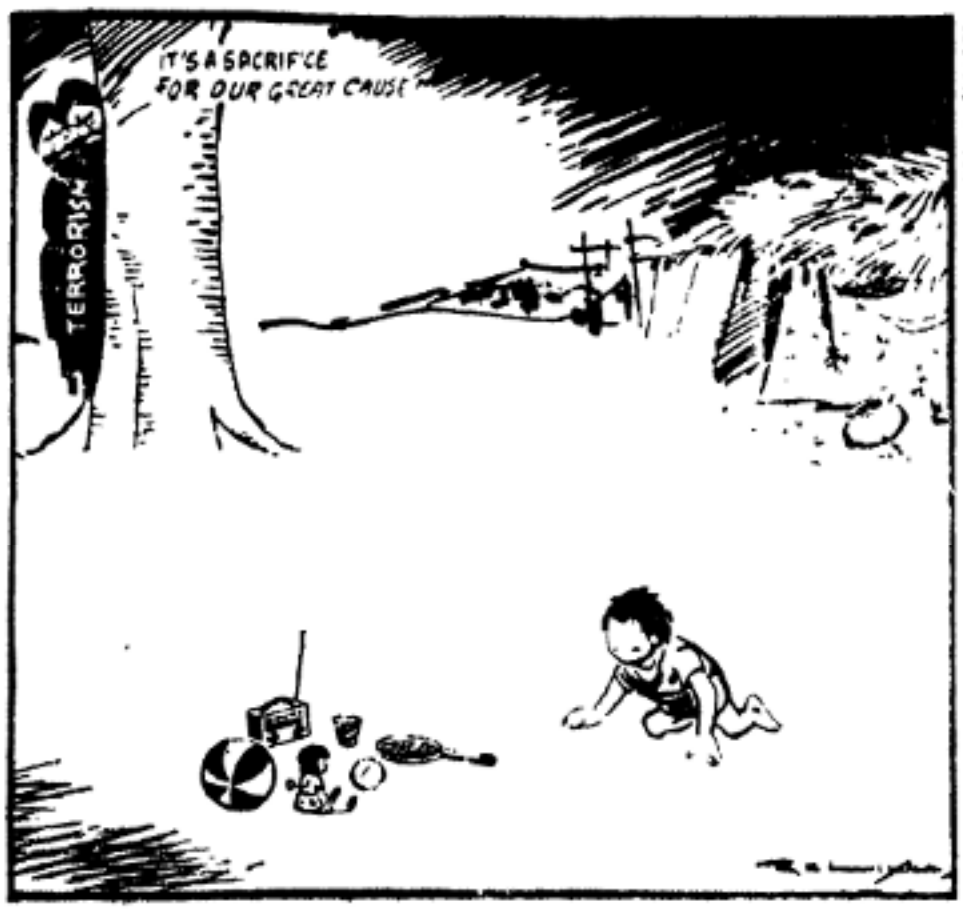
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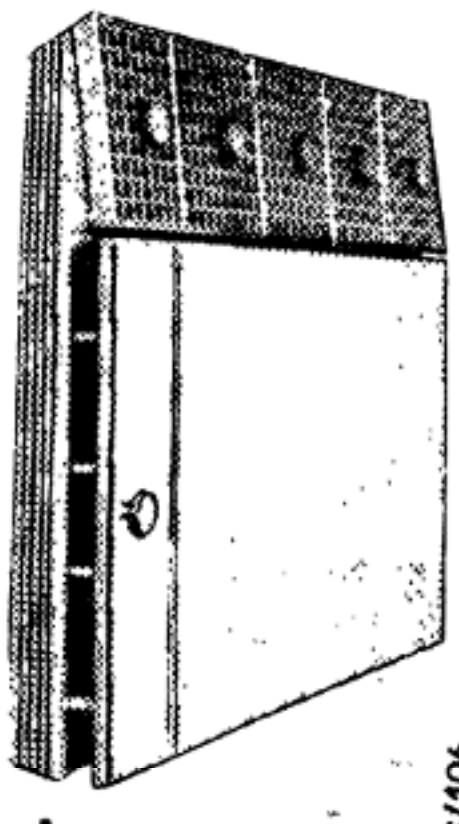
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DATELINE / M.J. Akbar

Jamshedpur: Perhaps only a Parsi could have done it. It needs a subliminal relationship with fire to create steel. Air, water, earth, fire: all the elements play their part in the magic of the chemical interaction, but it is in the fire that the base ore is chastened, cleaned, strengthened and moulded into the shapes that can serve society.

It is not easy to come to psychological or physical terms with fire. Fire was the difference between the gods and man, said the Greeks, and it was a secret which the gods were not willing to share easily. Prometheus had left his brother Titans to fight alongside Zeus in the war for ultimate power, but that did nothing to check the rage of Zeus when he learnt that Prometheus had handed the secret of fire to human beings, the secret which not only preserved mankind but gave man the confidence to challenge the gods. And so Zeus sent Pandora to take revenge on man. Pandora married Prometheus' brother and her suicidal curiosity led her to open the forbidden box, the box in which evil had been contained till then. Disease, sin, pain now seeped across the earth to trouble mankind till eternity; all he had in his favour was a thin layer at the bottom of Pandora's box, hope. And Prometheus was chained to a rock in the Caucasus, where a huge, cavernous eagle tore at his liver each day—and the pain would not end with death since the liver was renewed each day so that the insatiable eagle might feed endlessly off human ambition. The gods put a high price on impertinence, and the most unforgiveable crime of all of course was the temptation to know a secret of divinity. Prometheus was, in the end, rescued from the vengeance of the gods by a man, a hero, Hercules. Fire had altered the world of man, as much the inner as the outer.

That fire is still at the service of man. And there are few places that offer a glimpse of its many dimensions as a steel plant. That dry, white furnace, with its terrifying empty heat, bursting into an awesome confusion as oxygen is pumped into it. Or the unbelievable sight of liquid iron pouring out of the furnace in a stream of fire, elements in the middle of change, life caught in the act of transformation. Or a blazing, squat, geometrical ingot, six sides and three dimensions, moving fast over whirling rollers whose speed disguises their strength till the ingot gets caught in the heavy trap of merciless hammers coming from either side and hitting the ingot with a power that translates into an echoing roar. Quickly, even as the fascinated eye stares bewitched, that squat ingot has become a long, flat beam of steel.

That beam, produced with sophistication and verve, is the end result of a vision. When the nation's young industrialists were thinking of cotton and textiles, one man had the daring to think of a huge fire in which a metal would be forged which could create the framework for a modern nation state. Jamshedji Tata was not just creating wealth; he was contributing his abilities to something far more important—progress. There is a difference and a distinction between the two which industrialists do not necessarily recognise. Jamshedji Tata saw the future and prepared his country for it; he was a man born in the nineteenth century who built the twentieth. The twentyfirst century is only fifteen years away. Are the heirs of J.R.D. Tata at all ready for it? Is there a dream in someone's mind today which will shape and improve the lives of our children and grandchildren in 2085?



When the nation's young industrialists were thinking of cotton and textiles, one man had the daring to think of a huge fire in which a metal would be forged which could create the framework for a modern nation state. Jamshedji Tata was not just creating wealth; he was contributing his abilities to something far more important—progress... Jamshedji Tata saw the future and prepared his country for it; he was a man born in the nineteenth century who built the twentieth.

I never believed I would actually ever see it. But there it was. On the morning of Wednesday 29 May two passengers were on the wrong flight. The Vayudoot aircraft which hops from Calcutta to Jamshedpur is very much a club class plane. The passengers know one another, the atmosphere is thick with "in" jokes as the younger people check out their bits of information while the elders exchange quiet acknowledgements before going back to serious-looking files full of plans and accounts. The bonhomie is understandable. Virtually every passenger is a Tata executive. Jeans, T-shirts, public school English, management school confidence—or perhaps just Tata confidence. Perhaps it was this culture gap which alerted the couple, a very middle class Bengali pair going in fact to Siliguri. Just a little before the flight to Jamshedpur was about to take off, when the doors had come down, and that mood of nervous expectation had brought silence into the aircraft, suddenly the couple felt that something was wrong. They checked. And rushed out. The flight to Siliguri, sitting alongside, luckily had not left yet. But the mystery was not that our unsuspecting couple had boarded the wrong plane but that the mistake had gone undetected from the time they checked in.

Well, small things like this apart, it was a good flight attended by courteous men. They don't have air hostesses on Vayudoot, it is still an airline without too many complications. There is the small family air about Vayudoot which will disappear sooner or later. The friendliness will be replaced by efficiency. And the small errors probably give way to big ones.

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Komagata What?

A youngster preparing for his general knowledge paper asked me to test his information. He had crammed names of capitals, heads of states and what acronyms like MCC, UNO, UNICEF etc. stood for. I tried him out on items of recent history. "What and when was the *Komagata Maru?*" I asked.

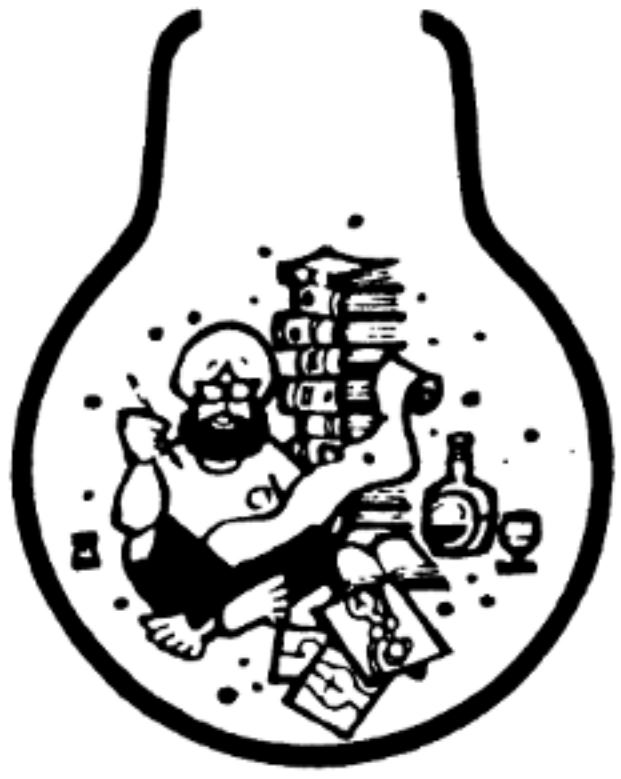
"*Komagata* what?" he asked very puzzled, "never heard of it. It's not in my G.K. cram book."

That, perhaps, would be the reaction of most people of the younger generation. It would surprise them to know that it was an important milestone in our freedom movement and a play entitled *The Komagata Maru Incident* is currently doing the rounds of major cities of England. It is written by Sharon Pollock and produced by the Jericho Theatrical Productions. Although the theme is almost entirely Indian, the director and most of the cast are English, Canadian or Caribbean. The only two Indians amongst the actors are Rashid Karapiet, once an announcer in A.I. Radio and Jamila Massey, wife of poet Reginald Massey. They picked on this incident that took place 70 years ago because it was an early example of racist prejudice and has bearing on the attitude of the Caucasian races towards the coloured to this day.

The scene is laid in Vancouver (Canada) The time is the summer of 1914. A few thousand Indian emigrants 'mainly retired Sikh soldiers' have found employment in lumber mills. Even the presence of this small group in a vast, unpopulated country has created hatred in the minds of Canadians of European descent. A popular song is entitled "*White Canada Forever*"

We welcome as brothers all white men still,
But the shifty yellow race,
Whose word is vain, who oppress the weak
Must find another place.
To Oriental grasp and greed
We'll surrender, no never.
Our watchword be "God Save the King"
White Canada forever.

Exactly 71 years ago this May, a Japanese ship, the *Komagata Maru* chartered by one Gurdit Singh of Sarhali arrived in Vancouver with 376 Indians intending to settle in Canada. The Prime Minister of British Colombia, Sir Richard MacBride, refused to let them come ashore. "To



admit Orientals in such large numbers would mean in the end the extinction of the white people and we have always in mind the necessity of keeping this a white man's country," he said.

For two months the ship stayed in Vancouver harbour till it was forced out by Canadian gunboats. When the ship arrived at Budge Budge (Calcutta), Indian police tried to force its passengers into railway trains. A fracas ensued: the police opened fire killing 18 and wounding another 25.

Some years ago a Hindi film made on this episode proved to be a flop. Now the same incident has been turned out into a successful play. Some enterprising organisation should get it over to India.

Loving India

"Delhi lives, breathes, eats and sleeps politics; politics hits every facet of life," writes Louise Nicholson, *The Times* (London) travel columnist, in her recently published guide book entitled *India in Luxury*. She goes on to make comparisons between our metropolitan cities: "The difference between Delhi and Bombay is India's version of that between Washington and New York. Indeed one Delhi gentleman looked down his knowledgeable nose, dismissing Bombay as a cheap imitation Manhattan. As the saying goes: Delhi is structured red tape, Bombay is money—to which Calcuttans add, optimistically, Calcutta is living."

Not all Indians will agree with this blanket judgement. Nor with Mrs Nicholson's view that "social rank in Delhi is measured solely by political power. A new-boy politician is several rungs above an eminent lawyer, and certainly above any outdated nonsense like maharajas. Indeed, Delhi is the only city where the former princes are most definitely former-...Indian filmstars do not fare much better here, a unique experience for them; in a magazine article on the dining haunts of the Delhi celebrities, four were politicians and six were writers, painters or performing artistes—but not a single filmstar."

This should convince the reader that *India in Luxury* is no run-of-the-mill tourist's guide book. It has all a visitor who has a week or so to spend in India needs to know about its history, climate, monuments, hotels, eating places, air and rail travel as well as the hazards that may be encountered in the way of professional pests like beggars, pimps, cab-drivers and guides who earn commissions from dealers in antiques and handicrafts. And a lot more

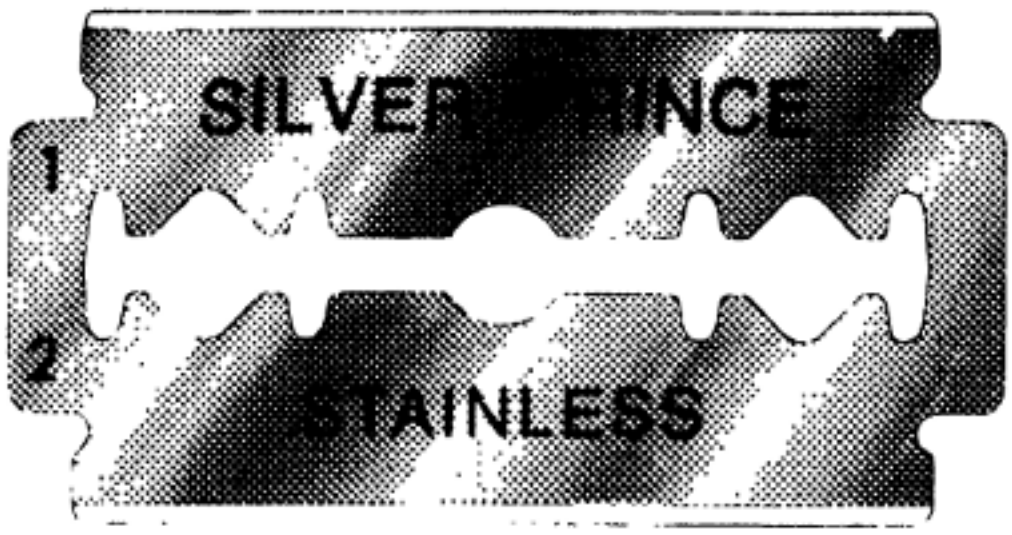
Louise was introduced to India by her husband who brought her here for their honeymoon. The union was apparently satisfactorily consummated: "He gave me a month in paradise," wrote a very fulfilled bride. She came again and again, travelled extensively and decided that India provides more luxurious experiences at less cost than any other country in the world. Its wines may be sour, its whiskey undrinkable, its girls unwilling, its nightlife only slumbering and snoring, its telephones always out of order, but it more than compensates for these shortcomings by its kaleidoscopically colourful and hospitable people.

Not Cruelty

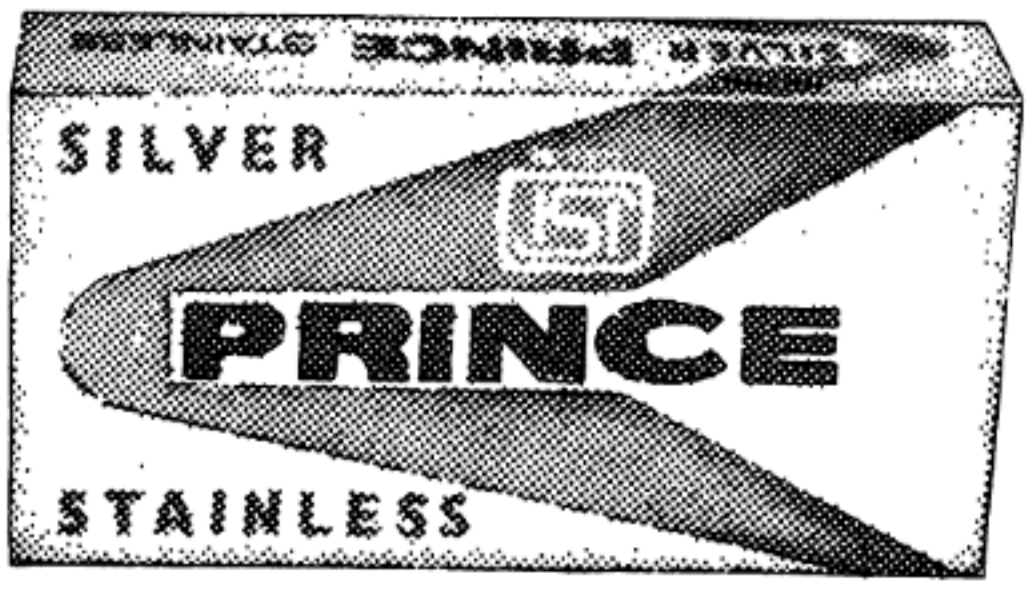
An inspector of schools went to a government-aided school and put the following question to students of sixth class: "You have read the *Ramayana*. Tell me who broke the Shiva's *dhanush?* Only one boy raised his hand: "Sir, I do not know who broke it but it was not me."

The inspector turned to the teacher and reprimanded him for not having done his job. The teacher replied: "Sir, the boy is very naughty. I am sure it was he who broke it, but will not admit it."

The inspector went to the headmaster and narrated the whole story. After hearing him the headmaster said: "Why make a fuss about such a petty thing. Whatever is broken is broken for ever. While paying us the grant you may deduct the price of a new *dhanush* and pay the balance." (Contributed by R. R. Bajaj)



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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



Two Nations, One Story

On a recent visit to Bangladesh, I saw for myself how much that country still has in common with Pakistan, which it tore off from in 1971: in both countries the people are struggling for a democratic structure and are being denied one. In both countries, there are entrenched military juntas and oppositions that are outliving their utility, the old leaders having exhausted themselves. In both countries, it is the students who hold out any hope for change.

General Zia-ul Haq of Pakistan and General H.M. Ershad of Bangladesh have both held referenda, but they have not given them the legitimacy they had sought within their own countries or abroad. But the elections to the national and provincial assembles in Pakistan and to the Upa-Zillas (the equivalent of the panchayats) in Bangladesh have had more credibility as it appears the military rulers of both countries had decided to remain 'neutral' after 'winning' their respective referenda. Interestingly, in both countries the opposition parties later regretted not having fought the elections.

Both Ershad and Zia can afford to loosen the reins of power only to a certain extent. If they ever try to transfer power to popular representatives, I have no doubt they will be swept aside. Zia, who is more of a politician, having been in power for eight years, is perhaps a better manipulator and more confident than Ershad. But he is evidently of the view that the armed forces have a permanent role to play in the affairs of Pakistan. Ershad, who is more of a simple, straightforward soldier, however, denies having ever envisaged military participation in his country's political system to go on indefinitely. The poet that he is, he has a rather emotional approach to the problems which confront his country, he also sees no contradiction in a democratic government assigning a permanent political role to the armed forces: "We (the army) are not a mercenary force, and we have to participate in the liberation of Bangladesh."

Both Ershad and Zia can afford to loosen the reins of power only to a certain extent. If they ever try to transfer power to popular representatives, I have no doubt they will be swept aside.

The most striking similarity between the two countries is the absence of institutions. The press, the judiciary and elected representatives function within the parameters laid down for them and have to accept the reality of military rule. But the people in both countries have not lost their voice—even though they might not be expressing their resentment against the rulers openly. While the Pakistanis have been under martial law for three decades and are less optimistic about retaining their basic freedoms, the Bangladeshis have had to put up with it for only one decade, and do not appear to have lost all hope. Economically, of course, Pakistan is much better off. Both countries produce few industrial goods and depend on remittances and aid from abroad for over 50 per cent of their foreign exchange reserves. But Pakistan, with a smaller population, receives more aid and remittances and does not have the stark poverty of Bangladesh Both countries devote more than 40 per cent of their budgets to defence. Since Islamabad is obsessed with the Indian 'threat,' its large outlay on arms and ammunition is perhaps understandable, but why must Dhaka follow its footsteps? Bangladesh has a peace and friendship treaty with India and good relations with China.

India is not popular in either country, but anti-Indian feeling is more visible in Pakistan than Bangladesh. Delhi has better ties with Dhaka than Islamabad. And though Bangladesh is no less 'Islamic' than Pakistan, the government in Dhaka claims that the Hindus are as much a part of their nation as the Muslims. Pakistan on the other hand continues to propagate the two-nation theory, calling the Hindus a separate nation. However, no Hindu is a member of the cabinet either in Pakistan or Bangladesh.

Ershad is more liberal than Zia. When I told the former that one of his ministers had remarked in an interview to me that Bangladesh could create the kind of problems for India that Sri Lanka has by persecuting Tamils, he grew furious: "The Hindus are part and parcel of our nation and there is no question of treating them differently."

Despite their similarities, there is no love lost between Pakistan and Bangladesh The Bangladeshis are still bitter about the years of repression under the rulers of the erstwhile west Pakistan. All those who died in the liberation war of 1971 have been made into national heroes. The monument built in their memory is shown on Dhaka TV every evening Pakistan, on the other hand, looks upon Bangladesh as lost territory. The creation of Bangladesh was a demonstration of the fact that religion alone cannot form the basis of a nation; it was a blow to the two-nation theory on which Pakistan was founded

Perhaps this was even willed. The Muslim League's Lahore Resolution, which prepared the ground for Pakistan, had said that "the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent *states* in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign." (italics mine). Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founder, tried to explain later that due to a typing error, 'state' had gone down as 'states.' I recall asking the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then President of Pakistan, to comment on the 'misprint' theory when I met him in Rawalpindi in March 1972. He laughed it off: "Quite a costly misprint. I must be careful about my stenographer!"

Bloody Revenge

SUNDAY correspondents deserve to be congratulated for the brilliant cover story, *The Sant's Revenge* (19—25 May). The government should take the strictest possible steps against the Sikh terrorists who are trying to undermine national unity. The photographs will continue to haunt me for a long, long time.
Bibek Sen, New Delhi

• M.J. Akbar had correctly analysed the reason behind the dastardly bomb blasts which killed and maimed many innocent people. The ghastly act by a few terrorists need to be dealt with an iron hand. As suggested by Sankarshan Thakur, an IRA connection cannot be ruled out. However, I was releaved to learn that most of the Akali leaders had condemned the incident.
Kajvir Grewal, Calcutta

• A small group of committed fanatics is disturbing communal harmony and threatening the unity of India. As rightly pointed out by M.J. Akbar, whenever a solution to the Punjab problem seems in sight, this group becomes active as was noticed in the 'transistor bomb' explosions which rocked the capital and parts of northern India It is time the centre took steps against such anti-national activities.
S. Ejaz Ahmed, Burnpur

• I was moved by the pictures of the victims of the bomb blasts. 'Blood for blood' seemed to be the guiding principle of our society. Are we head ing towards a major social unheaval?
P. Lala, Akra (West Bengal)

• The cover story was well researched and M.J. Akbar's expatiation on the background to the terrorist activities in Delhi and other places was apt. The terrorists are bent upon marring the camaraderie existing between the Hindus and the Sikhs and stopping their leaders from cooperating with the centre of find a solution to the Punjab problem. The government headed by Rajiv Gandhi agreed to grant a number of the Akali demands but the Sikhs seemed to be divided and confused. Much innocent blood has been shed and terrorism should reach its nadir very soon. Wake up Sikhs! Your unification is most needed to solve the Punjab imbroglio.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• Last November, when innocent Sikhs were butchered, the government was silent. There was bound to



be retaliation and soon bomb blasts rocked the country. But why is there so much hue and cry from the administration this time?
Ravinder Kaur Dua, Calcutta

• The bomb blasts were a natural retaliation for what happened soon after Indira Gandhi was assassinated. There will be more such occurances if the government does not stop the indiscriminate arrest and torture of innocent Sikhs.
Balbir Singh, Calcutta

• While condemning the bomb blasts by a few anti-socials, I wonder how the administration could apprehend the criminals so fast since this is the same government that had shown callous indifference when Sikhs were butchered in broad daylight in the capital last November.
Pritpal Singh, Calcutta

• The bomb attacks in the capital and some parts of northern India resulted in the killing of innocent persons who had nothing to do with the November riots and Operation Bluestar. It is now clear that foreign governments are behind the extremists in their nefarious activities. However, the most heartening thing was the unequivocal condemnation of the incident by the Sikh leaders.
Smita Narang, New Delhi

• I do not agree with M.J. Akbar that the recent bomb blasts in northern India are a manifestation of Sant Bhindranwale's revenge. But, yes, it was an outrage perpetrated by extremists in the Sikh community. The background built up by the government for negotiations with the Akalis has come to nought.
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

A Democratic Dictator

M.J. Akbar's report from Pakistan, *In the Name of Allah* (12—18 May) followed by the interview with President Zia-ul Haq (*'Halwas and Mithais Make a Lot of Us in Pakistan and India Join Hands Together'*) was enlightening. The dictator President's hypocritical remarks about democracy bordered on the ridiculous. However, Zia-ul Haq seemed to have forgotten the past and appeared to be interested in developing relations with India. Our youthful Prime Minister should make use of this opportunity and initiate fresh talks with Pakistan.
N. Ellango, Tirunelveli

• Such interviews will serve to build bridges of understanding between India and Pakistan.
Akshaya Kumar Boity, Rourkela

• Whatever explanation Zia-ul Haq gave to defend his decision to acquire sophisticated arms, history reveals that such armaments have been used against India. Zia appeared hypocritical and shrewd throughout the interview and it is our bitter experience that there is no co-relation between Zia's pious thoughts and his actions. His determination to resolve the volatile Kashmir issue has no significance since Pakistan loses no opportunity to make provocative statements regarding Kashmir in the UNO.
Tilok Upadhyay Koirala, Dibrugarh

• I was impressed by President Zia-ul Haq's remark that there is confidence among the common people (of India and Pakistan) but there is no confidence at a higher level and perhaps there is none at the top. If the people of the two countries are consulted or allowed to have contact with eachother, there would never be any war. When Kuldip Nayar visited Pakistan some years ago and talked to the people there, he found that the man in the street was not interested in a war with India. Neither does the average Indian want to attack Pakistan. If the crores of rupees spent on arms by the two countries are utilised for the welfare of the people of the respective countries, the world will be a much better place to live in.
S.S. Raju, Bombay

• I agree with M.J. Akbar that Jinnah's two-nation theory along religious lines did not do any good for the followers of Islam. Everyone knows what is going on in Pakistan in the name of religion.
Rama Bisht, Meerut

Are *Khadi* Weavers Exploited?

In *The Weavers of Despair* (21—27 April) Binoo K. John has tried to weave a story of ruthless exploitation, hunger, tears and denial of basic rights to workers of the *khadi* industry. This is far from the facts. Perhaps, *khadi* is the only industry where there is no scope for the exploitation of the artisans. The *khadi* economy is based on humanitarian consideration only. It is governed by a scientific and full-fledged costing system based on minimum overheads. The *khadi* industry is run on a no-profit-no-loss basis and even if any profit is accrued in the course of trading activities, the same is credited to the Artisans Benefit Fund and not appropriated by the institutions for any other purpose. There is a certification committee under the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) which ensures that the prescribed cost charts are scrupulously followed by the institutions and that the interests of the artisans are safeguarded and the purity of *khadi* maintained.

The earnings of spinners and weavers of *khadi* are based on their performance. There are weavers who earn up to Rs 500 a month in our centres. In one place the author states about the "meagre Rs three per eight hours working day." In another place Mr John writes that "a girl takes home Rs 5" and yet in another context the writer states that "a weaver weaves three meters for which he gets Rs six at Rs 20 for 10 meters." All these show that he has not tried to correctly assess the details. It is incorrect to say that a few girls manage to weave over a meter only a day. Perhaps the writer has been misled by the interested unionist. We can demonstrate to him and prove that his information about the speed of weavers is incorrect. The wages are revised from time to time by the KVIC throughout India whenever the situation calls for such a revision. The earnings of artisans may be low when compared to other industries since the technology employed is so devised as to suit the conditions in villages which call for minimum cost and maximum employment at a wage, be it ever so low, so as to increase the national wealth utilising the idle hours of the villagers. If employment opportunities on better wages are available elsewhere as the writer points out, who is preventing these artisans from availing themselves of these facilities?

The writer had entered our premises surreptitiously with some parties who are intent on maligning the institution and it was the local people who intervened and protested against taking photos of girls in a clandestine manner even when the institution was open to all for entry for genuine purposes. There was nothing to hide from the public as the writer tries to establish. A little bit of courtesy on the part of the writer could have saved an unpleasant situation.

It seems that the writer wanted to test the old Biblical dictum of "turning the other cheek" (which he ascribed to Gandhiji) in our premises at Chenkottukonam. We are sorry that our workers on the spot could not give a demonstration of the same as they are still far away from Christ and Gandhi. However, we are told that they gave a passive resistance to a seemingly improper act in a true Gandhian manner.

Mr John has concluded his article by stating that I had remarked that *khadi* today has become the symbol of shame. I have been quoted out of context. The shame has to be transferred from *khadi* to the society which allows half of its population to remain below the poverty line. I said that *khadi* is a symbol of shame to a society which practises the theory of survival of the fittest, as *khadi* is trying for the survival of the weakest by just helping them to keep body and soul together. *Khadi* puts annually about 100 crores of rupees (with minimum of overheads) into the pockets of about 14 lakhs of people who belong to the lowest strata of society. In case the same amount is distributed to hundreds of people, the per capita earning may be more and *khadi* can escape from this kind of criticism. But *khadi* workers have to bear the cross so long as there are human beings in this land, who are prepared to work even for lesser wages.

V. P. Appukuttan, Programme Executive, Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Trivandrum

Binoo John replies: *In the last sentence of the rejoinder Mr Appukuttan himself had put very clearly what my article was meant to expose: that* khadi *workers are being made to "bear the cross." Throughout the letter he substantiates the issues the article raised. At least twice he says about the wages of the* khadi *workers: "Be it ever so low" and "low paid artisans." And that exactly, Mr Appukuttan, is what exploitation is all about. The question is why should poor girls be made to sweat in dingy sheds for wages "ever so low" without being given even the basic rights guaranteed to labourers by law?*

Regarding wages of the khadi *workers, Mr Appukuttan says that I have given different figures in different parts of the article. The reason is that there is no fixed minimum wage. Recently there was an announcement that minimum wages of spinners would be raised to Rs ten and that of weavers to Rs 15. The announcement was an eyewash. No labourer has yet got this minimum wage benefit.*

One can understand Mr Appukuttan's impatience and ire against "interested unionists." If finally these girls have the courage to unite, Mr Appukuttan and his clan will probably have to move out from the comfort of the two-storeyed mansion in which they are now.

What is soclandestine about a press photographer taking two photographs which we published in public interest? Why did Gandhi Smarak Nidhi try to prevent the exposition of the truth by getting the police to forcibly seize the negatives? Mr Appukuttan is lying once again when he says that only "the local people intervened." Not only were officials of the unit directing the goondas *but later the secretary of Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Mr Luckose Benjamin arrived on the scene to lend support to Mr Appukuttan.*

However desperately Mr Appukuttan might have tried, he could not deny the basic points in the article: that girls have to buy cotton from their own meagre wages, that they have to make glue with the pittance they get and that they even have to make allowance for the shrinkage of khadi. *Why doesn't Mr Appukuttan take the trouble to venture out of his office and go into the huts of the girls who are struggling to eke out an existence? He would then have seen the tears as I did. If the* khadi *industry is based on "humanitarianism," why should the mothers of these girls cry? Luckose Benjamin who as secretary should have written the letter, did not dare to do so because then he would have had to answer uncomfortable questions like for instance, his trip to Kathmandu to discuss "development programmes."*

*Regarding the expression, "*khadi *has today become the symbol of shame," Mr Appukuttan says that he has been quoted out of context. But how can such a quote be out of context? What other context can there be to this quote? We stand by every word of the story.*

COVER STORY

IS VIDEO KILLING CINEMA?

Can Bombay's once record-shattering Hindi film industry withstand the onslaught of video and television as modes of mass entertainment? Will video piracy be a final nail in the coffin of Hindi cinema? The selling of the video rights of the film Saagar before its release indicates the shape of things to come, says Lekha Dhar.



The Bombay film industry is on the verge of closure. The cost of exhibition and production have shot up, while the collections are nosediving—Gulshan Rai.

The peak of Hindi cinema is over. The Hindi film industry is finished as it existed. It has got to don a new mantle. The role, the reach has to be redefined—Amit Khanna.

Very bad days are ahead for the film industry if video piracy continues. Piracy as well as television are a threat. We are not against the technology—video and TV look like the future of the film industry. Theatres will become godowns or cold storage cellars. It is written on the walls—Prakash Mehra.

Closure? Disaster? Far from it. Through the history of cinema there have always been technical upheavals, whether it has been sound, colour, television—and now video. None of them have killed it. If you look at the west, neither the cinema nor the theatre has died down. At the moment it has taken a big toll. The industry was not aware of the effect, nor the pace at which it has proliferated. It has upset everyone's applecart—Ramesh Sippy.

The fate of one of the world's most proliferous film industries, headquartered in Bombay, today hangs precariously in the balance: Will Hindi cinema, for long the premier mode of mass entertainment, survive the onslaught of video and TV? Even if it does, what will remain of its size and fertility? Answers to these queries have been attempted with varying degrees of optimism or despair. But one thing is certain: the industry is going through a period of flux, with its productivity at an all-time low. Ironically, while it is the bigger names in the industry who are expressing their fears most voluably, it is the smaller fries who will eventually prove to be the worst victims of the slump—as it happened in other countries where films entered a similar phase.

Why does an industry which has an annual investment of around Rs 2,000 crores, flounder? (Capital investment in 1981, excluding the central and state government film departments, was estimated at Rs 1,895.45 crores.) The film industry's magnates are quick to point out that Rs 300 crores from the steadily plunging net box-office collection of Rs 750 crores by way of entertain-





Kamalahasan and Dimple in a still from *Saagar*

ment tax, is the main malaise. However, it is the flourishing video industry with a Rs 1,000 crore turnover, 99 per cent of which is illegal, that is slowly choking the life out of Bombay's tinsel Hindi celluloid world, and threatening to spread its tentacles to regional cinema.

The film industry sees its most tangible threats as video and television. The boom in television serials is often compared to the phenomenon in America where TV emerged as the most powerful medium of communication; where the downslide in cinema witnessed a rush by producers to compete for TV time; and where under-quoting saw many fall by the way. While TV and video loom large in the horizon as threats, a myriad other factors have combined to slowly wear away the edifice.

Over the last 20 years a slow erosion has taken place. Regional cinema, especially south Indian cinema has become a force to contend with as statistics show. In 1947, 281 feature films were produced of which 184 were in Hindustani or Hindi. Thirty-three were in Bengali, 29 in Tamil, 11 in Gujarati, 6 in Marathi, 5 in Kannada, 6 in Telugu, 2 in Assamese and one in Sinhalese. In 1979, 714 feature films were produced of which 140 were in Tamil, 133 in Telugu, 131 in Malayalam, 59 in Kannada, 114 in Hindi, 19 in Marathi, 15 in Oriya, 15 in Punjabi, 10 in Assamese and seven in other languages.

This shows that the Hindi film industry controlled 65 per cent of the production in 1947 while south Indian films had a poor 14 per cent share. The balance swiftly shifted in 1979, with the southern languages taking over 65 per cent of the production share. This ratio is evident where theatres are concerned also. A survey in 1981 showed that 5,897 of the 10,813 theatres were located in the southern states while this ratio has become more than half now, with about 7,000 of the 12,000 cinemas in the country in the south.

Although the Telugu film industry is heading for a crisis, by crossing budgets it has managed to keep the local population in its grip and independent of Hindi films. This trend in the south, especially in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh where film stars have taken over as chief ministers and cult figures, 70 per cent of the Hindi films produced never get released here.

Regional cinema has also received a boost from the respective state governments which give subsidies and have slashed entertainment tax. In Gujarat for instance, slashing entertainment tax has eaten into the Hindi film audience. The Seventies saw an upswing, attracting small timers from the Hindi film industry to it. Snehalata, a lesser known Hindi screen actress, made it to the top in Gujarat. Others like Asrani, Aruna Irani and Upendra Trivedi turned to Gujarati films. According to writer-director Amit Khanna, "The Hindi film industry is the national orphan. States give incentives to regional language cinema, so Maharashtra will give incentives to Marathi cinema. You cannot expect Uttar Pradesh or Bihar to give incentives to an industry located in Bombay."

Another subtle contribution is from the fading or rather the narrowing of the star system to a few names. The Fifties and Sixties were dominated by a galaxy, among whom Dev

Anand, Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor featured prominently along with Madhubala, Nargis, Meena Kumari, Nutan and so on. Till the early Seventies, there were almost two dozen top stars. The Seventies saw the top thinning, despite the influx of film magazines and the tinsel world that they brought into focus. They should have sold a star system, invading homes the way they did and selling a mixture of fantasy and gossip. But they unconsciously narrowed the top. to a few Amitabh Bachchan, Rekha and a few others have managed to keep to the first rungs, giving rise to a subsequent increase in star prices and making doubtful the saleability of a number of others.

This kind of narrow cloistering at the top and the failure of commercial films to generate a number of stars who could maintain a sort of equilibrium at work, resulted in the multi-shift system and chaotic working conditions. For instance, Shashi Kapoor could be working in as many as six films in a day. As the star system polarised around a few, so did the work. Besides the polarisation of the star system the dichotomy between popular or commercial cinema and "good cinema," is a recent phenomenon and has probably determined the formulae being churned out in both categories. When Shantaram and Guru Dutt made films, no one spoke about "art" cinema and "commercial" cinema. Today the two are sharply delienated, they stand apart on their own, each sneering at what the other upholds.

"There is no set formula for success, we have to keep on groping in the dark to find the right one. We are in business, we must succeed," says Kamal Barjatya of Rajshri productions, commenting on their last film *Abodh* which was a total flop, turning them in 1984 from feature film production to the TV. This kind of groping in the dark has resulted in producers and directors not willing to go outside tried and tested formulae for their films, rejecting others. The successful formula has come to rest on the 'cannot-miss-the-box-office' scores.

"Good" cinema on the other hand has never had an eye firmly fixed on the box-office. Writer-director Amit Khanna told SUNDAY in an interview. "It is only in India that filmmakers are thrilled to make films for ten critics. The kind of new wave that we are seeing has done more harm than popular Hindi cinema. To combat the values the latter upholds and propagates, the fight has to be from the main stream. A kind of phoneyfilm has been generated, with a few aiming at the Cannes festival, while the vast majority are obviously competing for the "cans" festival here. There are two avenues in the film industry today, the con shop and the pawn shop. If you don't make it in the con game, you obviously end in the pawn shop. Some guys fool the Director general in Delhi that they are making some kind of great art film, while the others 'con' some financier into parting with his money. The products range from a tedious eye sore, to probably, *Daku Mangal Singh*.

The need for experimentation in the art form has been related by some film-makers to complexity and obscurity. A charge levelled at



Jeetendra and Sri Devi in *Suhagan*

Malayalam filmmaker, Adoor Gopalakrishnan is that his growth is gradually acquiring the merit of obscurity.

Combined with these are the physical drawbacks. There is a gross inadequacy of exhibition outlets. There are at present seven seats per 1,000 persons available, as against the UNESCO norm of 30 per 1,000. The annual growth rate of theatre construction, which is four per cent is hardly going to catch up to any norm. Meanwhile,unviable land costs in urban areas and a low population base in rural areas where land is available at cheaper rates, have made theatre construction prohibitive, and made the video theatre a likely alternative.

The decay has set in where theatres are concerned. Film producers lament that people now prefer the comfortable alternative of their homes to a trip to the cinema theatre, especially when faced with the odds of finding parking space, booking in advance, having to put up with the constant failure of the air conditioning unit and terribly maintained lavatories. In Hyderabad alone, 28 cinema theatres have closed their doors for good, with losses piling up. The law in Maharashtra which prohibits the demolition of an existing theatre for an alternative residential or commercial premise, is the only reason why theatre owners in Bombay have not put the buildings to some other use.

So much so that even if cinema which has a 1.3 crore daily attendance succumbs to television which has a greater reach with a captive audience of about five crores, the scope for recovery would be limited. In America where a similar upheaval took place, cinema has managed to stabilise, what with an existing infrastructure of about 70,000 theatres—six times the number here. With this the fact that video and TV have become a reality has to be faced. If the print media said that the eighth Lok Sabha elections were won single-handed by an assassinated woman, TV had its say too. The image of Rajiv Gandhi lighting his mother's funeral pyre remained in most memories and brought in the "sympathy" vote.

On the brink of a media takeover, the Hindi film industry's situation looks far from happy. On an average, out of a hundred films that are made, 50 are never completed. Out of the 50 completed, 15 are never released. Out of the 35 remaining, 20 are washouts anddo not recover even the capital. From the 15 survivors,ten are commission earners, that is, they recover the capital and earn some interest. Five are hits.

In reality the numbers are less kind. In 1977 out of ten films, four made more than Rs one crore per territory—*Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Dharam Veer*, *Hum Kisise Kum Nahin*, and *Parvarish*. In 1985, only *Pyar Jhukta Nahin* falls into this category. In the previous year only *Chota Chetan*, the dubbed 3-D film fell into the above category, while *Tohfa* made half this amount per territory and *Aaj ka Awaz*, *Ghar Ek Mandir*, *Purana Mandir* and *Yeh Hai Aurat*, have done about Rs 30 to 35 lakhs business per territory. In 1984, of the 165 Hindi films made (270 Telugu films were made last year), only 118 were released according to censor board figures. Recovery of profits was 12.72 per cent, 30.51 per cent just managed to cover the cost of production, while the loss was in the range of 56.77 per cent.

Located all over the country are more than 30 film processing laboratories and 70 film studios which aid the capture of an audience of over 65 million per week, with the average budget of a Hindi film being Rs 60 lakhs and the average budget of a multistarrer stands at over Rs three crores. From producers, distributors, laboratory personnel and camera men to export-import units, permanent and touring cinemas, the film industry employs over 2,51,500 persons. In the industry, mainly because of its wider linguistic reach, Hindi films have played a prominent role. They have exported their star culture to other countries and served as ambassadors of goodwill. In the central Asian regions of the Soviet Union, every Indian is considered to be from Bombay and a relative of Raj Kapoor or Shashi Kapoor; for Dubai and the Gulf countries video films are mainly Hindi video films. According to one actor who had performed for the Indian troops, Indian music and films (especially Hindi) are appreciated by Pakistani soldiers and citizens alike and have probably served as the best ambassador. Though the Satyajit , Mani Kaul and other prominent exponents of good cinema are the only ones remembered by film critics and students abroad, it is strangely the mass entertainment commercial that has offered an Asian alternative to the glittering world of Hollywood.

What do the moghuls of mass entertainment have to say about their industry? Says Gulshan Rai, producer, distributor and president of the Indian Motion Picture Distributors' Association: "Today only five per cent of the films are running, 95 per cent are failures. All the average films of yesteryear have become failures today. How can the industry exist on 95 per cent failure? The fault is in the production system—selling stereotypes. There is a dearth of good writers and stories are not being written, they are rewritten. The industry is on the verge of closure. Over all inflation, the high rate of entertainment tax (the government does not understand that



Mithun Chakravarty and Rati Agnihotri in *Rakta Bandhan*



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slashing tax rates will increase the theatre-going audience), video piracy and TV are the major contributory factors. I personally feel threatened and think daily that I should change my profession."

If you are a thief or a murderer you know you will be caught and punished. Not so the video pirate. He is not scared of the law. The government itself cannot understand video piracy, its seriousness and the loss of revenue through piracy. The other evils are the excise levy and the cost of prints. The levy was imposed several years ago by Morarji Desai, and still exists—four fold," said Prakash Mehra, producer and president of the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association, and added, "Look at the situation: Can you imagine the agony of a producer? We make a film costing Rs two or three crores, and a man enters the room with a cassette worth Rs 300, saying he has enjoyed it. It cost me Rs three crores to make the film. He is the owner at Rs 300. We have only an alternative: the entire film industry should close for an indefinite period for the government to realise our contribution. But as far as the industry is concerned, I think everything has a saturation point, and that point has come."'This year, except for *Pyar Jukhta Nahin, Arjun* and *Tawaif*, the rest have failed at the box office Previously even movies which were not good used to get first and second week audiences. Now they don't even get by one week. It is only in this country that video piracy is there for the asking, across the counter. It is blatant and operating with impunity. We have seen the chief minister about it. He has promised a special police cell and courts to be set up to try those guilty of piracy. To combat piracy, we are going to market videos of our film *Saagar*," said G.P Sippy, producer and president of the Film Federation of India, All India Film Producers Council and Producers Guild of India.

Kamal Barjatya of Rajshri Productions is of the opinion that "unless a picture runs for 28 shows, houseful, we have no chance. Theatre hire is 65 per cent of the houseful capacity. And these days pictures just don't run. We expected *Sun Sajana* to click. It didn't *Rakta Bandhan* also did not. *Saaransh* brought us prestige, tremendous prestige—that's all. Though it ran 15 weeks at Metro theatre, we had to pay a deficit of Rs 30,000 to the theatre. After *Abodh* flopped last August—we didn't even recover the theatre rentals—it was time to close.

The big question in the minds of the film industry's czars is now: What next? Will they be routed by Doordarshan and video? Was Doordarshan, hitherto dependent on them for entertainment by way of feature films and *Chhaya Geet*, now exploring new avenues with plans for specially made TV films and sponsored serials? While some are crying themselves hoarse about how video piracy



Dhirubhai Shah (standing, second from right) flanked by police officers

has cheated them and television is bearing them, others are keeping a sharp eye on the future, and trying to find out how the new media and its reach can be exploited. As a result, 27 TV serials are already under production, most of them by well-known film personalities. Basu Chatterji is the creator of *Rajni*, while Sai Paranjpe has made *Ados Pados*. After *Abodh* flopped, Rajshri Productions which has more than 42 feature films to its credit, turned to TV with *Paying Guest*. Filmmaker Shridhar Kshirasagar's *Khandaan* which features celluloid stars Shreeram Lagoo, Tanuja and Girish Karnad, is a testimony to the appeal of TV.

"Television is a threat to their creativity," former director general of Doordarshan, Kamleshwar told SUNDAY, adding that filmmakers could not expect to monopolise the media: "A or B cannot remain the single son of the family. They have to accept the third child of the media—television. In a poor country like India, television is the only answer. Given the speed at which it can reach far corners of the country, TV will be a threat to all those filmmakers who sign stars, take the money, never complete their films, and disappear. The genuine filmmakers will continue to produce films." Kamleshwar is currently making a serial for Doordarshan on the navy called "Akash Ganga." Lintas, the advertising agency, has also invited eight film directors to consider a proposal to work on a serial they are planning.

How long the threat will last remains to be seen. Doordarshan may be reluctant to relinquish its upper hand, as it busily juggles around producers and their serials to accommodate them in what is fast becoming precious and expensive TV time. For instance, the two sponsors of the 23-minute serial *Paying Guest*, have to split Rs 35,000, the cost of two minutes of advertising in the serial. But the beginning of the era of sponsorship in India has also brought in the attendant evils. The sponsor dictates terms, often changing them to suit his own needs. For instance, in America the break-time for soccer and baseball have been dictated by the sponsor. The end of a baseball final is considered the most expensive advertising time on television. Why? It holds captive the largest adult male audience in the age group 19-49, who have the largest earning and spending capacity.

According to one media critic, sponsorship is the biggest and most pernicious evil of western TV. It is threatening the next Olympics at Seoul, South Korea, where one of the big three American networks will be sponsoring the Games. The condition, of course, is that some of the games are played at 3 am (Korean time) so that it reaches the prime-time American TV audience. The Greeks can sit back and lament about their days of athletic glory. Today, from sweat shirt to canvas shoes, the magic word is "sponsored." And the people who matter are the sponsor and the TV audience, not the athlete and the spectator in the stadium.

Whether inspired by foreign programmes, be it a Mexican soap opera (*Humlog*) or an American *Dynasty* (*Khandaan*), television in India has come a long way since AIR set up an experimental TV service in Delhi on 15 September 1959 with the help of UNESCO. Nothing very significant featured on it till the 70s, when the government woke up to the fact that television might have potential. In 1971 popular programmes were introduced to offset the tedium of the didactic and agrarian programmes. Site, the programme for rural India, introduced in 1975-76 was shortly succeeded by TV's independence from AIR on 1 April 1976. The same year commercials came into being and are fast becoming the sustenance of popular television.

No one, least of all probably the government, had imagined that the unfairly dubbed 'idiot box', would one day challenge the supremacy of the industry that produced the *masala-for-the-masses* films and that the latter would some day have to bow to the 'box' to gain access to people's living rooms. Whether this is fair or not, the only consolation for the movie-maker is the statement of Sherry Lancing of Columbia Pictures: "The theatre-going experience will never die out."

A person who unsuspectingly sits through one of the Hindi film industry's extravaganzas, and gets a headache, or collapses from the sheer horror of it all, might have the satisfaction of watching his tormentor, the Hindi filmmaker, get similarly horrified—at the mention of the video. If any single industry has cut into the big apple that filmdom was wont to monopolise, it is video. And the industry of the video pirates, with a Rs 1,000 crore annual turnover, has comfortably beaten the movie moghul.

A state wise survey at the end of 1984 indicated that the country had 10,000 video parlours, 40,000 video libraries, 12,000 video coaches, about 1,200 of which operate the Bombay-Goa route, 11,000 five and three star hotels showing videos. Maharashtra alone has about 4,000 video parlours. In Ahmednagar (Maharashtra), there are five theatres for a two lakh population and 40 video parlours! A raid by the Indian film industry's anti-video piracy organisation (AVPO) at Ahmednagar, resulted in the owner of Deepak Video Club, Vilas Dhend, being taken into custody. What the AVPO men found in his club was astonishing. The club had three underground chambers, two rooms at different levels and remote control VCRs which took almost two hours to find, according to Vikas Mohan, secretary of the AVPO. And the total seating capacity of the video complex, which is also equipped with a canteen, is 1,000.

The AVPO, which since its inception has carried out 307 raid in

Bombay, Delhi, Goa, Ahmednagar, Srirampur and some other places, arresting 461 persons and seizing property worth Rs 2.5 crores, has merely touched the tip of the Rs 1,000 crore industry. Piracy has helped reduce film production by 55 per cent and the average loss due to piracy in every film is 59 per cent. The repeat audience of even successful films has been greatly reduced. *Dharam aur Kanoon, Duniya, Ek Din Bahu Ka, Kanoon Kya Karega, Jawaani, Karishmaa, Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho, Papi Pet Ka Sawal Hai, Raaj Tilak, Aaj Ka MLA Ram Avtar, Aan Aur Shaan, Bhavna, Awaaz, Divorce, John Jani Janardhan, Maqsad, Sparsh* are some of the films badly affected by video piracy.

But what exactly is the video industry? Has the magnetic tape humbled celluloid? The British Broadcasting Corporation first experimented with a machine called Vera-vision electronic recording apparatus—a technique for recording television programmes on magnetic tape. This was an improvement on the highly expensive method of storing programmes by filming productions from high quality monitors. The breakthrough came with the American Ampex VR 100, which recorded across a wider tape, than along it, and moving slowly. And now the video boom has taken the country by storm and threatened to shake up its cinema. It has overnight been elevated to the sanctity of one of the highest status symbols.

While producers and directors flounder and curse at what the illegal video is doing, the pirates thrive and have made it big on this industry. Dhirubhai Shah started three years ago as a provision store owner, delivering goods himself. He smelt the chance of big money in the video trade and turned towards it. Now he is worth more than Rs four crores. He has a unit installed at Rathan Jyoti Industrial Estate, Irla, and a retail shop called Modern Electronics at Vile Parle market. Padambhai Sethia, the owner of Video King at Kings circle, Nithin and Mahesh Thakur who run the trade under the guise of a wafer shop at Matunga and Balbir Singh, a Delhi-based offender who supplies video films to most parts of north India are among the 'video kings' according to AVPO.

The outlets from which the films get pirated have been identified. The Santa Cruz electronics exports processing zone (SEEPZ), where masters are made from the prints to be sent overseas, is one of the outlets, according to AVPO. While the master is being made, one or two prints which are entered as "rejects," are sent back to the pirates for circulation in the video circuits Due to the leakage from here, the pre-view facility inside the trade zone has been stopped.

SEEPZ has seven video units. Among them are MG Video, Esquire Video, Home Video, VGP, Spectra, Emca Video Pvt Ltd, which are allegedly a major source of supply to Dhirubhai Shah. After the arrest of the owner of Emca Video last month while attempting to smuggle out a print of Hum Do Hamara Do, the export of masters to foreign countries has been stopped from SEEPZ Now they are allowed to only send the VHS cassettes. When prints are being sent to the different theatres, copies are made on the way. Or in some cases theatres managers, watchmen and operators are bribed to allow pictures to be filmed after the late show ends at 12 O'clock.

As a result, while the video industry blooms, it is in the process killing the film industry in Bombay.

The Sippy Success Story

Lekha Dhar profiles the master entertainer

Sholay's monumental and somewhat outrageous success left its young director, Ramesh Sippy, at a point where any step is a comedown. The biggest blockbuster in the history of Indian cinema gave Sippy an aura, which his colleagues in the commercial film industry would give anything to acquire. Ten years after *Sholay* was made no film has come even remotely near it and judging the financial track record of current Hindi films, nor is any ever likely to challenge it. Even Sippy knows that he cannot repeat his own history.

Besides lifting Sippy to dizzy heights the film put him in a situation where he would not be expected to do anything less than *Sholay*. Sippy's subsequent ventures, *Shaan* and *Shakti* have been dismissed as anti-climaxes to his stupendous success story: if it is Ramesh Sippy's film the box office returns must be high. The observation is substantiated by the fact that despite being labelled "flops," *Shaan* and *Shakti* grossed as much as any other film termed a "hit." But then by *Sholay*'s standards, a hit for other film makers, is a flop for Sippy.

" I started out as a commercial film-maker and I intend staying that way. Certain ingredients are essential when you think in terms of the box office. I would like to make more socially relevant films "
— Ramesh Sippy

The 41-year-old director is currently giving the final touches to his latest film, *Saagar*, which has already passed the censors sans demur. The fact that four of the most important members of the unit have not lived up to the expectations of film industry watchers has raised apprehensions about *Saagar*'s box office performance. While Rishi Kapoor has failed to repeat his *Bobby* performances, Kamal Hassan is treading the tight rope after his grand entry into the Hindi film industry with *Ek Duje Ke Liye*, as his subsequent Hindi films have skydived. Javed Akhtar, always regarded as the better half of the film industry's most successful story-writing duo, has also found himself among moderate hits ever since he split with Salim. And Sippy, despite having dished out films which would normally be considered hits, continues to be haunted by *Sholay*'s success. Basing

their arguments on these facts, film-writers have described *Saagar* as the balance on which their collective future lies.

"After the film, whatever be its fate, neither is Javed, Ramesh Sippy, nor the rest of his unit going to be out of business. Javed will continue to write, Sippy will continue to make films and Kamal, Rishi and Dimple, act," said Sippy dismissing speculations about their "uncertain" future as idle gossip, in an interview with SUNDAY.

The hangover of *Sholay*'s wild success continues to linger and his industry colleagues wonder whether Sippy will repeat history in *Saagar Shaan* and *Shakti* though endowed with unmistakable slickness of the Ramesh Sippy style, forced many to wonder whether *Sholay* was a freak and its director, lucky. But the reconsideration stems from the fact that being Ramesh Sippy, the industry does not expect anything short of a miracle from him. And even the over Rs one crore-per-territory earnings by *Shaan* and *Shakti* have not fitted the requirements of a miracle. Asked whether history is likely to repeat itself in *Saagar* or any of his future ventures, Sippy retorted, "I think history will have to decide that There can be no success like *Sholay* today with television and video bringing everything to the drawing room. The market as such does not show signs of taking in that kind of business."

Sippy concedes that after *Sholay* he has certainly come down,if his box office returns are any indication. "The box office receipts certainly show that I haven't touched the heights of *Sholay*. Have I tried to put in all the factors to make each film a box-office hit? Yes, certainly. But the result was that people just didn't lap it up—and theirs is the final verdict," says Sippy.

By his own admission, a slow and fussy worker, Sippy has taken nearly two years to complete *Saagar*. And many in the industry say, his fastidiousness has proved a hurdle for Dimple who was trying to stage a comeback after *Bobby* and a stormy relationship with the cranky superstar of yesteryear, Rajesh Khanna. To this observation Sippy says, "First of all when I make a film, it is the film that is important, and not me or anyone else connected with it. If my delay has caused her (Dimple) some problems, it is unfortunate. But I can say this, she did not cause any trouble with dates and schedules, because of domestic and other problems, as the gossipmongers speculate. It is because we felt that the film was not ready, certain scenes had to be re-shot and there was a six-month gap between the first two shooting stints. And mainly because I am a slow worker. These delays probably created problems for her."



Ramesh Sippy

When Dimple decided to return to films, she was looking out for a director who could successfully take off from where *Bobby* left her. Sippy's decision to cast Dimple in *Saagar*, at once caused industry-watchers to speculate that after all the trauma in the Khanna household there could not have been a better development for her. Soon she realised, or so insiders insist, that Sippy's slow pace was increasingly proving counter-productive for Dimple. That probably explains why she accepted the roles she did in *Zakhmi Sher* and *Manzil Manzil*. Both sank into disgraced oblivion. This might prove a disadvantage for Sippy's *Saagar* as the audience has already rejected the star of *Bobby*.

Apparently unruffled by such speculations, Sippy discloses his "overpowering urge" to break into socially relevant films. But then what of the box office, which swings him back to the former view? "I started out as a commercial film maker and I intend staying that way. Certain ingredients are essential when you think in terms of the box office. I would like to make more socially relevant films. But so far I have not been able to line up a project which would work on both levels—on a level which is commercially viable, and on the other hand, something more. In any case which film maker would not like to make socially relevant films? I have not put values into my films, the way they are needed, and this goes for *Saagar* too. My films deal with basic human emotions. If they are enabling, then the values will be present. But far from social relevance, I just make neat, clean, entertainment films," replied Sippy.

To a suggestion that he could surely divert some of his resources into making relevant films without bothering about the box office, Sippy says, "Honestly I would like to try that kind of film But somebody has to approach me with such a proposal." When asked whether he was trying to usher in a soft, romantic kind of film into the milieu of commercial potboilers, Sippy vehemently disagreed, "I prefer to make each film as different as possible. There is no romance formula or any formula as such. I started my career with *Andaaz* which was a romantic film. *Seeta aur Geeta* was followed by the action films *Sholay, Shaan* and *Shakti*.

Sippy does not try to pretend that his films convey any message. "Tell me, is there no room for anything which does not convey any message? After all there is something called entertainment. In the hinterland you have audiences who do not understand the language. All they want is a couple of songs, a dance sequence and fight scenes. Only recently I read an article about a village totally inhabited by hunchbacks. Their life is so miserable. Do you think they want their miseries depicted on celluloid, or do they want an escape from it?"

While acknowledging the relevance of films like *Ardh Satya*, Sippy defends gross exaggerations in typical Hindi films and the simplistic solutions that they come out with. He feels that even though such methods are scorned by the intelligentsia, "to carry the message to a huge audience they are the only effective way."

SPECIAL REPORT

PUNJAB

ONE YEAR AFTER

What do the people of Punjab feel one year after Operation Bluestar? Is the memory of the bloody battle between the army and Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale still fresh in people's minds? Sanjeev Gaur feels the pulse of the state



Indira Gandhi fought her last excruciating battle in the Golden Temple, the holiest of Sikh shrines. Apparently, she won the battle; in reality, she lost. She succeeded in liquidating the militant Sikh phenomenon that was Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who virtually ruled Punjab from his seat in the shrine, ordering killings. But Bhindranwale dead became infinitely more dangerous. Within five months of his removal, Indira Gandhi was gunned down on the lawns of her own house by two of her Sikh bodyguards who had secretly sworn to avenge Bhindranwale's death.

Now, a year after Operation Bluestar, which hurt every Sikh in India and abroad, the situation in Punjab has worsened. The army action in June last year which Mrs Gandhi had thought would mark the end of Sikh terrorism, misfired. As a Sikh intellectual observed, "Mrs Gandhi thought that by killing Bhindranwale, she would be able to crush terrorism in Punjab. But she did not realise that by sending the army into the Golden Temple to kill Bhindranwale, she would not only make him a martyr and a hero of the Sikhs but also create many Bhindranwales and make the entire Sikh community her bitter enemy. No Sikh can tolerate the desecration of the Harimandir Sahib and the Akal Takht."

The Sikhs have not forgotten Operation Bluestar. The wounds are still deep and fresh. Even a year after the bloody operation, the Golden Temple is not the same place. Pilgrims coming to the temple are more interested in knowing the details of the army action and seeing the bullet marks on the walls of the Harimandir Sahib. Today the majority of Sikhs refuse to accept the new Akal Takht, the highest seat of Sikh spiritual and temporal authority, which was badly damaged during the

Baba Joginder Singh below a picture of his son, the late J.S. Bhindranwale

operation and rebuilt by the government under the supervision of the controversial Nihang leader Santa Singh. There has been a marked decline in the number of Sikh visitors to the Akal Takht Standing outside the Akal Takht along with her two colleagues, Aman Deep, a young doctor commented, "This is not our Akal Takht. It is not real. The government made it after first destroying it. Sikhs will have to demolish the government-built Akal Takht and rebuild their own Akal Takht." The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee (SGPC), which looks after the Sikh gurdwaras, has already declared that the present Akal Takht would be demolished and rebuilt.

If Operation Bluestar had wounded the Sikhs, the community felt hurt again by the attitude of the army and the para-military forces during the mopping-up operations in Punjab villages which went on for more than two months after the June action. Official sources admit that the army arrested fewer terrorists and more innocent Sikhs during the mopping-up operations. The army indiscriminately raided Sikh houses in the villages, abused their family members and took into custody young people. Said a police officer, not wanting to be named for obvious reasons, "Sikhs in Punjab villages today hate the army. The reason is simple. After Operation Bluestar, the army really let loose a reign of terror. Go to any Punjab village and they will have those sad and tragic stories to narrate to you."



Surinder Pal shows Sant Longowal the burns he got from the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi

And then the government brought in Santa Singh, who is known as a stooge of the ruling party, to undertake to rebuild the Akal Takht. The Golden Temple was still under the control of the army and the other security forces. Messrs Longowal, Badal and Tohra, the Akali trio, were already in jail. The arrival of Santa Singh with his *fauj* (army) of Nihangs further hurt Sikh sentiment. The Sikhs were unable even to protest loudly. The controversial Nihang chief, excommunicated by the five Sikh high priests, stayed in the Golden Temple for about four months with the full support of the government and also received a lot of media attention. Of course, the government knew that the Sikhs were feeling deeply hurt.

Then came the anti-Sikh riots in November, after the dastardly murder of Mrs Gandhi by Beant Singh and Satwant Singh who "avenged" the attack on their holiest shrine. When approached to sum up the events in Punjab during the last one year, Pritpal Singh, a student of Amritsar Khalsa College and president of the Khalsa Students Union (KSU) said, "The desecration of the Akal Takht caused immense pain to Sikhs. But Operation Bluestar became a small thing when compared to the November riots which alienated the Sikhs from the national mainstream. Later the unprecedented victory of the ruling party in the Lok Sabha elections made Sikhs feel that the majority community had given its verdict in support of the brutal genocide of innocent Sikhs. I heard some saying in Amritsar that each vote cast in favour of the ruling party is a greeting card congratulating it for the massacre of Sikhs."

The Punjab problem looks much more complicated today than it was a year back. With the Akalis having said more than once now that Chandigarh and the river waters are not the basic issues any more, the Punjab tangle has now basically become a Sikh problem. The tragedy is that the issues have become so complex in this turbulent state that it is becoming difficult even for the Sikh intellectuals and the Punjab observers to identify them. Bhagsingh Ankhi, a Sikh intellectual who maintains close links with the Akali leadership

moaned, "Both the government and the Akalis are to be blamed for the tragedy of Punjab. The government is insincere and the Akalis have no clear goals." Ankhi traced the genesis of the current Punjab problem to the age-old tussle between Zail Singh and Darbara Singh. He said, "Darbara Singh is the real villain. Why did he arrest Bhindranwale at Chowk Mehta when the government did not have sufficient evidence to charge him with the killing of Lala Jagat Narain? Why did Darbara Singh enact that drama for arresting Bhindranwale?" But Ankhi, who is also on the managing committee of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, sounded more angry with the Akali leadership. He elaborated, "They are always fighting among themselves. Each Akali leader will have his own demands. The Akali leadership failed in delivering the goods. They also failed during the negotiations with the government. They failed because they did not know what exactly they wanted." But the Sikh intellectual was more bitterly critical of the SGPC president Gurcharan Singh Tohra whom he described as the "man who has damaged the Sikh community the most." "Tohra," he went on, "is less religious and more ambitious. He wants to be supreme in Sikh politics. And he also wants to become the Punjab chief minister." But he does not spare Longowal and Badal either. He thinks that after their release from jail, both Longowal and Badal and even Tohra should have quit after taking moral responsibility for what had happened to the Sikhs over the last one year.

Ankhi holds both Longowal and Tohra responsible for the recent emergence of Baba Joginder Singh in Akali politics. "Why did both of them call on him again and again and ask him to forge unity in the party? I am sure they played some clever game in first building up Baba Joginder Singh and later retreating."

Today when a political solution to the Punjab tangle is nowhere in sight, terrorism and Hindu-Sikh tension in Punjab are much more serious problems for the government. Obviously, the June army action had failed to crush terrorism. In the days before Operation Bluestar, the government at least knew that Bhindranwale was masterminding the extremist activities and the terrorists would often take refuge in the Golden Temple. But today neither the Punjab government nor the centre seem to have any knowledge about the terrorists' organisation and the centre of its operations. Even the general public in the troubled state has now started taking the claims of the Punjab government about the arrests of "suspected terrorists" routinely with a pinch of salt. In the past few months, the terrorists have struck not only in Punjab but in the whole of northern India. Their transistor bombs shook Delhi. Hindus in Punjab are scared and absolutely demoralised about the rapid growth of terrorism Balbir Kapoor, a leading tea merchant in Amritsar felt "The government has proved weak in dealing with the terrorists. This is the popular Hindu feeling. They should be crushed with an iron hand."



The son of the late J.S. Bhindranwale

Sikhs on the other hand are agitated about the frequent deaths of Sikh youths either in police encounters or during interrogation. An activist of the Punjab unit of the association for democratic rights (AFDR) told SUNDAY "The *mala fide* of the government is evident from the recent cases of mysterious deaths of Sikh youths in police custody. Here the case of Gurinder Singh who was captured by the police with minor injuries in a police encounter and died two days later with multiple injuries in Chandigarh's Post Graduate Institute of Medicine is a typical victim of police brutality. Gurinder, it is well-known now, had links with the PCC(I) president Santokh Singh Randhawa. That is why he was killed. Such incidents are causing more injury to the Sikh community at large and they are feeling disillusioned with the state day by day."

After terrorism, it is the communal tension which is worrying the government the most in Punjab today. Curfew had to be clamped in Dhariwal, Gurudaspur, Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana following the Hindu-Sikh clashes after incidents of terrorism in these important towns of Punjab during the last one month. Comrade Hazara Singh Jassar, a prominent CPI(M) leader of Amritsar said, "Both Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab want peace. They are fed up both with the government as well as the Akalis. But it is a sad reality that the two communities are drifting away from each other." But the RSS activist Shyam Sunder Bhatia, younger brother of the AICC(I) general secretary Raghunandan Lal Bhatia on whose life an attempt was made by terrorists, feels that though a wedge between Hindus and Sikhs has been created, it is an artificial one. The younger Bhatia, an industrialist, is still hopeful that peace can return to Punjab and the Punjab problem can be solved. He said, "First Rajiv must give his verdict on the basic Akali demands like the Chandigarh and the river waters. He should make an unilateral announcement (on these issues). And then with a firm hand, he should handle the terrorists in Punjab." Dr Baldev Parkash, president of the Punjab unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), too, does not sound pessimistic today about the Punjab problem.

He feels that the situation in Punjab has improved since Operation Bluestar. He remarked, "The few months before the army action in the Golden Temple were sheer terror, especially for the Hindus of Punjab. Daily they (terrorists) were killing on an average 20 people in the state. But now things are not that bad. Of course, things are not normal as yet but they are certainly better than the pre-Operation Bluestar day." The BJP leader also thinks that the wedge between the Hindus and Sikhs, too, will disappear as soon as a solution is found to the 'continuing Punjab tangle'.

But is a solution in sight? Ankhi sums up the situation aptly enough: "The Akalis must now realise that all problems are ultimately solved through negotiations. They can't continue on the path of confrontation. The government should also show its sincerity in solving this problem now. If Rajiv sincerely feels that Sikhs are the soul of India as he said in one of his statements recently then he should treat Sikhs psychologically and not with force."

The Kharak Singh Factor

The union agriculture minister Buta Singh is his great devotee. All the Akali leaders bow before him. Even the militant Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale always followed his commands. Baba Kharak Singh (91) is perhaps the most revered Sikh saint in the country. Said Kharak Singh, "I don't have a home. I don't belong to any village. I have no relatives." He has now been entrusted with the task of *kar seva* for the rebuilding of the Akal Takht—the highest seat of both spiritual and temporal authority of the Sikhs within the Golden Temple complex.

When approached for comments about undertaking the *kar seva* for the rebuilding of the Akal Takht, Baba Kharak Singh told SUNDAY, "I don't believe in demolishing buildings. It does not matter to me whether the government constructs a building or some one else does. I only believe in making new buildings. But if the Akal Takht has not been built with good material and the workmanship has been poor, and if the entire Sikh *sangat* asks me to rebuild the holy place, I will certainly do so." Kharak Singh, considered a totally detached person, avoids meeting the press. Explains Comrade Mota Singh, trusted follower of the Sikh saint, "Babaji does not want to be in any type of controversy. That is why he does not want to be in the news. All his life, he has devoted himself to building *gurdwaras*, buildings and roads. He is respected by one and all for his selfless service for the cause of humanity."

Kharak Singh is originally from a village near Lahore and has also served in the army which he joined as a carpenter. "I belonged to a poor family. Hence I could not even get married. Who would have agreed to marry a poor man like me," he said. Kharak Singh, according to sources close to him, unlike the Akali leaders and the SGPC officials including the Sikh body chief Gurcharan Singh Tohra, did not mind the Akal Takht being rebuilt by the government after the sacred Sikh shrine was badly damaged during Operation Bluestar. He stays in a *dera*, opposite Shaheedan Da Gurudwara on the outskirts of the holy city but has yet to visit the Akal Takht after its reconstruction by the government after the June army action in the Golden Temple. According to Dr Joginder Kairon, Sikh scholar and biographer of Kharak Singh, "Babaji has only two objections about the rebuilding of the Akal Takht by the government. He feels that poor quality material was used and that the workmanship has also been poor."

Kharak Singh, who undertook the *kar seva* of the Golden Temple *sarovar* after the Harimandir was finally handed over to the SGPC authorities on 1 October last by the government, is not sure when he would begin the *kar seva* for the rebuilding. He bluntly told SUNDAY "Let them (the Akali leaders and the SGPC officials) decide. Let the Sikh *sangat* be called and the verdict sought. I have nothing to do as regards fixing the date." A top SGPC source, however, disclosed that *kar seva* for the rebuilding of the Akal Takht, earlier expected to start in the first week of June to mark the first anniversary of Operation Bluestar has been postponed till either the end of September or the beginning of October. He said, "The Akalis today are too busy fighting among themselves. Their internal crisis is deep. Even Tohra, the SGPC chief, is fully involved in the battle between the hawks and doves in the Akali Dal. So they have no time to think about and finalise the date for starting the *kar seva* at least in the near future."

Incidentally, it was Tohra himself who decided to entrust the *kar seva* for rebuilding the Akal Takht to Kharak Singh. The SGPC president has written a letter to the Sikh saint in this regard. Punjab-watchers feel that Tohra picked the best man for the controversial job. Baba Kharak Singh is himself the most non-controversial person and is universally accepted by the Sikhs. He does not belong to any group or party.

Informed Golden Temple sources claim that the extremist lobby in the Akali Dal tried its best to get the *kar seva* of the Akal Takht entrusted to Baba Joginder Singh, father of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and currently the acting convener of the ad-hoc committee of the "United" Akali Dal but failed. Tohra had consulted Baba Joginder Singh before announcing Kharak Singh's name. Obviously even Bhindranwale's father could not object to Kharak Singh's choice since that would have clearly amounted to inviting the wrath of the Sikh community.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

Baba Kharak Singh



"A True Sikh Never Commits Atrocities"

Baba Joginder Singh told SUNDAY

Q: *Tell us about your past.*

A: I was born in Rode village (Faridkot district) around 1910. When I was seven my father died At the age of 11 or 12 I began learning the "*path*" of Guru Granth Sahib under the guidance of Sant Kripal Singh. Since then I have become a religious man.

Q: Why did you form the nine member ad-hoc committee?

A: For the unity of the *panth*

Q: Was there no unity in the panth?

A: The Akali Dal had different factions and that was the main reason for the differences among them. So, to weed out such differences I decided to form the new ad-hoc committee which can run the affairs of the Akali Dal.

Q: When did you decide to form this committee?

A: Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi met me separately at my residence in Rode after their release from jail. They gave me details of their arrest, atrocities on the Sikhs and asked my advice on how to run the affairs of the Sikh *panth*. I gave them the advice not to indulge in factionalism and told them to do something fruitful for the *panth*. Both of them orally agreed that whatever decision I take for *panthic* unity will be acceptable to them. Later, both of them met my son Jagjit Singh Rode in jail and gave him in writing (which was addressed to me), that my decision for the unity of the *panth* will be acceptable to them. It was clear that I was given the responsibility for the unity of the *panth* and after a lot of thinking I formed the new ad-hoc committee.

Q: Who helped you in the formation of the ad-hoc committee?

A: Vahe Guru (God).

Q: There are very few political leaders in your committee. Why?

A: For us politics and religion are the same.

Q: Why have you included people like Simranjit Singh Mann, Harinder Singh and Gurtej Singh in your committee? They do not have any political background?

A: Because they are highly educated people and they have made sacrifices for the *panth*.

Q: Last year after Operation Bluestar, the Sikh masses were leaderless because all the top Akali leaders were under arrest. At that time why did you not come forward to lead the Sikh masses?

A At that time the ad-hoc committee of the Akali Dal was running the affairs of the party and it was not necessary for me to come forward.

Q: But now Akali leaders like Sant Longowal, Badal and Talwandi have already been released What was the necessity of forming such a committee?

A: I have formed the committee, because these leaders themselves wanted it.

Q: Now that you have formed the committee for panthic *unity and Sant Longowal, Badal and Tohra have dissociated themselves from the committee, how do you explain that the new committee is meant for* panthic *unity?*

A: Go and ask these leaders, do not ask me. I nominated them as members of the committee for the *panthic* unity.

Q: From your nine-member committee these three leaders have dissociated themselves, four others are either in jail or in a foreign country or underground. Only you and your son (Jagjit Singh Rode) are left along with Inderjit Singh Sekhon, general secretary of the committee. How do you plan to run the committee?

A: I have not dropped anyone from the committee My committee is complete.

Q: But what about the four members who are not present?

A: We have appointed others in place of them till their arrival.

Q. Suppose the government wants to talk to Akali leaders for the settlement of the Punjab problem, who will then talk to the government on behalf of the Akalis?

A: If the government comes to us and asks our advice then we will talk to the government directly.

Q: If Sant Longowal continues as president of the Akali Dal (Longowal) then how do you explain the unity of the panth?

A: He has already given it to me in writing that my decision will be acceptable to him. I have formed the committee to run the affairs of the Akali Dal. Beyond this I do not have to say anything The rest you can ask Sant Longowal.

Q: Agreed. Both Sant Longowal and Jathedar Talwandi gave you such a commitment in writing but Talwandi put a condition that Sant Longowal should not become the head of the new committee. Do you consider both of them to be equal?

A: For me both are equal, and both have been appointed members of the committee.

Q: What is your opinion on Hindu-Sikh unity?

A: I have to say only one thing, "*Nanak naam chadhati kala, tere panay sarbat da pala.*" A true Sikh never commits any atrocities on any one, but at the same time they never tolerate any atrocities on their religion.

Q: In your opinion what is the Punjab problem?

A: The government committed a lot of atrocities on Sikhs, our holy *Granths* had been burnt, the Akal Takht was destroyed, innocents have been killed and Sikh youths have been tortured. As I told you earlier, Sikhs never tolerate any atrocities on their religion.

Q: It has been said many times by Sikh and Akali leaders that the confidence of the Sikhs has been shattered after Operation Bluestar and later after the Delhi riots. How can the Sikhs overcome this?

A: Sikhs never commit any atrocities on anyone but we will not tolerate any atrocities on our religion. I will say a Sikh should be a true Sikh, a Hindu and a Muslim should also be true to their religions.

Baba Joginder Singh with followers



Sandeep Shankar

SUNDAY SPECIAL

The Koran's Attitude to Non-Muslims

By Dr Rafiq Zakaria

What is the attitude of the Koran, the holy book of the Muslims, towards non-Muslims? The question has assumed importance because of a recent petition filed in the Calcutta High Court, seeking to ban the Koran on the ground that it preaches hostility against the followers of other faiths. The petition was dismissed by Mr Justice Basak as it was "totally without merits."

In going through some of the paras of the petition, which *Sunday* (19-25 May) published, I find that certain verses from the Koran have been cleverly taken out of their context and shown as if it advocated enmity towards the Christians, the Jews, the pagans, etc. These verses, torn out of their historical background, can create this impression, particularly that the Koran preaches violence against the non-Muslims. Hence a proper understanding of their contents and the contexts is necessary; it will remove the cobwebs and clear the air.

In the first place the Koran is not like any other religious book; its contents comprise not only moral and jurisdical injunctions but also historical narratives and references to various happenings in the Prophet's life. There are many verses, which cannot be understood without the facts and circumstances of the time, when these were revealed. Their correct interpretation became the object of a special branch of learning—*tafsir* or Koranic exegesis as it was called. The commentators relied on *Hadith* or Traditions of the Prophet, in order to interpret correctly its meaning with reference to the circumstances of the Koranic verses. The task was strenuous, which the Ulema undertook with great care; *tafsir*, therefore, acquired the status of science and scholars spent a life-time in unearthing their proper import, finding out the roots, idioms and usages and relating them to customs and events of the times. Maulana Azad, for instance, devoted more than two decades of his life in writing his Commentary, which then too remained incomplete. He completed only 23 *surahs* out of 30.

Moreover, the Koran cannot be translated; as Prof. H.A.R. Gibb points out, "The very qualities which give it its literary distinction render it impossible to translate with any success into another language, and Islamic orthodoxy wisely discountenances any attempt to do so. The vigour and intensity of its language becomes vapid, the grammatical forms lose their subtle implications, the arresting rhetorical constructions become shapeless, and little is left but a seemingly confused and repetitious compilation, loosely strung together without life or artistry." Hence the Koran has to be read in Arabic if it is to be correctly understood.

The attitude of the Koran towards the followers of all other faiths is of respect. In fact it recognises all the other prophets, known and unknown, and declares that there is no land to which God did not send a prophet. Moreover, it is clearly enjoined on the Muslims that they should make no distinction between them; nor should they be the judges of what men do in this world because that is the exclusive domain of Allah.

The attitude of the Koran towards the followers of all other faiths is of respect; in fact it recognises all the other prophets, known or unknown, and declares that there is no land to which God did not send a prophet (35:32). Moreover, it is clearly enjoined on the Muslims that they should make no distinction between them (4:149); nor should they be the judges of what men do in this world because that is an exclusive domain of Allah: "The judgment is of only Allah's. He knows the truth and he is the best of deciders" (6:57). But the Koran is uncompromising in its attitude to two categories of people. One, *Kafirs*, or disbelievers in the montheism of Allah, and two, *Mushriks*, those who associate others with Allah. Belief in the unity of Allah is, therefore, cardinal to Islam; it is the pivot of its faith. Hence atheism is the eternal foe of Islam and has to be fought unto the last.

The Hindus, who confuse themselves with the pagans of pre-Islamic Arabia, believe in a supreme being: hence many Ulemas have opined that they cannot be considered as *Kafirs*, nor even *Mushriks*, as Iqbal has said. On the contrary Christians, who associate Christ with God, as His son can be termed *Mushriks*, though they have been described in the Koran as "People of the Book." Hence the declarations to fight the *Kafirs* and *Mushriks* are meant against the disbelievers in God, whoever they be, including the hypocrites among the Muslims, and not against believers in God, whatever be their denominations. The crucial test is: Belief in the oneness of God and good deeds or *amalus saleh*.

Let us understand some of the Koranic verses, upon which the petitioners sought to rely.

Their translation of *Ayat* 193 in *surah* 2 is incorrect; the correct translation, as translated by Allama Abdulla Yusuf Ali, whose translation is universally accepted as authentic, is as follows:

And fight them on
Until there is no more
Tumult or oppression,
And there prevail
Justice and faith in God.
But if they cease,
Let there be no hostility
Except to those
Who practise oppression.

Another verse, badly translated by the petitioners (2:216) is:

Fighting is prescribed
For you, and ye dislike it
But it is possible
That ye dislike a thing
Which is good for you,
And that ye love a thing
Which is bad for you.
But God knoweth,
And ye know not.

It is a call to fight in the cause of truth and there is nothing nobler than it; but the following verse (9:5) has a historical background, when the pagans from Mecca were plotting to kill Prophet Muhammed and his followers:

When the sacred months are over
Slay the idolaters, wherever you find them.
Arrest them. Besiege them. And lie in ambush
Everywhere for them.

But there is immediately the caution, in the same verse, which the petitioners have conveniently omitted:

If they repent and take to prayer and pay the alms-tax
Let them go their way.
For Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Likewise *Ayat* 28 in *surah* 8 is wrongly translated; it calls upon the believers "not to betray Allah and the Apostle" and to remember "how the unbelievers plotted against you and sought to take you captive or have you killed or banished."

In *surah* 22 *Ayat* 19 to 22, which the petitioners have distorted, the fight is between the two antagonists, who are called by Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali as "Men of Faith, who confess their Lord and seek to carry out His Will and Men, who deny their Lord and defy His Will." Indeed, all through the Koran, the emphasis is on this fight: between believers in God and disbelievers—people of God and atheists. The punishment for the disbelievers is graphically described. Has Krishna not told Arjuna not to hesitate in killing his nearest kith and kin in the cause of truth, which is God?

The *Ayats* 4 to 15 in *surah* 47 are clearly directions to the believers on how they should conduct themselves when engaged in a war; these have a historical background and were revealed under certain circumstances. They have no universal application, much less against non-Muslims, who have no quarrels with the Muslims. In *surah* 98 *Ayat* 6, the reference is to "disbelievers among the People of the Book and the Polytheists"; not to the believers in God among them The disbelievers will, of course, dwell in hell; there is no compromise on that count. But believers are not only Muslims but all those who accept the unity of God and do good deeds. As Maulana Azad in his commentary on the Koran has explained, "The Koran states that the differences which exist between one religion and another are not differences in *Din*, the basic provision, but in the manner of giving effect to it, or in the *Shara* and Minhai, not in the spirit of religion, but in its outward form." In support of this, the Maulana quotes the following Koranic injunction to the Prophet, "To every people have we appointed ways of worship which they observe. Therefore, let them not dispute this matter with thee" (22:66). The test is clearly laid down: "For each of you We prescribed a clear spiritual Law and a manifest way in secular matters. And if Allah had willed, He would have you all one people, but He wishes to try you by that which He has given to each. Vie, then, with one another in good deed" (5:48). How to go about it is also prescribed: "With wisdom and reason and wholesome preaching" (16:125); and not by "defamation or insult of others." (49:11).

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SPECIAL REPORT

CYCLONE!

On the night of 24 May, a devastating cyclone lashed the coastal areas of Bangladesh, leaving 25,000 dead, 30,000 missing and countless orphaned, uprooted and desperate for food, water and medicines. Syed Kamaluddin reports on one of the country's worst tragedies. Photographs are by Aloke Mitra



Gruelling poverty an hardship along with famin floods, pestilence and di ease together conspire t torture the villager in Banglades with savage blows. One such was th devastating nocturnal cyclone tha hit the country's southern coast on 2 May, leaving 25,000 dead, 30,00 missing, the whole island of Sandwi nearly wiped out and a staggering 2 lakh severely affected. Authorities i Bangladesh fear that the 30,000 wh were reported missing might hav been washed away by the four-and-a half metre high tidal waves tha lashed the coastal areas in the wor disaster the country has known sinc the cyclone of 1970 which killed fiv lakh people And it was only on 2 May that the Bangladesh goverı ment started getting an idea of th extent of the tragedy. Hunger, confu sion and the fear of epidemics gri ped the country as estimates of th death toll went higher and higher

An inoculation programme wa chalked out Typhoid and tetanu were considered major threats. I Urirchar, health officials used a sing le needle to inoculate about 30 persons, while the bloated bodies o children lay in the background. Eve hygiene became a luxury: "You can not change the needle," a healtl official said. "We cannot afford it God will give them (the people) re sistance "

The cyclone spared no one alon its trail. The worst affected were th islands of Pirbaksh, where 10,00 died, Urirchar, where 7,000 to 8,00 died, the Noakhali district, where 3,000 lost their lives and the inhabi tants of the island of Sandwip which was almost blotted out of existence Over 1,000 fishermen are also pre sumed to have died. The mainlanc areas were however saved by a time ly warning of the depression tha built up off the coast around 2 pm or the fateful day. Later when the storm was spotted about 40 kms south o the coastline, a second warning wa issued. But people in the villages ir the coastal areas remained in the dark. In Urirchar, a new island where thousands of people had taken shel ter to flee from Sandwip, nearly every family was uprooted. Nobody seemed to have any idea of the island's population before the gale struck. After the cyclone, it was 500

The last group of foreign newsmer who visited the worst-affected area on 31 May by helicopter, saw bodie

Left, a dead child on the shore and right, human beings and cattle killed by the cyclone



and carcasses still floating in certain areas even seven days after the cyclone was over. Reports from the affected areas say that only few decomposed human bodies are now seen but a large number of stinking carcasses lay strewn in more than one place, causing a major health problem. Chemicals were needed to treat these carcasses.

President Ershad cancelled his weeklong state visit to China on 29 May to personally supervise the relief operation. Newsmen returning from Urir Char on the afternoon of 31 May told SUNDAY that they could see the electrifying impact the President's stay in the island had on the people. It galvanised the otherwise shocked and frustrated survivors into action.

As the weather cleared, ships began picking up survivors from the Bay of Bengal. But there were still hundreds in the sea who could not be rescued. According to the government, at least ten fishing boats with 80 people were reported missing, but a statement issued by a fisherman's association claimed that as many as 500 boats with over 2,000 crew members were at sea when the cyclone struck. Officials claimed to have rescued about 4,000 people from the sea.

Rescue workers who reached the island of Urir Char on 27 May found 1,500 survivors cowering in a building that had withstood the violent storm. The Air Force and the Navy had mounted a massive rescue and relief operation and begun dropping cans of drinking water for survivors in remote areas. Naval vessels and other boats picked up hundreds of people from the sea and took them to hospitals, and also ferried food and other emergency supplies to the victims. But relief measures and medicine supplies were far from adequate. The government machinery, both civil and military, was overworked. No one seemed prepared to handle an operation of such a scale. Helicopters engaged in relief work went also overburdened. The affected areas, including Urir Char, were still without drinking water. Survivors were asking for food (preferably cooked), match boxes, kerosene oil and fuel. The people are in need of building material, too. Relief agencies provided them with



Above, queuing up for relief; below, a scene of wreckage

corrugated iron sheets but these were of little use without other materials like wires, nails, etc.

Thousands were crowded into relief camps, roughed it out in the open sea, used mangroves as temporary shelters. The opposition in Bangladesh accused the administration of not properly warning the people about the approaching cyclone. The facts, however, are different. Forty-eight hours before the storm lashed the coastal belt, Radio Bangladesh had broadcast special hourly bulletins on the danger. Diarrhoea and other diseases have broken out in a number of relief camps, already claiming nearly 100 lives. The places affected by the diseases include Urir Char, Sonagazi, Companygunj, Nabagram, Char Gangchil, Char Clarke and Sandwip

On 28 May, international aid began flowing into the shattered nation. Neighbouring India rushed medical and food supplies, as the USA made 65,000 dollars immediately available to the relief effort. The Indian Red Cross Society offered 1.2 million takas for the reconstruction of damaged houses, and the British government 50,000 pounds as emergency relief.

SPECIAL REPORT

A Mission of Humanity

It was an unprecedented gesture. Never in the past had two Asian nations rushed instantly to the succour of another in deep distress; never before was the expression of solidarity for the victims of a cyclone so immediate, spontaneous and forthcoming. The visit of India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lanka's President Jayewardene on 2 June to Bangladesh to console the families of those who died or lost property in the cyclone and their assurance of help to General Ershad broke new ground in South Asian cooperation. A picture report by Aloke Mitra.



Gen Ershad with Rajiv Gandhi at Urir Char



Above: Rajiv Gandhi, Gen Ershad and President Jayewardene at a camp in Urir Char and below, Rajiv Gandhi distributing relief



QUEST

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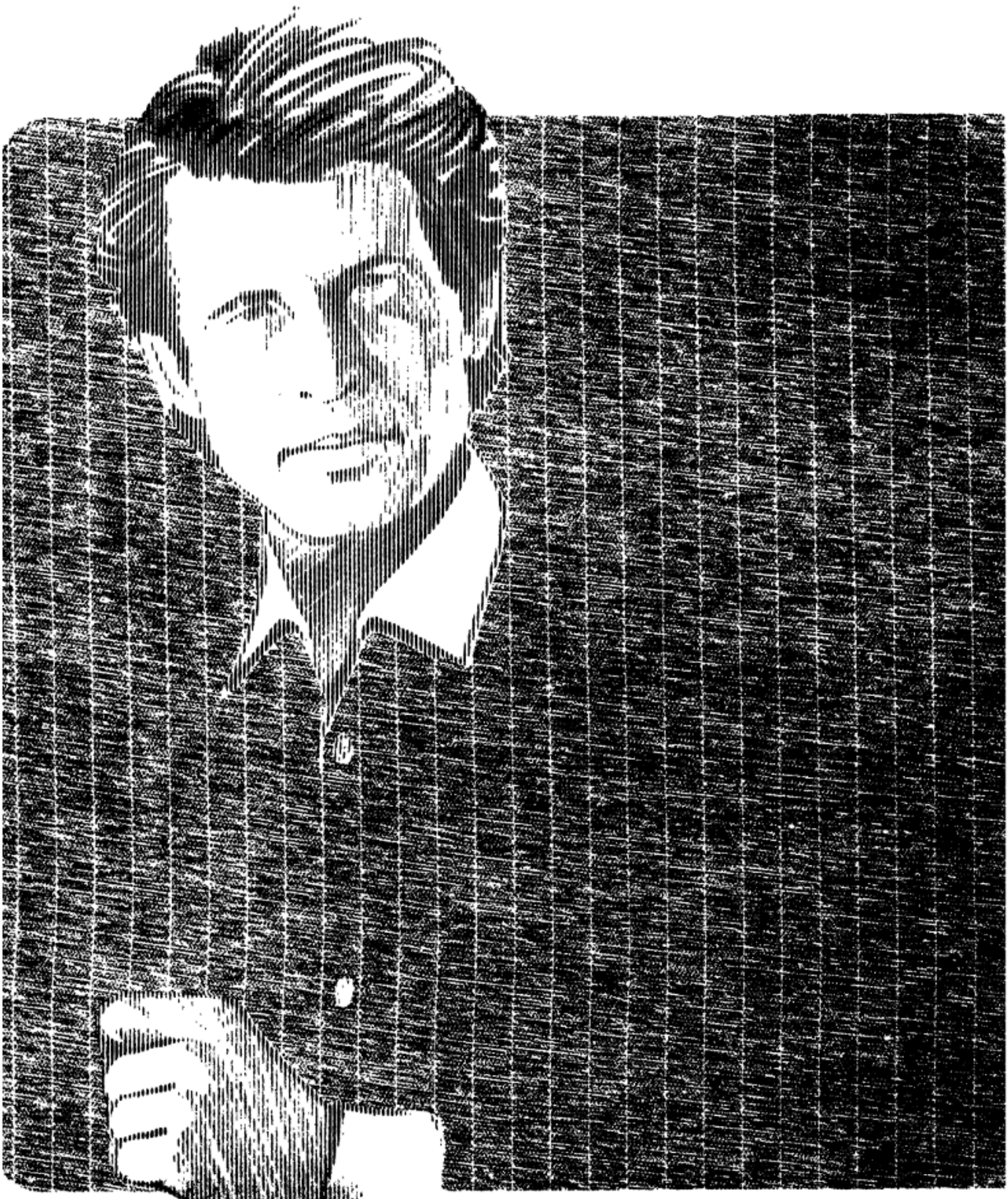
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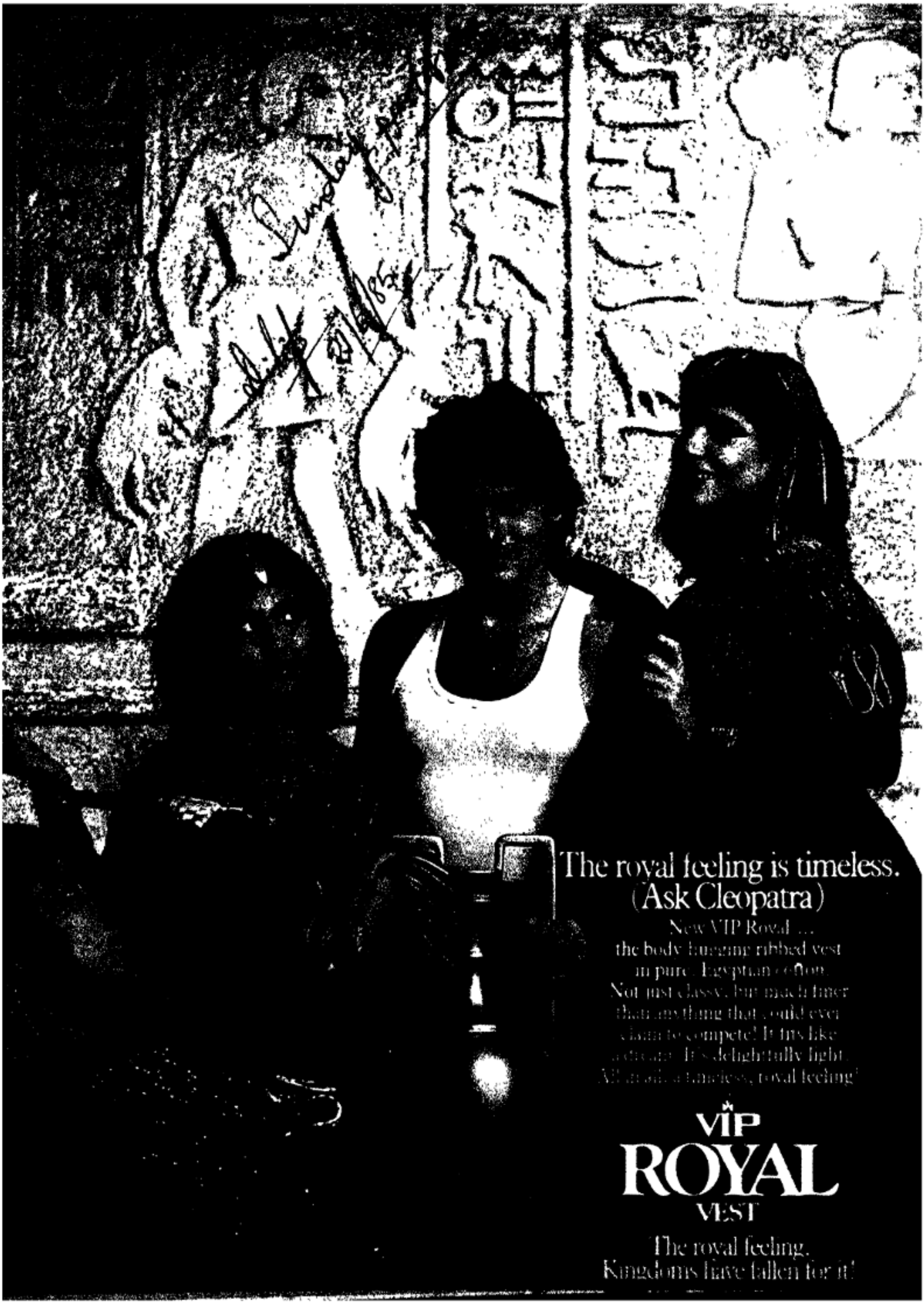
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SPECIAL REPORT

Have Banks Lost Rs 10 Crores in 45 Days?

The RBI's innovative scheme to raise the interest rate on new deposits misfires

For seven glorious weeks, it was boom time for the domestic bank depositor. In a circular dated 6 April, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided "in the public interest," to raise substantially the interest on deposits. In what was described as an "innovative experiment in competitive banking," the RBI stipulated a maximum ceiling of eight per cent as the interest rate on new deposits. Short term deposits ranging from 15 days to 364 days could now attract eight per cent interest, as against the previous three per cent (for 15 to 45 days), four per cent (for 46 to 90 days) and 6.5 per cent (for 91 days to 6 months). In a bid to mop up excessive liquidity, the RBI inaugurated this scheme in its golden jubilee year, in the hope that competitiveness among banks and cost efficiency would increase.

Surprisingly, however, the scheme was withdrawn 45 days later, leaving a large number of banks bewildered as to what the RBI was really up to. That banks were acutely worried about their profitability under the 6 April scheme, was evident. The Indian Banks Association (IBA), the apex body for the industry, indeed made it clear that the eight per cent ceiling on interest rates would certainly be detrimental to most banks, especially the public sector banks already operating on shoestring profits in India. In fact, since the RBI had only recommended an outer limit of 8 per cent, the IBA, at a meeting on 8 April of its 85 members, stipulated that a uniform interest rate should be followed—that is one per cent higher than the existing rate but lower than the outer limit of eight per cent as recommended by the RBI. This was done to "ensure that no deposit is lost to the bank for reasons like another scheduled bank giving a higher rate than what had been suggested by the IBA." The message was loud and clear—no infighting among the member banks which would lead to deposit grabbing.

But this was a message few banks did not want listen to. Some banks like the bank of Madurai Private Limited and Bank of America, while not contravening IBA's decision directly, began to advertise the new RBI rates. Advertisements announced the eight per cent rate applicable for any period, from 15 to 364 days. Since the IBA ruling on deposits over six months was also eight per cent, these advertisements 'conformed' through back-door methods to the IBA regulation. Said a foreign banker, "The IBA is not a statutory body. It's the RBI and the finance ministry which make the laws. We were playing by the rules and we wanted to attract new deposits. What's wrong with that?" Nothing, except that it left a lot of other member banks of the IBA discontented. Concurs J.S Varshneya, chairman, Punjab National Bank, "This strategy increased the nervousness among the other banks as it was thought that diversion of deposits would result." Concornered, the IBA ultimately decided towards the end of April that the rate of eight per cent would be equally applicable to all its members.

Unfortunately, what the RBI failed to see was that this new interest rate instead of attracting new deposits and mopping up the excessive liquidity in circulation, would merely result in the wholesale transfer of current and saving accounts into short term deposits. Effectively, this meant that a bank would be paying a higher rate of interest on the capital already available with it. A spokesman of the Punjab and Sind Bank admitted that over 80 per cent of the deposits under this innovative scheme were from old accounts. "We were forced to shift them to new deposits otherwise we would have lost a lot of valuable customers," he said.

A rough calculation made by Punjab National Bank, the leading bank of the IBA in Delhi, estimated that of the total Rs 75,000 crores deposited in banks, over 15 per cent, that is Rs 15,000 crores was in the form of current accounts, on which no interest is paid. Even if there was a conservative 10 per cent diversion, over Rs 120 crores would have to be paid as interest alone on eight per cent. Whereas, even if 20 per cent of the Rs 12,000 crores present in savings account was diverted to 15-day deposits, it would have amounted to a payment of Rs 45 crores as interest. Normally, a five per cent interest on savings account is calculated twice a year, on the minimum balance in an account, from the 10th to the 31st of any given month. It was also estimated that if deposits of maturities up to a year would be transferred into 15-day accounts at compound interest rates, it would mean another Rs 20 to 25 crores, as interest paymemt. Admits a representative of Banque Nationale de Paris, "It was a cruel joke to play on the banks." A spokesman from the RBI countered: "Reverting to lower interest rates on short term deposits at eight per cent from long term deposits accruing nine to 11 per cent would have meant a saving of over Rs 70 crores. Plus the banks would have a lot of funds at their disposal." But indications from most banks point out that they would have ultimately paid a whopping Rs 250 crores as interest alone. Even if a Rs 70 crore savings was made, the estimated loss of Rs 180 crores would have wiped out the profits of the industry, whch in 1983-84 stood at over Rs 110 crores. Given these statistics there was no option for the RBI except to revoke the scheme.

Explained Bimal Jalan, secretary, banking, and now chief economic adviser to the Prime Minister, "The scheme did not work and it was better that it was revised than not having been revised at all. I regard the recent decision of the RBI as a courageous act." But nevertheless, the RBI was perfectly aware of the limitations under which Indian banks operate. The earning capacity of banks is limited by the compulsory, statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and the cash reserve ratio (CRR) and the rates of interest imposed by the RBI. In addition, public sector banks are forced to lend to socially preferred categories, further reducing their profitability. Moreover, the RBI is not ignorant of the fact that over a fifth of the resources of Indian banks, particularly public sector banks, is used for commercial lendings at commercial rates of interest.

In all fairness, it must be pointed



The Reserve Bank of India, Delhi

Rajesh Kumar

out that the RBI proceeded on a sound principle. After all, abroad short term loans have proved to be immensely successful. Agrees Jalan, "It would only be natural that most people would favour liquidity rather than tying down their capital in fixed deposits for years. It is unfortunate that this scheme did not work in this way." The RBI in its 8 April statement had "hoped that individual banks would so fix the rates as to safeguard the current and savings account and simultaneously bring about a better portfolio management." Obviously, the RBI recognised the need to restructure interest rates, especially in the face of spiralling interest being offered by companies, secured debentures and other financial assets. Moreover, there has been an escalation of banking funds available in the call-money-market—a fact that the RBI well recognised. Banks like the State Bank of India and a few other banks, have enough funds to circulate in the inter-bank-money market, which they can lend out at 10 per cent interest. Thus, for banks which are chronic borrowers from the call money market, it made sound economic sense to utlise the RBI rules and pay a lower interest at eight per cent.

It was, therefore, not surprising that some banks splashed advertisements soliciting new deposits. Indeed, some foreign banks stipulated within the confines of their offices a minimum deposit of Rs 10,000 before opening new accounts. Says a highly placed official from PNB, "These foreign banks want to do as little as possible and earn profits as much as possible." Nevertheless, some banks realised that this scheme was not going to last and added a 'subject to change' in fine print, in case the regulations changed.

And change they did. Even as SBI and other banks prominently advertised the new rate across the pages of major dailies, the RBI, issued a press note slashing down the rates. Effective from 27 May, the RBI's new directive fixed the rate at three per cent for maturities of 15 to 45 days and four per cent for maturities of 46 to 90 days (thus making these rates lower even from the IBA's ruling). However, in the case of maturities of 91 days and above but lower than six months, the RBI has marginally hiked up the IBA rate to 6.5 per cent, while the eight per cent slab would continue on deposits over six months but less than a year. Most banks had no idea that rates had changed. As J.C. Mehta, public relations manager, SBI, said, "It was only through the newspaper reports that we realised that the rates had been changed." When the RBI had issued the press note on 25 May, SBI and PNB were still accepting deposits till 27 May at the old rate of interest. If the banks were confused, it was the depositor who really did not know what was happening to his money. With RBI's decision being revoked by the IBA and the subsequent alterations, one depositor even decided to send a letter to the finance minister, asking him to make one decision and stick by it.

While the governor of the RBI, R.N. Malhotra had stated that "these changes were being made as commercial banks had not taken to the scheme in its true perspective and that some of the banks were managing their 15-day deposits like current accounts, many insiders are of the opinion that he had been compelled to revoke the rates as many of the chairmen of the banks were going to take up the issue with the finance minister on 28 May. Though actual calculations are yet to be made on the amount of money to be given as interest, a finance ministry source ruefully adds that "it could result in a loss of about Rs 10 crores." Surely, if the RBI wants to attract more funds as new deposits, it would do better to reorganise this industry on an efficient service-oriented footing first and think about investment-oriented industry later.

Mekhla Chandra, New Delhi

POLITICS

Vasantdada Patil Quits

Before the high command asked him to resign

When the judgement against Abdul Rehman Antulay was announced in January 1982, Vasantdada Patil, then an AICC(I) general secretary, had made a sarcastic comment on the telephone to R.K. Dhawan, the then Prime Minister's special assistant. "I know there is a shortage of cement in Maharashtra, but is there a shortage of paper too? Why don't you send him (Antulay) some paper from Delhi, so that he can write down his resignation." On the night of 1 June, when Vasantdada Patil himself resigned from the chief ministership of Maharashtra (this was his fourth term), there was no shortage of either cement or paper in Bombay. The exit of the Maratha leader from Sangli had been a foregone conclusion ever since he returned from Delhi to Bombay without meeting the Prime Minister on 28 May. Vasantdada himself had made it known soon after his return from the capital that he was bowing out.

The appointment of Mrs Prabha Rau as the Maharashtra PCC(I) president has been opposed by the chief minister. But not only was a person disliked by him nominated to the top party post in the state, the high command's decision regarding the Bombay Regional Congress(I) Committee (BRCC-I) was a rebuff to Vasantrao Patil. Following the party's defeat in the Bombay civic elections, the BRCC(I) president, Murli Deora, had resigned. He had then made it known that the Shiv Sena had won the elections because of the laxity shown by the chief minister, some of whose statements in the state Assembly had helped the Shiv Sena cause. Soon after the appointment of Prabha Rau was announced, the high command asked Murli Deora not to resign and remain in office. Vasantdada Patil also felt that the Sharad Pawar led Congress(S) was being given more importance than the ruling party leaders.

There has been talk for sometime that in case Sharad Pawar and his followers in Maharashtra joined the Congress(I), Pawar would be made the CM. On 1 June, at the passing out parade of the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakvasla near Pune, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi surprised everybody by suddenly taking the Congress(S) MP, Suresh Kalmadi, away from the gathering and having a quiet chat with him. The opportunity accorded to Kalmadi was denied to Vasantdada Patil, despite his flying between Pune and Bombay in the Prime Minister's aircraft. The events after 27 May had made it clear that Vasantdada Patil's days as chief minister were numbered. He chose the honourable way out and resigned before being asked to quit.

Vasantdada Patil had been called to Delhi by the high command, which wanted to know the meaning of some of the statements made by him recently. He had criticised the holding of two posts simultaneously by partymen. The high command wanted to know if Vasantdada's reference was to Rajiv Gandhi holding the dual posts of Congress president and the leader of the Congress(I) parliamentary party (by virtue of which he is the Prime Minister). The high command pointed out that in the recent meeting of the AICC(I), held in Delhi on 4 and 5 May and in the Congress Working Committee meetings held prior to it, Vasantdada had not made known his views on this subject.



Vasantdada Patil — Durgaprasad

In fact, the election of Rajiv Gandhi as the party chief by the CWC(I) on 13 November 1984 had been ratified by the Delhi session of the AICC(I). If anyone in the party had any objection to the holding of dual posts by Rajiv Gandhi, then he could have used the party forum in early May, the high command sources pointed out. On 28 May, Vasantdada Patil left for Bombay in a huff. Had he stayed back for a day, he may have been able to meet the Prime Minister. But the delay in getting the appointment with the PM and the nominations in the state by the high command had upset the veteran politician, and he left the capital by the evening flight at 5.30 pm. Before leaving for Bombay, Vasantdada Patil met a number of journalists. His answers showed that he was angry and humiliated because of his inability to meet Rajiv Gandhi. Among the questions asked were:

"Have you met Rajiv Gandhi? Are you satisfied with your visit to Delhi? Is your mission accomplished? Is the controversy over?" And his answer to most of them was: "I don't know."

In the spate of the "I don't know" answers, one thing which became clear was that Vasantdada Patil would not visit Delhi as the Maharashtra CM in the near future. His resignation on the night of 1 June was not unexpected. By resigning now, Vasantdada has ensured one thing: that the mantle would not pass from him to Sharad Pawar. For one, Pawar is yet to join the Congress(I). The Indian Congress (Socialist) is holding a camp at Nagpur on 27 and 28 June to decide on the question of a merger with the Congress(I). Sharad Pawar was in Europe when Vasantdada Patil resigned. The question of Pawar succeeding Patil, therefore, did not arise. Whether Pawar will be able to become the chief minister of Maharashtra in the near future is a million-dollar question. His intention of joining the ruling party is clear. He has met Rajiv Gandhi on a couple of occasions in the recent past. His close lieutenant, Suresh Kalmadi, an ex-air force pilot whose primary interests are in business these days, has met Arun Singh, the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary a number of times.

But there is confusion within the Congress(S). In the last days of May, while K.P. Unnikrishnan, a senior Congress(S) leader, told newsmen in Guwahati that the party will not merge with the Congress(I), the very next day there was a press statement by Kalmadi from Pune asserting that the merger would be decided at the Nagpur meeting. While the Maharashtra unit may go along with Sharad Pawar, the units in Assam and Kerala, where many veteran Congressmen are in the Congress(S), do not share Sharad Pawar's views regarding the merger with the Congress(I).

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

FOREIGN POLICY

Rajiv Gandhi's Diplomatic Coup

India improves relations with her immediate neighbours

On 1 June, Rajiv Gandhi completed seven months as the Prime Minister of India. The problems at home may not have been solved in these months, but in the field of diplomacy, the young Prime Minister has achieved something which has no parallel in the last two decades. The visit of the Sri Lanka President, Junius Jayewardene, to New Delhi on the eve of Rajiv Gandhi's western tour was in itself a major achievement for India's diplomacy. The joint flight undertaken by President Jayewardene and Rajiv Gandhi to Dhaka on 2 June, to express sympathy with the cyclone affected people of Bangladesh, was a diplomatic triumph. The joint aerial survey of the devastated areas by the Prime Minister of India and the Presidents of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh was an example of regional cooperation in South Asia which has set a precedent.

When Rajiv Gandhi reaches Washington in the second week of June, he would be going with the image of a person who has the goodwill of President Jayewardene and Bangladesh's President H M Ershad. So far, India has been portrayed in the west as a medium-power in South Asia who is disliked by her immediate neighbours. After 2 June, this image has been changed. Pakistan, which has many friends in Washington, had relied upon the cooperation of other South Asian nations to tarnish India's image in the past. But recently, things have been reversed. Pakistan stands isolated in the subcontinent today. While India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were setting an example in regional cooperation, Pakistan has intensified its belligerence from across India's western borders.

On 31 May the Indian foreign office had to summon the Pakistan ambassador in New Delhi and hand over a letter of protest against Pakistan Air Force's violation of Indian air space in the Jammu and Kashmir region. Reports of Pakistan army firings at Indian outposts in the Ladakh region (from across the line of actual control) came in while Rajiv Gandhi, Jayewardene and H M. Ershad went round the cyclone-affected areas of Bangladesh.

Rajiv Gandhi's return from the Soviet Union on 26 May saw him getting busy with preparations for the western trip. The trip which he is undertaking in June is significant. His first halt is Cairo. It will be after a lapse of over a decade that an Indian Prime Minister will visit Egypt. The relations between India and Egypt had soured in the Indira Gandhi and Sadat days. Now there has been a thaw and since Hosni Mobarak became the President of Egypt, there have been many ministerial level visits exchanged between the two countries. The visit of the Prime Minister will renew traditional ties between India and Egypt, the co-founders of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Paris, the second capital to be visited by the Prime Minister, holds



Rajiv Gandhi

promise of increased Indo-French cooperation both in defence and in industry. The involvement of French diplomats in the Coomar Narain spy scandal had dampened the spirit of Indo-French relations, but the ties seem to be getting back to normal again. Rajiv Gandhi has made known his opposition to the American proposal for 'Star Wars.' President Mitterand of France would find this to be a common ground for discussion.

India and France have a lot in common. While France is a western power, it has been differing with the USA on various issues in the past. France has a self-reliant defence industry, which is suitable for India's needs. (Most western countries have collaboration agreements with the USA, which becomes an impediment in bilateral cooperation. When Sweden wanted to sell Viggen aircraft to the Indian Air Force, the US tie up had come in the way). The visit to France comes at a time when Indo-British ties have taken a sudden nosedive. The British, irked over India's decision not to go in for the purchase of Westland helicopters, have recently imposed a cut in their aid to India and indefinitely put off the ministerial level meetings of the Indo British economic committee. France can offer India almost everything this country can look for in the UK. To begin with, the substitute for the Westland helicopters can be found in France. The inauguration of the Festival of India apart, the Prime Minister's French visit is likely to yield rich dividends.

Algeria, where the Prime Minister will go after his trip to France, too, has not received an Indian Prime Minister for over a decade. Algeria and India agree on many issues. Even on the question of the Polisario movement in Morocco, the two countries have a common perspective. Last year, a delegation of the Polisario visited India as guests of the Congress(I) foreign relations department. A representative of the Polisario has been stationed in New Delhi, though neither *de facto* nor *de jure* recognition has been accorded. There was strong lobbying by Morocco to get the Prime Minister to Rabat in place of Algiers. A Delhi businessman who represents Morocco's business interests in India, tried his level best either to get the Prime Minister to visit Rabat or to cancel the trip to Algiers. Morocco has not been kind to India in the past. The humiliation meted out to the Indian delegation at the Islamic summit at Rabat in the Seventies has not been forgotten. When Indira Gandhi died, Morocco did not send a high level delegation to her funeral. When despite these factors, the Delhi businessman tried to use his proximity with the Prime Minister to alter the plans regarding Algeria, he was rebuffed. These facts are know in Algiers. Even before meeting the Algerian President Rajiv Gandhi has made a major diplomatic achievement.

When the youngest-ever chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement reaches Washington with the image of being an Indian Prime Minister whose efforts at promoting regional cooperation are being taken seriously by the neighbours, better Indo-US ties can be looked forward to.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

NEW DELHI

The Public Views a Martyr

Indira Gandhi's residence becomes a museum

Mrs Gandhi lives in the bloodstains on the concrete pathway between 1, Safdarjung Road and 1, Akbar Road. It has now turned grey and is encased, ironically, in bullet-proof glass. Around it are 30-odd circles in white paint, marked "BC" (bullet casing) and "SG" (sten gun)—silent signs of the bullets that killed Mrs Gandhi. A red bulb burns on the empty sentry-box where one of her assassins waited for her that morning. The approach to the spot is blocked by a rectangular platform in green mosaic, on which lie flowers and stand two guards of the Delhi Armed Police (DAP), specially liveried and coached on the sequence of events of 31 October 1984. As the steady queue of visitors files past, they go over the happenings again and again. "There stood Pradhanmantriji.. and from here and here (pointing in two directions) came the bullets and there she fell, you can see her blood under that glass box... that is where she died."

That is where Mrs Gandhi lives most, the spot on which she fell dead The rest of 1, Safdarjung Road, where she lived from 1964 to 1977 and again from 1980 to 1984, and which has now been converted into the Indira Gandhi Memorial, is more like a "good living" exhibition put up by the Trade Fair Authority of India (TFAI) in New Delhi's Pragati Maidan. In some ways, the memorial only adds to the enigma that was Mrs Gandhi. The memorial has not unravelled those mysteries. Indira Gandhi, the private person, remains impenetrable.

The journey begins with a metal detector check at the gates with a larger than life portrait of a beaming Mrs Gandhi, as if welcoming visitors. Then follows a glance at her life right from the time she was a baby to the time her ashes were deposited on the Himalayas by her son. There are picture panels (quite reminiscent of the one at the "Son of India" pavilion) where some rare photographs are displayed. There is, for example, a photograph of the young Indira in two-tone and another one on the beach with Feroze Gandhi, her husband.

Of the rooms that have been opened to public view, in 1, Safdarjung Road, her study, where only her immediate family members were allowed brings Mrs Gandhi most readily to life. Several paintings hang on the walls and the book shelves are stacked with books ranging from Ian Fleming's *Moonraker* to volumes on oriental art and spiritualism. There are a variety of chairs and a soft leather stretcher overlooking the green lawns at the back of her house On her table lie a pair of spectacles, a diary and some daintily arranged pens, pencils and rubberbands. "Move on, move on," say the guards on duty. A few steps away is Mrs Gandhi's drawing room where she received her guests. The tapestry is mainly green—a green carpet, green sofa sets, a couple of them in red and mauve. Fresh flowers are arranged on the low tables and on the walls, there are paintings from the Rajputana, Gandhara, and Oriental schools of art. Her dining room, in the midst of which is an oblong, ten-chair table, is well decorated. On the shelves all around stand pieces of sculpture. There are more paintings on the wall and beside the table, a huge elephant tusk standing against the wall. Next to the dining room is a tiny, L-shaped waiting room, with settees and low stools On the wooden shelves to the left are books, the only ones visible being the nine volumes of the *Bachchan Rachnavali* Right above it is a photograph of Nehru, without his cap. It is here that the very familiar last words of the late Prime Minister can be heard There are microphones hidden in the bushes that fall along that path from 1, Safdarjung to 1, Akbar Road. Just where the path begins, a small screen for showing the different aspects of Mrs Gandhi's life has been erected and beside it are two outhouses which the TFAI now occupies It was the TFAI which was entrusted with the job of converting the house into a memorial. According to some TFAI hands on duty, it was done in 15 days which is why it looks a hurriedly finished job, especially the photosection. The TFAI is still busy giving the final touches to the memorial. There will be, according to some TFAI sources, additions to the memorial. But the bedroom, the meditation room and other parts of the house will not be opened to the public in keeping with Mrs Gandhi's strong desire for privacy during her life.

Near the exit is the spot where the bullets felled her. Once, Akbar Road from there is only a breath away. It stands sealed, sparkling white and silent in the shade of huge trees, overlooking the small distance Mrs Gandhi could not cover.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi



A *samadhi* to commemorate the spot where Indira Gandhi was shot dead Ranjit Kumar

COINAGE

Shortchanged

Large-scale imports to deal with the scarcity of coins

Where has all the change gone? The public, facing daily the shortage of coins does not know. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which distributes millions of pieces of change all over the country is unable to comprehend the reasons and calls it an "artificial shortage." Even the government, pointing out the increased production of coins over the years, has been wondering where the coins find their way from the 1,755 depots that the RBI runs. The answer lies in large scale hoarding and some amount of melting, a fact that was recently admitted by the government in Parliament.

After years of vacillation, the government has decided to import for the first time, minted coins, to augment the supply from the three mints in India. On 14 May, the minister of state for finance, Janardhan Poojary announced in the Lok Sabha that 2,000 million pieces of coins (worth Rs 143 crores) would be imported to meet the current shortage in the country. Though it was not announced, it is believed that all imports are to be completed within this year itself and the deal was being finalised with four countries, including Great Britain, South Korea and Canada.

Before allowing the import of coins, the existing legislation, the Coinage Act of 1906 which provides that only coins minted in India could be legal tender, had to be amended. During a debate on the Amendment Bill of the Coinage Act, the finance minister refuted criticism from opposition MP's that in such imports India's prestige would receive a setback. He said that coin imports would be a "short-term" and a "one-time-measure." The main objective, he added, was for the imports to act as a disincentive to unscrupulous elements hoarding coins for selling them at a premium. He announced that such hoarding of coins in unreasonable quantities was shortly going to be made a cognisable offence.

Said Wazir Khan, deputy secretary, ministry of finance: "The decision to import a substantial amount of coins into the country will not only support the production of coins at home, it will force hoarders of coins out of business." According to him, the target for indigenous production of coins in 1985-86 was likely to exceed 2,000 million pieces, a substantial increase from the previous year's production figures. In 1982-83, 660 million pieces were produced, in 1983-84, 1,063 million pieces and 1984-85, 1,356 million coins were produced at the three mints in Bombay, Calcutta and Hyderabad. It was in 1982 that the government first felt the pinch of coin scarcity and evolved a long-term strategy to face the crisis. The new plan envisaged the following: the blueprint for a

COMPUTERS

Late for CLASS

Was it necessary to import computers for schools? The government with its penchant for bringing computers to the classroom started the Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools (CLASS) in April last year. Altogether 250 schools were shortlisted for the pilot project and 42 resource centres were established (the number of schools having computers is likely to become 1,000 in 1985). However, the wheels of CLASS are at a standstill at the very threshold of the extensive computerisation plans.

The computers—the BBC micros—were supplied by a bankrupt British firm, Acorn Computers Ltd., at a higher price than available in the international market. A significant question that has been overlooked is why we have to go in for foreign machines at all? There are many Indian firms which manufacture equally good equipment. A positive answer appears a closely guarded secret of the authorities at the Department of Electronics (DoE), the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the British Overseas Department Administration (BODA) and Acorn Computers Ltd., who have maintained silence.

The reasons for the failure of the Rs 300-crore CLASS project are numerous. The official reply for the delay is that the computers arrived only in late December when the students were preparing for the examinations. Also, it has been revealed that there were no systematic implementation plans. There was an absolute lack of coordination and no concrete procedures and schemes were laid down before CLASS was opened. The truth is that NCERT is still trying to evolve a well-integrated strategy to pursue the pilot project. The CLASS project will now envelop the 1985-86 academic year also and the DoE will review the progress in June 1985. However, some logistical problems, that are likely to create trouble have been foreseen but nothing has been done to remove them.

The BBC Micros have been doing fairly well in England. A variety of software are available for the British schools in a special language known as "Logo." A team of teachers was sent to Britain in April for a three months' tour to see how the computers function in the English schools. This team will report back in June.

A refresher course was conducted to re train the teachers because they had "forgotten" everything they learnt in the summer of 1984. An important question in the minds of the people is: will the students find a smart computer terminal on their desks after the vacations are over? Will the children receive better education with the help of computers? The answer being advocated is that in the next 10 or 15 years, computers may change our schools radically and it is time we invested in computers, say the authorities. The NCERT has been offered by 20 indigenous firms to produce software suited to our environment and culture. Standard software packages are already available in subjects like English, physics, chemistry, biology and history. Therefore, CLASS has fairly good prospects in the future to take off smoothly but first the wheels are to be oiled and geared properly.

In India, the computer revolution has just begun but efforts to bring them into classrooms have not been successful. It is high time the bureaucracy broke the silence about the still-born CLASS project which has been bogged down by delays and red tape.

Namita Rastogi, New Delhi

20-crore new mint to be constructed at NOIDA, New Delhi would be approved, 22 sophisticated coin presses would replace older presses at mints, production would be stepped up to the maximum and mints changed from a 48-hour week to a 54-hour week. In spite of these steps, the coin shortage continued. The queues outside the RBI of people wanting to exchange currency notes for small change became longer. So serious became the shortage and persistent the demand, that transport corporations, private enterprises and hotels evolved their own systems to deal with the situation. In Bombay, New Delhi and Calcutta, the transport corporations began to issue money coupons instead of coins and grocery shops would return anything from a chewing gum to a postage stamp instead of the elusive 20-paisa or 50-paisa bit.

While thousands wring their hands over the shortage of change, others have capitalised on the coin crisis and proliferated in clandestine selling of large quantities of small change. According to officials at the RBI, the coin shortage has given rise to a new source of employment for hundreds of unscrupulous persons. Every morning coin collectors line up outside the RBI office to collect pouches of change of Rs 20 each. Though officials at the RBI have instructions not to issue change to one customer more than once a day, it was learnt that the RBI officials sometimes connive with hoarders and issue more change than the stipulated amount.

The coins are sold at a 25 per cent commission. At Chandni Chowk market or the Sadar Bazar for instance, dealers openly sell pouches of coins at a profit. A 100-rupee note changes hands for 85 one-rupee coins. Said Hira Nand, a dealer in coins and damaged currency notes since 1960: "There is no acute shortage of coins as is being projected by the government. The shortage is only at the surface and exists because the RBI has restricted the issue of change to only Rs 20. Let the RBI announce that there will be open exchange of currency notes to coins, then the shortage will disappear." Will it not run coin dealers like him out of business? He replied: "Why should it? There will still be those people who do not want to stand in long queues at the RBI counters and will come to us. At least it will end the blackmarketing that shopkeepers and traders indulge in."

Already, according to officials at the finance ministry, the announcement of the government to import large quantities of coins has resulted in hoarders releasing their stocks into the market. At one meeting of the special committee which has been set up to study the coin shortage this year, it was disclosed that 25-paisa coins are back in circulation in Bombay and Madras. The committee is presently examining reports of melting done by persons of the earlier copper-nickel coins. To restrict the melting of coins for the manufacture of fountain pen nibs or motor spare parts, as has been alleged, the committee will be studying the possibility of further reducing the metal content of coins, so that the value of metal content is less than their face value. The committee is hoping that increased production from Indian mints and imports of coins from abroad will change the scene shortly. Said M. Venugopal, manager of Bank of India, "We welcome the decision to import coins. It will be a step towards ending large scale blackmarketeering and hoarding of coins. At least, we will not have to send back our customers without change."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

BIHAR

Big, Bad Wolves of Hazaribagh

Eighty children killed by wolves

The Indian wolf is described as a "timid animal, little bigger than the village dog." Less than a thousand of them survive in India and are, therefore, protected animals. In Bihar, however, their attacks on young children are forcing the forest authorities to take desperate measures.

Wolves have been playing havoc near Hazaribagh, a small town in Bihar. Altogether 82 children have been killed and eaten by wolves during the last five years. About 60 others have been seriously injured. The situation has driven the Bihar Forest Department (BFD) to take action against the maneaters. Even the Border Security Force was called in to kill the wolves. Major Sukhvir Singh, a crack shot, of the Punjab Regiment, was also employed for a week. Finally, the BFD sought the government's permission to requisition army helicopters and snipers to shoot the wolves. In between, *hakkas* were tried, in which villagers beat drums in the forest while closing in on the hideouts and thus led the animals to the waiting hunters.

Though 12 wolves have been shot dead recently; the killings of children continue. In the past five months, 13 children were killed and many injured. Wolves on several occasions have entered houses and lifted children from the courtyard. On one occasion, a wolf seized a one-and-a-half-year-old boy when he was being breast-fed. Recently, a wolf snatched away a child from her mother's lap in broad daylight. What has turned the wolves into maneaters? After all, wolves abound in Palamau, in Bihar, in the Rann of Kutch and in Uttar Pradesh, but there are no reports of wolves killing children there. Only in Karnataka for a brief period have children been killed by wolves.



An Indian wolf

Forest department officials and wildlife experts suggest that the wolves in Hazaribagh have turned maneaters since their natural prey is in short supply, because of the large scale deforestation in the area. The theory, however, suffers from a major weakness. The *Hazaribagh District Gazetteer* published in 1917 and edited by E. Lister, discusses the menace of the maneating wolves in the area. In fact, the *Gazetteer* records that in 1911, 44 persons were killed by the wolves and the government awarded Rs 50 to hunters for each wolf they killed. Seventy-four years later in 1985, the reward has gone up to Rs 5,000.

There could have been no shortage of natural prey because of deforestation 75 years ago. No scientific study has been made till date and thus,

there is still no rational explanation available. As a result, forest officials have been caught in a web of their own making. Intitially, they blamed the Hazaribagh burial ground, where, they alleged, wolves dug out bodies and acquired a taste of human flesh. They, however, have pointed out that wolves eat their ownkills and do not touch carcasses killed by other animals. Working on the premise that it is the shortage of natural prey that is driving wolves into human habitats, forest officials are trying to wean the wolves away from human flesh. Goats are tied up as bait at different places and every time a goat is killed, a fresh goat replaces it. Not surprisingly, some of goats offered to the wolves, are actually being taken away by the villagers.

Some of the villagers, however, are clearly taking advantage of the situation. On one occasion, a villager has been caught while falsely claiming that his daughter had been killed by the wolves. He wanted the compensation of Rs 10,000 offered by the government for each person killed by wild animals. In most cases, the forest department carrries out an independent investigation and reports to the police. Very often, the reports mention that no trace of the remains was found. Even in these cases, compensation is duly paid. Over Rs five lakhs have been disbursed so far, while three more lakhs will be given as compensation soon. Mr S.A.H.A.A. 'Tutu' Imam, a noted hunter and wildlife expert, has filed a case in the Supreme Court maintaining that the killer is actually a leopard. He quotes extensively from books on wildlife to point out that unlike leopards or other animals of the cat family, wolves do not have eyes to see in the dark; that they do not weigh more than 20 kg and they hunt in packs. All these tell-tale signs, he claims, are missing in Hazaribagh.

Forest officials, however, point out that eyewitness accounts, spoor marks and post-mortem reports of the wolves killed indicate that the man-eaters are indeed wolves. There are between five to ten in the area, said forest officials who believe that the menace will continue till at least next year. Very soon, the monsoons will begin, when action against the maneaters will be almost impossible to take.

Uttam Sengupta, Hazaribagh

MARUTI UDYOG

Now, the "People's Jeep"

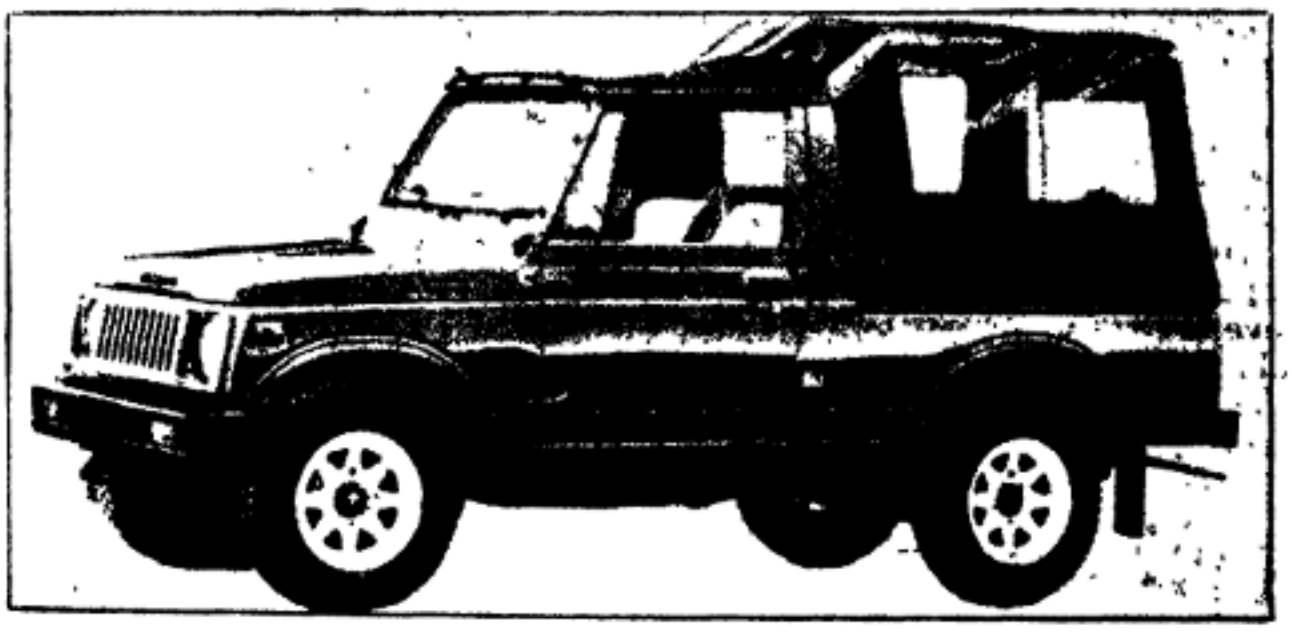
Scarcely had Maruti Udyog announced the launch of its new four-wheeled drive vehicle, "Gypsy," when it was flooded with enquiries and letters warning against its possible blackmarketing. One such letter published in the *Times of India,* dated 16 May warning against this states "...it is therefore suggested that Maruti Udyog should allow only one application from one family and also should ban its free transfer right from the beginning...." The fears are not unwarranted, keeping in mind that the firm intends to produce just 2,000 vehicles in the first year of production, 1985-86.

As was the case with the Maruti-800, the company officials expect to "revolutionise the market" with the introduction of the "Gypsy" which is coming into a market dominated mainly by the Jeep manufactured by the Mahindras and the Jonga. The Maruti vehicle is expected to be priced at around Rs 60,000 which is a little below the price of the competitors.

The four cylinder engine with a four-stroke cycle has a fuel efficiency of 14 km to the litre under test conditions. Under normal driving conditions it is expected to give a little less at about 10-11 km per litre. The Gypsy has a maximum speed of 110 km per hour. The production is expected to begin around November and bookings will begin in early July. Just as in the case of its earlier vehicles, the Maruti Gypsy will initally be totally foreign-made. It has been proposed that by the end of the first year it should be at least 20 per cent indigenous. The Maruti-800 is still plagued by problems about indigenisation. "All three factors—quality, quantity and time—are posing problems," said a company official.

The Gypsy was first tested in India last year in the trans-Himalayan expedition from Khardungla near Leh to the Pangsu pass at the Burma border. "If it impressed the army, we have no doubts that it will impress the market," claimed a Maruti executive. The firm has already received enquiries from para-military forces like the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The firm is also trying to promote it as a pick-up vehicle for agricultural produce. Enquires from the "young-in-crowd" are also pouring in every day, they claim. The four colours being offered intially have been finalised keeping the targeted clientele in mind. The colours are: red, white, "jungle green," and "racing blue."

The production of the eight-seater Gypsy will be raised to 8,000 in 1986-87, but even then its production would comprise just ten per cent of the total production. The firm has already reached a capacity of 4,500 vehicles per month, which consists mainly of the Maruti-800, with the production of vans and deluxe cars being varied as per the demand. At this rate, the company is expected to complete the year with a total volume of 50,000 cars as against the figure of 40,000 promised to the government for 1985 86.



The Maruti Gypsy

A Special Correspondent, New Delhi.

GUJARAT

Assault on Excise Officials

While the policemen looked the other way

It was one of the biggest anti-tax evasion operations planned by the Central Excise Department, involving 435 officers and men brought in from Kanpur, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Delhi and Bombay. So strict was the secrecy that members of the raiding party had no inkling even when they left Bombay. Their destination was Surat, the textile centre in Gujarat. Newspaper reports had spoken of excise duty evasion running into more than Rs 100 crores, of money being poured into construction and of piles of black money. For the tax sleuths it was a nightmare. Over 60 officials were beaten up by *goondas* hired by shopkeepers and manufacturing units while the Surat police turned a deaf ear to the distress calls for hours.

After the assault by the *goondas* on 24 May, V.P. Singh, union finance minister, telephoned the Gujarat chief minister, Madhavsinh Solanki on 28 May, and reportedly told him to spare no one involved in the attack. Singh had reason to be angry. A day earlier, the Solanki government tried to explain why policemen had not rushed to the taxmen's aid. Despite the fact that the police commissioner of Surat, Man Mohan Mehta, called the raids ill-timed, the Central Excise Department's revenue intelligence wing, acting on the finance minister's orders conducted further checks. At the time of writing, five persons, including three owners of mills and one manager, have been arrested and unaccounted fabrics worth Rs five crores seized.

The 24 May raid was planned meticulously. On reaching Surat, the raiding squad set up a temporary control room and raided the textile market and the nearby areas where about 1,000 shops are located. Some went to Pandesara, on the outskirts of the city. In the beginning, nothing seemed amiss and the taxmen began their work. At 2.30 pm however, the control room received the first SOS message. The taxmen were being attacked by gangs of hired toughs with sticks, rods and acid.

The 435 strong party led by two deputy directors, R. Bhattacharya and T.P. Singhal, which had broken up into smaller units for detailed checks were first attacked near the Ring Road area where most of the textile shops are located. The *goondas* attacking the men raised slogan like "Excise department *hai hai*, Rajiv Gandhi *murdabad*, Rajiv Gandhi *yeh nahin chalega*." The hoodlums, who seemed to be in the pay of the traders, assaulted the taxmen, and snatched away documents, search warrants and incriminating materials they had found. Some excise officials lost their personal belongings too. The documents were destroyed on the spot by the toughs. The attacks were clearly organised. In each case, some 25 to 30 people armed with rods and sticks entered shops being searched by the taxmen who would be identified and beaten up.

What came as a shock was the unhelpful attitude of the local police. As the *goondas* attacked taxmen, an alarm was raised and the police station at Salabatpura was informed. But the police did nothing. The excise team leaders at the control room then rang up their seniors in New Delhi to tell them of their plight. According to reports from Surat, the director of revenue intelligence in Delhi, M.S. Bindra, in turn, informed other top brass in the capital. Finally the Gujarat chief secretary, M. Sivagnanam in Gandhinagar was told to order the Surat police to help the excise men. It was only around ten

Lax Security



Geeta Ram - courtesy Statesman

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his family are seen alighting from Air-India s special aircraft *Annapurna* on his return from the USSR on 26 May. His personal security officer is seen behind him, carrying suitcases in both hands. If something untoward had happened, could the bodyguard have reacted? When Mrs Indira Gandhi was shot dead, her bodyguard Dinesh Bhatt could do nothing to protect her. If a personal security officer has his hands full carrying luggage, can it be said that the security arrangement around the Prime Minister is satisfactory?

pm, about eight hours after the first complaints, that the police moved in, journalists from Surat said.

Far from feeling embarrassed by the Surat policemen's behaviour, the Gujarat government stoutly defended it, and blamed the sleuths for not informing the police in advance. A top civil servant told SUNDAY in Ahmedabad on 27 May that the excise men should have taken the Surat police commissioner into confidence before launching their raids. There was tension in Surat because of the anti-reservation stir and the police were under strain. However, the areas where the searches were conducted were all trouble-free and outside the curfew-bound areas. The police commissioner, Mr Mehta, said that the raids were ill-timed in view of the prevalent situation in the city. Most of the police force was already deployed and the required help could not be provided. He said that the raiding party officials did not tell the police of their operation until it was already under way.

In Ahmedabad on 27 May, the chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki, almost repeated what the police commissioner had said. When asked to explain why the police took so long to send help, the chief minister said that an inquiry would be made. The Surat journalists present claimed that police help was not made available till officials in New Delhi got going. No one in Ahmedabad would say how much time had elapsed between the first alarm about the assault and the moment when the police arrived. Nonetheless, a Gujarat government press communique on 27 May described the Surat reports about the incident as "a totally distorted version." It also made much of the police being kept in the dark, adding that necessary help had since been given. Twelve people had been arrested

The explanations by the government raised even more questions. The police complained that they had not been told beforehand. But secrecy is essential for such operations without which the raids would have become purposeless. The police insisted that they should have been told about the raids beforehand. But excise officials argue that this would have led to a 'leak.' The incident has added an extra dimension to the controversy about police behaviour in Gujarat in recent months.

Although 64 employees were hurt in the assaults, the union finance ministry refused to call off the raids. Searches were resumed, with the police now providing protection. The pressure was kept on. On 29 May, the local police arrested nine more persons in connection with the attacks on excise men. Altogether 37 owners of ten mills in Surat have moved the Gujarat High Court in Ahmedabad to get anticipatory bail. They have taken the step in view of the complaints lodged by excise officials.

While the tax-men were being assaulted by toughs hired by traders and industrialists, the Gujarat government was busy promulgating an ordinance which would give it draconian powers. The Anti-social Activities Preventive Ordinance passed on 26 May is like the National Security Act, but only more convenient to use. The ordinance empowers the state government to order the detention of any anti-social element on the basis of his past record for up to one year. A *goonda* or dangerous person as defined by the provisions under Sections 16, 17 and 22 and also under Section five of the Arms Act can be arrested under the new ordinance. It can also be applied to embezzlers, bootleggers, drug-pushers and pimps. According to Amarsinh Choudhary, the state home minister, the ordinance will not be used for political purposes. In fact, the draft of the ordinance had been in the past discussed with the opposition parties. The minister said that the ordinance would help the authorities to curb the menace of *goondas* in the state effectively and quickly.

There have been allegations, even by the government, that *goondas* were behind the violence in the state during the past 100 days of the anti-reservation stir. The new legislation would come in handy because the police would not be required to produce witnesses or do the paper work needed for justifying the detention of a person under the National Security Act, officials explained. It was also stated that similar legislation existed in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu where it has proved to be very effective. The government will be setting up a three member-board of judges from the Gujarat High Court to supervise the enforcement of the ordinance and ensure that it was not misused.

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad

NEW DELHI

The Demand for Justice

Leprosy victims ask for better treatment

While the renowned Gandhian, Baba Amte was chosen for this year's Indira Gandhi award for his work towards the eradication of leprosy, the lepers in Delhi began an agitation demanding rehabilitation and social equality. A small group of lepers are staging a month-long *dharna* outside the Delhi administration's social welfare department in Timarpur. In view of the prohibitory orders imposed in the capital due to the threatened agitation on the anniversary of "Operation Bluestar," four lepers are on strike at a time, to highlight their demands which have gone largely unnoticed.

There are four million lepers in the country, mainly, in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In Delhi alone, there are over 7,000 lepers including many migrants from the south. Though lepers travel thousands of miles in search of rehabilitation, many of them are jailed for long periods of time. By law, lepers are prohibited from either seeking employment or using public transport. The only alternative, thus, is to beg. And begging only sees them behind bars. Said Govindram, an 80-year-old leper. "I earn a few rupees by begging in the streets. But the police come and lock us up. They demand money before we can be released again." Most lepers are taken to a remand home situated in Shahdara called Seva Kutir, which they refer to as "Danda Kutir" because of the severe beatings they get at the home. While the maximum penalty can be two years' imprisonment, lepers are usually freed after a few days, apparently after the jailers' palms are greased.

The lepers are subjected to antiquated and extremely discriminatory laws. On 15 March 1984, the then union health minister, R. Shankaranand in reply to a question on the eradication of leprosy told the Lok Sabha. "We have repealed the Leprosy Act itself. That should be enough." It was in 1982 that the Leprosy Act of 1898 was repealed by some states and union territories. Besides, insurance companies demand higher premium rates from them and under the election laws, there have to be separate election booths for leprosy patients in their own settlements manned by lepers themselves. Laws debar lepers from inheriting property and land. The agitating lepers in Delhi want these laws to be changed.

The leprosy eradication program-

me is part of the government's 20-point programme, but no concerted effort has been made to take up the cause of lepers. The Swaminathan Committee set up in 1982 to study the problem of leprosy eradication had set a target of treating 4.5 lakh leprosy patients during 1983-84 and to cure 3.25 lakh leprosy patients. The target fell short of expectations. Now, according to workers of the Jagat Mata Kusht Ashram, a recent survey has shown that if rehabilitation at this rate continues it would be 250 years more before leprosy is eradicated in India

Leprosy patients of the Jagat Mata Kusht Ashram placed their demands for proper rehabilitation and free rations at the doorstep of Chief Justice designate, P. N. Bhagwati a few days ago. In the petition they have complained that since they are not allowed to work most of them have no option but to beg, which gets them imprisoned. They have filed several complaints at the social welfare department. "We do not want to improve the facilities of beggars in the capital alone for fear of thousands of lepers converging to Delhi. We have to treat this as a national problem and plans are underway to evolve a scheme to rehabilitate lepers in the country," said an official of the social welfare department. A good explanation, perhaps. But the fact remains that in the guise of restricting the entry of lepers into Delhi, the capital's lepers are being neglected.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi



Leprosy patients demonstrating outside the social welfare department in Delhi

SRI LANKA

Island of Terror

Attacks on both Tamil and Sinhala civilians on the rise

The killing of 150 Sinhalese civilians by Tamil guerillas in Anuradhapura in May is another grisly chapter in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. It was the first time that Tamil terrorists broke their self-imposed rule of not attacking Sinhalese civilians whatever the provocation. They had identified the armed forces as their enemy and had not retaliated against the Sinhalese civilians unlike the Sri Lankan security forces, which when unable to apprehend the Tamil terrorists attack Tamil civilians.

On 15 May, about two dozen Tamil militants, disguised in army uniforms reached Anuradhapura. Using machine guns, they sprayed the area with bullets killing 150 persons. As a Sri Lankan official said, "The ferocity of the attack was unparallel in the history of terrorism in Sri Lanka." The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) is believed to be responsible for the massacre, though it has not claimed responsibility as yet.

A senior LTTE member told SUNDAY that the whole group had masterminded the attack. Asked how the LTTE could justify this action particularly when they had consistently maintained that "their war was not against the Sinhalese people," he replied that the attack was intended, to drive home a few points to the Jayewardene government. "This is a desperate attempt by the Tamil guerillas to protect their people. The killing of Sinhalese civilians is a preventive warning to the Sinhalese armed forces that they can no longer kill Tamil civilians with impunity. If they kill our civilians, we will kill theirs," he said.

If the Tamil guerillas continue to attack Sinhala civilians, the Jayewardene government will not be able to protect them. The Sinhalese have been living in peace but now, the guerillas wish to give the Sinhalese masses a taste of the fear and insecurity that the Tamils face.

The Anuradhapura incident is a setback for Jayewardene. The Sinhala opposition parties and the Buddhist clergy are now up against Jayewardene. The mass killings of Sinhalese civilians have outraged opposition Sinhala leaders and exposed the inefficacy of the administration. Security help arrived hours after the guerillas left. One way Jayewardene can cling onto power is by declaring martial law but it may at best delay his political exit.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka government is going ahead with its plan of colonisation. Over 200,000 Sinhalese armed civilians will be settled in the Tamil-dominated areas in the north in the next one and a half year. Tamil militants told SUNDAY that they would attack these armed, well-trained, and predominantly male settlers because they considered them to be a para-military force.

The Sri Lanka government has started a propaganda war before a military solution to the Tamil problem. Recently, the department of information released brochures which had grisly photographs of the victims of Tamil terrorists, violence and brutality by Tamils. But there is nothing to prove that these victims are of guerilla violence and not army "excesses." Some photographs however are definitely suspect. One photograph for instance, is of men killed in the Kent and Dollar farms raid by the LTTE.

In November 1984, the LTTE raided the farms and killed about 100 inmates. The photograph showing the dead "farmers" placed in a row is considered fake because the hands of the victims are tied at the back. The LTTE commandos had swooped down on the farms and fired indiscriminately It is impossible to believe that they had the time to tie the hands of the victims before killing them as such an action would have served no purpose. It is believed that the dead are actually Tamils. The photograph, a coloured one, reveals that the victims are wearing clean shirts, with no bloodstains. There are no other marks of injury on the body. It would appear that the victims have all been shot through

the head while the dead bodies of the Kent and Dollars farms were mangled and charred by the grenades and bazookas Moreover, all the men seem to be young, judging by the colour of their hair

It is the Sri Lanka government's intention to prove that Tamil terrorism is the handiwork of a Soviet plot to topple the Jayewardene government. The Sri Lankan government has come down heavily on Amnesty International (AI) which, it believes, is controlled by "leftists." The arguments put forward by the government against AI and other "high sounding" human rights organisations of the world are revealing. The Sri Lankan government wonders at the 'dead silence' of AI and other groups, even about the "lamp post killings" indulged in by the terrorists (to punish who they believe to be police informers and anti socials) when they castigate the army excesses

The pamphlet talks about the army's capture of the LTTE's armoury in Atchuvely in Jaffna. The seizure, estimated to be worth Rs 40 million (Sri Lankan rupees) was the biggest setback suffered by the LTTE. The pamphlet states, "Apart from the cyanide said to be of Indian make, a number of items recovered from the Tiger arsenal by the army had Indian markings. Among those which bore Indian markings were twelve bore shot gun cartridges, explosive primers and ammunition ranging from nine mm hand gun bullets to 7.26 mm rifle bullets. All the ammunition were packed in PVC canisters with screw tops and were at the time of the raid, still in their paper jackets. This army raid was a significant breakthrough in that the soldiers were able to recover a large cache of arms and ammunition brought over to Sri Lanka mainly from India, with a view to creating murder, mayhem and chaos in this country."

The cache of propaganda literature also includes a book, *The Ethnic Problem in Sri Lanka* which seeks to dispel the "myth of discrimination" against the Tamils. The book says discrimination can take many forms and points out that there is no discrimination in these spheres in Sri Lanka. To quote a passage "Legal discrimination can take various forms ranging from the enshrinement of race discrimination in the statute book (as in south Africa) to such restrictions as the legal disabilities of the Fijian Indian (50 per cent of the nation) with regard to the purchase of land or the *bhumiputra* (sons of the soil) legislation of Malaysia. Sri Lanka makes no such discrimination." The crucial point here is that the two above mentioned statutes are directed against foreigners. Does the Sri Lankan government unconsciously think that its Tamils are foreigners?

The book states that the percentage of the Tamils in the legal and judicial departments of the government is higher than the percentage of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The same situation prevails in the professional and semi-professional spheres. The figures are from the census of public servants conducted in 1980. The figures, however, do not tally with the statistics collected by the Tamils

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is that for the first time the government of Sri Lanka actually discusses the concept of Eelam, which had been dismissed as a pipe dream conceived by madmen. In the passages discussing Eelam, it is pointed out that the "mythical state" includes Trincomalle and Amparai districts where Tamils are in a minority (34 and 20 per cent of the population respectively). No mention is made of the colonisation plans of the Sinhala governments since independence in the eastern province which has altered radically the demographic pattern there. Before independence, both the districts were dominated by Tamils. No mention is also made of the Seruwilla electorate which was carved out of the Trincomalle district in 1978-79 wherein the neighbouring Sinhalese dominated areas were included to bring down the aggregate Tamil percentage.

There is a section devoted to proving that the Tamil militants are 'murderers.' The LTTE is described as a group led by Pirabhakaran who is "known to have killed several of his own comrades because he felt they would be a danger to his leadership." The PLOT led by Uma Maheswaran was "always Marxist in outlook" and the TELO "consisted of youths who had strong links with smugglers." The major emphasis of the book seems to be to discredit TULF and its leader A. Amirthalingam, probably because he continues to be regarded internationally as the leader of the oppressed Tamils of Sri Lanka. The book reproduces a photostat copy of an incriminating letter written by Amirthalingam's son Ravi which came into the hands of the Sri Lankan security forces. Among other things the letter claims responsibility for the murder of Pulendran, an organiser of the Ruling United National Party. The letter refers to land being 'bought in south India for the purpose of training' would be terrorists. There is also a mention of Amirthalingam attending to the 'Libyan connection.' The motive behind the publication of the letter is to point out to the world that Amirthalingam is not the self styled Gandhian he claims he is.

Ever since the four militant groups got together, there has been an increase in violent activities in Sri Lanka. The militants are determined to "break the backbone of the Jayewardene government." After having scored a military triumph, the militants claim they will be willing to negotiate with the Sinhala government but on their terms and conditions only. That they are now mentally prepared to negotiate is in itself a step forward.

Anita Pratap, Madras



An allegedly fake photograph of Sinhalas killed by Tamil terrorists

The Small Screen

That controversial, much-talked-about programme, *It's a Woman's World*, will no longer start off with an evening-gown clad, impeccably coiffured Simi Garewal greeting viewers in her unmistakably stylish voice. Simi, director and programme hostess of *It's a Woman's World*, is opting out of the programme from July.

Rumours are flying thick and fast—some say she is very upset over criticism of her glossy, lavishly produced programme by female journalists and women's organisations who claim that the programme is too high-brow for the average Indian woman. Others say Simi has withdrawn because of other pressing commitments like her feature film, *Rukhsat*. As for the lady herself, in keeping with her dignified and stately image, she is maintaining a silence that speaks louder than words

The roly-poly Raja of *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* wed his soul-mate, painter Aradhana Oberoi (nicknamed Winkly), at a well-attended but quiet wedding ceremony on 5 May at New Delhi. Star guests included Rajeev Kapoor, Kunal Kapoor and Jackie Shroff. The bride is an ardent Rakesh fan. She says she has been an avid Rakesh watcher since their engagement in December 1984. "Although it was an arranged marriage I was a fan of his," she confesses. Why did Rakesh choose Delhi as the wedding venue? He has a snappy comeback to that one: "Because I had to have my *shaadi* at the rajdhani."



Simi Garewal

Durgaprasad



Rakesh Bedi (right) and Shafi Inamdar in *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi*

Popular series *Rajani* is Mudra Videotec's sop to the middle class woman. In sharp contrast to Simi's sophisticated woman, Priya Tendulkar, as the angry young woman, depicts a militant middle class housewife who tackles every situation from tricky admissions in a snooty school to an imposter godman, with admirable aplomb.

The series, directed by Basu Chatterjee, promises to make a star of the talented Priya Tendulkar, who has already bagged many feature film roles (*Kaalchabra*, *Sasti Dulhan Mehenga Dulha*, etc). Priya is emerging as a brilliant new star on the horizon.

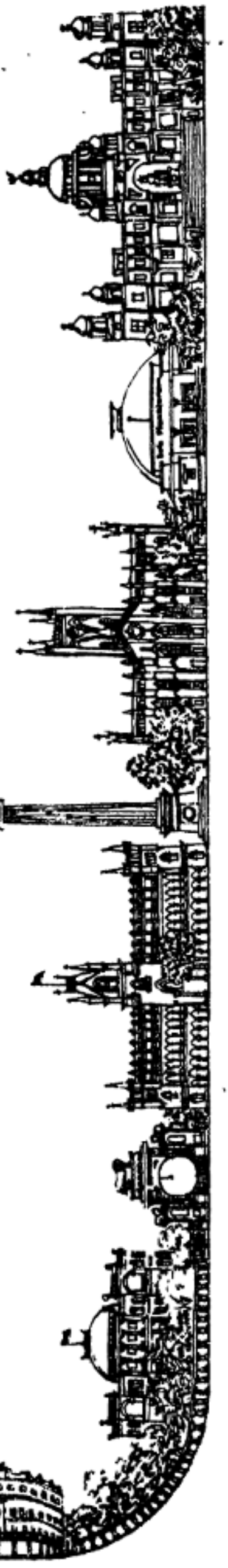
Mr Ya Mrs? The Jalal Agha directed, Trikaya-produced, hilarious TV sitcom, left for Goa last week to do a couple of location scenes there. The series, with its deft comic reversal of traditional male-female roles (the wife plays the go-getter bread winner, while the husband plays the stay-at-home housewife—or is it house husband?) promises to fill the gap left behind by *Idhar Udhar*.

Hollywood feature films, whose release in India was banned either on political grounds (*Raid On Entebbe*, *Midnight Express*), or because of an excess of sex and violence (*Death Wish* I and II, *Muscle-bound Silent Rage*), can now be viewed by movie buffs on video. Muscle-bound superstars, Charles Bronson and Chuck Norris, batter their brawny way through these flicks. There's enough gore and gruesome death to satisfy the most blood-thirsty.

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"India is number one in tea"

R. L. Rikhye, *chairman of the Indian Tea Association (ITA) spoke on the major issues presently confronting the tea scenario, both domestic and international.*

*** On ITA**

The ITA is 102 years old and is based at Calcutta It has 27 member companies collectively owning 234 gardens in north India which grew in 1984 the sum total of 230 million kg of tea. This represents close to half of the north Indian crop and well over one-third of the national crop. The pre-eminence of the ITA as a representative organisation is borne out by the fact that its chairman also presides over the apex level Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA).

*** On the national importance of the tea industry**

On all counts, India is number one in tea-worldwide Thus, we are number one in production, in quality and in yield per hectare. We are also the world's largest single exporter. Besides the tea industry is the country's single largest employer, providing direct employment to over a million persons India also has the largest available bank of managerial expertise in tea. By any reckoning, therefore, the standing of this agro-industry in the national context is quite extraordinary

*** On the current market boom**

This will not last. Already, the market is on its way down. Take the London auction, for instance, which is a good barometer of the international scenario Six months ago, the price fetched per kg was 348 pence By 1st January, it had come down to 291 pence. In April, it was down to only 160 pence. A similar downward trend holds true for the domestic market I do not visualise any improvement in prices because all our projections point very clearly towards an excess of production over demand In other words, there will be a surplus

*** On the export ceiling of 220 million kg**

We might have a tough time in meeting the target of 220 million kg at reasonable prices With production buoyant in all tea producing countries, buyers will not be in a rush to buy

*** On the minimum export price**

The fixing of the minimum export price prevents irresponsible talk of under-invoicing and other malpractices. The only minor irritant is the extra bit of paperwork involved. I must say that the policies followed by the ministry of commerce in the last two years have been pragmatic and in the overall interests of the trade One certainly can't find fault with it.

*** On the industry's major problems**

Domestic consumption is rising at the rate of 5 per cent per annum, while the international growth rate is 2 per cent. Therefore, there exists the need to produce more tea both to satisfy domestic demand and to retain our 24% share of the world market. This can be done only if funds are available with the growers for ploughing back into new planting, irrigation and drainage, herbicides and pesticides factory modernisation, labour housing and so on at the gardens It is important therefore that fiscal levies should not be increased Indeed, despite the recent lowering of corporate tax rates and the introduction of a development fund for tea, this industry still remains the highest taxed industry in the country.

*** On crop prospects in 1985**

There has been a good early season crop in the north India gardens this year. Also, the south India gardens are keeping pace with last year's record crop there. We estimate this year's crop at about 655 million kg which would be 10 million kg more than the aggregate crop last year.



Tea and tea machinery

Dinesh Bagaria *describes how the fortunes of the tea and tea machinery industries are interwined.*

The one industry whose fortunes are directly linked to the prosperity of the tea industry is the tea machinery industry

Owing to the stagnation in tea prices over the years, demand for the machinery has been minimal and so also the capacity. the major manufacturers' combined annual turnover has hovered around Rs. 8 crores including exports.

With the recent boom in tea prices, there is a renewed demand for equipment but the makers have all been caught unawares. Added to this is the uncertainty for the future. Even the tea trade shirks from making any predictions and therefore machinery makers shy off from making fresh investments to enhance capacity

Tea machinery prices over the years have remained unremunerative and only in the present boom have the tea machinery makers been expecting a better deal. This however has been belied by increase in costs. Thus in less than a year steel prices alone have gone up by over 40%. And unfortunately, when tea machinery manufacturers approach tea companies now, the former are charged with trying to take advantage of the shortage of equipment to extort high prices!

Research on tea machinery is carried out by the Tea Research Association Centre at Toklai (near Jorhat). The machines so far commercialized are the Rotorvane, Continuous Tray Dryer, Barbora Leaf Conditioner and Baruah Continuous Roller while work on the newly developed Continuous Withering Machine has just been started.

Indeed, it might well be said that the one industry which is a sincere well-wisher of the tea industry is the tea machinery industry.



Courtesy Tea Board

Largest tea machinery export

The largest ever single tea machinery export from the country is to a surprising land—Turkey—never heard of as a tea producer. This export is valued at over Rs. 1 crore.

This single shipment is against an order booked in December and ready for shipment by end February but delayed owing to import formalities at the [illegible]



Snippets from the world press

The return of afternoon tea

Afternoon tea is staging one of its comebacks, according to *The Times* of London. It notes that tourists can be overheard talking about high tea under the misapprehension that high means posh in the high and mighty sense. In any case, they will have to get away from the metropolis to resort towns like Torquay and Perth where dainty afternoon teas have never been out of fashion. Small sandwiches, fresh scones and fancy cakes are served with tea at these places

What is new is that London's big luxury hotels are now making a selling point of their teas. The usual accompaniment is an item or two good baking which has always been the essence of a good afternoon tea, the paper points out.

Across the Atlantic, in *New York*, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel offers "the best tea value in the world", according to *The Guardian*. The exact spot: famous Peacock Alley Lounge where a pianist plays Cole Porter. The approximate cost: about £10 for two at current rates.

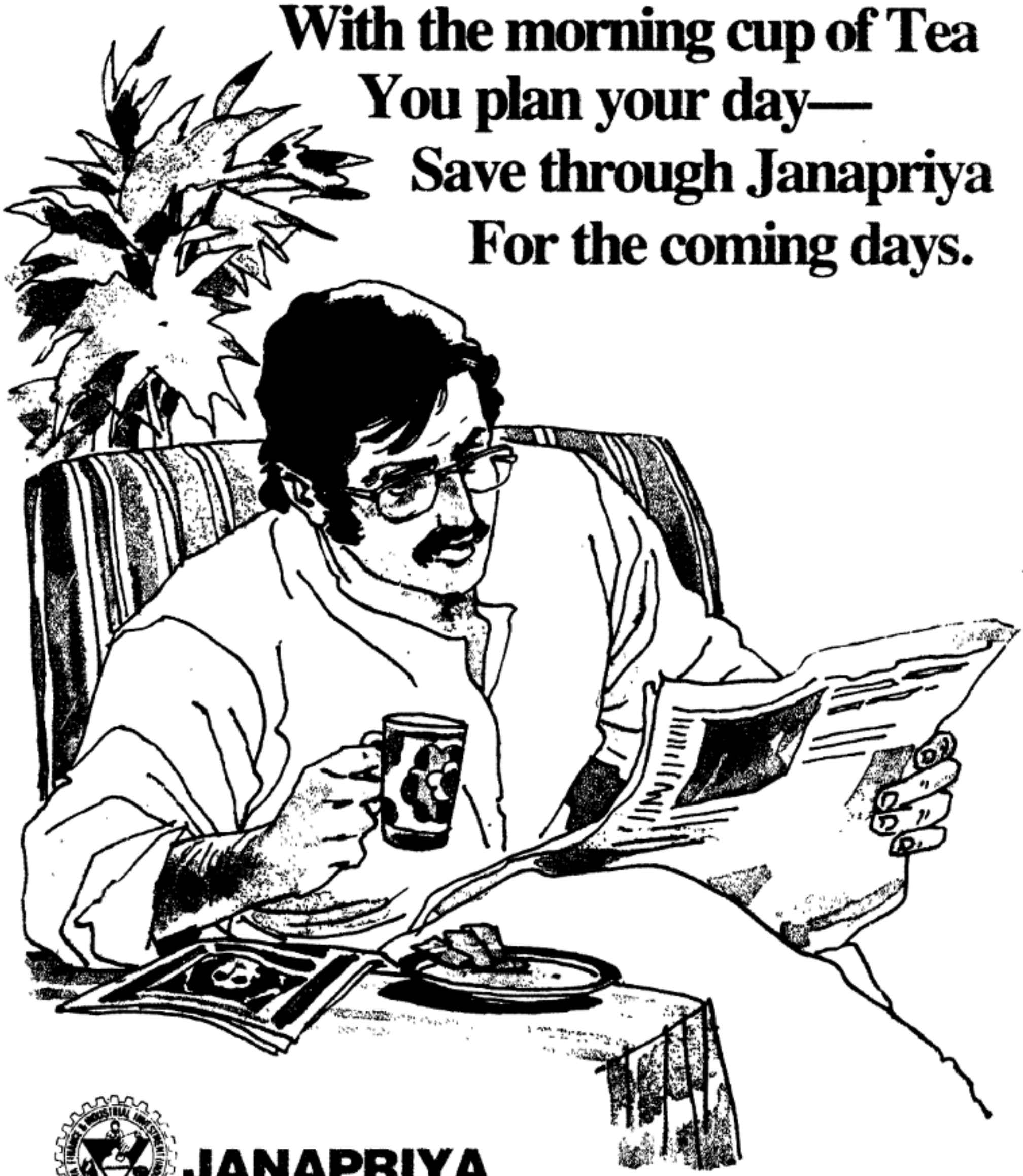
Good tea moving away from India?

In India, the world's top tea producing and drinking country, it appears, however, that a good cup of tea is getting increasingly difficult to find outside the private home.

At one end of scale, the fivestar-plus hotels serve an indifferent cup of tea more often than not. This is particularly unfortunate as tourists staying in such hotels associate India with good tea and look forward to enjoying a good cup. Surely, the hotels could order special quality blends for their own use—no tea bags please—and take particular care with the brewing.

At another end of the scale, the celebrated "Irani" tea shops in Bombay are doing a vanishing trick, according to a columnist in *Indian Express*. Firdaus, where Narayan Surve, the Marathi poet, wrote most of his poems over cups of hot and steaming tea, is still holding its own. And there still is

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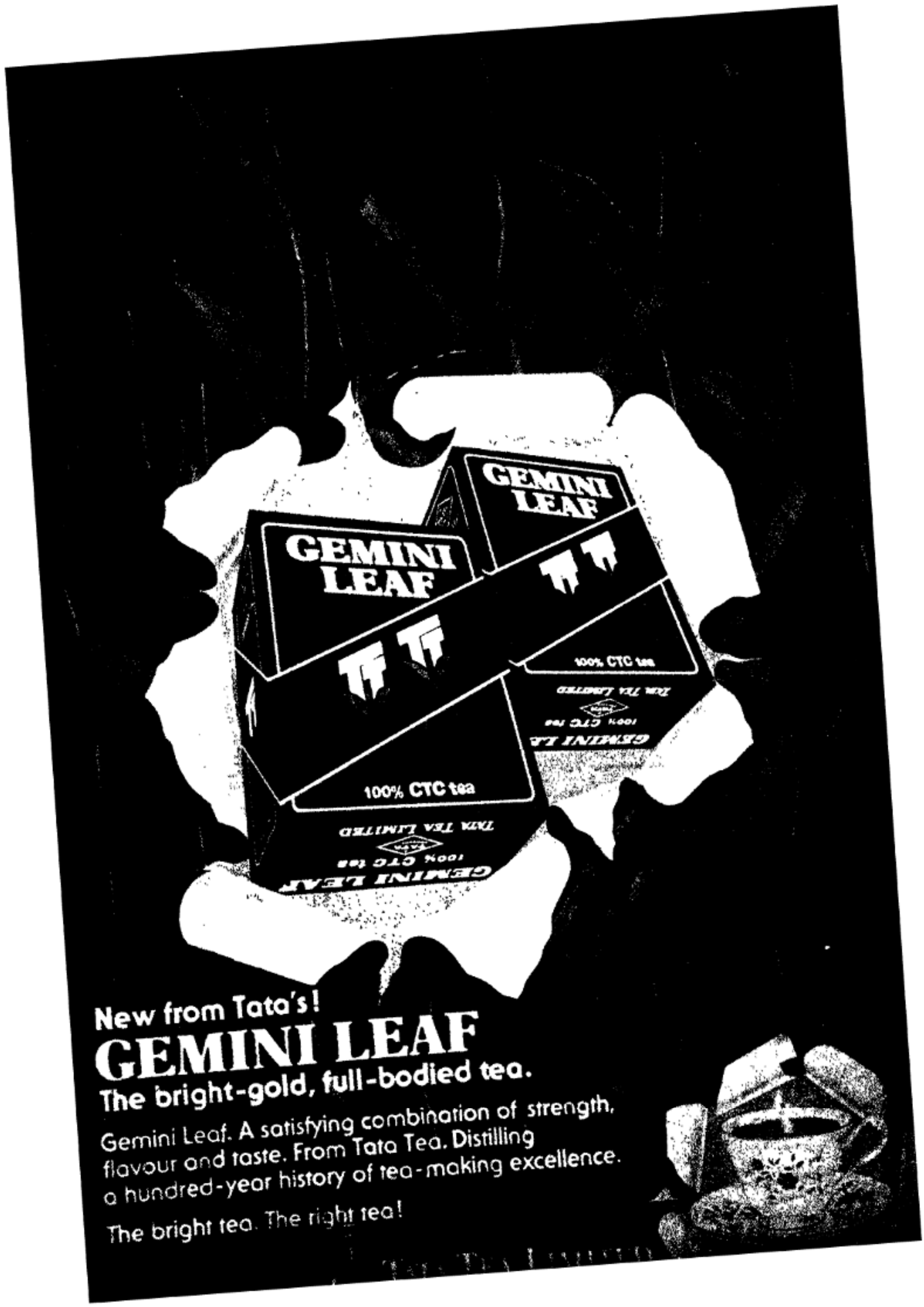
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New Excelsior Cafe, perhaps the only one in the city to offer three categories of tea—tea, tea full and tea in pot But the last one is now specified as "no extra cup", which means the customer probably gets no more than a cup of infusion with the choice of adding milk and sugar as he likes it In fact, the columnist plaintively ends, almost all the "Irani" restaurants in the city now serve "a different cup of tea altogether What a tragic fall!"

London auction prices fall as tea supplies improve

The sharp fall in London tea prices during the month of February brought the all-tea average to 237 77 pence—its lowest level since early September, 1984 Dealers attribute the decline to abundant supplies in the wake of last year's good crops According to *Commodity Bulletin*, stocks in the U K are reported to be very high at around 51 million kgs., almost 50 per cent more than what is generally considered necessary to keep the market running smoothly



Declining trend for coffee and cocoa as well

Prices of plantation crops such as coffee and cocoa are also on the retreat, notes Robin Stainer in *The Guardian*. Supplies are now more freely available than they were just a few months ago and the picture is unlikely to change much

Brazil's coffee crop has turned out bigger than first forecast and recent good weather has boosted prospects for the second harvest, which begins in a couple of months. Total 1984-85 production in Brazil could easily reach a record Most analysts now think that this season's output will be more than adequate to meet world demand.

West African cocoa production is up sharply this season, after the poor 1983-84 showing when severe drought resulted in serious crop losses. Ivory Coast, the main producer, is expected to bring in a record 1984-85 crop, with Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon also likely to show gains The better weather that has helped West African cocoa production has also boosted the region's coffee crops

Courtesy Tea India



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The five golden rules for preparing tea

1. The tea pot should never be cleaned with any detergent. It is sufficient to rinse the pot before use with hot water. Before use fill the pot with hot water and prewarm it in that way.
2. Only fresh cold water should be used and not pre-boiled water. Put it on the stove and bring it to near boiling point. The water should simmer for 2-3 minutes, so that the chlorine and other gases disappear. The tea water should always be heated in one and the same container, in which nothing else other than water is boiled.
3. One calculates per cup ½ to 1 teaspoon tea plus ½ to 1 teaspoon per tea pot, depending on the type of tea and the desired strength. (½ litre of water—4 cups of tea=7 to 12 grams of tea).



4. The required amount of heated water should be poured immediately and at one time onto the tea. The tea should soak in a closed tea pot and if possible be kept under a tea cosy. In general 5 minutes. (Broken tea: 4 minutes, leaf tea: 6 to 7 minutes).
5. Stir the tea. Pour the tea into the cup. Milk should now be trickled into the tea. Stir.

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Tea Irrigation

Applying the right quantum of water at the right time is the essence of tea irrigation as **R.N. Chatterjee** *explains.*

Successful irrigation is more than just applying water. It is a complex interaction of soil, water, agronomy and economies, all of which are continuously evolving with new knowledge and technology.

Irrigation is not only a necessity in areas traditionally regarded as drought prone but is also an important concomitant to counteract climatic changes which might be diminishing rainfall in many other areas as well. Thus, irrigation is now being implemented where it had never previously been considered either necessary or economic. And it also makes sense to have an irrigation system as an insurance to project expensive investments in replanting and inputs to avail of good prices when they are available.

New land for planting is in short supply. Therefore, the major part of increased production will have to come from increased yields. If targets in tea production are to be met, irrigation will necessarily have to be one of the important enabling factors in the achievement of these targets.

It is a common present-day practice to apply 2 inches of rainfall a month either at one time or as split doses, i.e., 1 inch in 15 days. This practice has generated some controversy and it is said that the amount irrigation should be considered according to.

—Soil status
—Land slope
—Severity of prune
—Root development
— Soil moisture status
—Economic factors i.e.,: Cost of irrigating
Crop value
Cost of production

An authority on the subject has specifically recommended consideration of the above factors. His views are: "To say that tea bush requires two inches or four inches of rainfall is incorrect. A detailed analysis according to the above factors can be the only guiding principle".

Indeed, various trials have shown that 3 inches and more per month does give very good results. The amount can be split into more than one dose at a time depending on the soil type and bush and climatic conditions.



The following are some gardens that follow an application of between 3" and 4" per month:

Baintbarrie Divn. of Sylee Tea Estate	—	4"
Mornai Tea Estate	—	4"
Choibari Tea Estate	—	3"
Chaper Tea Estate	—	3"

The increase in yield at these estates has been found to be around 27 to 30 per cent. Tensiometers can be helpful in determining the frequency and quantum of water to apply.

Experts at the Tea Research Association have been stressing "irrigation at the right time with the right quantum of water" implying that it is meaningless to irrigate otherwise. Their other priority is drainage. It is important to associate drainage in tandem with irrigation. Planning either irrigation or drainage in isolation is ill-advised.

To conclude, a rule of thumb is better than nothing but in dealing with a complex subject like tea production each garden should endeavour to analyse the benefits and economics of different irrigation applications. In any case refinement in irrigation techniques and monitoring of soil moisture levels will always pay dividends.

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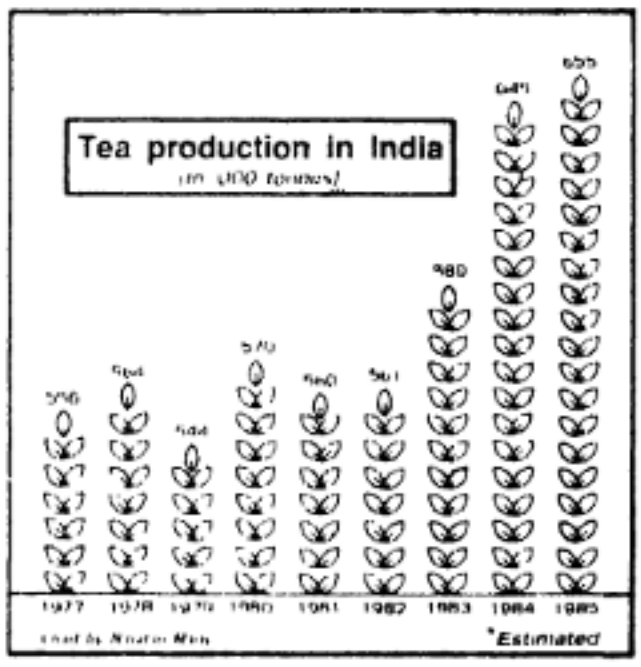
The Season that was and future projections

Records were shattered and new heights established during 1984, describes the directors of **J. Thomas & Co. Pvt. Ltd** *. in an authoritative review.*

1984 has been a phenomenal year of growth for the Indian tea industry where all previous records have been shattered and new heights established Emerging from the inertia of stagnating tea prices through the seventies, the industry has broken free of its shackles Having taken a good lead ahead in 1983 it has in a remarkable effort broken several records during 1984

- a record crop of 645 3 million kg showing an increase of 9 6% over last year,
- record all India auction price-average of Rs. 28 59,
- highest quantity (420 6 million kg) sold through the public auctions,
- largest ever export earnings of Rs 744 92 crores.

Tea prices during 1984 have remained buoyant and stable, both in India and the world The year has reflected a realistic value of tea, tempered globally by what could now be recognised as a true balance of the supply-demand equation.



The total crop harvested in 1984 amounted to 645 3 million kg. A year of fairly good weather and rainfall coupled with adequate field inputs contributed to an increase of 45 3 m kg. in the first half of the year and 11 m kg. during the second half, bringing the total increase in crop to 56.3 m. kg. by the year-end, compared to 1983.

Tea producers have, after years of low returns, reacted positively to the stimulus provided by the remunerative price levels of 1983 and 1984 The majority of the surplus, wherever



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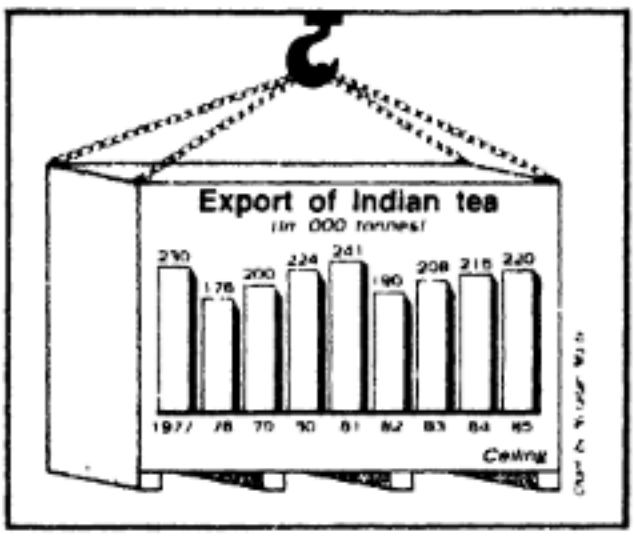
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possible, has been ploughed back into the estates and the results have been reflected visibly in the year's crop.

Improved cultivation practices, liberal doses of fertilisers, adequate pest control measures and extension of planted areas together with scientifically-aided propagation of high yielding stock, each contributed in adequate measure to achieve this record production; almost a third of the total world tea production. To this, north India contributed 496.7 m. kg and south India 148.6 m. kg. showing respective increases of 23 m. kg and 33 3 m. kg

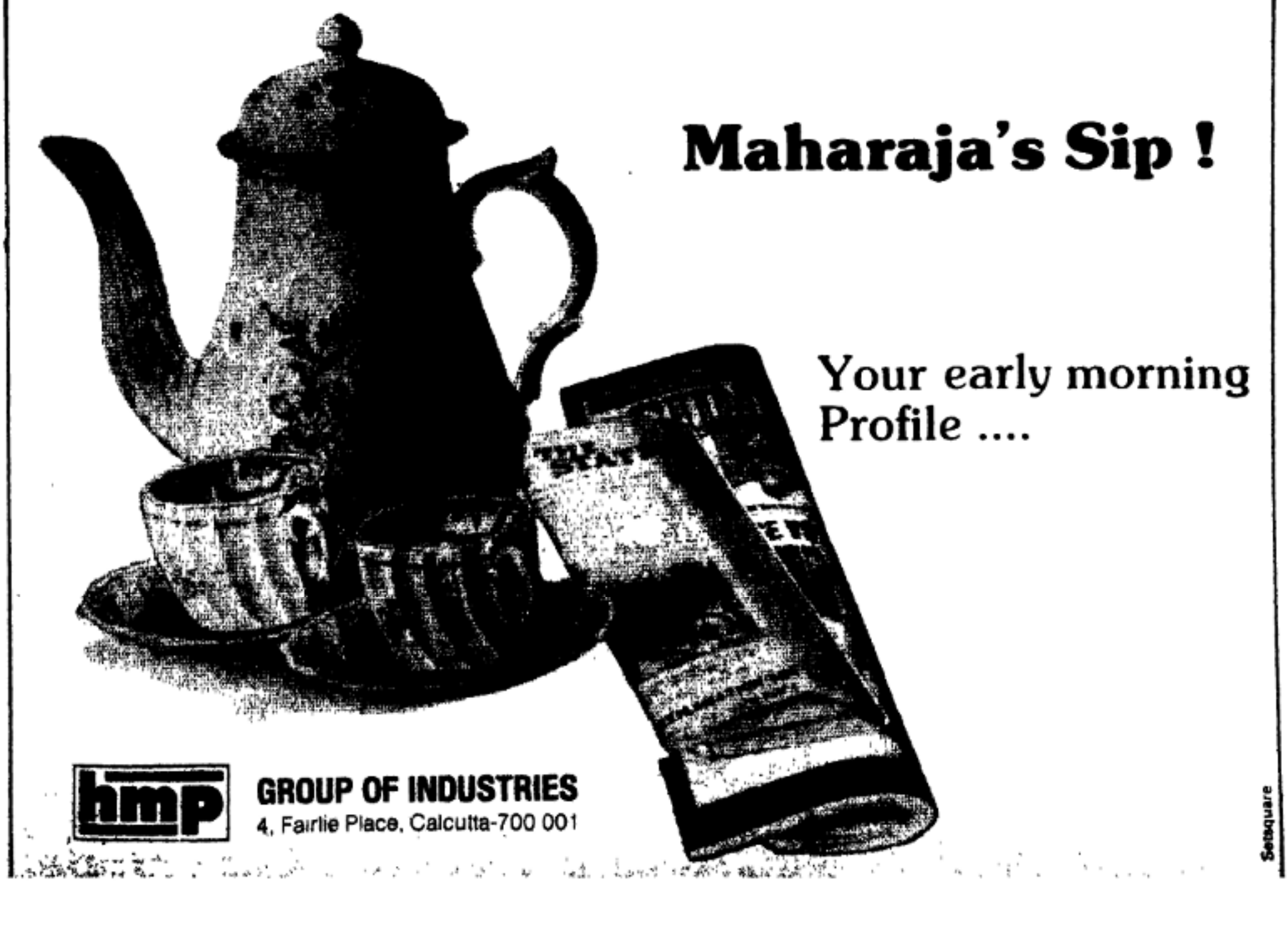
The total production of major producing countries during 1984 has recorded an increase of 85.6 m. kg. over 1983. It is significant that India alone has contributed 56.7 m. kg. to this increase.

A record 420.6 m. kg. was sold through the public auctions in India in 1984 compared to 338.5 m. kg. in 1983 and one may record with a measure of pride and satisfaction that the time-tested system of auction-sale handled this efficiently, smoothly and expeditiously. A substantial weight of the additional quantity was channelised through this stream by a government order requiring producers to sell 70% of their total production through the auction network and the West Bengal state government's decision for further enhancement in the Rural Employment and Production cess which made it unremunerative for producers to sell teas directly The objective of this was to ensure a stable and enduring price structure and to establish a sound basis of supply to the home markets Restrictions on the export of CTC teas announced on 24th December, 1983 remained in force up to 12th May, 1984 and were reimposed from 3rd September, 1984, as a protective measure to contain domestic tea prices The Government wisely did not think it expedient to impose any other harsh measures to check the price rise by levying further duties and imports on the industry



Earlier, there was industrywide concern over the marginal increase registerd in the Darjeeling price averages last year, which, relative to the high cost of production in the district had continued to be inadequate for any significant development work. During the year under review, however, this district's average registered a healthy increase to allow it to share in the fortunes of the industry.

Historically, tea has been a major foreign exchange earner for the country and 1984 proved to be a milestone. Although the total volume of exports amounted to 214 7 m. kg. against the 1983 figure of 208.5 m. kg and high of 241 2 m. kg. achieved in 1981, total earnings from exports of tea surged to an impressive Rs. 744 92 crores in 1981 This was achieved by a substantially higher unit value realisation of Rs. 34.69 per kg. A new emphasis was



also projected by way of value-added exports which were exempted from export controls and to which both the producers and merchant-exporters lent their unstinted effort.

The focal points of India's tea exports during the year were the increased off-take by the trade-pact countries, the considerably larger volume of Orthodox exports and the resulting lower CTC exports brought about by official policy. This, doubtless, highlights the crucially changing scenario of increased consumption of tea in the developing countries, particularly in the Middle East, off-set dramatically by the lower Indian CTC exports and demand for CTC tea from the countries of the Western hemisphere. The USSR, Iran, Iraq and Egypt emergerd as burgeoning markets for Indian teas and but for the restriction on CTC exports, some of these countries would have accounted for even larger off-takes.

The merchant-exporters have, from the very beginning of the organised tea trade in India, contributed greatly to the country's export effort In 1984, however, their operations were increasingly shackled by controls, and while the object may have been to maximise export earnings and yet leave enough tea for the internal markets at a reasonable price, very often these acted as a major disincentive to exports

It would be appropriate to mention that the prevalence of high taxes continues to erode profitablity in the industry. While most official policy aims at protecting the interests of the domestic consumer, very little has been done to ensure that the tax structure is suitably rationalised to allow sufficient ploughbacks. Surplus funds must be made available to the industry for devlopment, further extension and rejuvenation of areas under tea and investment in new machineries. Funds are also necessary for the continued improvement of labour welfare schemes in which the industry has already achieved a fair measure of success.



India has earned, once again, the distinction of being the largest producer, consumer and exporter of tea in the world The limelight of this effort must fall on the producers who have consistently sought to fulfil the aspirations of the industry and the nation. Historically, the cyclical pattern of tea prices has witnessed more frequent and prolonged stretches of depression than prosperity and the improving returns of the last two years cannot but be well-deserved by the resilient breed of producers and planters who have provided the world, through their gigantic but oft-unrecognised and silent effort, the wonderful 'cuppa'—the cup that cheers.

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Trends for 1985

Will the last two seasons' boom continue? Perhaps the price levels may not be as good, says **Vijay Dudeja** *in discussing trends for 1985.*

*** No takers for poor teas**

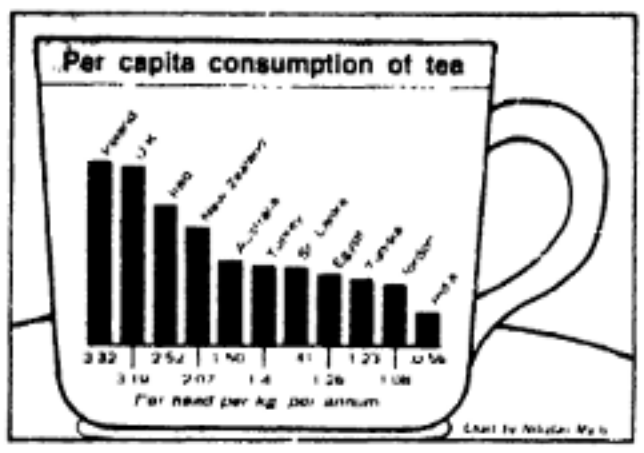
The 1983 and 1984 seasons have both seen boom conditions because demand was greater than supply. In 1985, once again, supply is likely to be somewhat short of demand. However, the gap is being narrowed. It had become clear in 1984 that poor teas have no takers. Neither the internal buyers nor the international buyers want them. A largest weight of poor varieties remain unsold at all auction centres of India. The weight of poor teas remaining unsold is so large at present that it has largely contributed to the change in market sentiment. This trend will continue in 1985. Quality will pay in 1985.

*** Poor orthodox: no home**

In particular, poor orthodox teas will find no home.

*** Prices: non-issue for common man**

Despite government's concern at rising tea prices, the common man in India has shown any great concern, because the cost of actual tea in a tea cup is still meagre. A kilogram of crush-tear-curl or CTC tea (Indians drink CTC variety) produces 500 large cups, or 1,000 small cups (bhand); the common man generally drinks the latter. The small cups are sold at 40p. per cup. Even if the vendor pays Rs 40.00 a kg for tea, the actual cost of tea leaf is 4p. per cup. Approximately 6p. is vendor's profit per cup. The cost of sugar, milk and fuel is 30p. or 75% in a cup of tea. Thus in reality it is the other ingredients—sugar, milk, fuel, etc.—which are the main contributors to the cost of a cup of tea.



*** Tea is not essential commodity**

In my opinion, tea is not an essential commodity. Wheat, rice, edible oils and clothing are the real essentials. For consider the fact that per capita consumption of tea in India is a little over 0.5 kg. per person per year. With such a low consumption, it is debatable whether tea is at all an essential commodity. Taking the retail price of tea at Rs. 40 per kg., the expenditure on tea per person is only Rs. 20 per annum.

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BOOK EXTRACT

WALT DISNEY

King of the Magic Kingdom

Derek Wilson profiles one of the geniuses of our times, in an extract from his book Extraordinary People *(published by Pan Books, London, and distributed in India by Rupa & Company, 15 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 700 073; price £ 5.95)*

In 1966, the year that Walter Elias Disney died:

240,000,000 people saw a Disney film;
100,000,000 people every week saw a Disney TV show;
800,000,000 people read a Disney book or magazine;
50,000,000 people listened to a Disney record;
80,000,000 people bought Disney licensed merchandise;
150,000,000 people read a Disney comic strip;
80,000,000 people saw a Disney educational film;
6,700,000 people visited Disneyland.

That, in crude statistical terms, is a measure of the achievement of the man who arrived in Hollywood in 1923 with 40 dollars in his pocket.

Walt Disney took a primitive and undeveloped technique—animated film cartoon—and turned it into a multi-billion-dollar growth industry. He turned his basic creations to economic advantage in every possible way by licensing the production of comic strips, tee-shirts, alarm clocks, plastic mugs and a host of other manufactured goods for children. He started with nothing: he died a millionaire. But there is much more to the Disney saga than a rags-to-riches story. He was not just a very successful business tycoon. Disney had a motto which he applied to himself and which he used to drive on his employees and colleagues—'Dream, diversify, and never miss an angle.' And for Walt Disney the dreaming always came first.

Dreams were essential to a child born into a large, poor family; there was little else to amuse the young mind. Elias Disney, the head of the household, was a man who had tried his hand at many things and failed, slipping progressively down the economic scale. Walt spent the first eight years of his life on a small Missouri farm. Then his father was forced to sell up and move to Kansas City where he organised a news round. Elias expected his sons to help him without payment. Walt was regularly hauled from bed at 3.30 am and sent out delivering the heavy journals in all weathers. Elias was a hard man, mean as well as poor. His children were never given toys and the slightest transgression was punished with the strap

His obvious talent for drawing received no encouragement from his father but his meagre earnings enabled him to attend a Saturday morning art class.

By the time he left home he had had enough of working for someone else. He was determined to be his own boss. For years this meant eking out a living on the fringes of the newspaper and commercial art worlds as a freelance cartoonist. During this period he made a few experiments with animated film cartoons. The 'short,' a crudely simple piece of entertainment based on a sequence of jerky, moving drawings, had become an established part of the programme in many movie theatres. They had no sound, of course, and, like all silent films, animated cartoons might have remained museum pieces, bypassed by changing fashion and improved technology. The man who prevented this was Walt Disney. In 1923 he moved to Hollywood, determined to make his name in the film industry.

He was joined by Roy, who took care of the finances and attempted, not always successfully, to anchor Walt's soaring enthusiasm. They produced shorts and just about managed to make ends meet. They also learned the hard way about the savage competition in the movie industry: in 1927 their New York distributor poached some of the Disney artists and set up his own studio in opposition. Walt travelled to the East Coast and tried, unsuccessfully, to resolve the crisis. Refusing to be downcast, he cabled Roy before his return, 'Everthing OK. Coming home.' And on the long train ride back to California he created a new cartoon character. It was Mortimer—soon to be re-christened Mickey Mouse.

'The Mouse,' as he was referred to in the studio, was an instant success, particularly when Disney, pioneering in this as in so many other fields, used sound in *Steamboat Willy*, the third Mickey Mouse adventure. Within a decade Mickey and his 'gang'—Donald Duck, Goofy, Pluto, Minnie, *et al*—were known and loved throughout the world.

One dream that Disney cherished for years was the 'magic kingdom.' He wanted to extend his world of illusion beyond the two-dimensional limitations of the cinema screen. He wanted to create it somewhere where people could fully experience the Disney vision, could escape into the pure, happy, clean, innocent realm of idealised childhood. Even in the 1930s he played with the idea of an amusement park to end all amusement parks. No one, not even Roy, shared his enthusiasm. In 1952, using partly his own money, because his brother refused to back 'Walt's screwy idea,' Disney hired technicians (immediately dubbed 'imagineers') to turn his dream into reality. He found a site. He defined the character of his kingdom. He canvassed support from financiers and fairground experts. They all told him he was crazy. The creation of Disneyland and its Florida counterpart, Disneyworld, has shown that it was not Disney who was crazy. Millions of people every year visit these incredible pleasure grounds which are now among the biggest tourist attractions in the world.

Walt Disney with one of his creations



Sum Trouble

After being showered with accolades from international agencies for her genius, Shakuntala Devi, the Indian mathematical wizard had a 'bitter' taste of success. A widely-publicised public show she had given in Kanpur recently had to be called off as a group of unruly demonstrators barred her from coming on stage Following a threat from the hostile demonstrators who called themselves "rationalists," the show had to be cancelled. A large contingent of policemen also had to be called to the hotel where Ms Devi was staying to prevent any violence there The allegations against Ms Devi were that she was "misusing her genius" for pecuniary gain and was using her skills to prepare horoscopes at exorbitant rates. After the incident, Shakuntala Devi admitted that she was indeed selling talismans and charging people for horoscopes But she said she was making money for a noble purpose—to build a mathematics institute in India that would be the first of its kind. Not to be taken in by her sweet words, the protestors demanded that in future geniuses like Shakuntala Devi should not be allowed to indulge in such objectionable activites under the pretext of fostering progress in mathematics



Shakuntala Devi

The Asian Sensation

Not too many Indians in India can claim to have heard her golden voice yet. But lovely Sheila Chandra, whom we had the pleasure of putting on our cover (29 January 1984), is doing well as London's latest Asian pop star. And she is proud of her origins in Kerala: "I'm proud to be an Asian, an Asian woman and an Asian woman in the music business." Following the success of her albums *Out on my Own* and *Quiet*! which sold more than 20,000 copies in the UK and the Scandinavian countries, she has come out with an even better solo called *The Struggle*." The album," she says, "differs considerably from *Quiet*! The title has a very positive connotation for me. It's a struggle *for* something—a challenge." Winning acclaim as a singer amid tough competition is no mean task, but Ms Chandra is sure her *Struggle* will succeed. And she is strong enough for it "On the album sleeve I hold a spanner to represent strength. It's not destructive as, say a hammer would be...I'm feminine—yet very determined."

Sheila Chandra



The 'Proper' Biographer

It takes more than literary skill to recreate the life of a dazzling personality who presided over the transfer of power from British to Indian hands And Philip Ziegler, author of *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* appears to have done a commendable job on his subject, judging by the reviews it has got so far. Accuracy, of course, was a major concern Ziegler claims that the authors of *Freedom at Midnight*, the other bestseller based on the events of independence and partition had made Mountbatten out to be just the hero he would have liked to be known as Apparently, Collins and Lapierre, the famous duo who wrote the book, got most of their information from Mountbatten himself. Ziegler, despite being the 'official biographer,' claims to have been more objective—to cater to his conservative British readers

A Fine Account

Popular as the father of cost and management accountancy in India, N.K. Bose has devoted almost his whole life to the development of this laborious yet crucial science His greatest achievement was his success in getting the Companies Act amended to provide for cost audit, which opened up a new vista for cost accountancy and gave a new dimension to the profession. Recognition came Mr Bose's way as the executive committee of the Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA), consisting of members from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and the Philippines at its meeting in November 1983, unanimously elected him president of the body.

The Human Connection



Immunologists in West Germany, working with biologists and psychiatrists at the University of Pennsylvania, have discovered that certain psychiatric disorders might be related to a rare virus disease of sheep and horses. The ailment, Brona disease, causes spasms, paralysis and either excitability or apathy in such animals in Germany and Switzerland. The brain tissue taken from infected animals and injected into healthy chickens and chimpanzees among other creatures had been known to cause behavioural abnormalities and reduction in cognitive ability. Now according to a report in the journal *Science*, researchers suspect a human link. The scientists took serum samples from 979 psychiatric patients in West Germany and the United States and tested them for the kind of antibodies that would indicate they had been exposed at some time to the Brona virus. The screening turned up 16 patients with positive Brona antibody reactions, all of whom also had depression, mostly of a cyclic nature.

A Double-action Drug

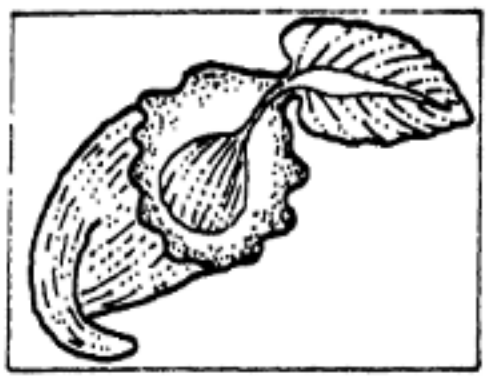
A drug that prevents thrombosis has also proved effective in checking the spread of melanoma, a dangerous skin cancer. The treatment has been devised by a team working with Dr Ellen Rhodes at the St Helier and Kingston Hospital group in Surrey. 39 patients with deeply invasive melanomas were treated by a combination of surgery and administrations of the anti-thrombotic drug dipyridamole. 30 of the patients (77 per cent) have survived five years or more, compared with 32 per cent for those treated by surgery alone. Melanomas are black or dark brown tumours often less than one centimetre in diameter, and to the untrained eye many look like ordinary moles. The tumours themselves are easily removed but any remaining melanoma cells can be rapidly dispersed in the bloodstream and even a small growth on the skin may have "seeded" secondary deposits in the lymph nodes or main organs of the body before excision.

Repairing Bones



Scientists at a research company in California have produced two protein-like substances from pulverised cow-leg bone which could bolster the ability of human bones to repair themselves. Dr Saied M. Seyedin and other researchers at Collagen Corp. in Palo Alto have isolated and purified two similar protein-like substances called cartilage inducing factors A and B. In a lab these factors stimulated formation of cartilage precursors in cells that otherwise did not produce that kind of tissue.

Exporting Carnivorous Plants

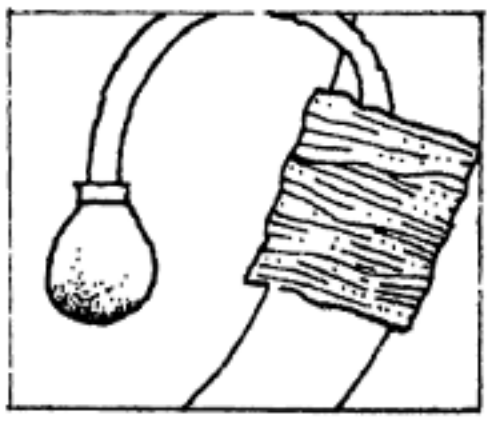


Marston Exotics in Somerset, England, is the only horticultural nursery in Britain that is entirely devoted to growing and selling carnivorous plants. Here many species—like Venus flytrap, waterwheel plants, rainbow plants, sundews, pitcher plants, butterworts and bladderworts—are grown and exported back to countries where they have almost become extinct or near their natural habitat. Mr Adrian Slack, who founded the company, says, "Conservation is most important. We are hoping to clone some of the rarer species such as the climbing pitcher plants or monkey cups (nepenthes) from the mountains of South-East Asia. One of them, *nepenthes raja*, has a huge pouch or cup, capable of catching rodents and small reptiles."

Detecting Disease

Doctors in the United States have developed a new device which can find out in just a few minutes whether a patient has herpes or any of ten other viral and bacterial infections. The instrument's name is a jawbreaker: the multi-parameter light-scattering spectrometer. It uses a computer and a cell-counting machine called a flow cytometer. The latter illuminates cells in a sample from the patient with polarised laser light. It's theoretically possible to do this with any cell—including those affected with herps or any other virus—because each one scatters the light in a distinctive pattern that can be used to identify it. The device can shorten hospital stays and check indiscriminate use of antibiotics.

The Silent Attacker



In Wiltshire, England, the failure to diagnose high blood pressure in a patient who frequently complained of head and neckache has cost two doctors £139,500 in damages. The diagnosis of severe hypertension was made after the patient had suffered a crippling stroke. Most patients are under the wrong impression that if they have no symptoms their blood pressure must be normal. Hypertension attacks silently. Headaches, nosebleeds, breathlessness, changes in vision, chest pain or even a loss of intellectual ability are the results of hypertension and are not directly related to blood pressure. Although headaches are difficult to evaluate, pain at the back of the head or in the neck is usually prominent; the most common cause is probably an arthritic neck. One small clue to the presence of hypertension has been recently reported in the Lancet. It seems that stentorious breathing and heavy snoring may be a sign of high blood pressure.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

BEGINNING 9 JUNE 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) Slow progress on all fronts may tell upon your patience but do not take hasty decisions to speed up things. Financially, this is a bleak period but do not get disheartened as this is only a passing phase. This is also not a favourable period to pursue legal problems. Social engagements will keep you busy but do not neglect your health However, this is a good time for lovers
Good dates: 10, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is not a good week for love and marriage negotiations Professionals will also find this phase equally disappointing check your temper and deal with those in authority with tact Your health will add to your worries On the financial front you may have to borrow money to tide over this phase A letter towards the middle of the week will relieve you of a lot of tension
Good dates: 10 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: South-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is an extremely lucky week for those in service. chances of going abroad are bright Businessmen can go ahead with expansion plans If you have legal problems pertaining to property, this is the right time to pursue them Lovers will also find this phase extremely favourable. Singers and performing artists will win rare honours. But do not neglect your health and diet
Good dates: 12, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Artists and sportsmen will find this period favourable. Students should make the most out of this favourable period. On the professional front, minor problems may crop up but you will overcome them with a bit of tact and diplomacy. The domestic front will remain inspiring but avoid arguments at all costs. Your health will improve. Watch out for a pleasant surprise this weekend.
Good dates: 11, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is not a good week for businessmen you may lose heavily if you indulge in risky financial ventures Professionals, too, should be wary of their colleagues The domestic front will cause fresh problems The financial front is not very encouraging. A journey you were looking forward to is in the offing Those above the age of 45 should keep a sharp eye on their health and diet
Good dates: 12, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Businessmen will find this period extremely favourable any deal struck during the period will prove financially profitable Sportsmen will come out with flying colours in competitions The domestic front will remain calm This is a good week for lovers But this is not a good period for professionals Your health will continue to bother you
Good dates: 9 11 and 14
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This week students will get opportunities to study abroad or in reputed institutions Businessmen and professionals will make steady headway but they should guard against deception This is a favourable week to solve legal disputes Social engagements will keep you busy throughout the week but avoid late-night parties A letter will bring good news during the weekend
Good dates: 10, 12 and 15
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: South-west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Those connected with the fine arts are likely to find this phase favourable For those in love and intending to get married, this is the opportune time to do so On the domestic front your children will be a source of joy. The financial prospects are also bright but avoid extravagance A close friend is likely to let you down. Keep a sharp eye on your health and diet.
Good dates: 11, 12 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: North



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is an extremely lucky week for all of you On the financial front a major gain is in store for most of you Problems on the domestic front will be solved amicably Lovers will be happily married For those in service a promotion or a posting to a place of your liking cannot be ruled out. Businessmen will bag lucrative deals Your health will also improve markedly
Good dates: 12, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: East



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Those employed in government concerns should be cautious while dealing with their superiors Businessmen are likely to face stiff competition from their competitors Do not get disillusioned by the slow pace of progress on all fronts At home a member of your family may suddenly fall sick adding to your worries. However, lovers will find this period extremely favourable.
Good dates: 9, 10 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 8
Favourable direction. West



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) A hectic week lies ahead for all of you do not waste time on socialising but push your efforts to the utmost Professionals will be rewarded for their sincerity Elders will prove very helpful this week do not hesitate to take their help On the financial front, gains through unexpected sources are in store Lovers may go ahead with marriage plans But do not neglect your health or diet.
Good dates: 11, 13 and 14
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: South-east



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Be prepared for setbacks on the financial front you may have to borrow money to tide over this period On the professional front you may come in for severe criticism from your employers However your domestic problems will be solved this week This is also a good period for love and marriage A letter from a long-lost friend will give you a lot of joy Your health will improve markedly.
Good dates: 12 14 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South

For those born between 15 May and 14 June:

Most of you are meditative by nature and you always like to be away from the madding crowd of towns and cities. You spend most of your time reading books in solitude. You will do well if you take up teaching. People respect you and value your comments. You are guided by some principles in life and you refuse to compromise with them in order to make temporary gains. However, some of you are very sentimental and at times your heart rules over head. Women born during this period are extremely hard-working.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration: Debasree Deo

NEW DELHI: The next time you go to a hospital for treatment and have to go into the operation theatre for some minor operation do not forget to take an attendant to look after your clothes which have to be left behind. For, the clothes could be stolen and you may have to face the prospect of returning home in just undergarments. Mr O.P. Gupta of Sitaram Bazar went to LNJP hospital on the morning of 6th May. As the practice is, he discarded his clothes when he was summoned into the operation theatre and wore the gown supplied by the hospital. However on coming out, much to his dismay and embarrassment, the bag which contained his clothes and purse was missing. Efforts to trace the missing bag proved futile and the hospital authorities pleaded helplessness. The patient finally rang up his son who arrived with another set of clothes—*Indian Express* (B.R. Mohapatra, Puri)

DARJEELING: Strange as it may sound, six young Nepalese boys of Aloobari area, on the outskirts of Darjeeling town, are facing the wrath of the local *panchayat*. They had been charged with 'roasting' a sweet-looking dog for a feast in a nearby forest. The matter came to light when a resident of the locality started making frantic enquiries about his missing dog a few days ago. Later the truth came out when, one after another, six young boys of the area were charged with stealing the dog and gobbling up the same. The charge proved correct when the senior members of the area conducted their own *panchayat*. It was stated that these boys were very friendly with a youth from Mizoram and got the "clue" of a tasty dog meat. Better late than never the boys prepared the recipe in good faith and had a good meal of the roasted dog only to face the wrath of elders. The *panchayat* elders are now toying with the idea whether to "outcast" the youths from the community—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (B.K. Salwan, 99 APO).

BOMBAY: A scribe, specialising in crime stories for a Hindi magazine, staged a real life drama by looting the Oriental Bank of Commerce of Rs 4.17 lakhs in the northern suburb of Borivili on 3 May. The writer and his nine-member gang looted the bank at the point of knives and pistols. They escaped in a taxi but were subsequently traced by the police. The writer and four members of the gang had been arrested, the police said. The police said the writer prepared the plan with the help of an employee of the bank, whose services were terminated last month. The police have seized Rs 65,000 from the arrested persons. They are on the lookout for other members of the gang—*The Statesman* (Miss Janiya Ukhade, Hooghly)

GUDALUR: The primary health centre at Pandalur, near here, which was upgraded and declared open on 10 May, was closed the very next day. Dr H.V. Hande, health minister, on 10 May declared open the health centre with a bed strength of 24 and constructed at a cost of Rs 5.89 lakhs. The residents of Pandalur felt happy that long-pending demand to upgrade the health centre had been fulfilled at last. But to their utter dismay they found that the centre was not functioning on the next day and the reason given for the same was that there was no adequate water supply. The beds brought from Udhagamandalam to Pandalur for the inaugural function, were also taken back—*Northern India Patrika* (B. Meenakshi Sundaram, Trichy)

CALCUTTA: There was excitement in the Badurbagan area in north Calcutta, when a briefcase was spotted at the pedestal of a bust of Indira Gandhi. Wiser after the recent transistor-bomb blasts in north India, nobody dared touch it fearing that a bomb might have been planted inside it. Soon a large crowd gathered there and the police were informed. The police took the briefcase to the Brigade Parade Ground where the experts of the explosives department of the union government joined them. Passersby were asked to move away and the briefcase was opened with the aid of detonators. Nothing was found inside except some "papers." The police are trying to trace the person, who left the briefcase there—*The Statesman* (P.A. Kuria, Kharagpur)

WITHOUT COMMENT

He is too old...He is just a pawn—Khushwant Singh on Baba Joginder Singh.

Basically this man (Rajiv Gandhi) is an airline pilot who wants to get his plane off the ground. He does not look to the ideology of right or left to get it flying, he just wants the machinery that will lift him off quicker. As it happens, most of that machinery comes from the West—A US economist quoted in *Newsweek*.

We do try not to behave like the Israelis—Rajiv Gandhi quoted in *Newsweek*.

I have not yet spoken in Parliament primarily because I have not yet been able to attend it—Amitabh Bachchan quoted in *Probe*.

Take a gun and shoot us or accept the presidentship—Twenty six Akali leaders urging Harchand Singh Longowal to withdraw his resignation.

I wouldn't call anybody a liar. But actions in the past have spoken louder than words from Pakistan—Senator John Glenn, commenting on Pakistan's nuclear ambitions.



He (Mountbatten) was convinced that he was a marvellous destroyer captain, but all the evidence I have been able to collect suggest that he was second rate by the highest standards—Philip Ziegler, Lord Louis, Mountbatten's official biographer, in *The Telegraph*.

If I had the same measure of success in Hindi films (as I had with Bengali films), I would have probably been where Dilip Kumar or Amitabh Bachchan is today—Bengali actor Soumitra Chatterjee in *Celebrity*

prize Rs 30 for the entry given first

VARIETY

CHESS

In winning the international tournament in Reggio Emilia, Hungarian grandmaster Lajos Portisch displayed some of the best form of his long and distinguished career. Though never a world championship challenger, he has been a more or less permanent fixture in the Candidates' series and remains one of the foremost tournament players of modern times. The following game from Reggio is, like most major tournament games, rather long, but nonetheless an enthralling contest. We also see that, despite his success in Tilburg, poor Tony Miles has never really come to terms with Portisch.

White: A. Miles; Black: L. Portisch. Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

1 P–Q4 P–Q4 2 P–QB4 P–K3
3 N–QB3 B–K2 4 PxP PxP
5 B–B4 P–QB3 6 P–K3 B–KB4
7 P–KN4

Botwinnik's patent, but a move which both Portisch and Miles have in the past played with success.

7 . . . B–N3 8 P–KR4 P–KR4!

As Botwinnik showed, 8 . . BxP 9 Q–N3! is unpleasant.

9 P–N5 B–Q3 10 Q–B3 N–K2
11 KN–K2 B–N5

Portisch (Black) to move



Miles (White)

Black has problems . . 0–0 will always be met by N–N3 while Black is temporarily precluded from developing with N–Q2.

12 0–0–0 P–QN4 13 P–R3 B–R4
14 P–N4 B–N3

If 14 . . B–B2 15 BxB QxB 16 Q–B4 is excellent for White.

15 B–K5 0–0 16 B–R3 N–Q2
17 BxN QxB 18 N–N3 B–B2
19 BxB QxB 20 NxP

Little could the dire consequences of this move have been foreseen.

20 . . . P–QR4 21 K–N2 PxP
22 PxP DIAGRAM
22 . . . P–QB4!! 23 QPxP N–B3!!

Threatening N–K4. If 24 NxQP Q–K4+ or 24 NxNP Q–N1.

24 Q–B4 N–K4!

Now 25 NxQP is met by . . . Q–R2!

25 N–B6+ PxN 26 K–N3 N–B5
27 R–R1

Of course if 27 QxQ R–R6 mate.

27 . . . QxQ 28 PxQ N–Q7+
29 K–N2 KR–Q1

Better 28 . . . P–Q5. White now almost makes a comeback.

30 NxNP QR–N1 31 N–R7 RxP+
32 K–B3 R(1)–N1!

This piece sacrifice finally clinches it.

33 KxN R–N7+ 34 K–K1

Forced. 34 K–B3 would allow mate in 2 with R(1)–N6+ and R–Q6.

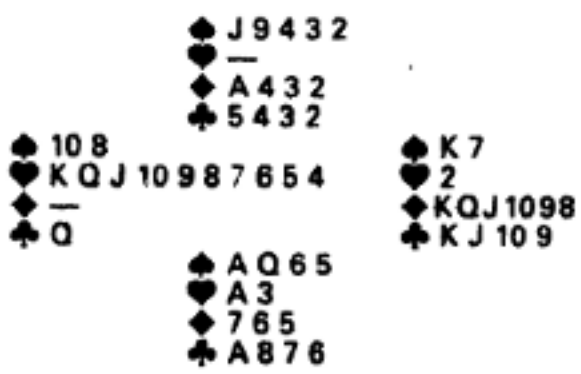
34 . . . R–N8+ 35 K–Q2 R(1)–N7+
36 K–K3 R–N6+ 37 K–Q2 R(8)–N7+
38 K–K1 B–K5 39 P–B6 R–QB6
40 P–B3 R–K6+ 41 K–B1 RxP+
42 K–K1 R–K8+ 43 K–B1 B–Q6+
44 Resigns.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Double dummy problems are something of an acquired taste, and I don't find them interesting when the play is complicated and artificial. But I like this one because it is 'pretty' and illustrates a theme not too far removed from practical play.

Dealer West Game all



There is no bidding in a double dummy problem, but one may imagine that South opens One Spade and becomes declarer in

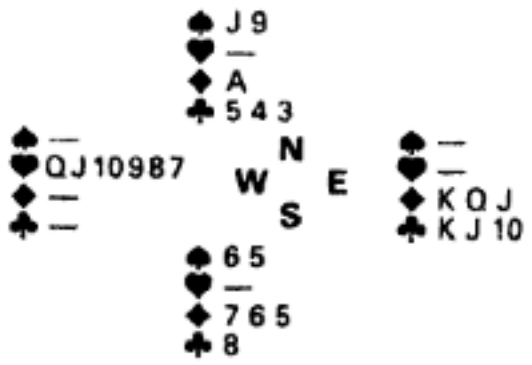


Four Spades doubled. West leads the king of hearts. How can South make ten tricks?

Having some experience of the mentality of problem-setters, I didn't find it too difficult, but if you have led a sheltered life you could spend several hours without coming close to the solution.

If you have done your best, here is the answer:

Ruff the opening lead and dispose of the ace of hearts (obviously!) Pick up the trumps, cash ♣ A, and exit with ♥ 3. Discard diamonds from North, clubs from South, arriving at this position:



North ruffs the next heart, and South discards a club. Whichever suit East discards allows South to establish a winner

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. What do the following have in common: Charles Shulz, Hank Ketcham, Dik Browne, Lee Falk and Alex Raymond?
2. Name the Mohammedan leader who became the first Caliph.
3. What does the term "lurich with the Borgias" mean?
4. How is the award-winning musician Stevland Morris better known as?
5. The houses of Piasts, Anjou and Jagelloneans ruled over which European country?
6. What is the "Penny Black?"
7. In which state in India is the Chandraprabha sanctuary, the second home of the Asiatic lion situated?
8. In computer termonology, what is a crunch?
9. Who was the world's first woman astronaut?
10. In the Solar System, name the planet which is the farthest away from the Sun
11. What is the young of a pigeon called?
12. The "Soccer king" Pele, has played for two football clubs for most of his career. Name them.
13. The first newspaper published in India began on 27 January 1780 in Calcutta. What was it called?

ANSWERS

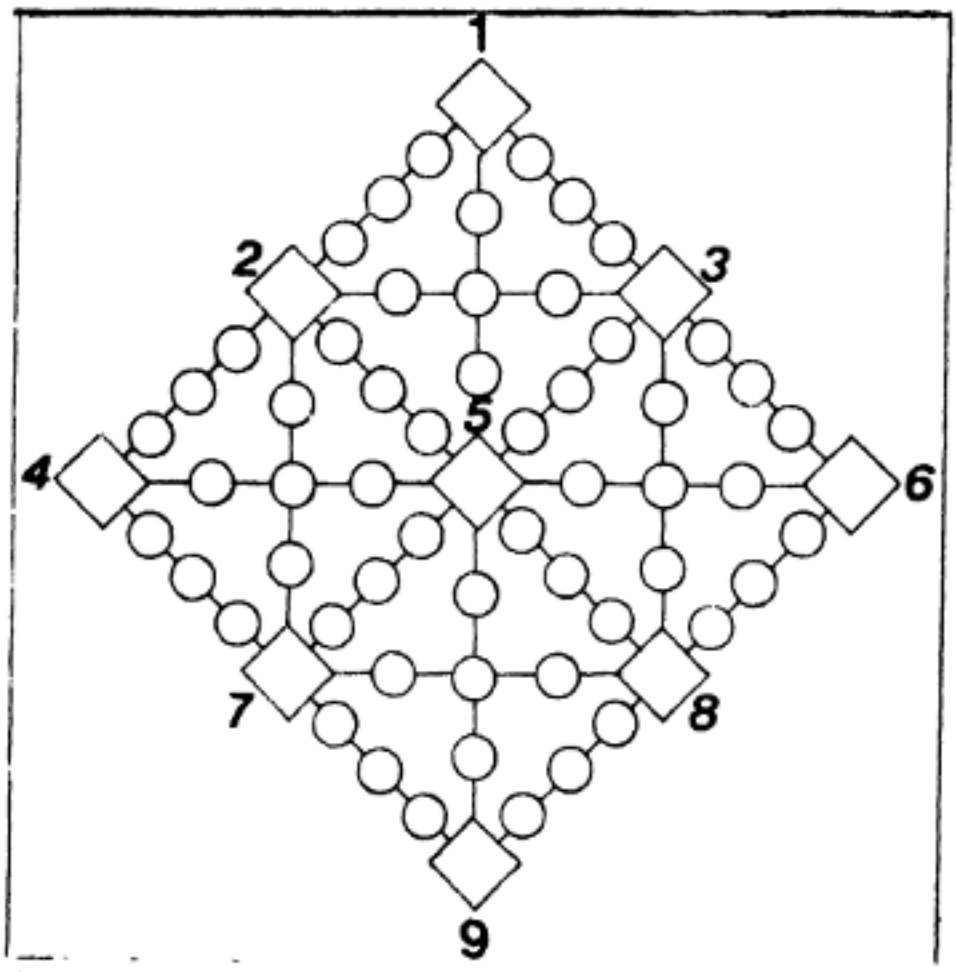
1. They are all writers of comic strips.
2. Abu Bakr.
3. The possibility of being poisoned. The Borgias, notably the 15th century Florentine Cesare Borgia, often killed their enemies by poisoning them.
4. Stevie Wonder.
5. Poland.
6. The first postage stamp. It was issued in Great Britain on 6 May 1840.
7. Uttar Pradesh.
8. The method of making a certain amount of information fit into a smaller amount of space than normally required.
9. Valentina Tereshkova.
10. Pluto.
11. A squeaker.
12. Santos, in Brazil and Cosmos in USA.
13. *The Bengal Gazette* also known as *Hickey's Gazette*.

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Diamond Diagonals

Solve the clues given below and place the answers which are all five-letter words into the circles of the diamond. The first and last letters of each word fit into the squares. Remember that the last letter of one word forms the first of the next.



Clues :

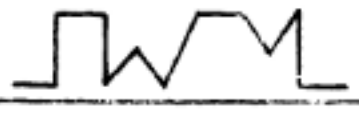
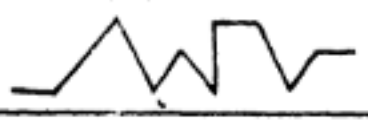
1—2	A thin leaf of coloured paste
1—3	To keep vigil
1—5	Tasteless fluid
2—3	Try to vomit
2—4	To groove spirally
2—5	Water body
2—7	A just claim
3—5	He who tramps
3—6	Treasure
3—8	Content
4—5	Ardent to do
4—7	Directed upward
5—6	Quickly accomplished
5—7	To relax
5—8	To respond in action
5—9	Automatic Traffic signal
6—8	To defer
7—8	Artificial stone
7—9	Compact
8—9	Vessel

Mindbender



Can you plant these ten trees in five rows of four each?

Quick Think

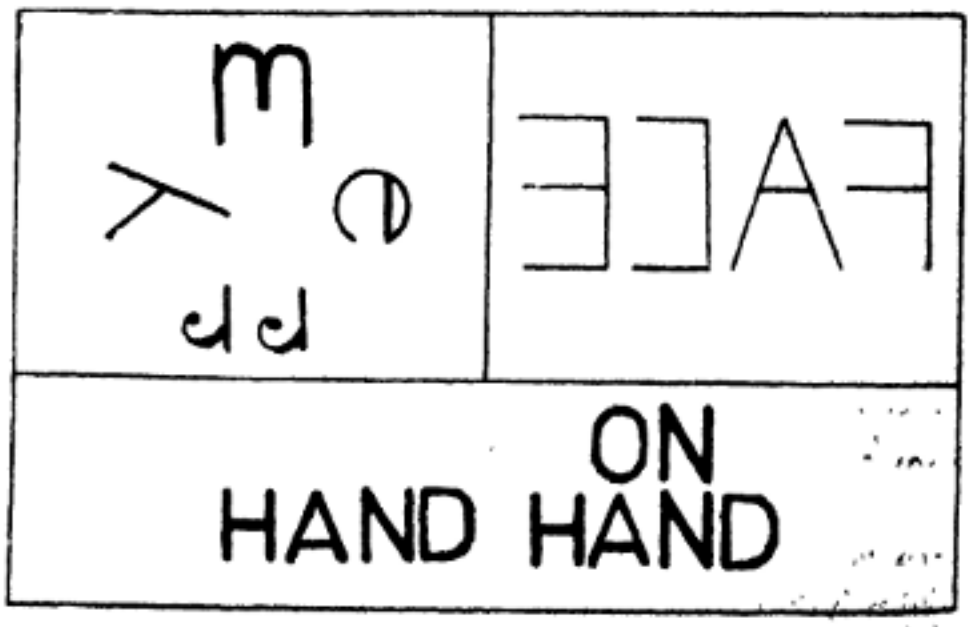
	123236214365
	3212521515
	212143623412
	2

Complete the last section using the same formula that has been used to compose the first three sections.

Witsharpener

There is nothing new about this problem but it might serve to tease your brains a bit. Three men travelling in America decided to economise and share a room in a hotel. The desk clerk told them that it would cost them $30 so each of them paid $10 and went to their room. However, shortly afterwards, the clerk realised that he had made a mistake and had overcharged the three men. The tariff for the room was only $25, so calling a bell boy he gave him $5 and told him to return it to the men. Ever ready to make a quick buck, the bell boy decided that it would make matters much easier if he kept $2 and returned $1 to each of the men. This meant that each of the three men paid $9, or a total or $27. With the $2 that the bell boy kept, the total came to $29. Can you say what happened to the missing dollar?

Sketch a Word



A punagram is a word sketch which depicts a familiar saying or phrase. Can you decipher the following punagrams?

Really

The 34-letter word, introduced in the film *Mary Poppins*,

SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS

simply means 'absolutely superb.'

The Webster Dictionary lists one which is longer:

PNEUMONOULTRAMICROSCOPICSILICOVOLCANO-CONIOSIS

See how long it takes you to learn to pronounce it. It means 'Pneumonoconiosis caused by the inhalation of silicate or quartz dust' or miner's lung disease.

Do you know what is the word for those who use long words?

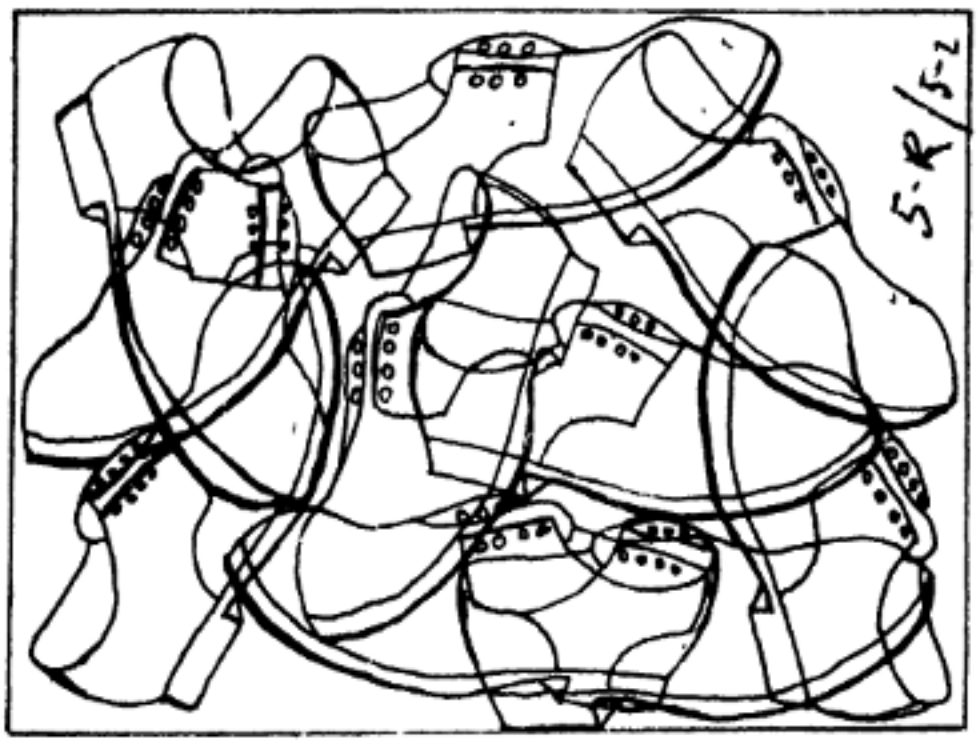
HIPPOPOTOMONSTROUSQUIPEDALIANISM

Letter Power

Reading through this sentence *only once* (remember you are on your honour) how many f's can you count?

The truth of the matter is that as a result of years of scientific study the fifth paper on the subject has been written and is now on file.

Shoe Search



How many left shoes and how many right shoes can you find in this jumble?

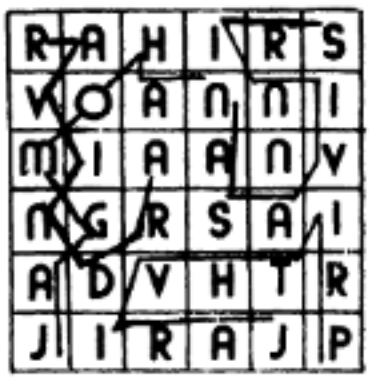
Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Quick Think: They were two of a set of triplets, quadruplets or quintuplets
Shape Sleuth: 2
Shape Sleuth: Box f
Quizzbizz: Los Angeles, Paris and London.
Word Power: Autumn

Witsharpener:

			6	6	3	2						
			6	2	1	5						
			4	4	1	1						
5	1		4	0	3	0		4	6			
6	3		0	4	0	0		2	1			
3	2		5	2	0		5	0		4		
1	4		3	4	3		6	2		5		
			2	1	5	5						
			2	6	3	5						
			0	6	3	1						

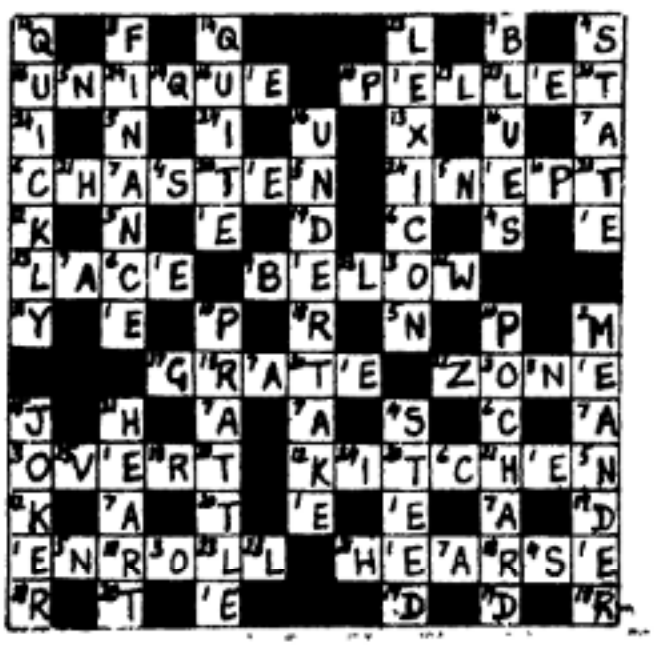
Figure it Out: Ravindra, Srinivasan, Prithvirajm, Jagmohan



Mindbender:



Cryptocross:



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
E	M	O	S	N	C	A	F	B	P	Y	K	X

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	J	U	G	R	D	T	H	Z	L	I	V	W



SCIENCE

Cure for the Kidneys

Japanese scientists have transformed an abandoned Italian technique for removing poisonous wastes from human blood into what might be a money-spinner. They have come up with a drug that promises relief to the 50,000 Japanese at risk from kidney disease.

The kidney is a filter, removing from the blood poisonous body wastes such as urea and ammonia The average person produces more than 50 grams of urea every day and, unless most is removed, it will kill. Dialysis machines do the same filtering with chemical "adsorbents," usually activated carbons, but their capacity to extract urea is poor. Patients must spend tiresomely long periods connected to expensive kidney machines at least two to three times a week.

In 1968, Dr Carmelo Giordano, president of the Italian Nephrology Society, developed a drug called dialdehyde starch (DAS), with a high urea-adsorbing capacity, by chemically treating starch extracted from potatoes and maize It was most effective when eaten, since it removed toxic urea and ammonia from blood circulating to the intestine. The result of his trials was remarkable. The need for dialysis dropped to almost nothing. However, there was a nasty side-effect: severe diarrhoea within two or three hours of the first dose. Why this happened is not known, but it led to a premature end to all research work on the project

Until now. Tinkering with DAS, scientists at the Research Institute for Polymers and Textiles in Tsukuba Science City, Japan, have improved the adsorbent's performance considerably. According to Dr Toshimi Shimizu, whose research into DAS has been part of an artificial-organ project, Dr Giordano's DAS worked by combining its surface "aldehyde" groups with "amino" groups in urea and ammonia molecules. But this process was not selective and DAS combined indiscriminately with any amino groups—including those on the body's precious proteins.

Dr Shimizu's group came up with a new version of the substance by chemically reacting the DAS with a protein such as gelatin. The gelatin inactivates the aldehyde groups on the surface of DAS, but not those tucked away inside the molecule. Because urea and ammonia molecules are small, they can penetrate the coated DAS particle and reach the active aldehydes.

Not only does this modified DAS appear to be twice as effective as Dr Giordano's, but it is also selective and no side-effects have emerged in clinical trials so far. Dr Shozo Koshikawa of the Showa University's affiliated hospital in Fujigaoka, Tokyo, believes the potential of DAS is huge. Nearly 80 per cent of the patients with deteriorating kidneys who entered his two-year clinical trial were about to prolong the period before starting dialysis, simply by consuming 20 grams of DAS a day. And once dialysis became necessary, treatment was required less often and for shorter periods than usual.

One note of caution. In some patients the normal frequency and duration of dialysis were still required to remove the build-up of the water that is normally expelled from the body by a healthy kidney. Moreover, the patients had to take 30-40 tablets a day.

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[illegible] at the heart!

[illegible] compressor is made under [illegible] Hitachi — made for [illegible] compressor failure and [illegible] efficiency.

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7 YEAR GUARANTEE



HITACHI

Nothing seems to be going right for *Dimple Kapadia* ever since she walked out of Ashirwaad with her two daughters. She pinned all her hopes on a career in films and the industry in Bombay welcomed her with open arms. But what followed frustrated Dimple. The producers wanted her to work wonders and when most of the movies released did not do too well at the box office, they started neglecting her. Dimple is also facing troubled times on the home front: she has fallen out with her parents and has moved to her own apartment. The tinsel city is agog with rumours that Dimple is seeking a compromise with *Rajesh Khanna* who is having a grand time with *Tina Munim*. But Rajesh's response to his former wife's overtures has so far been cold.

Gossip columnists are still in the dark about the *Rakhee-Gulzar* divorce. On 18 April the film industry was agog with rumours that the divorce case was to be heard. People rushed from court to court but in vain. Some of the journalists even went to Gulzar for his comments. The poet-director snubbed them: "I have always said that my private life is my own and I don't know why people should be so curious about what I am doing about my life." But gossip-mongers are made of sterner stuff and next morning they were out with a scoop. They wrote that a new man in the life of Rakhee has necessitated the divorce.

These days *Mandakini* and *Ashish Chanana* spend most of their time together. Moreover, his car is always parked outside her apartment. Ashish, the son of former union minister Dr Charanjit Chanana, has been teamed up with her in *Jeetendra's Aag aur Shola*. One song together in the rain and they are madly in love.

All seems to be over for *Bindiya Goswami*. *Vinod Mehra* has made it public that he has nothing to do with her and producers too are keeping her at a distance. That's a sad end to a promising career.

Fate has played havoc with *Suresh Oberoi*. Just when he was thinking of giving up modelling, fortune smiled on him and overnight he started receiving offers from well-known film producers. But soon he lost his brother and injured himself seriously in a car accident Scores of actors are waiting on the sidelines to fill the vacancy while Suresh languishes in hospital.

Every time *Pramod Chakraborty* completes a film he comes up with a mournful statement in which he says he has had enough of the mad, mad ways of the industry and that he is not going to make any more films. It happened again after he completed *Jagir* (the Bengali version was entitled *Teen Murti*). "I have had enough of the stars and their whimsical ways. They have lost all interest for even an established filmmaker like me. I shudder to think of the new men who have come in. Anyway, I am sick of the whole thing. I am not going to make any more films. I am going to retire. I have had enough," he said. And just two months later Pramod started his new film based on *Shatru* (an all-time hit in Bengali) with *Rajesh Khanna* and many other stars from Bombay.



Rakhee: a victim of gossip

Dhirendra Kishan



Bindiya Goswami: end of the road?

Jitendra Arya

The press is at war [illegible] *Anupam Kher*, [illegible] owes his success to [illegible] extent to the fou[illegible] of Nowadays almo[illegible]airs filmy magazin[illegible]n, stories of An[illegible]. The with a marr[illegible] the *Kiran Tha*[illegible] has sur- sudden b[illegible]. "I don't press in[illegible]y have be- prised [illegible]tle I think it know[illegible]iwork of some com[illegible]iends." is [illegible] of [illegible]mer pornographic publisher *Kalloor Ravi* entering the world of films While the censors are waiting with bated breath, the viewers in the south can hope for something tantalising. Ravi has decided to switch to films because his publications which fetched him millions are not doing too well.

Hotel Amritha in Trivandrum is fast becoming Kerala's answer to Bombay's Sun 'N Sand Hotel. It is the meeting ground of filmstars, directors and producers and most of the deals are struck here.

DELHI DIARY

Lack of Protocol

The chairman of the external affairs ministry's policy planning committee, G. Parthasarathy, is looking cheerful these days. Ever since the war between him and the foreign secretary, Romesh Bhandari began, Mr Parthasarathy looked crestfallen because the younger diplomat outsmarted him on some occasions. On 2 May, however, the tables were turned. Bhandari had convened a meeting of former Indian envoys to the United States of America, for a meeting on the eve of the Prime Minister's visit to the USA. L.K. Jha, Kewal Singh, K.R. Narayanan (now minister of state for planning), B.K. Nehru (Gujarat Governor), K.B. Lall, N.A. Palkhivala, T.N Kaul, P N. Haksar and some other prominent former diplomats were invited But none turned up. Reason: The invitation had been extended not by the foreign secretary (after all Bhandari had served under all these gentlemen at one time or the other) but by a deputy secretary in the foreign office. The next day, some



G. Parthasarathy

leading journalists, including Girilal Jain, chief editor of *The Times of India* and Nikhil Chakravartty, were invited for a session because they were considered to be "opinion makers." But in their opinion too, the invitation, coming from a deputy secretary, was not appropriate Ultimately, only L.K. Jha, the former Indian ambassador to the USA, agreed to meet Romesh Bhandari along with a couple of retired officers of the America desk. If the foreign secretary fails in protocol while dealing with dignitaries at home, things can be worse abroad.

Appointment or Disappointment?

P. Shiv Shanker, the former union cabinet minister, has been given a post in the AICC(I) headquarters. No, he is not among the general secretaries. He has been given a vague designation and put in charge of centre-state relations, a subject which is under the consideration of the Sarkaria Commission. When the defeated Andhra politician was brought to Parliament from Gujarat, speculation was rife that he would be inducted into the cabinet again. Even a post was mentioned for him: that of the finance minister. Earlier, when he had not been elected to Parliament, ambassadorial assignments were mooted for him. However, the party post given to him was a big comedown. When A.B.A. Ghani Khan Choudhuri has been made an AICC(I) general secretary and Pranab Kumar Mukherjee the president of the West Bengal PCC(I), one would have expected Shiv Shanker to get a better deal. Gujarat, incidentally, has now become the dumping



P. Shiv Shanker

ground for defeated Congressmen. In total disregard of the anti-reservation sentiments in the state, Gujarat has been burdened with the parliamentary seats of Pranab Mukherjee of West Bengal and Shiv Shanker of Andhra Pradesh. Chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki has to pay the price for remaining in power. When his popularity in the state is at a low ebb, keeping the central leadership happy by accommodating politicians who cannot otherwise come to Parliament is a safe way to remain in power.

Importance of Allahabad

Amitabh Bachchan's constituency, Allahabad, has been rewarded for having returned him to Parliament. Though the benefit accruing to Allahabad will not percolate down to the common man, the city can now boast of having a Maruti agency before Kanpur. In the original scheme of things, Kanpur was designated as one of the Phase-II centres for Maruti distributorship. All of a sudden, the city has been shifted to a later phase and Allahabad pitchforked into a prominent place in the plans of Maruti Udyog Ltd. While Lucknow is the state capital, Kanpur is considered the economic capital. The Reserve Bank of India's branch office in UP is located in Kanpur. But this time in Parliament it has not been able to return a celebrity. The sitting MP, Naresh Chandra Chaturvedi, is a political lightweight compared to Amitabh Bachchan, though Chaturvedi has put in many more years in politics than the filmstar. Amitabh Bachchan, though not in the limelight in party sessions and in Parliament, has now started sitting at 2A Motilal Nehru Marg, the private office of Rajiv Gandhi, which he used till he became the Prime Minister.



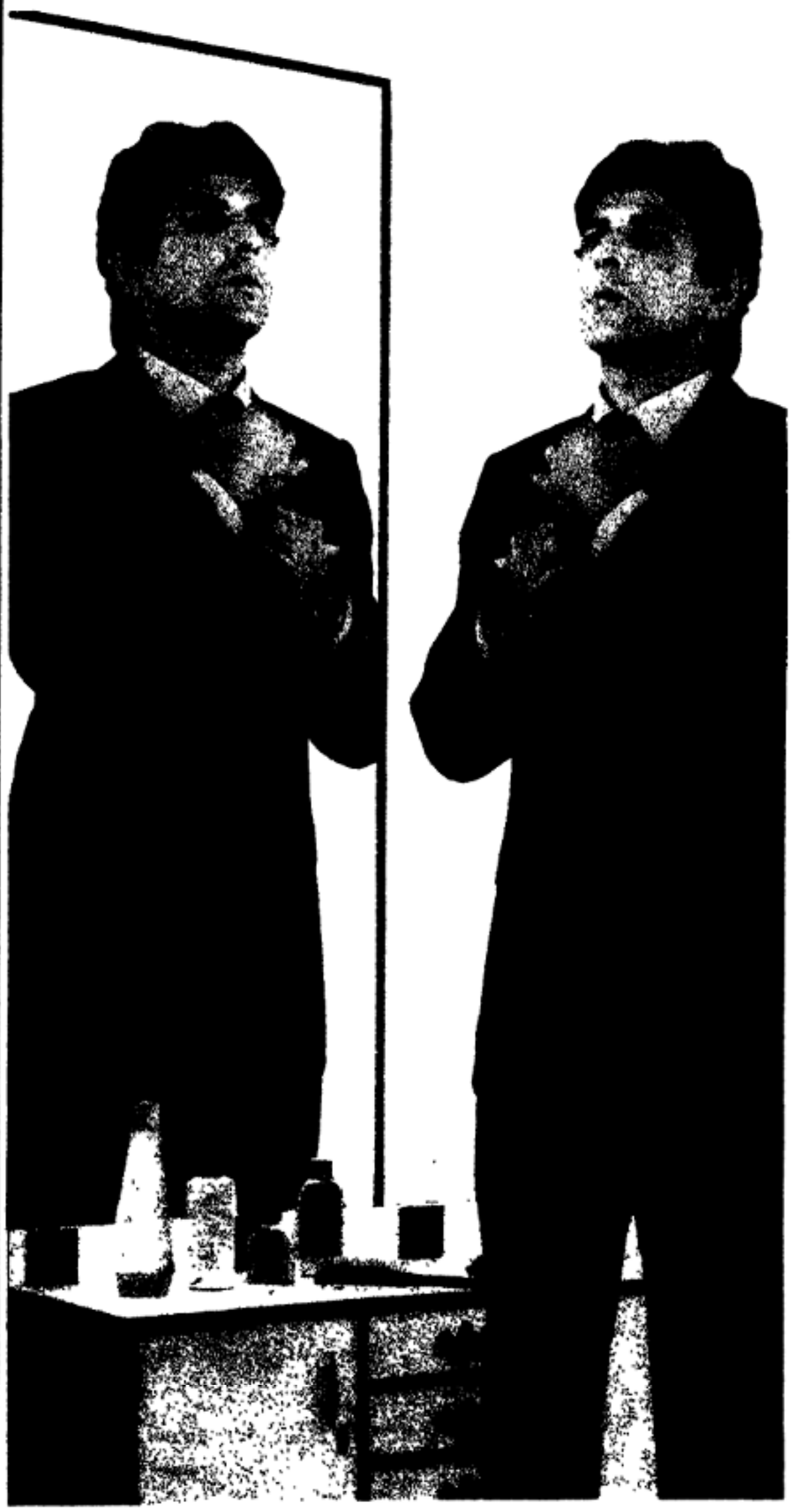
Amitabh Bachchan

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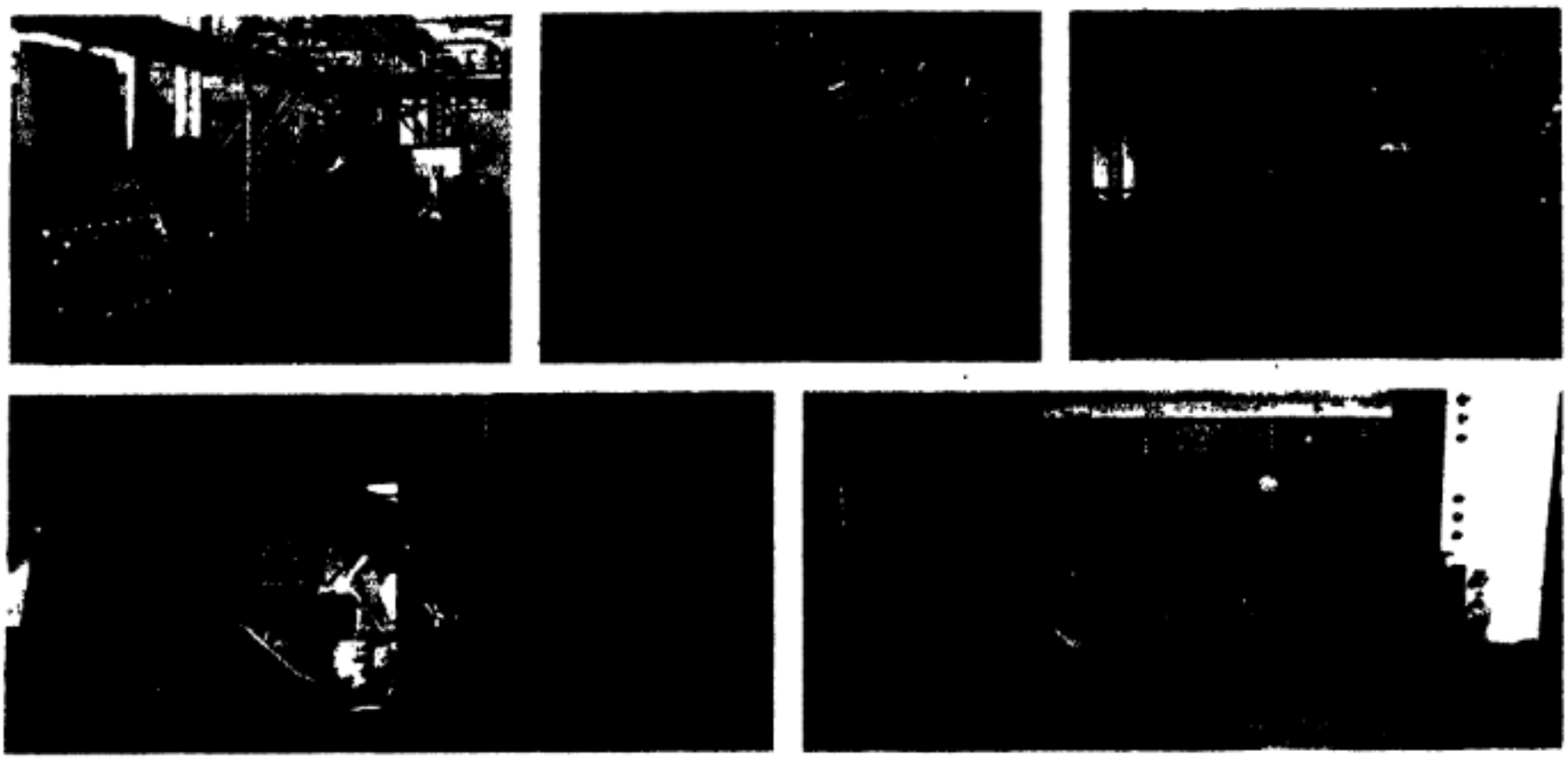
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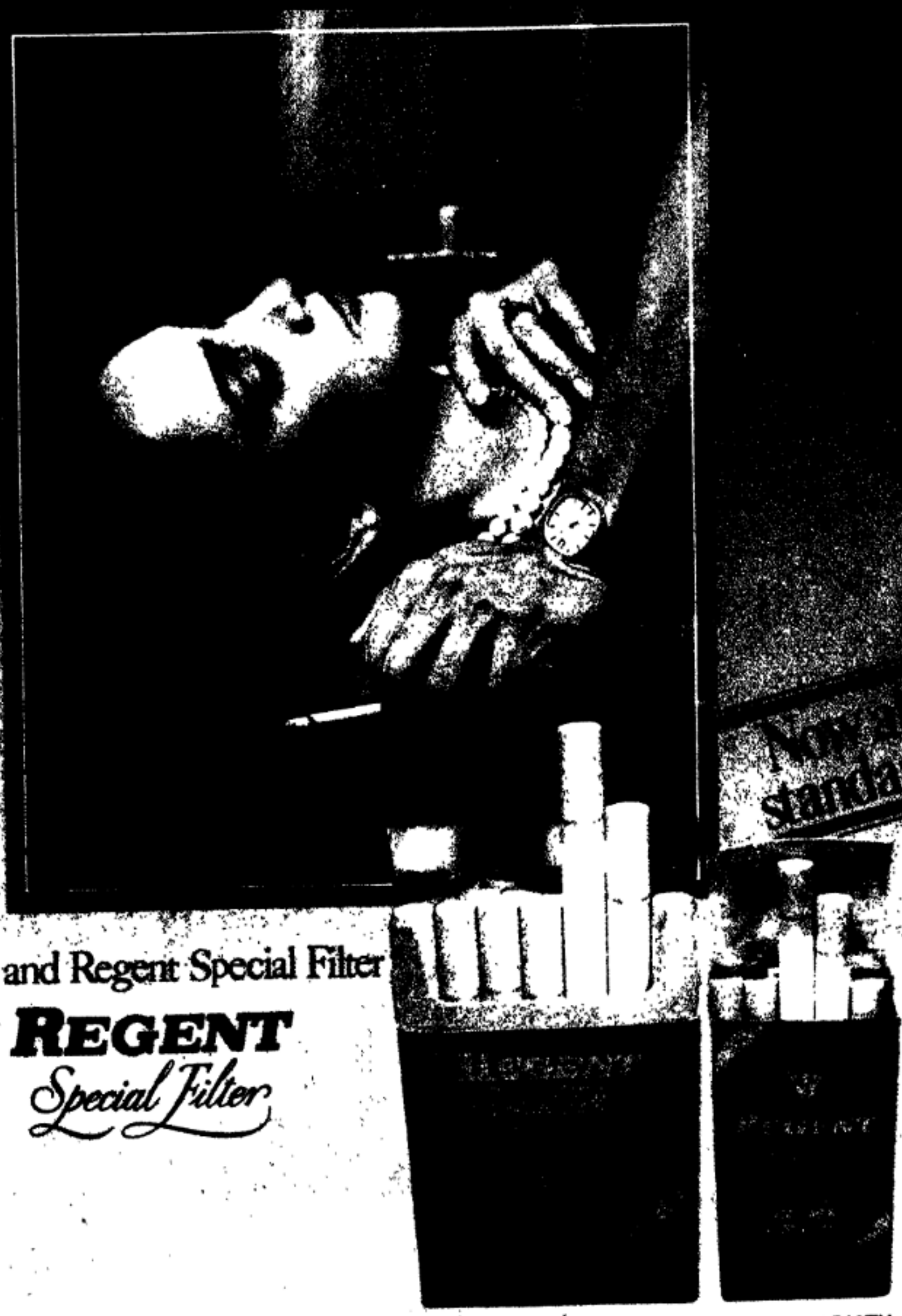
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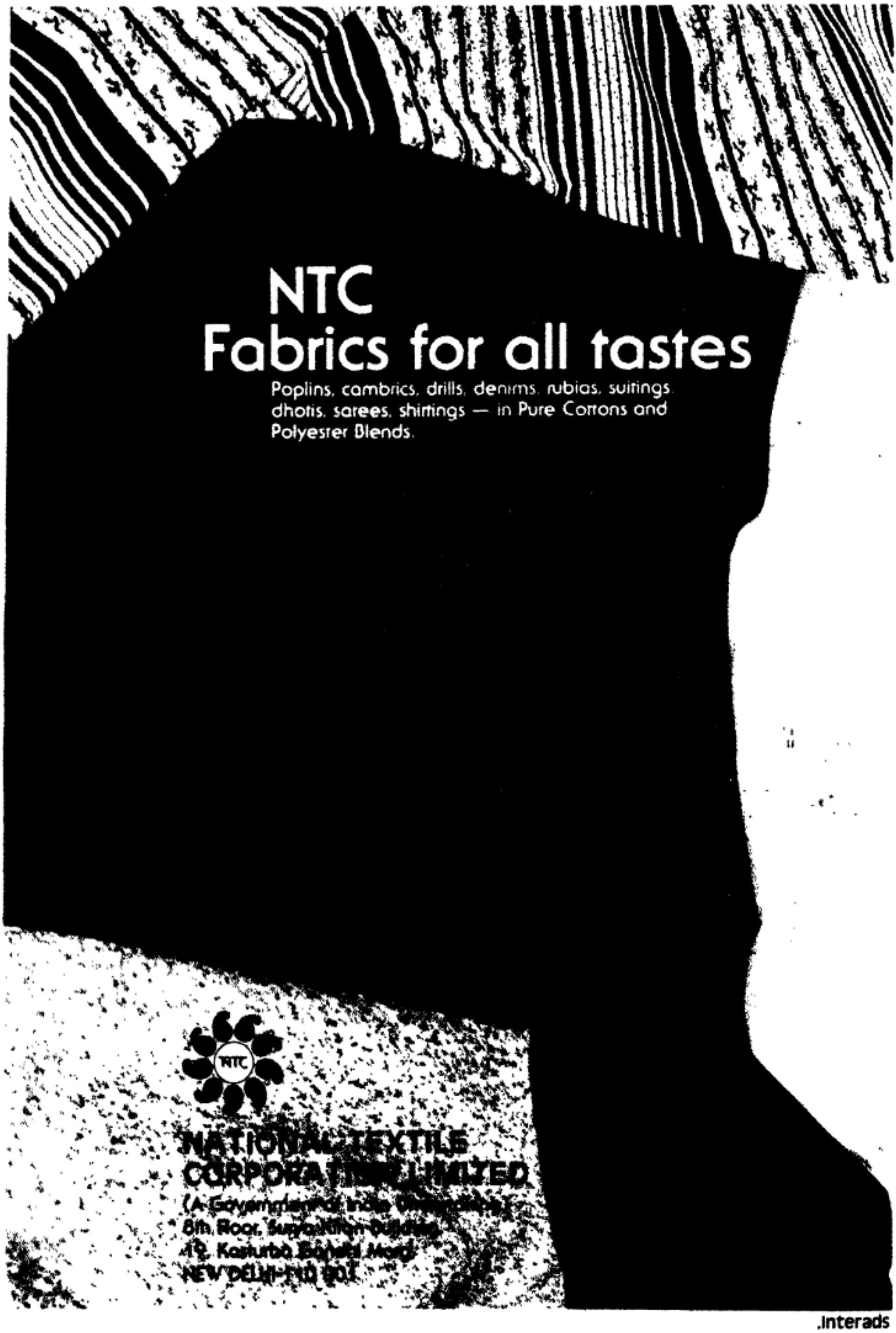


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A Disaster Called G.M. Shah

On 2 July the defector government of G.M. Shah will complete one year in office. The record, so far, is enough to put any government to shame. A report from Sankarshan Thakur and Yusuf Jameel.

Summer of Discontent

At a time when India is trying to present its best face to the world outside, it is doing precious little to cure the festering sores on its body. The Assam and Punjab problems remain unresolved while Gujarat is in the grip of a fierce caste war. In Kashmir a government of defectors continues to loot the state. Kuldip Nayar, Romesh Thapar, K.F. Rustomji along with SUNDAY correspondents take a look at the turmoil in the country today.



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Why Vasantrao Patil Resigned

Olga Tellis reports on the incidents which lead to the resignation of Vasantrao Patil from the chief ministership of Maharashtra and Shivajirao Nilangekar taking charge.

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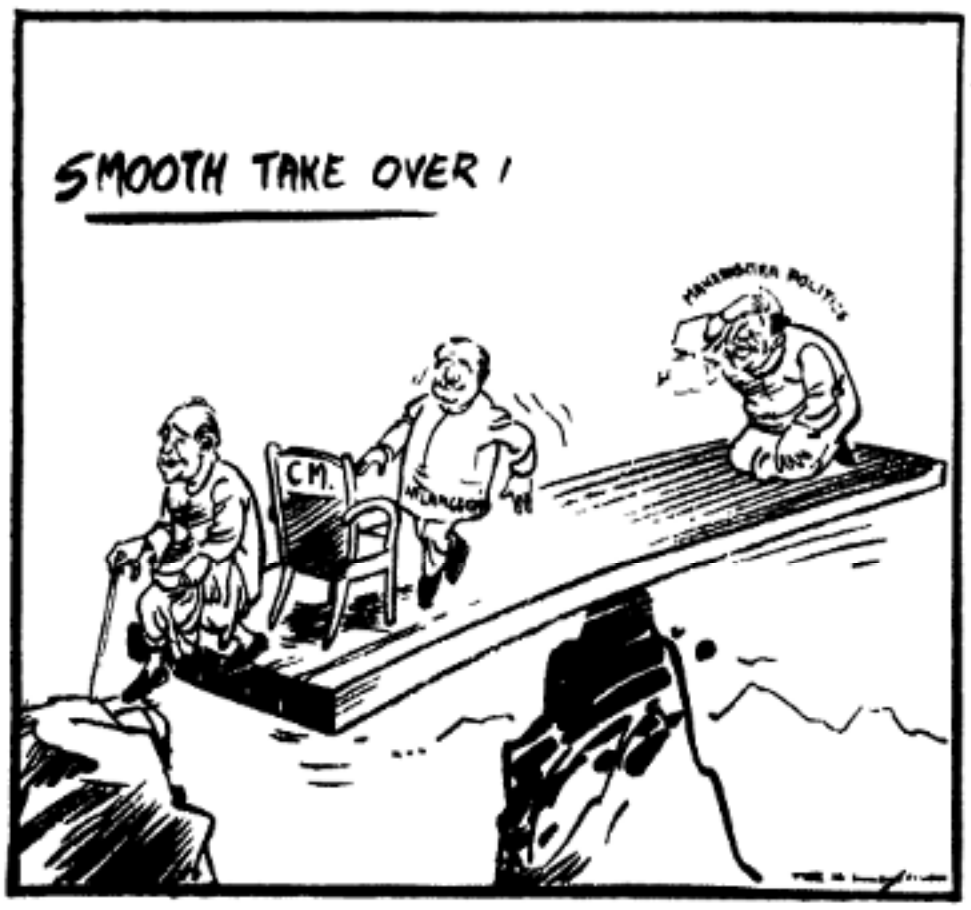
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Courtesy Times of India

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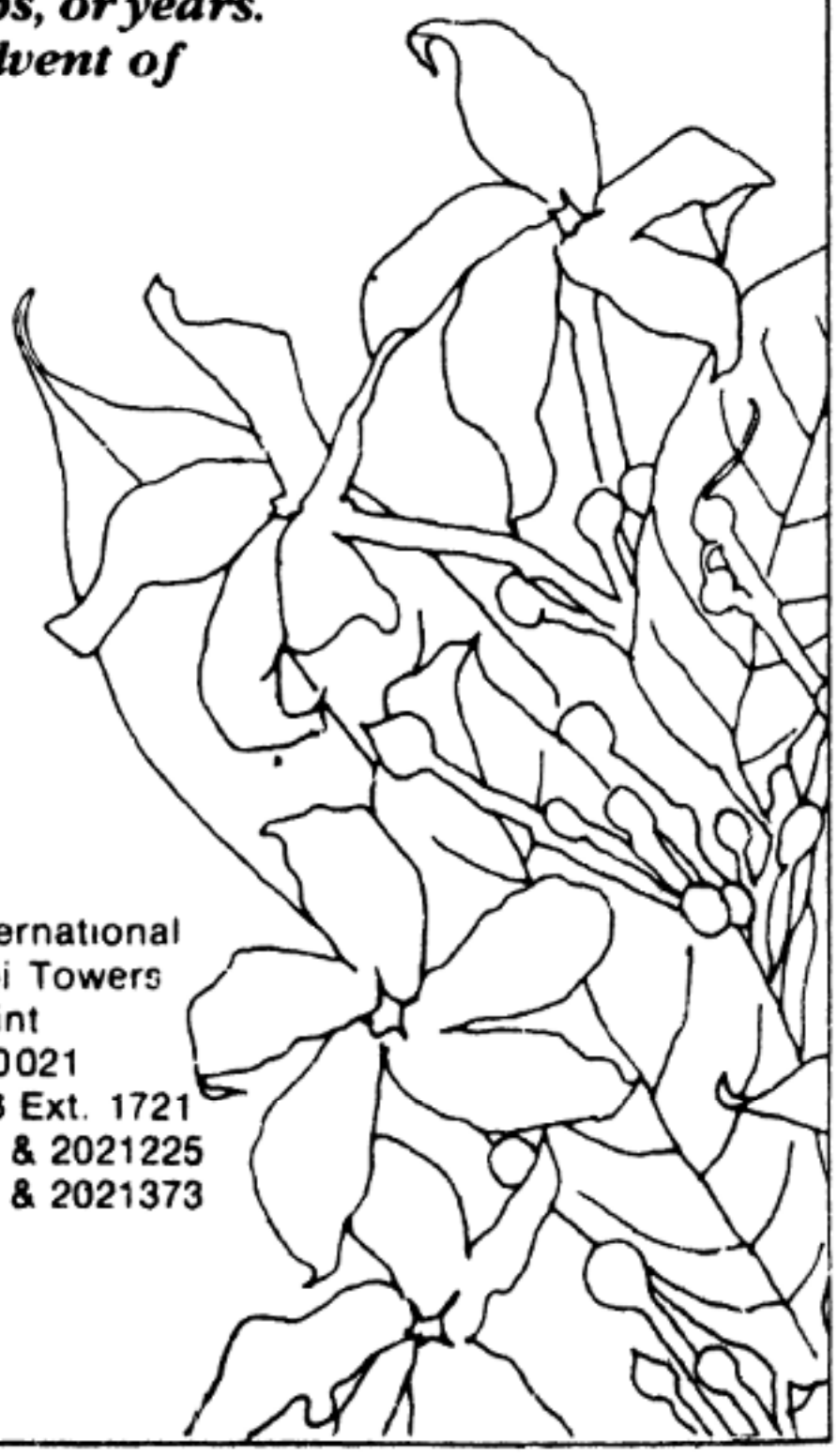
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to clinch titles
in world championships.
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or way of life.
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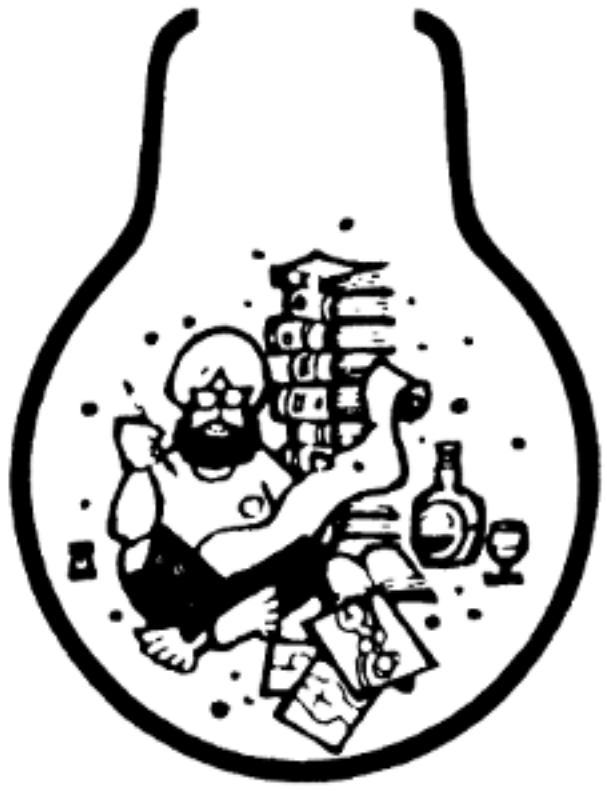
Interpub PIA/D-2/86

Amaar Jonmo Bhoomee

For three days and nights dust hung in the air like a pestilent cloud. Not a whiff of air, not a leaf stirred, not a bird sang. The once green lawn in front of my apartment had turned a sere yellow, flowers had withered in their beds. I said to myself: Only cacti thrive in my cactus land! When the days were at their hottest, the fan stopped churning hot air leaving me to sweat it out and nurse prickly heat that had erupted round my neck. In the evening when I stood under the shower to wash away the day's dust and sweat off my body, the turn of the tap only produced a few gaseous farts but not a drop of water. One night, the air-conditioner died on me converting my cool bedroom into the Black Hole of Calcutta. What did Andre Gide mean when he talked of the "sensual ecstasy that comes with persistent heat?" Bullshit! Why do I have to live in this God-forsaken land?

The next afternoon a dust storm swept across the city with demoniac fury. An ancient banyan on Parliament Street which I had regarded as the emblem of eternity was pulled out by its roots and hurled across the road bringing traffic to a halt for several hours. Its limbs had to be hacked off before the stream of traffic could resume its flow. At another place a cat nestling in the shade of a *neem* was broken into two as the tree crashed down its middle. The storm blew for almost an hour till the shades of twilight gathered the metropolis in their fold. Suddenly I heard sounds of thunder and saw flashes of lightning pierce the dust-laden sky. Then came the rain. It lasted only 15 minutes but in that short spell it filled the gutters to overflowing, flooded the roads, knocked out the electric supply and slew all of Delhi's telephones stone dead. Why do I suffer these humiliations? Why not live somewhere where things are better managed?

Early next morning I set out for my game of tennis. Every leaf of every tree had been washed clean. The soft fragrance of *siris* floated in the air. Carpets of golden yellow were laid about the boles of laburnums that line the avenue. Golden orioles called from the foliage of *shisham* trees. The *gulmohar* along the tennis court was ablaze with scarlet and yellow. A magpie robin *(shama)* alighted on its



topmost branch and burst into song :"*Amon deshti kothao khunjay paabey na ko toomee, Shokol desher rani shejey, Amaar jonmo bhoomee*" (Search wherever you may, but you will not find a land (as beautiful) as this; she is the queen, this land of my birth)."

How could I have ever thought of living elsewhere except my *jonmo bhoomee*?

Of Cats, Dogs and Humans

As both a dog and a cat lover I am somewhat perplexed by differences in their attitude towards humans and their behaviour towards each other. There is little doubt that the human-dog equation is much closer than the human-cat relationship. Dogs attach themselves to their masters, preferably those who feed and exercise them. They are miserable when their masters are away and start looking unhappy as soon as they see suit-cases being packed. Cats are indifferent towards their masters and are more attached to the homes they live in. Dogs can sense people who do not like them; cats don't give a damn. They'll purr for anyone who places a saucer of milk before them. Dogs are dirty and have to be bathed and house-trained. Cats keep themselves clean and their toilet practices are lessons in decorum. They dig a pit, defecate in it and cover it up with earth. Dogs, unless they are brought up together as pups, find it difficult to adjust to each other. Cats will cuddle up with their own kind without much fuss. Dogs get into brawls with other dogs, cats, except at mating time, seldom fight with other cats. Dogs refuse to share their food and snarl at the approach of another dog when eating. Cats observe a code of eating propriety.

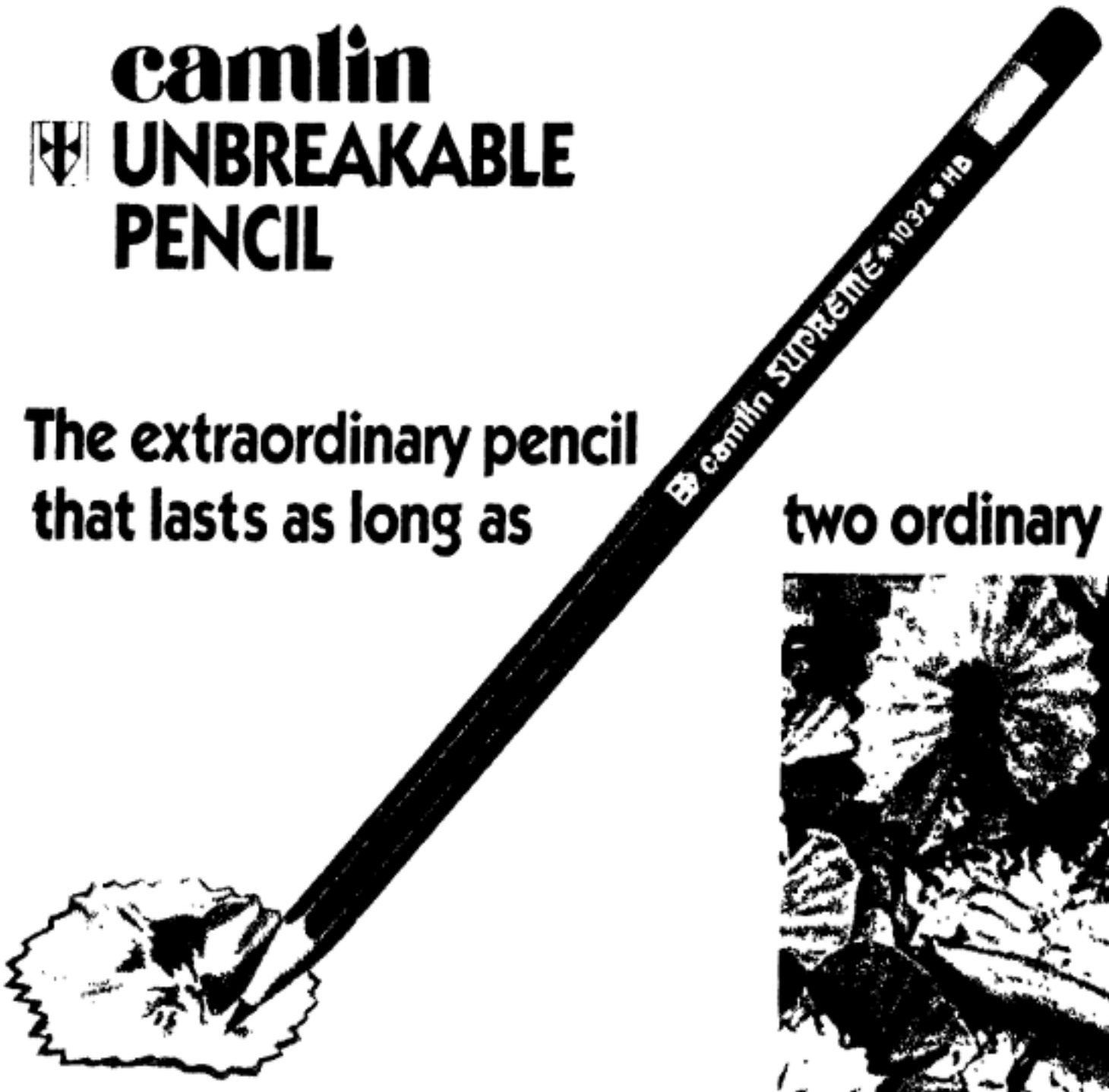
Early every morning, between six to ten cats assemble outside my front door. I can hear them mewing impatiently beside the bundle of newspapers which are delivered to me by 4.30. Since the number of cats has multiplied I put the milk in a large enamel saucer, so they can lap it up together. As I open the door they get very excited, my favourites even leap up to snatch it from my hands. But no sooner I place the saucer on the ground, only those that can get their heads together around it get to drink it. Invariably two or three are crowded out. They never try to muscle their way into the ring, but sit aside despondently hoping I will bring them another bowlful. However their behaviour in the evening is quite different. Whenever I go out for dinner, I ask my hostess or the waiter to put all the left-over bones in a plastic bag. No sooner I step out of the car, cats come running from all directions. However much I try to scatter the bones, they fight over every piece. The one which succeeds in grabbing a bone runs away with it lest it be clawed out of its mouth. Why this belligerency when it comes to meat and not over milk?

It has been established that most animals and birds have sixth or seventh senses unknown to humans. A case on record is from a small town, Concepcion, in Chile in 1835. One morning at 10.30 am suddenly and for no reason whatsoever birds took to the air screaming wildly. An hour later dogs began to bark and horses tried to break loose from their tethers. Ten minutes later at 11.40 am came an earthquake which destroyed most of the township.

Birds are better equipped by nature than animals. Birds of prey like hawks and scavengers like kites and vultures can spot tiny lizards and mice from several miles. They have sharper eyes, but animals have sharper noses. Dogs can spot people who have smoked heroin two days earlier. Even humans can develop uncanny powers when the situation demands. Convicts in jail are known to smell the approach of prison officials before they can see them. If you know of other instances of extra-sensory perception please write.

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Can Colombo Help Tamils?

Sri Lanka believes that a marked change has come over India's attitude towards her. After his talks with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, President Jayewardene has come to feel that New Delhi is honest and serious about its intention to check the infiltration of terrorists into Sri Lanka from India. This is what President Jayewardene told his ministers at the conclusion of his talks with the Indian Prime Minister.

In the past, the two countries had made very little progress in finding a solution to the ethnic problem because, while India insisted on initiating talks—which it believed would eliminate violence and retaliatory action—Sri Lanka argued that only cessation of violence could create an atmosphere conducive to talks. Sri Lanka is happy that India was now more appreciative of their point of view. But Sri Lanka also sees the need to check the atrocities of her armed forces. President Jayewardene has promised to recall most of his troops to the barracks. A couple of months ago, when I met him, he had offered to withdraw the troops but he first wanted India to agree to a joint surveillance of the troubled areas by the two countries. It appears that Jayewardene had not agreed to withdraw troops before the talks. He wanted the gesture to be reciprocal. India should not give refuge to terrorists operating in Sri Lanka and Colombo should see to it that its often trigger-happy army is not assigned civilian duties.

Officials accompanying President Jayewardene on his New Delhi visit reportedly proposed that New Delhi should bring the Eelam terrorists under the purview of the recently enacted Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act. Whether India complies with this or not will depend on how the two countries sort out the ethnic problem between themselves. However, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has suggested a global approach to the task of combating terrorism. He reportedly told Jayewardene that the two countries should draw up a blueprint for global action to check terrorism. Mr Gandhi said that the problem should be tackled in all its ramifications, involving other countries as well. At Mr Gandhi's instance, the Indian defence minster P.V. Narasimha Rao met the Sri Lanka security minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who had accompanied Jayewardene to India. All the steps they decided on were not made public but some joint steps are undoubtedly in the offing. And before long the two countries may come up with a proposal for global consideration.

One thing noticeable about the efforts for a reconciliation is that G. Parthasarathy, chairman of the policy planning body, is now out of the picture. Sri Lanka [illegible] kind of aversion to him [illegible] declared that he is not [illegible] Romesh Bhandari, the former [illegible] taken his place.

President Jayewardene [illegible] regard for Rajiv Gandhi. [illegible] Gandhi had the making [illegible] and whatever he had read about [illegible] confirmed this impression. [illegible] reluctant to come to Delhi [illegible] because he was worried that [illegible] would get the impression that [illegible] towing to a new and young [illegible] But once he had agreed to [illegible] he insisted on having this [illegible] drum so that it did not [illegible] travel all the way to [illegible] Indian Prime Minister [illegible] that Rajiv Gandhi [illegible] country's internal problems [illegible] fly to Delhi. The joint [illegible] Jayewardene and Rajiv [illegible] Indo-Sri Lankan [illegible] the cyclone in Bangladesh [illegible] altogether new dimension.

There is no doubt that [illegible] getting along quite well. [illegible] dene bring sanity to [illegible] fanatical Buddhist [illegible] which appears to be [illegible] In Delhi he agreed to hold [illegible] Sri Lanka, but he did not [illegible] for what. This is an oft repeated [illegible] When it comes to giving some power [illegible] Lankans, Jayewardene has been [illegible] will be overcome this hesitation now.

The problem is difficult. The [illegible] seem a redoubtable force. For example, according to *Le Monde*, a French daily, the [illegible] have 6,000 guerillas [illegible] raise 4,000 more [illegible] with the Sri Lankan [illegible] troops. Moreover, [illegible] thousands of [illegible] east of Sri Lanka, [illegible] Hindu Tamils are [illegible]

Asked what would be [illegible] to the Tamils, who are in a majority in the north and north-eastern [illegible] Amirthalingam, the TULF chief, said they would be content with [illegible] in India. It is difficult to [illegible] can ever be given [illegible] Sri Lanka. G. Parthasarathy has [illegible] a formula in which the Tamil-dominated areas would be given the status of an Indian union territory. But Jayewardene could not even get that through. Till now, this formula, suggested by both sides, seems the most practical one. But can Jayewardene get it endorsed by his Parliament? He is thinking of holding a referendum on the subject. What if he fails?

Jayewardene was reluctant to come to Delhi for the summit because he was worried that his people would get the impression that he was kowtowing to a new and young Prime Minister.

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Let All Have a Stake

A middle class intellectual is, in one respect, much like Arjuna of *Mahabharata*; he can wield both hands: right and left. Now he scoffs at businessmen for unsavoury practices; now he admonishes workers for indolence He abhors black money, profiteering and all such shady deals; he sniffs at absenteeism, lethargy and indifference The intellectual would do a yeoman's service to the nation if he could rather trace the roots of all these evils, and suggest remedies, short of pipe-dreams.

Businessmen would, no doubt, pursue the road to profit at any cost But how do you elicit the commitment of workers to production? In these days of cynicism, a work ethos is a much devalued currency; it is frowned upon as a manifestation of petty bourgeois reactionary mentality But if millions of workers are not positively stirred by an emotion for productive endeavour, the future of the country would become a prisoner to the present.

At times revolution was thought of as a once-for-all event complete by itself upon a certain date. Mao instilled a new concept into it by bringing within its fold even the routine functions of a farmer, a teacher, or an artist at his post. China went on making revolution day by day, every day. No such ideological fervour rents the air in India today. Yet we have to carry on production, expand the economic base, and prepare for the years to come; we owe it to our children and grandchildren, as much as to ourselves.

But who has the time and inclination to ponder over the distant horizon, or on the wider circle beyond one's own? It is, indeed, a bit too abstract for the man on the street, in a farm, or in a factory, to contemplate the national economy and mark his own place in it. He needs something more tangible, more concrete and immediate, as a yardstick for his activities. It would be much easier for him if his self-interest could somehow be made concomitant with the well-being of the nation, the economy, the society. Even then his perception of self-interest as such has to be broad in scope.

A worker enters into a contract with the employer to supply his *capacity* to labour for a stipulated length of time per day in exchange of a certain amount of wages. But how much he *actually* exerts himself, how much he *really* puts in, during that period, is contingent upon a host of other things like the extent of his sense of belonging to the enterprise, his own physical and mental nourishment, the state of his family, his surrounding, and so on. Rampant corruption that he sees all around diminishes his energy, soaring inflation saps his attentiveness, his anonymity in the vast machinery of a giant company heightens his feeling of alienation The full potentiality of an hour of his work under such circumstances may, in fact, never get translated into actual practice, even though he is at his desk with full sincerity To realise the complete potentiality that is ingrained in an agreed amount of supplied labour time is one of the greatest challenges to modern management, after the age of slavery. Herein also lies a hidden treasure waiting to be tapped

Our society is riddled with many conflicts. Workers are at odds with industrialists; landlords are sore at tenants; on some points capitalists are in disagreement with the landed aristocracy; big capitalists are always on the prowl to look for smaller species The society is like a molecule full of internal tensions, held in a precarious balance by a criss-cross of group alignments. The potential energy stored in it is immense; but the equilibrium is possibly unstable and volatile Once disturbed, the adjustment process of the system could be pretty bad unless progressive forces come to lead it. In the midst of the current stalemate, relatively affluent people somehow get their things done It is those who are at the lower and middle parts of the spectrum, who are called upon to bear the brunt of the low-level equilibrium Big landlords and monopoly capitalists can bribe, cajole, and pamper some workers, and make money out of it. The tussle is most acute when it is between workers on the one hand, and the *ordinary* capitalists, on the other, who are not big enough to afford the goodies that *monopoly* capitalists can offer to their employees. For example, when a wage agreement covering a particular industry is signed, quite often we find that relatively small enterprises are forced to close down; the bigs thrive

Our society is riddled with many conflicts. Workers are at odds with industrialists; landlords are sore at tenants; on some points capitalists are in disagreement with the landed aristocracy. The society is like a molecule full of internal tensions, held in a precarious balance by a criss-cross of group alignments. The potential energy stored in it is immense; but the equilibrium is possibly unstable and volatile

The problem is, therefore, twofold: one, to achieve in reality all that the worker is optimally capable of delivering; and, to reduce the tension, as far as possible, that prevails singularly between workers, and non-big ordinary capitalists. Killing two birds with one stone is always a complex operation. Perhaps there is a way in the present case. *Let the workers have a share and a stake in the company's profits and losses.* As a beginning, part of the employees' provident fund can be turned into the company's equity capital. If so, workers will then have the pleasure and responsibility of tasting the fruits of their collective labour—fruits which may be sweet or sour depending largely (not entirely) on their own efforts.

In due course, the scheme may be extended so that the two parts, the fixed wage and the variable profit-share, become more or less of equal magnitude in a worker's total earning Return on investment will not suffer under this arrangement, for the volume of output will now be larger as workers put their hearts and minds into their assigned jobs. This could also act as a partial answer to the problem of price-wage spiral that we have seen so long. Above all, the social harmony flowing from it would be a precious by-product in whose shadow the economy can gather fresh momentum.

OPINION

Murder Mystery

In her investigative cover story Ritu Sarin rightly pointed a finger at another assassin of Mrs Gandhi whose identity is still undisclosed (*A Missing Assassin?*, 26 May—1 June.) I can still recall very clearly that the news broadcast on 31 October declared that three people were involved in the assassination. It is indeed a mystery that since then investigative agencies failed to trace the third man. Satwant Singh's confession reproduced in SUNDAY is worth considering. At times I get the feeling that the murder of Indira Gandhi is deliberately not being investigated properly.
Prabal Guha, Calcutta

• I did not understand the symbolism inherent in M.F. Husain's rendering of Indira Gandhi's assassination. Why was she depicted as having four fingers on the right hand? Does the watch symbolise anything?
Debu Paul, Calcutta

• I did not appreciate the cover story. It was a typical SUNDAY gimmick.
Suprakash Roy, Patna

Forgotten Nehru

Today, sadly, Jawaharlal Nehru has become irrelevant (*The Post Nehru Generation*, 26 May—1 June). He does not hold much significance for the present generation who seem to have little notion about Panditji The only occasion when we care to remember him is on his birthday. Not only the youth, there seems to be little effort on the part of our leaders to follow and propagate the teachings of Nehru. The press too has failed to give adequate publicity to the dreams and ideals of one of the founders of our nation.
Arvinder Singh Walia, Calcutta

• I was shocked and pained to learn that our younger generation knew so little about Jawaharlal Nehru, the man who shaped our destiny. In fact our education system is largely responsible for such a sorry state of affairs. Moreover, parents rarely narrate stories of the freedom movement to their children.
Khuku Mazumdar, Ranchi

• Nehru has never been a hero of all times to me. Yes, he was a sincere leader who aligned himself with all things western to prove that the east and the west were equal. Nehru gave us a sense of purpose and confidence to face the world. But I always felt



that his message was hackneyed.
Rashmee Roshan Lall, Meerut

• I think that India could have been a much stronger nation had we not adhered to the Utopian ideologies and impractical foreign policy of Jawaharlal Nehru. Our country has become the playground of the superpowers only because we do not possess nuclear technology. If we want to settle our problems with Pakistan and China, the 'atom' is absolutely necessary.
Subir Lahiri, Calcutta

Koran in Court

The special report on *The Koran Controversy* (19—25 May) was in bad taste. An act of two religious fanatics should not have been publicised. The report hurt the sentiments of all the Muslims. I was surprised that Justice Khastagir admitted such a biased and provocative writ petition.
Khalid Jamal, Patna

• At a time when our country is passing through a crisis, the petition filed by two persons to ban the holy Koran is bound to spread communal hatred. Such incidents should not be publicised as the petitioners were clearly upto some mischief.
Syed Asif Noor, Rourkela

• I appreciate the timely action of both the union and the West Bengal government to foil the despicable conspiracy by vested interests to ban the holy Koran.
Abida Samiuddin, Aligarh

Lawless Lawmen

The atrocities perpetrated by the Gujarat police in Ahmedabad is not novel to this country (*Police Vs People*, 5—11 May). Murders and rapes in police custody and the harassment of innocent citizens in the name of enforcing law and order have become routine. Gujarat CM Solanki is one of those politicians without a mass base and hence he has to depend on the police force to remain in power. The police in our country are no longer protectors of the people.
Pramod Sahoo, Chirimiri (MP)

• Sankarshan Thakur gave a vivid portrayal of the police excesses in Gujarat. Not only did the common man suffer the wrath of the policemen, the press too was not spared. This shameful act by the Gujarat lawmen will go down in history as an attack on democracy.
N. Ellango, Tirunelveli

• Reservation is a very sensitive issue which requires a great deal of consideration before implementation. But Gujarat CM Solanki wanted to make political capital by hastily implementing his own brand of the reservation policy. The government alone is responsible for the events following the anti-reservation stir in the state. Moreover, the Congress(I)'s image has suffered a lot due to the CM's refusal to resign even after admitting the police excesses.
S. Jayaraj, Coimbatore

• I was ashamed to learn that the police force perpetrated such brutality in the land of Mahatma Gandhi.
A.N. Veeraraghavan, Bombay

• The anti-reservation stir by the students in Gujarat is ruining education in the state. Most of the examinations have been postponed and no one knows when schools and colleges will reopen. Many a talent has been wasted as a result of the meaningless agitation.
G.V. Phanirajkishore, Hyderabad

No Following

The interview with the Sindhudesh leader, G.M. Sayed, made amusing reading (*Pakistan is a Creation of Hatred*, 26 May—1 June). G.M. Sayed was known as an eccentric in the Forties and after partition he sank into oblivion. He never had any following then, nor does he have any today. M.J. Akbar should have exposed the hypocrite.
K.A. Makkar, Calcutta

Congress (Real)

The special report on the AICC(I) centenary session (*The Mood After 100 Years*, 19—25 May) was interesting. As I feel that the ruling party is the real "Akhil Bharatiya Congress," it is regrettable that the present opposition leaders and former Congressmen did not attend the centenary meeting.
Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Sambalpur

• The Congress session did not do justice to a party with such glorious traditions. The party which formed the mainstream of the national movement, seems to have become the personal property of a single family. Blatant sycophancy has erased the names of several prominent Congress leaders—even Mahatma Gandhi was largely ignored. It was a shame to have had such a pathetic show telecast.
M.H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

• The ruling party does not in any way relate to the organisation formed 100 years ago by Sir Allan Octavian Hume and others. The par ty celebrated its centenary in a hurried manner. Slogans in praise of Rajiv Gandhi and his mother suppressed the voice of old freedom fighters and genuine Congressmen. It was a political *mela* for the district and state Congress(I) secretaries who spent two happy days gazing at their leader from close quarters. The young generation, still in the 'honeymoon mood,' made no attempt to observe the occasion historically.
N. Ellango, Tirunelveli

• Rajiv Gandhi and his aides repeatedly advocated socialism of the variety followed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs Gandhi. Does Mr Gandhi know what Nehru's socialism meant? On 20 February 1955 Nehru had said in New Delhi that the Avadi Resolution was "meant to confuse people and to catch votes."
S.S. Raju, Bombay

• Great Indian leaders were remembered at the Congress centenary celebrations. But the names of Sardar Patel, the architect of modern India and Lal Bahadur Shastri, the former Prime Minister of India who was responsible for our victory in the 1965 war, were almost forgotten. Pandit Nehru was a great man who ruled India for 17 years but nobody can deny that had he acted diplomatically, the China and Kashmir problems on which billions are being spent annually and which will haunt the generations to come for ages, would not have existed. Similarly, Mrs Gandhi has left Punjab in turmoil while Assam is burning simply because of her indecision. We have foreign debts of over Rs 40,000 crores and a yearly trade deficit of Rs 5,000 crores. The country has progressed during the last 37 years but the fact remains that economically we are still backward.
B.R. Nanda, Lucknow

Idols are Symbols

This is with reference to Ranita Ray's letter, *Sex and Morality* (*Opinion*, 19 May) I strongly object to her suggestion that Hinduism should follow the Islamic approach to idolism. People like her who are immature, spiritually and mentally, cannot go beyond the physical aspect of these pictures as they do not understand the symbolism behind them. For instance, the Shivalinga, apparently a sex symbol, stands for the power of creation. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony have mercilessly crushed everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. The pictures do not defame Hinduism but in their own way highlight the versatility of this great religion which allows full freedom of thought and expression.
Akkiraju Natarajan, Hyderabad

Punish Miscreants

The detailed information and the analysis of the terrorist activities in *The Sant's Revenge* (19—25 May) made absorbing reading. M.J. Akbar is absolutely correct when he concludes that the reasons behind this death-game are the domination of Sant Longowal and the resurrection of fear and hatred in Hindu-Sikh relations. Fortunately, the terrorists' plans were aborted by the harmony between Hindus and Sikhs.
Prakash Paliwal, Akaltara, Madhya Pradesh

• When the majority of the Sikhs stand for peaceful coexistence, it is deplorable to see a handful indulging in arson and genocide. Let not magnanimity be mistaken for cowardice. The men behind the bomb blasts should be brought to book.
S. Jayaraj, Coimbatore

Cheating Students

While agreeing with Nirmal Mitra that all sections of the society have contributed to the collapse of the educational system in Bihar, I hold the teachers guilty more than anyone else (*How Education Ruins Merit in Bihar*, 19—25 May). The teachers have relegated education to the levels of any other trade with the result that money can work wonders. Question papers are sold openly and one need not sit for an examination to obtain a degree.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• Leakage of question papers, mass copying, tampering of answer scripts and manipulation of the marksheets are all an inalienable part of education in Bihar. Though education in India as a whole suffers from the same malady, the situation in Bihar has surpassed all limits.
Subal Chandra Saha, Malda (West Bengal)

• The formation of the intermediate council and the examinations conducted by the respective universities have doubled the hardship of the students. In the recently conducted ISC exams three papers were cancelled by the intermediate council, because questions leaked out in and around Patna. Students in south Bihar,like me,had to be subjected to a re-examination although we did not have a glimpse of a single question beforehand. And as results are usually declared late, we are immobilised; we cannot leave Bihar and take admission elsewhere without losing a whole year at least.
Ranju, Ranchi

• SUNDAY has done a good job by publishing Nirmal Mitra's special report on education in Bihar. The article will not only open the eyes of the Bihar government but also those of the other states. The purchasers and sellers of degrees should know that the mere holding of a certificate is not the aim of education.
Kshirodendu Jagatdeb, Cuttack

• SUNDAY deserves praise for exposing the state of education in Bihar. Hardly 15 classes of each paper are conducted in half a session and this is the reason why even meritorious students take the help of teachers privately, for which they pay them large amounts of money. But everybody is not rich enough to pay for tuition. Using the police against students cannot solve this problem.
Raj Kumar, Nawada Arrah,

A Disaster Called G.M. Shah

Another anniversary is coming up; on 2 July the defector government of G.M. Shah will complete one year in office and the record of this one year would put any government to shame. Sankarshan Thakur and Yusuf Jameel report.

"Look at the mountains of Kashmir," said Dr Farooq Abdullah, driving down the shaded slopes towards the huge lakes of Srinagar bathed in summer sunshine "Look at those lakes, look at these trees, feel this weather. Isn't it heavenly? Kashmir is paradise; there is no problem here. How can there be? After all, isn't Farooq the villain of this Valley?" The sarcasm is not lost. It is almost a year since his government was toppled and a government of defectors headed by Ghulam Mohammed Shah installed—a government which has done everything other than what it had promised to do when it came to power. It is up on maladministration, mismanagement, inefficiency and corruption and nil on popularity.

Public sentiment against Gulshah (as G.M. Shah is popularly known) and his ministerial colleagues is so strong that to date, they have not been able to hold a single public meeting without being outnumbered by plainclothes securitymen. Today, the chief minister cannot travel half a mile in Srinagar without flanking himself with gun-toting guards. Insecurity and popular denial best characterise the government led by him. And if the manner of operations during the first three or four months of his regime had brought him the nicknames of "Curfew Shah," and "Gul-e-Curfew" (the curfew blossom), the chief minister has now earned a new name: "Scandal Shah." In the last couple of months the Shah government has been buried under a heap of allegations that have come from all including some senior leaders of the Congress(I), on whose shoulders is balanced Shah's seat. What has the Congress(I) gained from this alliance with Gulshah, they are asking. Said one Congress(I) member quite matter-of-factly, "We should have been the beneficiaries of this agreement. Shah is there because of us. But we are losers on every side. While the party is losing whatever following it has by supporting a government that has no face to show in public, our members are not even getting the benefits that they thought they would These ministers just treat us with disdain." The benefits, of course, have more or less remained a preserve of the 18 Jammu and Kashmir ministers and their near and dear ones. And so intent are the ministers on pocketing them that they have come down to even appointing daily wage labourers themselves. The cow has been milked for what it was worth, now they are tickling the udders to squeeze out the last drops.

Chief minister G.M. Shah



Sudeshna

Corruption has been a by-word in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir, not something that came in with Ghulam Mohammed Shah. It was legendary even during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is said that after he had conquered Kashmir in the first half of the nineteenth century, he appointed his most honest man as the governor of the province. But the moment he reached Kashmir, he was a changed man—he gave in to malpractices. The same thing happened with the Maharaja's "hand-picked" men on successive occasions—Kashmir cast a strange spell upon them. But the Shah government is taking corruption in the Valley to new heights. And it all begins in his own house

Gulshah's son, Muzaffar Shah, has recently emerged at the centre of what is perhaps the biggest financial scandal in the state in recent times. A non-entity till not so long ago, Muzaffar Shah has suddenly begun calling the shots from behind the political shield of his chief minister-father Apart from the assumption of key positions like the presidentship of the state labour union without having had anything to do with labour all his life, Muzaffar Shah is also said to be browbeating state government departments, banks, state-owned corporations and other public sector units into giving him business concessions at the cost of twisting and tearing all norms laid down. Shah, in partnership with Din Mohammed Wani and Altaf Ahmed, runs the Tycoons group of industries which, ironically, has its office in the Nawa-i-Subh building, the city headquarters of the National Conference (Farooq). According to a memorandum that was sent to the high offices in Delhi recently, the Tycoons group has been sold 3,000 tonnes of coal dug at the government-run Kalakote mines at heavily slashed prices.

While the rate of the Kalakote coal is normally around Rs 514 per tonne, it was sold to Tycoons at a rate of Rs 375 per tonne And this without inviting any tenders or placing any advertisements. The Jammu and Kashmir Bank too has been generous in its dealings with the Tycoons group which has nine accounts in the bank. A memorandum presented by the Jammu and Kashmir bank employees union says that while the loan arrears of the groups with the bank has jumped to Rs 23 lakhs, the group had been extended the facility of a trust account with an overdraft allowance of over Rs 10 lakhs. And all this, insist some employees of the bank, is just the tip of the iceberg. "But we cannot do anything about it he is after all the chief minister's son.



G.M. Shah addressing a gathering shortly after he became the CM

Anyone who tries to raise questions will have to pay," said one of them. This is precisely what happened. Some officials of the bank who were attempting to inspect the Tycoons account sometime back were asked to leave.

On another front, however, Muzaffar Shah is facing competition from one Mr Iqbal who is the agent of a multinational pharmaceutical company and who is said to be a very influential man in political circles The Jammu and Kashmir government spends about Rs four crores on buying chemicals for treating apple-scab every year. Till sometime back Iqbal held the monopoly of the product as pesticides worth nearly three-fourths of this sum were being spent on buying chemicals from the multinational firm that he represents One of the reasons for this was also that the product he sold — diethene M-45 — was found to be very effective. Recently, Muzaffar Shah also entered the agrochemicals market with the agency of another firm, threatening Mr Iqbal's hegemony on agrochemicals contracts But since Iqbal too has his own spheres of influence, he began mounting pressure on the government through some senior Congress(I) leaders of the state A behind-the-scene tug-of-war is already on with the chief minister's son balanced against Iqbal who wields power through money.



Deputy CM D.D. Thakur

There are others who seem to have moved political levers to their advantage. Maulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari, leader of the Congress(I) legislature party in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is one such person. While it is still a mystery why Maruti Udyog Limited had to give an agency to Ansari Motors — the second one in a small city like Srinagar — the land on which Ansari Motors, run by Iftikhar Hussain Ansari's cousin Zaffar Hussain and his brother Abid Ansari, proposes to build its show-

[illegible] under a cloud of [illegible]. The piece of land in Ko[illegible] measuring one [illegible] and 35 sq yards on which Ansari Motors has begun the con[illegible] of its showroom has been [illegible] by the Durganag Trust as its own. Since the State government [illegible] by the October 1984, [illegible] moved to court and [illegible] 1985 obtained an order [illegible] the civil judge of Srinagar which [illegible] Hussain is hereby [illegible] from creating any further [illegible] on the suit land or [illegible] Adverse to the position [illegible] exists on spot till further [illegible]. The status quo was vacated by the additional district judge on 5 January and the Durganag trust went [illegible]. Justice M A Shah of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir gave an order [illegible] saying that [illegible] as it exists today on the [illegible] be maintained." But," says [illegible] Trust's lawyer Deepak Bhan, "old Dur[illegible] who has been pur[illegible] the matter, "nobody would [illegible] Ansari out because he is [illegible] of the great Congress [illegible] and threats, and we have to [illegible] helplessly. The construction of the Ansari Motors showroom, despite the court order is still going on. And Farooq Dole fearlessly [illegible] from office to office, from one court to another with original [illegible] of the deed that sanctions the land to the Durganag trust.

Petitions against malpractices in the government and the administration are aplenty. In fact most people seem occupied filing them. Three employees of the Jammu and Kashmir State Finance Corporation (J and K SFC) Mohammed Ashraf Shah, Abdul Rashid Bhat and Ghulam Hassan Pala have between themselves filed five petitions in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court on 8 April 1985. The petitions filed against the J and K SFC, its managing director Sheikh Mohi ud Din and its general manager, R K Sadhu allege a number of irregularities which include the appointments and promotions of "some relatives and friends" of the members of the Kashmir cabinet. Among those whose appointments in the J and K SFC have been challenged by the petitioners are:

Manzoor Ahmed Dar, appointed as loans officer vide letter number PA 26/564 dated 19 March 1985. Manzoor Ahmed Dar is the son of the industries minister Sadaullah Dar and before he was appointed loans officer in the J and K SFC was a teacher in the Rainawari high school.



Farooq Abdullah

N.H Naik, appointed as loans officer vide letter number PA/26/577 79 on 19 March 1985. N.H. Naik is the son of the education minister Ali Mohammed Naik and according to the petitioners he does not have the necessary qualifications for the post.

The list goes on. Naresh Kumar, the son of Mangat Ram Sharma, Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Amar Singh, allegedly a relative of deputy chief minister Devi Dass Thakur, Miss Hamida Khan, one of whose relatives is said to be in the anti-corruption department where several charges of misutilisation of funds by the J and K SFC managing director, Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din are pending for investigation.

In a separate memorandum, employees of the J and K SFC have raised doubts about the motives of their managing director, Sheikh Mohi ud Din himself. "In July 1984," says a section in the memorandum, "Sheikh appointed such persons in the class 'A' group who were either with no experience or were clerks in the J and K Bank Limited, his parental department. This was done by him to keep the ministers and other high level officials happy so that he could be appointed as chairman of the J and K Bank Limited." It is interesting here to note that Mohi-ud Din is the man who, as general manager of the J and K Bank Limited, had advanced loans to several influential National Conference (K) and Congress(I) politicians among whom were Gulshah's son, Muzaffar Shah and the J and K CLP(I) leader, Iftikhar Hussain Ansari. He is now trying for the post of chairman, J and K Bank Limited and perhaps wants to upgrade his position in the corridors of power. The government and the board of directors of the bank have already fought the first round of the battle over Mohi-ud-Din's appointment as chairman of the J and K Bank Limited. The nine-member board of directors of the bank had refused to accept Din as the chairman on the ground that several complaints were pending against him. The government hit back with an order removing all the non official members of the bank in March and inducting some of its own nominees as directors. But the ousted directors, among whom was Sheikh Nazir, general secretary of the National Conference (Farooq), went to court and obtained a stay. But while the matter hangs in suspension the government seems determined to bring in Mohi-ud-Din who has recently been given an extension after his

retirement in May.

The goings-on in the J and K SFC are not an isolated case. Such things are happening almost everywhere in the state today. Admissions to premier educational institutions are bungled *en masse;* tenders are invited for projects, while the person who gets the contract is someone who had not even applied; hundreds are appointed to government institutions without proper notices or interviews; people grab land and stick to it, simply because they have political clout; loans are given out to people who have the right recommendations; the farmer, the small industrialist, the artisan and the craftsman languish while Gulshah's flock is busy adding to its comforts as if in a great rush.

It is not very difficult to explain why. The psyche of the Gulshah ministry is shaped by the circumstances under which it came to power: a government solely of defectors that enjoyed no popular backing and walked into office clinging on to the thread that the Congress(I) held out to it It still hangs precariously by the same thread, insecurity dogs the ministry day and night, for who knows when that support will snap? Besides, Gulshah's ministers hardly have a face to save or protect. Instead of working for the betterment of the masses, they have gone their own merry ways, making hay while the sun shines. Shah,even if he wants to arrest the malpractices to inject some respectability into his government, cannot do so because of the internal pressures of his cabinet. Ministers do what they want,the way they want to do it. A popular joke in Srinagar these days is that the state has 18 chief ministers—each one in the Gulshah ministry for everyone can dictate terms—if one of them goes, Shah goes too. So much so that Gulshah cannot even reshuffle his cabinet. The government's second priority has been to keep itself intact, an exercise that has taken more of Gulshah's time than anything else He is more often busy trying to elicit fresh assurances of support from New Delhi than administering his state. The result: the administration, already sluggish in Farooq Abdullah's time, has slumped further, its sense of direction lost. A recent instance would show how things have gone haywire in Jammu and Kashmir. The state irrigation minister had inaugurated a two-crore project in Badgam but the chief minister was completely ignorant of It. "What project?" he asked, nonplussed, when a newsman questioned him about it.

Its congenital handicaps, its non-performance, its failure to make a dent on the popular mind and thus, its lack of confidence, have only exaggerated the opposition challenge for G M. Shah. And desperate, he has taken steps that have even further alienated the masses. There was, for example, this order sent out to some artisans and craftsmen of the valley by a group of "art experts" from the J and K government arts emporium which buys their product. The artisans were told they would not be entertained by the government emporium, unless they become members of the National Conference (Khalida). Political analysts in the state also say that in order to break some ground on the popular front or at least to counter the base of the rival National Conference, Gulshah's



Governor Jagmohan

men have been driven to negotiating with parties like the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Jamaat-i-Tulba. Apologists of the Shah government, on the other hand, have picked up another argument. They cannot disagree that Shah as an administrator has been a failure but they spell out different reasons for it. Shah, they maintain, inherited a decaying administration from Farooq Abdullah and now that he is trying to set it right, the bureaucracy is not ready to help him, and are in fact sabotaging his moves. "But," says Abdul Hamid Zerger, convener of the Naya Kashmir Forum, an intellectual group in Srinagar, "was this not the very argument on which Shah had come to power? That Farooq was leading the state to ruin and he would put everything right with his administrative excellence? What good is a chief minister who cannot control his own officers?"

Will G.M Shah go? A question that everybody asks but nobody has the answer to A memorandum submitted recently to the Prime Minister by the Naya Kashmir Forum lists reasons why political disillusionment in the state is spreading and how this process might ultimately threaten the integrity of the country itself. "The government of India," says the memorandum, "relied time and again on such allies and stooges (in J and K) who for their own survival passed such information to the central government which suited their own designs Unfortunately a feeling is being created in the minds of the Muslims of the state that they are unpatriotic They find no other reason for installing stooges (by New Delhi) in place of democratically elected governments." Even Governor Jagmohan has reversed the political dice cast on 2 July 1984.

He has sent, in the last six months (apart from complaints of corruption to the chief minister) a number of letters to the centre suggesting that Governor's rule be imposed in the state and fresh elections be called some months later The Raj Bhawan is of the view that Kashmir should be treated not as a political but as a national question but New Delhi has been silent to its requests Instead it gives repeated assurances of support to the Shah ministry Arun Nehru, who was holidaying in the state recently did so and only a couple of days later, G M Shah himself flew down to New Delhi to bring forth a fresh promise from the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi Which is what hurts the Kashmiri pride the most Why should New Delhi decide such a matter? Why cannot Kashmir be ruled by the people of the state by a leader elect? What does Delhi want to say by denying us a democratic government? In an interview to this correspondent immediately after the toppling of the Farooq Abdullah government last year, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Mir Qasim, had said that by repeating the charade about the "suspicious Kashmiri character the centre was only opening a chapter that is closed. Every day you tell us that Kashmir is drifting apart We sometimes begin to wonder whether we are part of you at all. Why rub it in? If the centre continues to do this, I would not blame the Kashmiri people later." In a year of Gulshah rule, this feeling has only gathered ground.

Sankarshan Thakur, Srinagar

Congressmen Oppose Shah's Rule

State Congress(I) unit wants support to the Shah government withdrawn

Picturesque Srinagar was recently the venue of hectic political parleys. Not one, but five central leaders descended on this summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, not, as you might imagine, to escape from the oppressive heat of Delhi, but to confer with chief minister Ghulam Mohammad Shah, his cabinet colleagues and senior Congress(I) leaders of the state. And among those who undertook the journey to the Valley were two faces familiar with Kashmir politics—minister of state for power, Arun Nehru, and Arif Mohammed Khan, both of whom had been associated with Dr Farooq Abdullah's ouster from the chief ministership a year ago. The other central leaders present in Srinagar recently were union labour minister, T. Anjaiah, and minister of state for steel, Kanwar Natwar Singh.

The purpose of their visit was to look into the complaints of maladministration which even senior leaders of the party in the state had been levelling; this has increasingly been leading to strains between the ruling National Conference (K) and the Congress(I) which has been propping up this government of defectors, led by Sheikh Abdullah's son-in-law. Senior state Congress(I) leaders, including Gulam Rasool Kar MP, have been saying in public that the administration of Gulshah, as the chief minister is popularly known, has totally failed to give a clean government to the people of the state and solve their economic problems. "The situation has worsened drastically as some of the ministers are not only openly encouraging corrupt officials but are also indulging in corruption themselves," said a Congress(I) leader, who wished to remain anonymous.

The deteriorating law and order situation in the state seems to have become the chief concern of Delhi. In order to give his government a clean facade, the chief minister recently announced that he would retire all those officials found guilty of corrupt practices. He also ordered the constitution of a special committee to prepare a list of such officials. But even three months after the announcement nothing has been done in this direction. In fact, this committee is being used by the chief minister to censure and warn only those officials who have either come in the way of corrupt ministers, or have remained neutral in the Shah-Farooq conflict or have refused to oblige the ruling party on various administrative matters. As Dr Abdullah said, "It remains to be seen how Shah reacts. But one thing is becoming clear: the chief minister's Congress(I) allies are keen to see the end of the one-year-old relationship with Shah's government."

And this is precisely what is worrying the centre. During their stay in Srinagar, both Arun Nehru and Arif Mohammad Khan had extensive meetings with PCC(I) chief Mufti Mohammed Sayed to bring about better coordination between the state unit of the Congress(I) and the



Curfew raj. Para military personnel checking passes during a curfew imposed shortly after G.M. Shah came to power

National Conference (K). They also met leaders of the ruling National Conference and Governor Jagmohan. In fact, on their return, chief minister Shah and his wife, Begum Khalida, also the president of the party, along with deputy chief minister D. D. Thakur were summoned to New Delhi, presumably at the behest of the Prime Minister. The two central leaders had apparently reported in detail the goings-on in the state.

It is believed that there was considerable pressure on the two leaders from state Congress(I) leaders to influence the high command to withdraw support to the Shah ministry. This is especially so in view of the fact that the Congress(I) in Kashmir is virtually a divided house with Trilochan Dutt, a senior party leader from Jammu accusing Mufti Mohammed Sayed of dominating the party with his supporters from the Valley. In fact, Trilochan Dutt is posing a challenge to Mufti since the legislators from Jammu form a larger group in the Assembly than those from the Valley. It is this Jammu-Valley tussle that is touching a breaking point. In fact, there was even a serious move to either expel Dutt, or at least suspend him from the party for sometime. What is, however, being evaluated is the support he enjoys among the legislators. For a crisis in the Congress(I) can even threaten the survival of the Shah government.



Sondeep Shankar



Mufti Sayed

Sondeep Shankar



Arun Nehru

Ashok Kr Vanar

Without the support of the 26 Congress(I) MLAs, Shah with his 17 MLAs is no match for the 32 MLAs belonging to Farooq Abdullah's National Conference. However, the fact that the move to suspend Dutt has been given up speaks volumes for the support he enjoys among legislators.

Whether or not the central leaders have succeeded in bringing about a rapprochement between Shah and the local Congress leaders is not known as yet. Arun Nehru has reiterated the party's "unqualified support" to Gulshah's government, but if the attitude of the local Congress(I) leaders has remained unchanged towards Gulshah's administration, then the central leaders failed in their task. It is believed that it was suggested that a coalition government be formed with the Congress(I) and the NC(K), but senior leaders in the state were apprehensive as they felt that this would only give a bad name to the party in the state. The problem seems to be that the Congress(I) leaders in the state are unhappy because they are being made to support Shah's government by the high command, despite the local unit's obvious reluctance.

Meanwhile, Governor Jagmohan who had stopped persuading the centre to impose President's rule in the state, especially after the wellknown "wazwan" hosted by Gulshah at Kashmir House in Delhi where the Prime Minister was present, (apparently, it was this dinner which turned the tide in Shah's favour) has again started indirectly complaining about the functioning of the government. He did not make any secret of this when Shah met him before leaving for Delhi to parley with the Prime Minister. Mufti too seems to favour Jagmohan's view that President's rule should be imposed in the state, after the Assembly is put in suspended animation for sometime.

Adding to Shah's problems is the fact that any call for agitation given by Farooq Abdullah against the goverment of G.M. Shah meets with tremendous success. For instance, last month Farooq Abdullah had announced a statewide agitation to "restore democracy" in the state by holding elections under Governor's rule. The call for a *bandh* given by the National Conference (Opposition) and some other parties received a tremendous response as the entire Kashmir Valley wore a deserted look on 6 May, the day of the opening of the civil secretariat for the summer. But Dr Abdullah decided not to go ahead with the stir, as it would affect the tourist trade, which would be harmful for the state.

Add to this the facts that there are hundreds of political activists who are in jails for having raised their voice against the Shah government, that anti-national elements who make it a habit to raise pro-Pakistani slogans at public meetings are having a field day and you get a full picture of what is happening in the state today.

Yusuf Jameel, Srinagar

A SUMMER OF DISCONTENT

Acts of sabotage, arson, killings and destruction are breaking out all over India like an ugly rash: The country today seems engulfed in an uncontrollable wave of violence. Tension and frustration everywhere—social, economic and political—is giving way to sporadic terror and mass protests. Thirty-seven years after independence, India finds itself at a crucial point in history. What is happening to the country and why? Romesh Thapar answers.

There is no getting away from dynastic scenarios and assessments. One look at the disarray around the Congress Party and its totemic leader, Rajiv Gandhi, is enough to tell us that he is battered by the problems his mother left behind unresolved, or, better still, the problems she thought she could shelve or keep in cold storage for melting when the moment was opportune—yes, for her. His only stupidity is that he too does not move to untie the obvious knots.

When I was learning my journalistic trade, around the time when we were about to witness the transfer of power, I remember an evening when some seniors in the profession were wondering whether India's problems would burst out all at once, and whether our inexperienced political leadership—in 1947!—would be able to prevent such a disaster. This fear of several, simultaneous eruptions all over the sub-continent, dispersing the strength of the centre, was critical to assessments in those tempestuous years.



A victim of the bomb blasts in Delhi being treated at a hospital

Eruptions there were, even major challenges like the armed struggle in Telengana, but the people in their wisdom respected their leaders who had structured the freedom movement, and they exercised patience. This patience was strengthened by the energy of the first governments of free India to consolidate our ravaged frontiers, to absorb the multitude of princely states, to reorganise the states of the union on a linguistic coherence, and, let it not be forgotten, to embark on the massive, self-reliant industrial development of the sub-continent.

This fund of popular goodwill, despite varying and erratic election results, began to exhaust itself the moment consciousness grew about the ineffectiveness of our planning processes to tackle the gut problems of poverty and lack of opportunity. The escalation in discontent was sharp in the Seventies when no remedial steps were taken to fix more relevant priorities for growth. Behind the political turbulence today is the economic strangulation resulting from our ineptness as managers.

The key is the fact that we have used political activity as a means, not of solving problems, but of acquiring short-term power, unearing of the results. Thereby, the political process has created a number of vested interests, from reservation to 'sons of the soil,' from dissidence to agitations, to gather the votes. This has become an end in itself, making huge gashes in the social fabric.

Lumpen, unemployed, alienated youth, unable to link to local opportunity, are latching on to every manifestation of "rebellion," something which might shake the rotten status quo. And such youth is the largest constituency in present-day India—some 60 per cent under the age of 35. A mere youthful Prime Minister, however, is not enough to assuage the angers inherent in this constituency.

I ask myself why should Assam, headed by a very disciplined student and teacher movement, be kept hooked on endless negotiations when we are all agreed that the Bengali migration cannot be allowed to disturb the political balance of the state. Several answers are possible: select one, agree upon it, and implement.

I ask myself why should a thoroughly unrepresentative, defector government be allowed to misbehave in Kashmir when it is widely known that its existence only encourages secessionist feelings of the worst communal kind. Surely, President's Rule and fresh elections in six months or earlier is the only way to restore democratic normalities. What advantage, to put it at its worst, is there in delay?

I ask myself why Gujarat, where everyone has been fighting everyone, has not been salvaged from the faction battles of the ruling Congress Party. "Is central intervention only reserved for opposition-controlled states? Is no one aware that the Hindu caste collisions of Gujarat, punctuated by vicious anti-Muslim sorties, could spread to adjoining states at the bidding of this or that political group? Does the rise of the Shiv Sena in Bombay, and the prevarications of Congressmen on the future of the city, provide no warning signals of the storms on the way?

Naturally, I ask myself why Punjab's problems continue to be treated as exclusively Akali problems, with solutions held up because of crazy terrorist actions to blackmail both Hindus and Sikhs. Political management embraces the techniques of unilateral initiatives to break the disruptive power of the mischief-makers. Punjab's problems around water, boundaries and centre-state relationships are part of the evolution of our federal polity. Could not permanent commissions take over these burdens which interest and affect many states of the union? Then, only Chandigarh would remain to be handed over as Punjab's capital. That was always the intention.

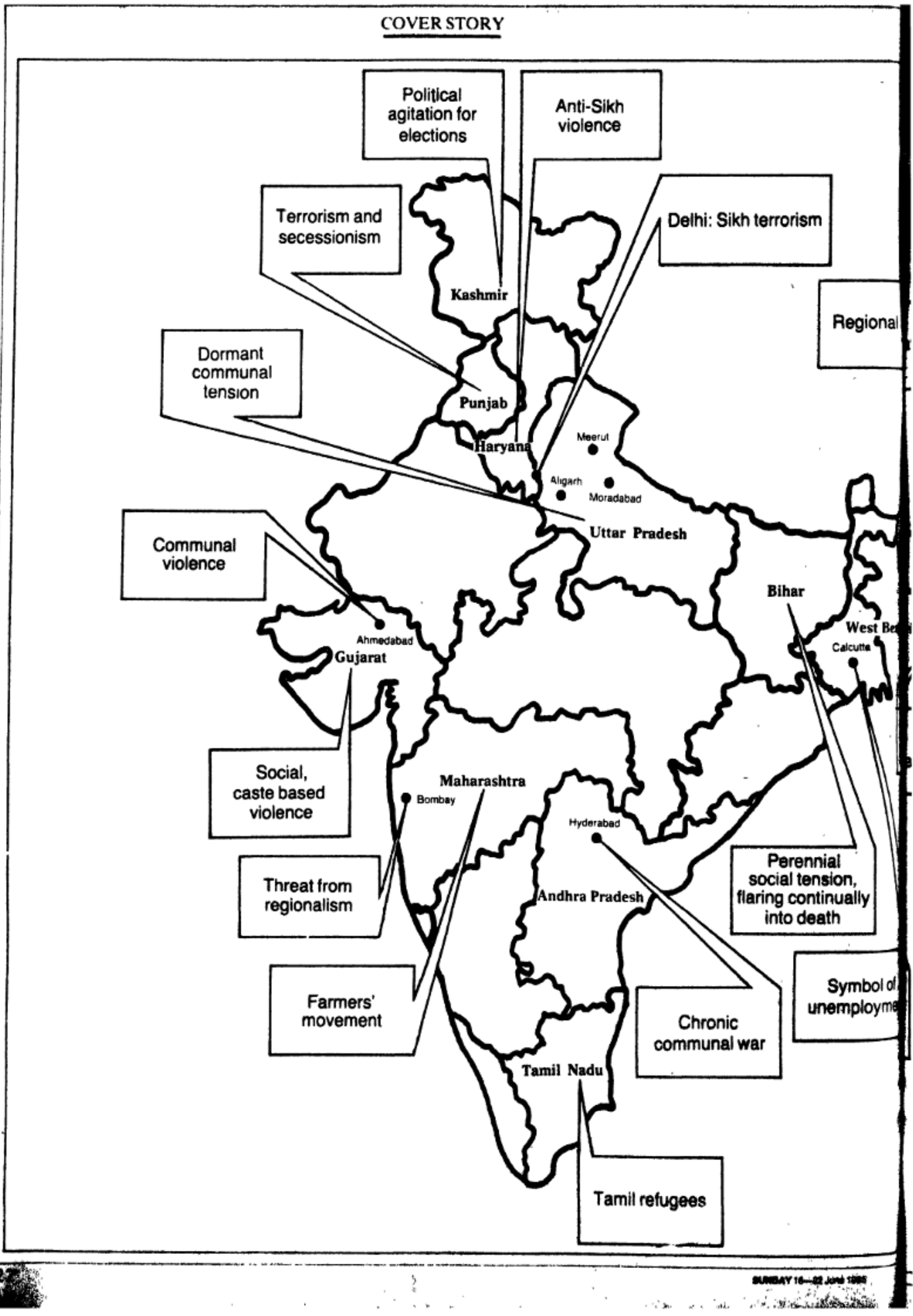
And, finally, I ask myself why we are so slow in legislating mandatory orders to regulate the environs of places of worship—yes, of all religions and sub-religions—as also of the management of their funds, the elections of their leading committees and of the disciplines to prevail in these places. No religion in this country can demand sovereign status for its temple, mosque, gurudwara or church. Let it be stated in clear-cut terms, within the framework of our federal Constitution and on the basis of the fundamental rights enshrined in it. We are dragging our feet without reason though we speak of a secular commitment.

Even as we fail to take these very logical steps towards democratic coherence, and ignore the reports of the police commission which pointed to the breakdown of our law-and-order systems, we keep legislating more and more powers for what will under the circumstances become a lawless state, if it has not already become in certain regions of India. This insensitivity to justice, the lack of concern about torture when in custody, and the connivance in brutalities of various kinds, could bury the democratic life we pledged ourselves to.

There's much more to be concerned about. Let me take just one sample of the duplicity we indulge in—the denouncing of Pakistan as a refuge and training point for terrorists and the quiet acceptance of Tamil Nadu's succour to those who are challenging the Sri Lankan state. Not a whimper from any corner of India because Tamil votes are important. And now, at last, EMS Nam-



Rioting in Chandigarh


Political agitation for elections
Anti-Sikh violence
Terrorism and secessionism
Delhi: Sikh terrorism
Kashmir
Regional
Dormant communal tension
Punjab
Haryana
Meerut
Aligarh
Moradabad
Uttar Pradesh
Communal violence
Bihar
West Be
Calcutta
Ahmedabad
Gujarat
Social, caste based violence
Maharashtra
Bombay
Hyderabad
Threat from regionalism
Perennial social tension, flaring continually into death
Andhra Pradesh
Symbol of unemployme
Farmers' movement
Chronic communal war
Tamil Nadu
Tamil refugees



boodiripad has to denounce this double-think and double-talk, and win editorial plaudits.

All this is feeding the violence and the angers that are surfacing over the sub-continent. It is as if no one is in command at any level. To some extent, this was inevitable after the rather oppressive Indira Gandhi years. But the fear is growing that we are moving beyond the point of no return, to use a phrase from the jargon of airlines pilots. The breakdown is becoming too visible.

The future cannot be grasped without an understanding of the past. If that is too much for our politicians, at least the recent past needs studying in the context of the developing chaos. The splitting of the Indian National Congress in 1969 on the false belief that this purge would purify. The use of Calcutta's loafers and unemployed to break the back of Naxalism. The Sanjay circus and all its ramifications during the Emergency. The harassment of Indira Gandhi after she had lost the primeministership. The fascistic polarisation of the country by her into friends and foes. The brazen manipulation of Indian politics using the powers of government for blackmail. The nurturing of the killer Bhindranwale. The tragic aftermath. All this, and more, makes our grim present and our uncertain future.

A critical element is the scale of the present crisis and the moral failure to confront it. There is a tame acceptance of every distortion and violation of norms, particularly at the highest levels of governance. The easy rationalisation that adjustment to this style is the way of survival creates the rebellious mood among those who are never heard at the base of our society. They are inflammable material in the hands of lumpen politicians linked to various parties.

This country's administrators, known for their skill and experience in handling riot situations, are no longer able to cope with mobs that have no anchorage or stake in society. The ambience of the lost and the damned, the faceless ones, defeats those who imagine that crises can be managed intelligently. Soon, there is recourse to the traditional medicine, a mix of lawless laws and brutal force. It works temporarily. But when the fevers return, there is no curbing the derangement.

Apart from setting an example of probity and principled commitment at the highest levels, it is becoming increasingly clear that almost everything is wrong with our so-called growth model. It is not able to cushion the crises of the youth. It is here that various alienations are nurtured. We think that the old populist rhetoric will satisfy. Far from it. We need housing in local materials, within a modern *mohalla* style. Education has to become training for self-employment, particularly to service one of the largest urban spreads in the world. Baby cars are not the answer for Indian mobility when tens of thousands need bus systems of various denominations to meet their needs. Medicine has to gear to a basic health service available within easy distance and without the harassments of today. Within such frameworks we have to formulate our concerns for the people's welfare. We have the skills and resources, but we lack the passion to structure the change.

Admittedly, agitation and eruption lead to some measure of correction but to rely on this kind of pressure and motivation is extremely dangerous, particularly to the functioning of a society which owing to its complexities must remain democratic-minded, flexible and sensitive. We are forgetful of what is expected of us in the give-and-take of today. And there is no one emerging to remind us and to persuade us—an almost obsessive activity in the early years of freedom.

When Congressmen, including office-holders and elders, complain of the inaccessability of the Prime Minister, and opposition leaders feel that they are treated as enemies, as persons not to be trusted, the scenario is one of disarray, of acting without reference to common interest. India cannot function in this manner. It possesses an inherent divisiveness which needs constant and energetic attention—at least, until a genuine modernisation of her people has taken place. So far, only a tiny elite claims this transformation. We remain so terribly tribal in our reactions, and for this reason have no compunction in accepting those three inter-locked evils which have embraced our polity—criminalisation, communalisation and bureaucratisation. I could add a fourth: militarisation.

Many people in our world have been through tempestuous times. They have teetered on the edge of many disasters, pulling back just in time to tread paths of sanity and reason. An amalgam of many factors created the sensitivities required for such a dramatic change. Maybe, what we are witnessing will mark the beginning of our revulsion with the ways of violence and disorder. It has happened with other people. It can happen with us. Yes, in dreams begin responsibility.

COVER STORY

The Spreading Fire

By Kuldip Nayar



Shops burnt by the rioters at Ahmedabad

Bomb Blasts in Punjab

The Month-long Talks on Assam Adjourned

Underground Nagas Still at Large

The Police Increase Vigilance in Kashmir

Ahmedabad Observes Total Bandh

These headlines appeared on the front pages of newspapers on a single day last week. They recorded trouble of varying intensity in areas thousands of miles apart, but they had a familiar ring about them, manifesting the syndrome of tension and confrontation afflicting people professing different religions, and speaking different languages. For a long time they have lived on the edge of disaster and this summer their discontent seems to have reached a bursting point.

Punjab today is in the midst of a phase where the Sikh youths, guided by lunatics and frustrated by unemployment, are lost in a wilderness of violence.

Both the Akali Dal groups, one led by Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and the other by Baba Joginder Singh, the late Bhindranwale's father, are wooing the Sikh youth. By asserting itself, the Longowal group has retrieved part of the ground it had lost by its timid approach earlier, but has not given up its old habit of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The government is more responsive this time

But the Hindus of Punjab have hardened in the last one year. They are not ready to accept what they would have in 1983 or the beginning of 1984. Most Hindus have come to doubt whether the Akalis consider the Sikhs part of the Indian nation and attach little importance to their oft-repeated statement that India is their motherland. Some of the Akali demands, like the integration of Punjabi-speaking areas, including Chandigarh, with Punjab, equitable distribution of the Ravi-Beas waters, and granting of more powers to the state, articulate Punjabi nationalism, but the Akali emphasis on *Dharam Yudh* and the gurdwara culture has alienated the Hindus in Punjab. And today, there is a wide chasm between

the two communities that will take a lot of effort to bridge.

But even if a solution to the Punjab problem is found, many people from among the Sikhs and the Hindus will continue to harbour resentment. The Sikh youth in particular may, by and large, stay aloof and dream of achieving a separate nation. This is largely due to incidents like Operation Bluestar and the random killings of Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination. In terms of money, the loss to Punjab due to disturbances in the last three years is estimated at Rs 15,000 crores. Material losses apart, the wedge driven between the Sikhs and the Hindus is the concern of every citizen.

Unlike Punjab, the problem in the north-east is not of recent origin. From ancient times, the region, including Assam, has been the meeting place of many tribes and races. Right through its history, there has been an inflow of people of different origins into the area. In 1931, when linguistic tabulation was undertaken, Assamese was not the language spoken by the majority of the inhabitants of the region.

A former British Governor described Assam (which then included Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland) as a broad central corridor hall, from which small rooms, corresponding to the hill districts, open on both sides, with, however, no connecting doors between them The reorganisation of the state, which the States Reorganisation Commission rejected in 1956, but which Mrs Gandhi effected 11 years later, has brought to the fore the old problem of the Assamese-speaking population being in a minority in Assam. Immigration over the years has changed the complexion of the state.

The agitation in Assam, nearly a decade-old now, to oust "foreigners" has embittered every section of the population in the state. The Assamese harbour hatred against the Bengali-speaking population, the Hindus are suspicious of the Muslims and the tribals are fighting the non-tribals. At one time it appeared that fixing 1971 as the "cut-off year" for determining the status of those who had come into the state after that would settle the problem. Even the agitation leaders looked like accepting it. But once again the demand of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) to have 1969 or 1968 as the cut-off year in place of their original demand of 1961 has stalled a solution.

Whether it is 1971, 1961 or any other year, it will not alter the basic point: no outsider can be thrown out of India. Bangladesh will not accept them, as General H. M. Ershad, the Bangladesh Martial Law Administrator, told me a few days ago in Dhaka. The solution on the anvil is to disfranchise "foreigners" for a particular number of years. But the cut-off year has to be agreed upon first. And, in the meanwhile, Assam remains a trouble spot.

The situation in the rest of the north-east is more volatile. Violence is a part of the lives of the inhabitants of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. Hostile Nagas and Mizos have pinned down a large army and para-military forces in the area. New Delhi's efforts towards a settlement have succeeded to some extent, but the hard core of anti-Indian elements remains.

For a long time people have lived on the edge of disaster and this summer their discontent seems to have reached a bursting point

The most disconcerting part, as the home ministry says in an assessment, is: "The emerging pattern in the north-east region indicates a link-up amongst the extremists and subversive elements. There are reports of formation of an armed voluntary organisation known as the Seven United Liberation Army (SULA) drawing its strength from the underground youths of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. The aim of the SULA is to fight for an independent country taking together the seven states/union territories of the region."

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur has advocated the formation of the Revolutionary United Front by the various extremist groups of the north-east in order to liberate the region. Yet another extremist group claiming to belong to the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) has also come to an understanding with the Mizo National Front (MNF). Reports also indicate that the MNF has been maintaining contacts with the Tripura extremists.

The problems in the north-east have multiplied because there are several sanctuaries across the border for the insurgents. The inaccessibility of the terrain makes it difficult for the army to liquidate insurgency in the entire north-east region.

Kashmir, which had achieved some stability when Sheikh Abdullah came to power in 1975, is in turmoil now because Mrs Gandhi arbitrarily dismissed the elected government of Farooq Abdullah, the Sheikh's son, by encouraging the defection of 12 National Conference legislators and installing G.M. Shah as the chief minister. On the one hand, the democratic forces have been weakened, with people saying that India does not believe in democracy when it comes to Kashmir, and, on the other, Muslim fundamentalism has taken root Never before has the Jamaat-e-Islami been so popular in the Valley as it is today.

Adding to the insult of the people is the terrible blow that the state's major industry, tourism, has suffered. For three consecutive seasons there have been few tourists going to Kashmir because of the disturbed conditions in Punjab. The people, especially traders and artisans, are desperate and the slightest provocation brings them to the streets The state government is too unpopular to deal with the situation. Questions regarding Kashmir's accession to India are being asked once again.

But Farooq Abdullah is adamant on his stand that Kashmir is a part of India. However he is being asked to prove that he is an Indian, time and again. Rajiv Gandhi, after assuming power, has held talks with Farooq Abdullah more than once and indicated that he was ready to undo the wrong done by his mother, by dissolving the present state Assembly and ordering fresh elections. But Rajiv's advisers, M. L. Fotedar in particular, who was responsible for Farooq's dismissal, have delayed action so far.

Gujarat has been turned into a battle ground by the state chief minister, Madhavsinh Solanki, himself. The state was amongst the best administered in the country. But the CM's inept handling of a relatively innocuous situation has led to a position where everyone is pitted against everyone: Hindus are against the Muslims, employers are against the employees, and the upper castes are fighting the lower castes. Solanki is not in the good books of Rajiv Gandhi but the PM does not want to oust him from the chief ministership yet.

It is ironical that at a time when India is trying to present its best face to the world outside through festivals, it is doing precious little to cure the festering sores on its body.

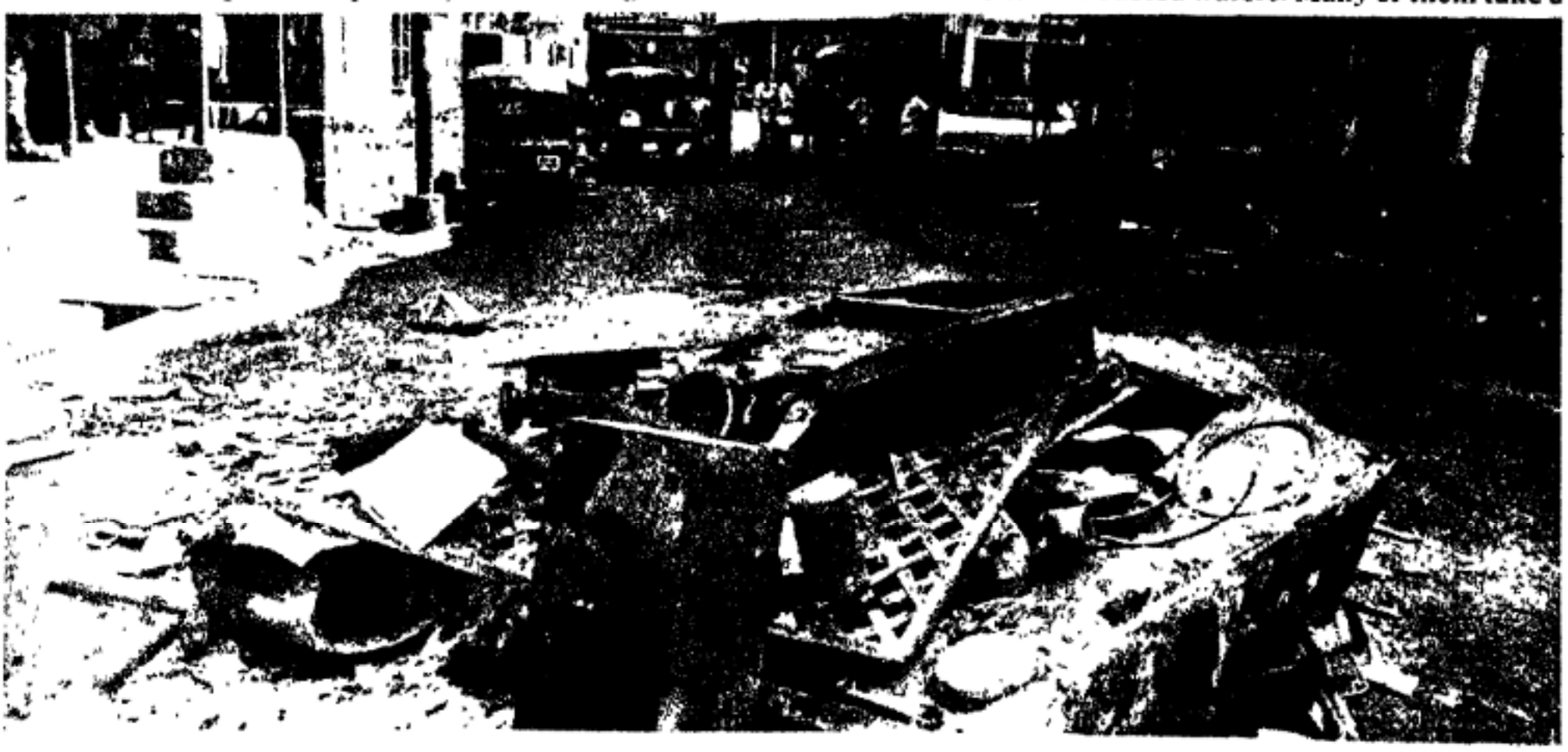
The Pains of Progress

K.F. Rustomji analyses the state of the country today

Should we not reorganise our politics and administration so that the fanatic and the demagogue do not claim the right to organise the deaths of thousands under the guise of democratic dissent? In the last three years more than 12,000 persons have been killed in Assam, Punjab, Bhiwandi, Delhi and Ahmedabad in violent movements organised by evanescent groups. Like the Naxalites, they want to "shatter everything to bits" and then "remould it closer to the heart's desire." But what may have seemed feasible to Omar Khayyam may be disastrous today. They may succeed in shattering Indian society if we continue to be unconcerned about their activities, and they may replace the clamour and din of the democratic system striving for consensus and compromise with the silence of an unrelenting dictatorship. Freedom would be totally extinguished. Do we want that? Apologists maintain that India is a large country and that such movements are a sign of growth. They say that there will always be some type of disorder wherever there is dynamism in society. Look at China, look at Indonesia, look at South America, look at any overpopulated country.

If we analyse each disturbance from the time it is an idea mooted in coffee shops or temples, through its various developmental phases, the creation of frenzy and its final outburst into rioting and bloodshed, we will find that the planning is done with a callous disregard for life. When it is first mentioned as a subject which disturbs the people, the authorities view it with a certain amount of disdain and ridicule as in Assam or Gujarat, or they do not know what to say because it is not clear what the agitators want, as in Punjab, or there does not seem to be any genuine grievance. The authorities allow liberty to the organisers even if there is an infraction of the law because they feel that the situation would be aggravated if they take action. Then the intimidation of the police and the executive by the agitators begins and it is followed by sabotage and killings, and the state government goes into a trance. What should we do? Pass another law? Where is the police force to enforce it?

Where can we get the extra policemen from? The whole attitude is defensive in the extreme. Avoid a confrontation--they say to the district magistrates and senior superintendents of police. Let them do what they like. Avoid force. No firing. This is followed by sabotage and murder in Assam, collection of arms and ammunition and the killing of Hindus, Nirankaris and policemen in Punjab. In Ahmedabad, police-baiting occurs on a massive scale in the lanes and by-lanes where stone-throwing is practised as an art (132 policemen have been injured in Gujarat from 18 March to 2 May). Then the centre decides to arraign the state for allowing so much violence. Instructions are issued by the Governor or the chief minister. "No violence should be tolerated." And promptly a few buses are burnt, a few localities looted, and a few men are killed in order to hurl defiance in the face of authority, which results in police firings. The hired bravos of the movement have done their work with practised skill. By this time it is easy to work up an agitation against the police for having used force. Move the police away, even courts say. Not only the police but every single agency of government decides to move away for the sake of safety. The executive with the large cadre of deputy collectors, *tehsildars*, block officers and thousands of officers who deal with civil supplies, taxes, and so on move away—"Not our business." The judiciary moves towards the agitators thinking that placating them in some ways might help to contain their fury. The media becomes partisan or passive, even the organised political parties take cover. Many important politicians just disappear when their need is the sorest. A large number of others feel that it would be worth fishing in troubled waters. Many of them take a



Looted property lying on the roads of Bhiwandi

Palkhivala Public Library

covert part in the agitation, as in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Assam, Bhiwandi or Punjab.

This is the stage at which doubt seizes the organisers. The sanest feel they have raised a Frankenstein and do not know how to contain the public desire for loot and arson, or how to shake off the grip of extremist elements. The easiest course is to carry on and blame the police. This is the time-tested formula since the days of the civil disobedience movements and, as if to confirm that the police have totally failed, the police make numerous blunders and the army is called out. After a few spasmodic attempts at revival by hard core activists who subscribe to the Naxalite philosophy, the bloodshed stops. Now it is a field day for all the do-gooders who are shocked at the violence, and surprised by its intensity. They want to resume talks and parleys, make peace offers and suggest roundtable conferences for withdrawal of the agitation. The media thinks that its role is basically that of doling out the milk of human kindness and government must compromise, even express regret for the use of force. After all, the killings and arson were not deliberate. It is just that the agitation went out of control. Anyway, peace in our time, O Lord, is what is wanted. This, sad to say, is how our democracy functions. The political machine functions only at the time of elections, the government closes down shop and leaves the police to battle alone with the agitators. When the tumult and the shouting breaks out into bloodshed, there is no desire to fix the blame, to find out who failed, why the trouble was not nipped in the bud by enforcing the law. It is a fact that as a race we are terribly afraid of bloodshed. Any group can threaten us with murder and we become pulp, ready to find some way of accepting their proposal, howsoever outrageous it may be. But the number of dead does not move us. They can be counted in thousands. We have no regrets, no tears, no sympathies, no fears of a recurrence of violence. There is, however, a self-purifying desire to help the victims of violence if it does not mean more than contributing an old shirt and a torn saree, or a few rupees to the Prime Minister's relief fund, provided it is tax-exempted. We may, however, protest at the perversity of foreign TV stations that refuse to expound our plans for development, and only show us killing each other all the time.

India is a unique country in one other respect. We never punish anybody in the normal judicial way.



A policeman patrols the streets of a riot-torn area in Khurja, UP

Anybody who is prosecuted in court is presumed to be suitable for acquittal after a brief wait as an undertrial. If he is to be punished, it would have to be in the police lock-up or in the street by angry policemen or frenzied mobs. It matters little if police firing goes out of line and a little girl is killed. She is expendable as far as the state is concerned. In any case the police are a bloody lot. Blame them. That exonerates the organisers and the government.

Forget the dead: but count the votes. In a few years even the votes may not be worth counting because we may have killed democracy by then. Twelve thousand dead in an overpopulated country—particularly as all of them would be poor and half dead in any case—does not create a big outcry. Nor do we think of the widows, the orphans, those left with no support, or the feelings of revenge which generate vendettas that go on for generations. All that has been our lot for centuries, we say.

We can also discount the cost of such disturbances—the crores spent in security arrangements, the relief camps, rehabilitation, the crores lost in trade and industry, the crores spent in wages. We can print notes for 500 or 1000 crores in a day and deal with the inflation afterwards by providing tax reliefs. We keep wailing that the guilty seem to be going unpunished, but no practical steps are taken to correct it. Apart from those that the police shoot and others who have been mowed down by mobs, there is hardly anybody who can be held accountable for the damage caused. Forget Roman law, forget Indian law, and even forget justice. We do not believe in conviction in a court of law. It almost seems a travesty of justice to us to think that those who organise carnage should be punished. In the first place, the FIRs would be defective. Then the court would readily hold that delay of one day has been caused by the police in presenting the *chalan*, so the case is seriously weakened and the accused can be bailed out. The witnesses refuse to appear in court after some of them are killed, other legalities appear and the court rightly holds that the prosecution has failed to prove the case. In fact even strictures could be considered justified as the police had arrogantly taken on the role of arbiters of the country's destiny according to the defence lawyer.

So, in sum, we have a sort of exceptional democracy in which crime and disorder are rampant (mafias have grown in every major city), where the criminal justice system depends only on the police, which functions spasmodically, where the legislatures have ceased to be the place where conflicts are resolved. Yet we are all sustained by the hope that the government will do something. Inwardly we are getting more and more cynical as the years go by.

Is there a way out, or do we keep on drifting in the ocean of disaster wondering where the next storm will come from and how the frail bark of democracy will weather it? I am one of those who is sure there is a safe passage and we will find it. In the first place we must learn to deal with disorder with the inherent strength of a democracy and the real strength is the popular will. If 700 millions express it in the right way, it can create an impact sufficient to deal with the most obdurate agitation. But first we must learn to stand up against threats and enforce the law ruthlessly from the very beginning of an agitation. The popular will can

only appear if the people are well-informed and are able to see what is happening in clear terms, and are able to express that will in such a way that it would strengthen the government and guide it firmly.

It is difficult to say where the blame lies. Is it our size? Is it our poverty? Is it a failure of the media? Why is it that the Indian has failed to feel and be moved by the tragedy that has struck thousands of people? Twelve thousand are only the people killed. The disruption of life has affected millions. Millions more, particularly the minorities, have lived in fear and dread of the frenzy that is organised again and again by the enemies of the people. Mahesh Bhatt can make a whole theatre gush with tears with the story of an elderly couple whose son was killed by thugs in New York in the film *Saaransh*. Why is it that the tragedy of thousands killed in agitations leaves us cold? We don't relate. Is it because we can identify with one middle class family, and not with thousands of the poor, or is it because we identify only with Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or com munity-wise? The poor do not interest us. Why? I can only assume that it is the fault of the national media which is adept at concealing disasters. In a democracy that is a serious crime. But does anybody consider that we are serving democracy poorly by deception, concealment, cover-ups, by not allowing the worst to be known and its causes understood? We have a large number of poor and illiterate people. Is it in the national interest to mislead them, even brutalise them instead of giving them lessons in feeling, in understanding the depth of suffering that is the lot of those who are the victims of out internal wars?

Perhaps we are just at the beginning of our democratic life. Our artists, writers, dramatists and our poets are still searching for a way to depict our condition. Even *Saaransh* is a new development. Some writers may already have undertaken the task of depicting our deliriums. A sensitive film on the pattern of *The Day After* may even be in the making, showing the damage that has been done to our national ethos by violence. A dramatist may prove once again that a scream is better than a political thesis.

There is something strong and enduring in the voice of the people which we have felt at times but never properly acknowledged because at heart we are all monarchists. We have seen waves at election time—unpredictable and overpowering—welling up somewhere in the deep sub-conscious of the race. Elections have helped to solve our most intractable problems because it is the inner voice that speaks the most enduring truths.

As soon as the election is over, all the political work collapses. Congressmen become interested only in office—in minitries—what to get out of politics, not what to give. All the other parties also disappear from the scene. Whatever is left of the voice of the people is only there to be heard in legislatures where it becomes the voice of politicians, not of the people. True democracy will only come when each political party maintains and nurtures its cadres, has regular organisational elections, and encourages a mixture of the organisational and the governmental effort, even an alternation between them from time to time.

Unless we have vibrant political parties that are always in the field, prepared to meet every vile concept with counter propaganda, and in which some of the best men of the party are committed, we have only a facade of democracy, not a true democracy. If we can organise the party in the right way, the strength of government will improve immeasurably and we would not have to depend only on the police and the army to deal with agitations.

Forget the dead: but count the votes. In a few years even the votes may not be worth counting because we may have killed democracy by then.

The structure of government too needs a basic change. In the name of liberty we have allowed licence to come into every governmental organisation. There is an enormous amount of indiscipline which we accept as normal—an unjustified proliferation everywhere—a cynical disregard of the need for cooperation in government. What is lacking is a unity of purpose, with the result that the district magistrate thinks differently, the sessions judge has his own ideas, the superintendent of police differs from both in the districts. At a higher level, it seems as if the judiciary and the Legislature, the army and the police, the IAS and the IPS, are all in a state of permanent confrontation.

Where is the basic cohesion which good government requires? Why should there be no common aim? In many cases there is no common meeting ground. We keep on developing institutions which have a separate identity, all of it jealously guarded. What is the result? If there is a threat to the integrity of the nation—a war—unity is mysteriously achieved, but if the dangers are not apparent or are concealed, we work at cross purposes. If we can make all agencies of the government work as a team, we can deal with a problem of any size. All institutional arrangements should be designed only to further cohesion. This applies even to the judicial side where we will have to work out systems which will enable the law to be clearly established and firmly administered with the main purpose of protecting the people from the fanatics and demagogues.

Lastly, future agitations will develop the themes and techniques used in the last three years and add a few unpleasant aspects which are present in our politics and our administration. Terrorism will almost certainly be used by all agitations that appear to be failing because there is a basic theme of Naxalism which persists in all of them. Secondly, mafia kings will take a hand in it, if only because it weakens the police. Their money from drugs and gambling will be a big help to any agitation. Thirdly, politics will be stained by young hoodlums specialising in double dealing, posing as symbols of purity on the one hand, and on the other supporting every cause which spells money.

Will our administration stretched to the utmost with hardly any police reserves, media support or administrative unity be able to deal with agitations without enough legal or judicial support or the massive public backing which is required?

The *saaransh* (gist) of what I am writing is that we neither realise how weak we are because of our lack of political and administrative cohesion, nor understand how powerful the movements of the future will be, and the destruction they will cause. We still have time to reorganise our politics and administration and strengthen our resolve to face only movement with firm determination, and to crush it the moment it resorts to violence. Each one of us has to see that this opportunity to review our defences against internal enemies is not lost.

Bihar: Living with Violence

Caste and class conflict leave the state in turmoil

The sound of gunfire, instead of the chiming of bells, heralded in the new year (1985) in the harijan settlement of Kaitha-Bigha in Bihar's Aurangabad district. A police patrol surrounded one of the village huts and demanded the surrender of its unyielding inmates. The resulting gory battle that lasted throughout the night left 12 people dead. Locals say that the landlords of the area personally doused the village huts with kerosene and set them on fire during the encounter, so that all that remained of the village by the morning was a heap of ashes.

This incident is a typical example of clashes in Bihar that are triggered off by social tensions, rural poverty and aggravated by considerable economic inequalities and increasing harijan militancy. Locals say that on the evening of 31 December, harijans led by Naxalite militants, met to discuss how to avenge the rape of a harijan girl by the son of a powerful landlord. The landlords, unable to prevent the meeting from taking place, called the police with the message that "armed extremists were planning to annihilate the landlords." The landlords had long been looking for a chance to teach the harijans a lesson, since the militants had inspired them (the harijans) to demand a hike in their minimum wages and resist attempts at eviction from their lands, and that night seemed the perfect excuse.

Such occurrences are only a few examples to illustrate that bloodletting and violence have assumed staggering proportions in Bihar. Home department reports state that Bihar witnessed nearly 14,000 riots in 1984, 18 per cent more than in 1983, and more than 3,000 murders, 4.3 per cent more than the previous year. A senior police official who refused to be quoted said that this was due to the 'retaliation' after Mrs Gandhi's murder coupled with the two general elections. Fair and free elections are a must for effective functioning of a democratic system, but in Bihar, might prevails, and the politicians stoop to criminal dealings and even murder, to establish their supremacy.

The largescale violence witnessed by Bihar during the December elections caused the election commission to mark Bihar as the most sensitive state. During the Lok Sabha elections about a dozen Congress(I) and CPI workers were killed in Jehanabad and the Assembly elections witnessed similar casualties.

Besides fights for political supremacy, the perennial clashes are also associated with land disputes, caste wars, economic deprivation and exploitation of women. "Most of the cases are related to land disputes," says Mr Sudhir Kumar Katraia, an advocate of Patna High Court.

Recurring clashes have now become the way of life in more and more areas of Bihar and gradually greater parts of the population are being affected. From official figures we see that only 15 per cent of the state's population owns more than 80 per cent of the land. The remaining land has to be shared by a very large number of people. The middle-class agriculturists, unable to get remunerative prices for their produce, are unable to pay minimum wages to their workers. In the fight against the have-nots the more prosperous upper-middle class peasants take the side of the landlords. Eviction of landless harijans from the "benami" plots they occupy or from the meagre plots allotted to them under the 20-point programme is an integral part of the social set-up in every village. Harijans leaving their villages with none to speak in their favour is a regular feature of life in rural Bihar. The January incident at Kaithi Bihar was one such example.

The restless among the tribals in Santhal Parganas and Chotanagpur is due to some traditional reasons as well as lopsided government planning. Erosion of the tribal culture by outsiders, eviction of the tribals from their lands by money-lenders and government officials, without alternative place for the tribals to go to, deforestation and government apathy to develop these areas are cited as some of the reasons. Another factor generally mentioned with reference to the clashes between the tribals and the 'dikus' (a term used by Santhals for non-tribals) is the exploitation of the tribal sentiment by the leadership for their own ends. The allotted government aid has not reached these areas. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the Integrated Rural Development Programme. (IRDP) have not been effectively translated into practice. "Here it was much easier to cheat the tribals," says Suraj Mandal, leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.

Thus, with landlords clashing with the landless, police versus people and students against students, Bihar may not be as peaceful a place as the new chief minister envisages. There have already been 78 murders, mainly due to clashes, in the first quarter of 1985. However, the law and order problem is high on the state government's priority list. With the monsoon and planting season imminent, Bihar might be the scene of another round of gory clashes. Will the government be able to bring the situation under control ?

Yubaraj Ghimire



Grief-stricken and helpless relatives of riot victims in Bihar

Dissent in the Ranks

The old order has changed yielding place to the new—but not without an expression of discontent

The discontent in the summer of 1985 is unique. Normally an organised opposition is needed to sharpen feelings against the ruling elite. The Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress(I) mauled the opposition in the December 1984 Lok Sabha polls. The performance of the opposition parties improved in the Assembly elections held in March. However, the poor performance of the ruling party was due to the denial of tickets to many sitting Congress(I) members coupled with general discontent among Congressmen. Apart from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, where the Janata Party and the Telugu Desam respectively swept the polls, the only state where the opposition staged a creditable performance was Maharashtra. It was not the personal charisma of any individual which enabled the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) led by Sharad Pawar to restrict the Congress(I) to a majority of only 18 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly. The splitting of the anti-Congress(I) vote having been avoided, the opposition parties fared better in Maharashtra. Today, Sharad Pawar and a group of his followers are debating whether they should join the Congress(I) or not, instead of mobilising opposition against it. The discontent in the summer of 1985 is unique because it is not politically organised. The masses in various parts of the country are expressing their discontent without any help from organised political parties. Also, there is discontent within the ruling party—though they are not free to express themselves openly.

Why are Congressmen unhappy? Under Rajiv Gandhi, their party has won a better mandate from the people than it ever did under Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi. The discontent among Congressmen is two-fold—discontent among the party MPs (evident from the fact that dissent has been voiced both in party meetings and expressed in the voting patterns of the parliamentary party elections) and discontent among those who are not members of the legislature. Inaccessibility to the power centre is the main cause for discontent. In the party's functioning today, Arun Singh, the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, has emerged as a central figure. He is one of the three parliamentary secretaries, the other two being Oscar Fernandes and Ahmed Patel. But due to his close relations with the Prime Minister, he is the one most popularly known. He is a personal friend of Rajiv Gandhi from his schooldays. Such is his proximity to the Prime Minister that when the latter decided to take a holiday along with his family and retire to a forest resort in Madhya Pradesh in March, Arun Singh and his wife Nina Singh (who is friendly with Sonia Gandhi) also went along. Arun Nehru, the minister of state for power, is not as powerful as Arun Singh. Mrs Gandhi's trusted political aide, Makhan Lal Fotedar too has a say in party matters. When he was elected to the Rajya Sabha recently, there were rumours that Fotedar was on his way out. But the fact was that by nominating him for a Rajya Sabha ticket, Rajiv Gandhi was only ensuring that his political adviser had better facilities in Delhi. After the 1980 elections, Sanjay Gan-



Sandeep Shankar

At the AICC meet (from left to right): A.K. Antony , Darbara Singh and P.V. Narasimha Rao (both behind), Rajiv Gandhi, Kamlapati Tripathi, Pranab Mukherjee and K. Karunakaran

dhi had decided that AICC(I) office-bearers of the rank of general secretary should be accommodated in the Rajya Sabha so that they could get an official bungalow, telephone and other amenities. (Later some AICC(I) joint secretaries too were accommodated in the Rajya Sabha on the same principle). Besides, Oscar Fernandes too is an important personality in the capital's power equation.

And the buck stops there. No party general secretary or cabinet minister is included in the ruling caucus today. This is a major cause of discontent among Congressmen.

It may be argued that if there is discontent in the Congress(I), why does it not come out in the open? The AICC(I) session held in Delhi, in early May, did indeed see some criticism of the official resolutions, but the power centre was not attacked directly. The psyche of the Congressman over the last decade and a half has been oriented towards sycophancy. The removal of Vasantdada Patil as the chief minister of Maharashtra was a rash step. It only revealed the discontent in the party. By and large, partymen were unhappy with the *modus operandi* being adopted in Maharashtra. Sharad Pawar had been a young Congress leader in that state. He had been initially propped up by the late Y.B. Chavan. Congressmen cannot forget that in the days when Indira Gandhi was out of power, Sharad Pawar had headed a coalition government with the Janata Party. Asked to choose between Pawar and Vasantdada Patil, the partymen preferred Patil, who had been an AICC(I) general secretary in the days when Sharad Pawar enjoyed power outside the Congress' fold The inaccessibility of Arun Singh, however, seems to be restricted only to Congressmen. His sudden appearance at a dinner hosted by a Congress(S) MP a month ago created a flutter among the ruling party MPs. When Vasantdada Patil resigned, he won kudos from most partymen. In one stroke he had foiled the plans of the leader of the opposition in Maharashtra as the chief minister of the state. Congressmen may be submissive, but even submission has a limit. If party tickets are denied to leaders, if meetings are not possible with the powers that be, then submission cannot be sustained for long. The very fact that Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar, the new Maharashtra chief minister, was "weeded out" when Assembly tickets were given, shows the arbitrariness of the high command's decisions.

The discontent in Assam had seen the sudden departure of organised political groups. The students of Assam, organised under the banner of All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the masses of Assam under the banner of the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) have challenged the very existence of organised parties in the state. In Punjab, too, the traditional leadership of the Akali Dal has been challenged by Baba Joginder Singh, a non-entity until a year ago, when suddenly the world came to know of him as the father of the late Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. In Gujarat too, discontent is not being organised by traditional political organisations. The victory of the Shiv Sena in Bombay has shown that national political parties have not been able to cut any ice with the electorate of the country's most modern and alert metropolis. Bombay had been the centre of disorganised discontent earlier, too. The emergence of Datta Samant as the militant trade union leader of the city had made all the central trade union organisations irrelevant. With the mishandling of Andhra Pradesh by the Congress high command till 1982, N.T. Rama Rao, hitherto a political non-entity, emerged as the leader of the Telugu people The discontent of the summer of 1985 has another dimension—that of a generation gap. With Rajiv Gandhi at the helm of affairs, the generation which was born around the time India attained freedom has taken over the reins in India. This is the generation which is preparing to take the country into the twenty-first century. The generation which ruled the country till last year is refusing to bow out gracefully. And the intervening period, between the rule of one generation and the takeover by the next, is bound to create discontent—which is what we see today.

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya, New Delhi

Sikkim: Dormant Secessionism

An uneasy calm prevails in Sikkim today, beneath its apparent tranquillity. A decade after its emergence as the 22nd state of India, the Himalayan state continues to be haunted by an "identity crisis" that has a different meaning for different groups, though the question of a demerger is no longer avidly pursued.

The people of Sikkim, particularly the Bhutia-Lepcha community, would like the present Chogyal, Wangchuk Namgyal, who was consecrated as the 13th Chogyal in 1982, to come out in the open and lead them. But, Wangchuk says, he is not interested in joining politics. Sources close to him maintain that he may have some emotional attachment to the Naya Sikkim Party, which is currently advocating the cause of a demerger, but he refuses to either advise or finance them. The palace supporters had once done so with the present chief minister, Nar Bahadur Bhandari, then of the Sikkim Janata Parishad, and had been let down. After having swept the elections largely on the demerger issue, Bhandari dumped both the issue and the Chogyal at the altar of political exigency. The Naya Sikkim Parishad, created by Captain Wangda, an officer of the late Chogyal's disbanded Sikkim Guards, aims at restoring direct rule by the Chogyal in the future. It is reported that a leader of the Naya Sikkim Party, who enjoys burning the Indian flag and disfiguring portraits of Indira Gandhi, had met some American senators just before the December parliamentary elections. Besides, the Chinese stand which continues to refer to Sikkim as a "country" fuels the lingering dream of such elements.

While such incidents can be described as portentous, reading too much meaning into them may also be misleading for the simple reason that people in this state are more concerned about being swamped by 'outsiders' than the political status of Sikkim The aboriginal Bhutia-Lepchas are haunted by a fear of being outnumbered by the Nepalis, especially from the neighbouring Darjeeling hills and more recently by people from Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. In fact, the allegation that Bhandari has amassed huge sums of money has only led to apprehensions among the Bhutia-Lepchas who feel that this would help Bhandari consolidate the political base of the Nepalis in the state. The election of the first ever plainsman, Balachand Sarda, in the last Assembly elections has added to this fear.

Bhandari, however, is trying to balance the Nepalis and the Bhutia-Lepchas in a state where people are convinced that no national party can win an election. "Having merged, we do not want to be submerged," is gradually becoming more of a political rule than an exception.

Tapash Mukherjee

Punjab: Terrorism on the Rise

After the recent wave of violence, the Punjab problem is nowhere near a solution

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale is dead but the philosophy of violence that he preached continues to inspire the youth of Punjab. Although Indira Gandhi succeeded in crushing him by sending troops into the Golden Temple last year, once dead he grew even more powerful and dangerous than when he was alive. Mrs Gandhi was assassinated. Today, her son Rajiv Gandhi has inherited a problem far more complex. As a Punjab watcher put it, "The fight in Punjab is no more between the terrorists and the government." What started off as an agitation to coerce the centre to concede a couple of regional demands has become a unique religio-political issue. With the agitationists and their leaders unsure of their own demands, the situation is more confusing.

The government too is confused. Extremists have been operating in Punjab since 1980 and most of them are followers of the Akali Dal. Their aim is to force the centre to accept the demands put forward by the Akali Dal. The Punjab administration is certain that the activities of the extremists would come to an end as soon as the government arrives at an understanding with the Akalis. "But what is bothering us are the terrorists," said an intelligence officer who wished to remain unnamed. "The terrorists have no religion and all they are interested in is to establish a new nation, Khalistan, to be precise."

The beginnings of the Punjab agitation can be traced to a seemingly innocuous incident which took place on Baisakhi day, 13 April, 1978. On that day the Nihangs, including followers of Bhindranwale, clashed with the Nirankaris at the Railway Stadium in Amritsar leaving 16 people killed. Of them 13 were followers of Bhindranwale. Says Harbir Singh Bhanwar, a Sikh intellectual and journalist, "The Nirankari-Sikh clash marked the beginning of terrorism in Punjab. The Sikhs believed that the government was siding with the Nirankaris to crush their community." Interestingly, at that time Prakash Singh Badal was heading the Akali-Janata coalition in Punjab.

The Sikhs today find Rajiv Gandhi no better than his mother. They allege that he is responsible for the killing of "thousands of innocent Sikhs—men, women and children—in the November riots." They may not openly talk about Khalistan but they are certainly dreaming of a separate Sikh state.

With Punjab now a virtual police state, the army, the para military forces and the Punjab Police have converted an otherwise curable disease into a cancer. The government claimed that Operation Woodrose—



Militant Sikh youths in Amritsar

the mopping-up operations by the army to apprehend extremists, after Operation Bluestar broke the backbone of the terrorists in Punjab. The truth is that during such operations, the army harassed, humiliated and kept in illegal custody a large number of innocert Sikhs, a majority of them youths from the villages. Official sources disclosed to SUNDAY that the army personnel relied on mere hearsay while arresting people. A majority of the Sikhs arrested and kept in custody for months by the army after Operation Bluestar were actually innocents. Such an action by the army alienated the Sikh community. Moreover, reports started pouring in that innocent Sikh youths were being falsely implicated in criminal cases involving the killing of Hindus, bomb blasts and arson. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Punjab Police have also angered the Sikhs. All throughout the CRPF has been blatently pro-Hindu and anti-Sikh. The Akali Dal has time and again demanded the withdrawal of the CRPF from Punjab. The Punjab Police is still busy killing Sikh extremists in fake encounters.

As things stand today, there is no sign of an end to terrorism in Punjab. The sentiments of the Sikh youth against the government is still too strong. By and large, the Sikh community feels that it is being discriminated against in India The army action in the Golden Temple, the destruction of the Akal Takht and the November riots have alienated the Sikhs from the national mainstream. The extremists want to continue their tirade against the "Hindu *sarkar*" and the unknown terrorists operating under the command of Pakistan and America will continue to indulge in bomb blasts and kill innocents, irrespective of the community involved in breaking up India and in the eventuality create a separate Sikh state. Says Gunbir Singh a young industrialist from Amritsar, "There was an increase in the number of extremists in Punjab during the last one year. The reason is mainly the harassment of innocent Sikhs and torture of Sikh youths by the police. The forces are encouraging Sikh youths to take to extremism." Mubarak Singh, a senior Janata Party leader of Punjab, feels that the best way to curb extremism is to educate the general public. But the remedy does not sound very convincing. A senior Punjab government officer was of the view that extremism and terrorism would end only if a solution to the Punjab tangle was found.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

Haryana: State of Tension

If up north in Jammu and Kashmir it has played havoc with the economy, the turmoil in Punjab has increased communal disharmony in Hindu-dominated Haryana. It had taken almost no time for the strife in Punjab to spill over into Haryana. Haryana forms a major part of what has come to be known as the 'Punjab problem.' The dispute over Chandigarh and the border districts of Abohar and Fazilka as also the fact that till very recently Punjab and Haryana were one, have added to the state's problems. Artificial boundaries might have been created and the administration separated, but the people remain the same They react to problems in Punjab differently from people of other parts of the country. And in this case, the reaction has been one of anger and retaliation. Haryana, as far as the Punjab problem is concerned, has come to be known as the 'backlash-state.' Indeed political analysts feel that Haryana has stoked the fire of terrorism in the region by returning violence with violence and thus inviting retaliation till it has all become a vicious circle

It has been rolling on its ruinous path perhaps ever since November 1982 when hordes of Akali agitators, determined to disrupt the ninth Asian Games being held in New Delhi, were held at different points in Haryana, in a clever joint manoeuvre by the centre and Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal. Mum on the Akali demands in the beginning, it was Bhajan Lal who in the post-Asiad days has wielded the iron fist on Sikh extremism in the state. But, as at several other places in the country, it degenerated into indiscriminate violence against Sikhs: the burning down of *gurdwaras*, stray attacks on Sikhs, looting and destruction of their property. The moment something happened to Hindus in Punjab, Haryana was ready with a reply. And when violence was missing, the more dangerous enemy emerged: hatred and mutual suspicion, creating gaping cracks in the social fabric of the state.

Chandigarh used to be known as the 'peaceful city,' life there verged almost on dullness. Students from other parts of the country, where university education entailed recurrent strikes and closures, came to Chandigarh to study. Education, though not exactly of the highest standards, was a smooth affair. Now, over the last three years, this union territory, though spared recurrent violence, has become a knot of tension. The people live perpetually in fear of something happening. When the armed garrisons come out of their barracks after sundown, as they have been for the past so many months, the city takes on a besieged look. Two cannot ride on scooters and motorcycles, cinemas do not run night shows, hidden terror always lurks. At the university of Punjab classes have been disrupted like never before. Examinations have been scheduled and postponed, students have gone to the examination hall with curfew passes in hand. Many of them will be returning to their native states this year to continue their education. Chandigarh is no longer the students' haven. Nor is Haryana the fertile territory for business and enterprise that it once was.

Other parts of Haryana have time and again been convulsed with spasms of violence, the worst of which was witnessed only recently on 10 and 11 May when a series of bomb blasts shook Sirsa, Hissar, Sadhaura and Ambala, sending shock waves throughout the state. More than twenty were killed and the security mechanism had to be brought on more heavily. Prohibitory orders were imposed, the police were placed on red alert, tension returned to the border with Punjab and the Haryana Roadways, which has borne the brunt of the violence, had to once again suspend its night services. A lull followed and then another scare: on 31 May four armed Sikh youths attempted to hijack a bus travelling by night from Hissar to Ambala. Their attempt was foiled but the damage was done: suspicion was even more firmly implanted into the minds of the people.

Haryana has known no peace since the beginning of the troubles in Punjab. People have not led normal lives for months together. And they live with little hope of normalcy returning in the near future. Instead of ebbing, the tide of terror only seems to be gathering force.

Sankarshan Thakur

"Come Immediately. We are Going to the *Gujarat Samachar* Office to Avenge What They Have Done to Us. Come Immediately with the Vans"

With these words, the Gujarat police attacked the office of Gujarat Samachar, *adding another dimension to the violence in the state*

"Come immediately. We are going to the *Gujarat Samachar* office to avenge what they have done to us. This is what they will get for opposing us Come immediately with the vans." The voice rasped out an order on the police wireless in Ahmedabad in the afternoon of 22 April. Over the cackle of the static came the instruction to launch an attack on the offices and the press of *Gujarat Samachar*, an outspoken critic of the police and chief minister Madhavsinh Solanki. Shortly afterwards, the newspaper's office premises in the Khanpur area were set on fire. This was followed by an attack on the building by a mob of unidentified people. All through the day, the city's policemen were on the rampage in other parts of the city. A frightening dimension had been added to the social strife that was rocking Ahmedabad for the last 105 days. There were also numerous complaints of police excesses and that they had abetted attacks by *goondas* at the time communal violence had broken out. The government has turned a Nelson's eye to all this, confounding suspicions about its role in the affair.

Today, Ahmedabad, with a population of 2.5 million, can easily claim a place of prominence on India's map of trouble spots. The city has witnessed not only Hindu-Muslim riots and violence between upper castes and lower castes but also policemen going beserk. The worst Hindu-Muslim riots in India after independence had broken out in this city in 1969, claiming more than a thousand lives. In 1974, the city witnessed the Nav Nirman Movement, primarily an uprising of the urban middle classes. It was nihilist in political complexion. The first anti-reservation riots erupted in Ahmedabad in 1981 as an expression of upper caste hatred for the backward classes. But since February this year, the city has become a theatre of communal and caste-violence.

Since the year 1969, when the Congress split for the first time after independence, politicians have been increasingly depending upon lumpen elements for mustering grassroot support. This has affected the city's social fabric. The lumpen elements have a stranglehold over various communities, and can easily provoke them into a violent confrontation with each other. Simultaneously, the economic condition of the poor and middle classes has been steadily worsening. To add to their woes, there is a shortage of jobs and housing. The latest round of strife, which has already claimed some 126 lives in the city over the past 100 days, has baffled both social scientists and ordinary people alike. SUNDAY spoke to a number of people,representing a cross-section of society, about the violence. Most people tended to blame politicians for the mess and did not know of any solution to the problem. More important, Ahmedabad now feels very insecure.

It has become a city of paradoxes. The Sabarmati divides the city between the modern Ahmedabad, on the west bank and the medieval city on the east bank, with industrial Ahmedabad farther east. The west bank suburbs have wide roads, modern shops, buildings exquisitely designed by renowned architects like Le Corbusier and Lois Kahn but inhabited by people who are conservative. The walled city on the eastern bank, more than five-and-a-half centuries old, has narrow, winding lanes, small, crowded houses and is also inhabited by conservative peo-



Sondeep Shankar

The gutted office of the *Gujarat Samachar*



Firemen extinguish the flames of a bus set ablaze by rioters

ple. In the industrial areas, poverty is writ large—dingy slums, overcrowded chawls, widespread joblessness, poor civic amenities, and a population drawn not only from various parts of Gujarat but also from different parts of the country. It is only a few kilometres away from the well-laid avenues of the west bank, but economically, far away. In spite of the substantial wealth generated by industry, trade and commerce in Ahmedabad as a whole, poverty is all-pervading. A census of slums some years ago estimated that nearly half of the city's people lived in slums and squatter settlements or dwellings which were not much better. Almost one-third of the slum-dwellers had an income of about Rs 200 to Rs 250 and more than half got between Rs 200 and Rs 400 a year. Many of them worked in the unorganised sector of the economy where hours of work are long and wages low and unregulated by any labour laws.

The city has about 1.5 lakh people working in the 60-odd textile mills, getting wages that are much better than in the unorganised sector. But the large size of families and inflation has also affected their living conditions. Nearly 30,000 regular millhands are also out of jobs owing to the closure of some mills. Many substitute workers, who got irregular, but frequent employment in the mills have become jobless. According to a study by Prof. Mahesh Bhatt and V.K. Chawda some years ago, five out of every ten citizens of Ahmedabad live in houses resembling slums. The average size of a family was around 5.6 persons. In most families, the main source of livelihood was a manual job like pulling a handcart laden with goods. Another 15.7 per cent were in textile mills and other factories, and about 10.5 per cent in government jobs at the lowest level. Sixty per cent of the slum-dwellers were self-employed At the same time, Gujarat has seen a lot of economic development, underlined by speedy urbanisation. In the decade between 1951 and 1961, the population in Gujarat increased by 26.88 per cent, with the rural population growing by 29.42 per cent and the urban population by only 20.07 per cent. This trend was reversed heavily over the past two decades. In 1961-71, the rural population grew by 25.3 per cent and urban by 41 per cent, and in 1971-81 by 21.89 per cent and 40.82 per cent respectively. Ahmedabad's population increased by 44 per cent between 1971 and 1981. Literacy was as high as 61 per cent.

But the brisk pace of industrial development in Gujarat, especially after the formation of the unilingual state in 1960, brought about a dramatic change. In 1960, workers in textiles and related industries were a good 75.5 per cent of 3-10 lakh workforce in the state, with a heavy concentration of them in this city. By 1977, the proportion of textile workers fell to 48 per cent of an industrial labour force of 5.63 lakhs. On the other hand, the proportion of workers in the chemical and engineering industries rose to 19 and 18 per cent of the state's work-force respectively, almost double that of what it was 17 years ago. Ahmedabad district alone accounted for 40 per cent of the labour force in the state. In spite of this dominance, it would be wrong to assume that the textile industry alone is the backbone of the city's economy. Some years ago a detailed study of the situation in Ahmedabad by Dr T.S. Papola found that the informal sector—which means jobs in the unorganised sector and self-employed persons—formed 46.5 per cent of the work-force in Ahmedabad but contributed only 28 per cent of the total domestic product here. A lot of people were working in poor jobs, earning pittances and living in penury. One more revealing aspect of the slum situation in Ahmedabad till a few years ago is that nearly 51 per cent neither paid for nor owned the land on which their huts stood A study by B.B. Patel found that 47 per cent of the slum-dwellers paid rent.

The decline in the importance of textiles in general and the setting in of bad days for the mills in the past few years has thrown a lot of people into the unorganised sector for jobs. Already a large number of people were migrating into the city every year. The migration, according to Prof. Pravin Sheth of Gujarat university, took on a different complexion since the 1950s. Until then people from nearby districts, a majority of them Patels, came to the city. Since the formation of Gujarat and the development of chemical and engineering industries, many others from Gujarat and outside the state came to Ahmedabad. The non-Gujarati workers settled in the eastern industrial areas and distant suburbs in the west. North Indians live in a large number in the eastern suburbs, while the Patels are in a large number in Usmanpura, Navrangpura, Naranpura while Jains are predominant in Paldi, Ellisbridge and in older village localities of Madalpur, Navrangpura and Naranpura as well. Prof. Sheth estimated that in Ahmedabad about five per cent of the people are from the Patel (Patidar) community, 15 per cent are Muslims and another 15 per cent harijans and backward classes.

According to Achyut Yagnik, a social worker, the decline in the fortunes of the textile industry led to economic hardship for two sections of Ahmedabad's population, the Muslims and the harijans, because together they formed nearly one-third of the work-force in textile mills in the city when they were prospering. At one stage, about 50,000 were jobless, which meant about five lakh, in all, had been badly hit by the textile crisis. Although some mills had reopened, there were complaints from the Muslims and harijans that they did not get preference in reemployment. Officials denied there was any discri-

mination against these two sections, but both Muslims and harijans strongly felt that if a job was available after reopening of a mill, they were unlikely to get it. Again as Prof. Papola found, the unorganised sector did not serve as a newcomers' stepping stone to jobs in the organised sector, instead it swelled the ranks of unemployed in the eastern suburbs.

Mr Yagnik felt that the distortion in the economy brought about by industrial growth on capitalistic lines—joblessness and rising competition for both a job and a shelter—contributed to social tensions among the poor. This economic process was accompanied by the "criminalisation" of politics. Since the Congress split, political parties in the formal sense were in a state of flux. The old power structures like cooperatives, *Ashramshalas*, various social service organisations, which were serving as mass support-props for the old Congress were not active after the split. Despite their shortcomings, these had served well in providing a base for political sustenance and mobilisation of people during the elections. When these were not available, political parties of various hues turned to lumpen elements for filling in the gap because the aim was always to win elections.

A number of people noted that even the Congress(I) which had recently won 149 of the 182 Assembly seats and 24 out of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat did not have a well-defined mass base with an organisational wing nursing it. The trauma of the 1974 Nav Nirman movement and the subsequent coming to power of the Janata front ministry of Babubhai Patel in 1975 caused the Congress(I) to hastily attempt to woo a potential power base among the kshatriyas, harijans, adivasis and Muslims, in what was later dubbed as the KHAM theory. These classes together had more than 70 per cent of the electorate and ensured a smooth victory for the Congress(I) in 1980. But in the cobbling up of the KHAM strategy, the Congress(I) brought about an upheaval that had far-reaching social implications. When Madhavsinh Solanki became chief minister in 1980, he was the first person from among the non-Patidar, non-Brahmin section of society to occupy such a position. When Gujarat came into being, it was initially ruled by a small elite drawn from among brahmins and banias. For the first few years after Gujarat became a separate state, this dominance of brahmins and banias was resented also by the Patels, who form about 22 per cent of the population. Analysing the emergence of kshatriyas and other castes in the 1980 polls, B.C. Shah, a social scientist, noted that if the history of the first two decades of post-independence Congress rule in Gujarat "is nothing but the story of the struggle waged by the Patidars (Patels) against the brahmins and banias for establishing their supremacy, the next two decades are going to witness a bitter power struggle between the Patidars and the kshatriya."

The KHAM strategy came in very handy for the Congress(I) as well as the kshatriyas, who form around 40 to 50 per cent of the population. When it was put together, the KHAM strategy provided the Congress (I) with a mass base, held together by the fact that most of its supporters were have-nots. But it also had casteist hues, as old-time Congressmen in the ruling party like Ratubhai Adani were quick to realise. They eventually left the party. Even among the proponents of the KHAM cracks developed, with a dissident group finally emerging under the leadership of Jinabhai Darji, one-time political *guru* of Mr Solanki and one of the architects of the strategy.

Why has the Ahmedabad society become so vulnerable that riots occur like this? Again, no single answer is available. Some people see it as a result of life becoming more and more difficult, plus the absence of a leftist movement in the city. Among the larger cities, Ahmedabad probably is unique where no significant leftist ideology has flourished even in a limited way. The two communist parties have a presence, but they are not very effective. "We have no progressive middle class like in Maharashtra," said Mr Yagnik. The conservatism of the people resulted in closing of the ranks in different castes. It was not that banias or Patels did not exploit their own clansmen, but when dangers like the reservation quota hike loomed large, even in imagination, the communities united. The lack of growth of a rationalist movement was accompanied by the heightening of religious fervour all round, both among the Hindus and Muslims.

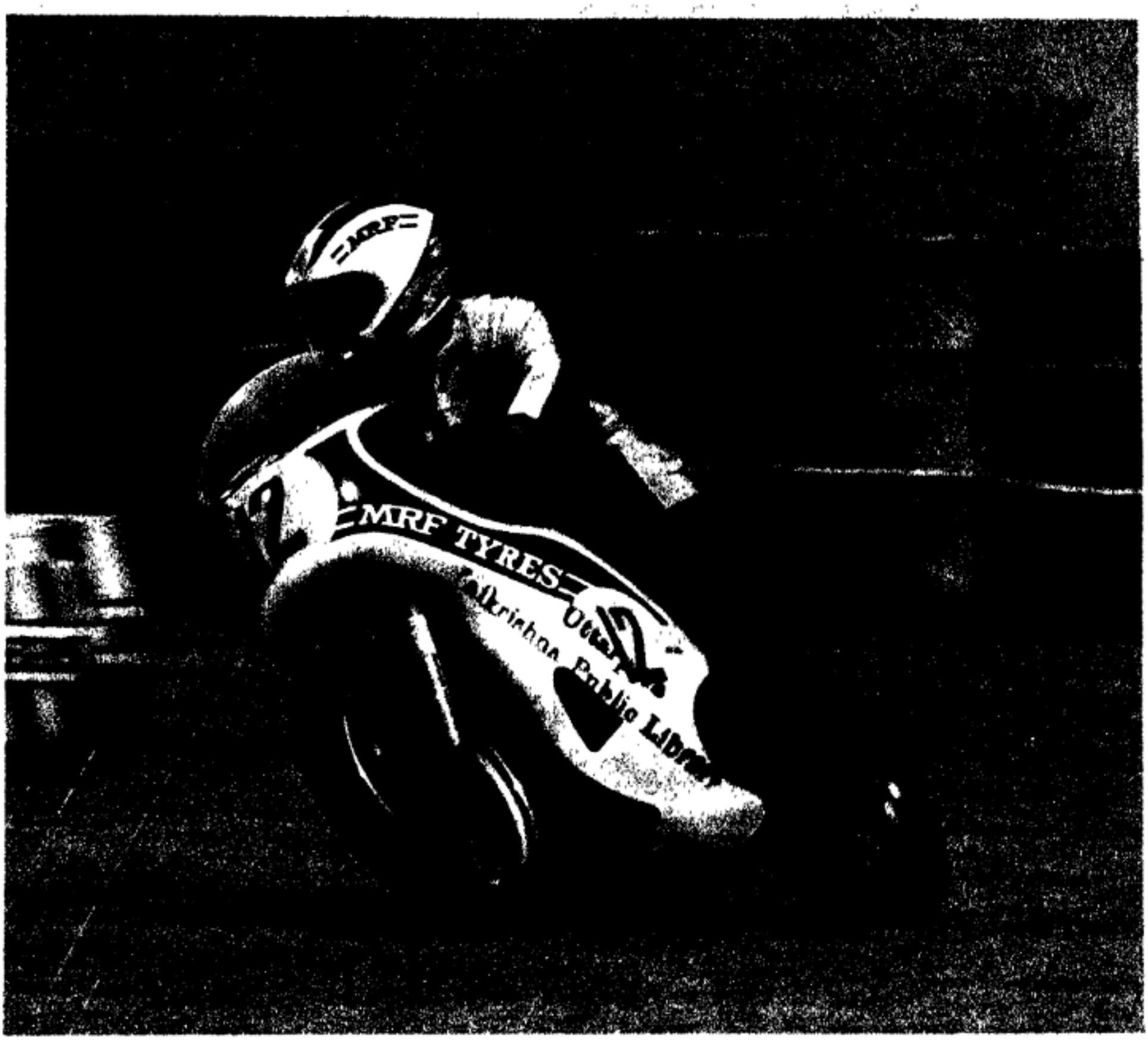
It was argued by these people that such a society was prone to get worked up emotionally and when agitations really got under way, they tended to draw sustenance from successive emotional issues even as the original issues were forgotton for a while. Although it has been a stir against the reservation quota hike, the current agitation has drawn a lot of strength from the angry reaction of the people against police inaction, police excesses, killing of a police sub-inspector and of a little girl and the failure of the government in ending the strife.

What are the prospects for the future? "They appear bleak to me," said Babubhai Patel, former chief minister, who was pained to see secularism on the decline. As Mr Patel pointed out, really speaking, the current agitation—either for the reservations or against them—was needless. "The backward classes together have 31 per cent (reservation) now, but half of this was utilised. The need is to help these classes to utilise more seats. Similarly, if the existing quotas were not being used, there was no need for the upper castes to feel threatened about the increases in quota. And still there is a marathon violent agitation."

Tushar Bhatt, Ahmedabad



Scene of devastation: a shop looted during the riots



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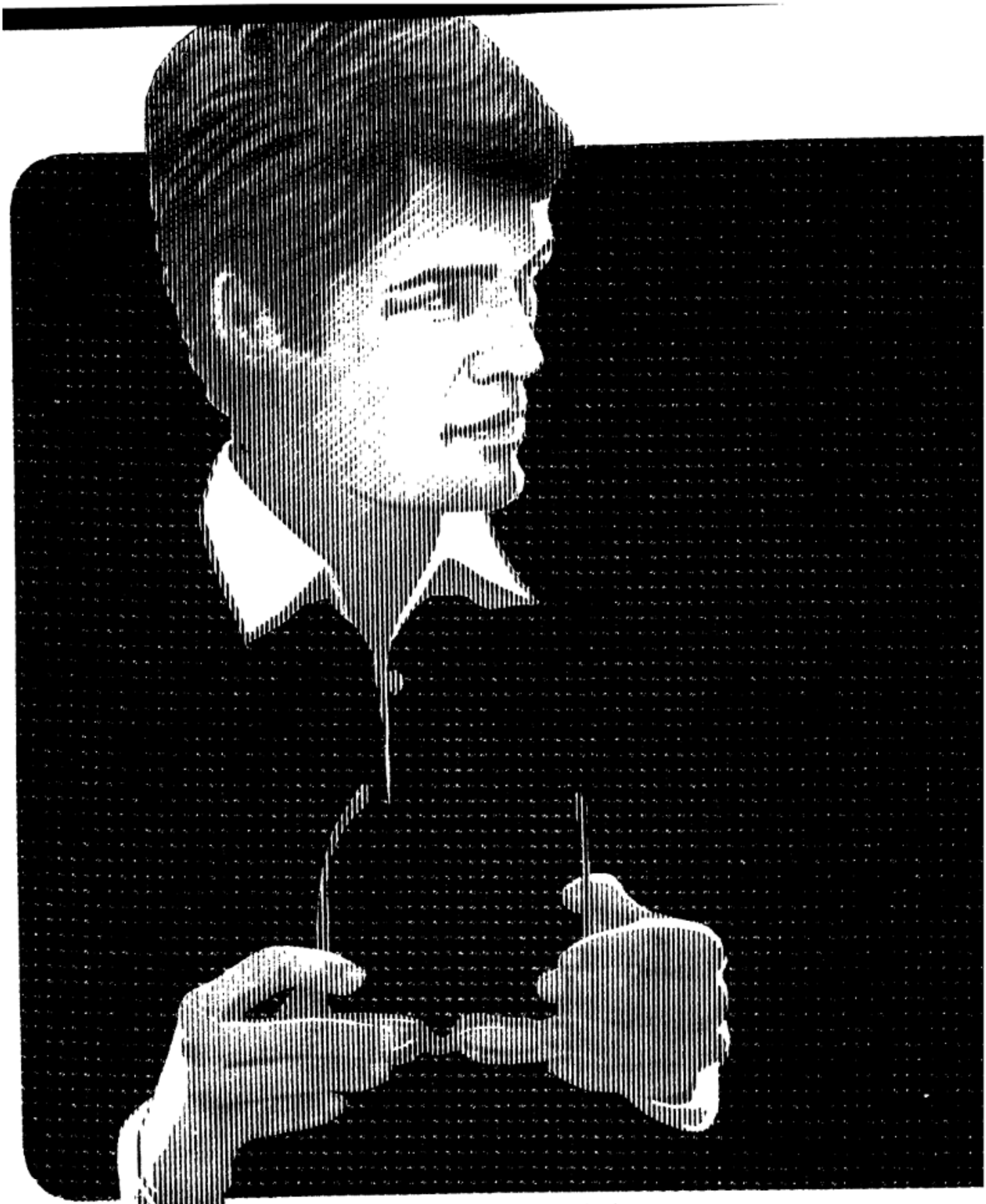
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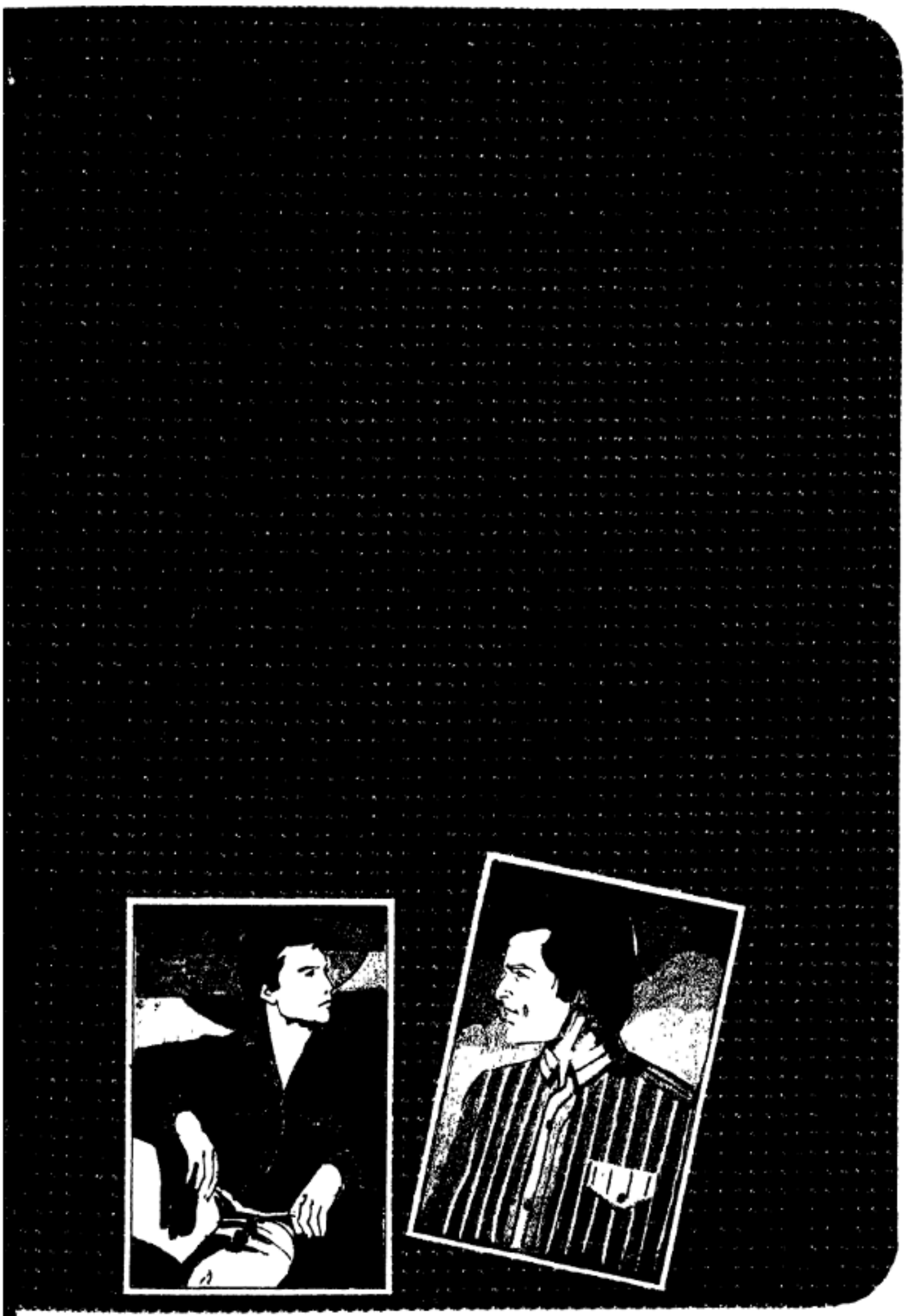
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Delhi: An Uneasy Calm

The November anti-Sikh riots and the recent bomb blasts leave their scars on Delhi

From the murder of Nirankari Baba Gurbachan Singh in 1980 to the present phase of organised disturbance, Delhi has had its quota of terrorist tension. In these five years time and again the menace has appeared, once even in the shape of Bhindranwale himself who had come crusading to Delhi with his bandwagon of followers armed to the teeth: the killing of Jathedar Santokh Singh, president of the Delhi Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee in December 1981, the assault on the gates of Delhi on the eve of the Asian games, the protest over the "martyrs" of the Taran Taran bus accident which culminated in rioting and firing at Gurudwara Rakab Ganj near Parliament House, murders of other Sikh leaders opposed to the cause of Bhindranwale, the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, the riots that followed and then the big revenge of May 1985. Bombs concealed in transistors went off at more than 20 places in New Delhi on 10 and 11 May killing nearly 50 and leaving many others injured. It was an example of organised terror at its best: Bhindranwale's children had struck again almost a year after Operation Bluestar and six months after the anti-Sikh violence in November 1984. The mid-May outrage, many thought, was a vendetta for both. So what began essentially as a feud between Akalis and Nirankaris disintegrated into rank communalism. Nothing could stop it going that way.

When "ghallughara" began—the Akali's genocide week—it sent Delhi scurrying once again under the wings of heavy security. Police set up roadblocks and checkpoints at night at Palam airport, at the two main railway stations in the capital and at the inter-state bus terminus, some of the worst hit spots during the May blasts. Vigilance was stepped up. In office buildings the police posted pickets which frisked people going in. Parking in the basements was stopped, guards were even placed on duty in lavatories. But as it turned out, while the security buildup was awesome, "ghallughara" was a bit of a let-down for those expecting trouble. Attitudes and reactions during the week from 1-7 June well underlined the extent to which fear had embedded itself in the peoples' minds.

There were sighs of relief at the end of the week. But the terrorists need never give advance warnings, the possibility of future strikes is always there. The Delhi police have arrested 36 people—most of them Sikh youths—from various parts of the capital in connection with the blasts. They also unearthed in West Patel Nagar in central Delhi, a crude actory for manufacturing the transistor bombs that ripped Delhi. But to date, they have not been able to lay their hands on the real conspirators behind the crime. They were able to make their way out in time. Sikh intellectual groups of New Delhi have, during the genocide week, expressed their determination to preserve communal harmony between Hindus and Sikhs and pledged themselves to unity. But when has the terrorist had anything to do with the greater mass of the Sikh population? He has his own centre of activity, striking from a tangent with the sole purpose of keeping the situation destabilised.

"Ghallughara", from that point of view has been a failure and even the May blasts, which brought death and injury to innocents, tagged along a welcome signal: the villains behind the blasts had failed to provoke a communal backlash, as obviously was their intention. Harmony between the two communities held. But how successfully Delhi can keep away further forays by terrorists is a difficult question to answer. As the recent arrests of people concerned with the May blasts have shown, a lot of young Sikhs, some from well-off families, have taken to terrorism. It seems to have captured the imagination of the Sikh youth. How wide has this network spread? In Delhi, as in Chandigarh, insecurity and fear always lurk in the corners. Having made its gory passage through Haryana, it has now established its roots in the capital. And its eradication, if and when that is done, will require more than the services of the security and intelligence networks. The socio-political knot of Punjab will have to be untied, something that the terrorist attacks are meant to abort.



Firemen fighting flames in north Delhi during the November riots

Sankarshan Thakur, Chandigarh

Bombay: The Threat From Regionalism

Reservations threaten to become an issue in Maharashtra, too

Ever since the Shiv Sena scored its brilliant and unexpected victory in the Bombay municipal elections, there has been apprehension in certain circles about an outburst of parochial skirmishes and communal clashes. Pramod Navalkar, the Shiv Sena's journalist-turned-politician, disputes this and says, "In fact, we are thinking of making Rajiv Gandhi the president of the Shiv Sena because he has fallen in line with our thinking. Mr Gandhi has said that the influx into Delhi should be stopped." There have been several instances, says Navalkar, where "we have had alliances with the Congress(I) and opposition parties, and at that time no one spoke about regionalism and parochialism. Why is it that because the Shiv Sena was isolated and won the corporation elections on its own that these fears are being voiced? We have talked of stopping the influx and have also talked of cut-off years. This does not mean that we can put this into action, but we can certainly reverse the trend. We can discourage people from flocking to Bombay. You must remember, we are nationalists first and then regional. We would disband the Sena if the nation's interest demanded it."

The Sena's mayor, Chaggan Bhujbal, discounted the possibility of a regional war saying, "We have nothing against outsiders. We are prepared to welcome everybody, but then the centre must help us. The centre takes Rs 3,000 crores annually from Bombay and gives nothing in return. The centre is like a Pathan who takes his money and does not care whether the person lives or dies, as long as he gets his money. There is a limit to what Bombay can accommodate and after a time it will be the people of Bombay themselves who will confront the outsiders."

The Shiv Sena chief, Bal Thackeray, is more direct as he zeroes in on the problem. He says the police commissioner, D.S. Soman, has informed him that hordes of Bangladeshis are leaving Assam and coming to Bombay. Besides, there is a continuous influx of people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Thackeray also says there are one lakh Pakistanis who have overstayed in Bombay after expiry of their visas. He has called for a committee of citizens to decide on a cut-off date that may even be a future date, and says that other state governments should take the responsibility of seeing that their people do not migrate by providing them jobs on the line of the Maharashtra government's employment guarantee scheme, which has significantly re-



A Shiv Sena meeting in progress in Bombay; (inset) Bal Thackeray

duced the influx from Maharashtra's rural areas into Bombay.

However, the realities of the situation are that the people who dwell in slums are predominantly from the lower-income groups, the Dalits and the Muslims. Such a predicament, dictated by economic hardship, is ripe for anyone wanting to take advantage of the simmering discontent. A relevant development in this connection, according to political circles, is the alliance forged between the Dalits and the Muslims, headed by Prof. Jogendra Kawade and Haji Mastan respectively. This organisation, though maintaining a low profile at the moment, has been growing gradually in strength and can pose a formidable force against caste Hindus and other groups should a confrontationist situation develop.

One such problem could be the reservation issue. Maharashtra has by and large remained unaffected by the anti-reservationist stir in neighbouring Gujarat, but this does not mean that there is no grievance on this issue. A vital section that has been adversely affected by the reservation policy in Maharashtra is the police and at the moment the discontent has been channelised through writ petitions in the Bombay High Court.

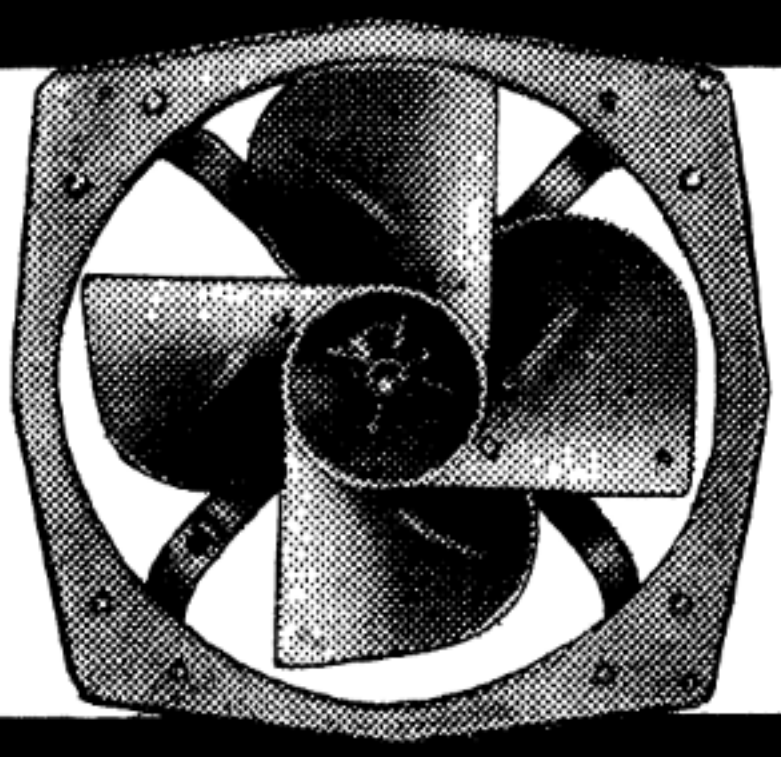
In addition to the normal reservations, a general resolution No. BCC-1074-J of 23.5.74 provides 24 per cent reservation for SC and STs and denotified and notified tribes at all levels till the first promotion to class 1 service. The result is that a sub-inspector of police becomes an inspector of police by virtue of this reservation within a service period of five years, whereas his colleague becomes an inspector after 15 years of service. There are three writ petitions pending in the Bombay High Court challenging the reservation in relation to yearly vacancies. In his writ petition, Gopalkrishna R. Chavan and three others said if it is interpreted to mean reservations in relation to yearly vacancies and not in relation to cadre strength, then by 1992 all the 69 posts of assistant commissioners of police in Greater Bombay would be filled by appointees from the backward classes, most of whom would be junior to many of the inspectors of police (general category) by as much as over 15 years. The petitioners also stated that by getting seniority as ACPs other high posts will only be available to these backward classes, resulting in gross discrimination to the petitioners and other officers and leading to further discrimination, dissatisfaction and lowering of morale of the whole Greater Bombay police force and further impairing of its efficiency. ACP Chavan and three of his colleagues have been named as respondents, besides the state government and the director-general of police, three of their colleagues who belong to the scheduled castes and have become assistant commissioners of police.

Assistant commissioner of police R.K. Sharma (traffic) said that though he joined the service 25 years ago, those who joined it in 1972 as sub-inspectors have become ACPs in 1985. He said that of the 72 ACPs in Bombay at present, 25 are from the reserved category and only two of them are senior to him. What is worse, he said, is that these juniors can retire as deputy inspector generals of police in 2004 A.D. and those from the general category can at best retire as junior ACPs.

Mr Sharma and his colleagues believe that by not taking this genuine problem in hand the government is only postponing a solution to the problem. The situation is volcanic enough.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

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Assam: Old Issues, Fresh Efforts

But the AASU's talks with the centre are still making no headway

The foreigners' issue has for long evoked strong ethnic emotions among the Assamese. However, much of the enthusiasm which marked those early days of the movement in 1979 has now ebbed, as the search for a political solution is on. The rigid stand of the AASU-AAGSP leaders who are now in Delhi to have talks with central leaders to settle the issue has also mellowed with the passage of time. The AASU leadership has been engaged in talks with S. B. Chavan, the union home minister, since 16 May, to resolve the 'foreigners' issue. While the student leaders have no objections to retaining the people who came into Assam between 1951 and 1961, a formula for dealing with the infiltrators who came into the state between 1961 and 1971 is still being sought. The suggestion that those who entered the state between 1967 and 1971 be disenfranchised has received the leaders' approval. Moreover, there is the problem of rehabilitating those disenfranchised. Now, the question being asked is: Which should be the cut-off year: 1961, 1965 or 1967?

Another question that is being asked in Assam today is: When will elections be held? The past five years have witnessed a gradual erosion in the impact of the Assam agitation. The mass protests snowballed into violence and bloody deaths, following the Assembly elections which brought the Congress(I) into power in this northeastern state. Today, the student leaders maintain that in view of the revised electoral rolls, the Saikia ministry should be dissolved.

When the Assam agitation initially began in late 1979, it started as a movement against the *bohiragotas* or outsiders. Very soon however, the agitation leaders realised that they could gain leverage and acceptability among the masses by dropping the word 'outsiders.' However, in essence, the Assam agitation, especially prior to 1983, remained essentially a movement against all outsiders. The AASU-AAGSP leadership which spearheaded the mass movement received an overwhelming response from the Assamese, who had for long been silent sufferers against what they felt was a gradual domination of outsiders in all spheres of life in the state.

Even before independence a broad current of sub-nationalism has always been prevalent in the Assamese society. Much of this strong sense of Assamese nationalism came from the genuine fear of a minority community finding it difficult to take its place in a federal set-up dominated by the more populous states of the country. Much more important, however, were the historical forces at work during the last few centuries. Before the advent of the Ahoms in the 13th century, Assam or more specifically Kamarupa, had been an integral part of the then Indian mainstream. There was a constant exchange of travellers and scholars between the kingdom of Kamarupa and other Indian states. Mention of expeditions to Kasi or ancient Benares is found in several ancient works. Scholars from other principalities came to the sacred shrine of Kamakhya and a two-way traffic between the kings of Kamarupa and the rest of the northern and eastern Indian kingdoms was maintained. However, since the coming of the Ahoms to Assam and their domination over the land for the next 300 years or so, this inter-action between the people of the Ahom kingdom and the rest of the Indian states gradually disappeared. With the Ahom kings repulsing the attacks by the Mughal armies which were sent to subjugate them, Assam and the region remained aloof from events sweeping the rest of the Mughal empire.

The coming of the British to Assam once again broke the insularity of the region. However, along with the annexation of Assam by the British, came a long retinue of Bengali *babus* in the service of the foreign masters. The *babus* naturally got the coveted jobs in the courts and the administrative services in the state, in tea gardens, railways and postal services. Locals started to feel overpowered by the new army of clerks and petty officials. One of the most shattering effects of British rule in the state was the compulsory use of Bengali language in the courts and educational institutions of Assam between 1835 and1873. This replacement of the local vernacular by an alien language has left an indelible mark on the Assamese psyche, clouding for generations their attitude towards Bengalis living in the state.

While the urban Assamese have been resentful of the Bengalis, in the rural areas there is a bias against the immigrant Muslims, who came to Assam from former East Pakistan. The hard working Muslim peasants from Mymensingh and neighbouring districts of East Bengal were initially encouraged by the authorities to come into Assam and work the marshy lands into suitable agricultural plots. The availability of land, the pressure of population in East Bengal and encouragement by politicians like Sir Sadullah led to an increasing influx of peasants from East



The aftermath of the Nellie massacre: when the movement turned violent

Bengal. Even after Independence this influx into rural Assam continued and over the years the easy-going local peasants resentfully watched the hardworking East Bengali immigrants prosper at what they felt was their expense.

The Assamese landlord who had once welcomed the Muslim peasant to work on his land, is today increasingly apprehensive of the immigrants. The poorer local peasants are today joining forces with the landlords in the fear of being overrun by the immigrants. With land becoming more and more scarce and the once reasonably well-to-do local peasants feeling the pinch of rising prices, resentment against the immigrants had been building up to an all time high.

Thus, when the AASU-AAGSP call to throw out the foreign nationals from the land was given, it found a ready echo in the hearts of the peasantry. The Assamese peasant who is as emotional as his urban cousin, responded enthusiastically to the agitation programmes. In fact, it is in the rural areas where the villager was aroused, that the worst attacks on the minorities took place.

Much of the influx of Muslim immigrants into Assam till the late Sixties was done under the protection of Assamese political leaders and bureaucrats. To the Congress ministers of those days, helping the immigrant Muslim to settle in Assam paid rich dividends, as they formed a vote bank for the party. Large numbers of Assamese officials helped the Bengali peasants to settle in the land for a small fee. Today, these very people who are now retired government servants, are staunch supporters of the agitation and blame the politicians for selling their land to foreigners. The Congress politicians, dependent as they were on the Muslim vote bank, made it a point to get them registered as voters and as a consequence the electoral rolls are today replete with names of alleged foreign nationals, though by virtue of living here for generations most of these people have become Indian citizens. The people of Assam also felt that with the entry of immigrant Muslims into the voters' lists, the political power in the state was gradually slipping out of the hands of the traditional Brahmins and upper castes.

Thus, the Assam agitation started at a time when the people were slowly feeling the pinch of a backward economy in a state where development had been ignored. The movement leaders played on these latent fears of the common people, exaggerating much of them to untoward proportions and pointing out that the economic, cultural and political ills of the society was the result of the outsiders' domination. The common man too found a willing scapegoat to account for his declining fortunes. A strong regional bias was built up in the state against outsiders, especially the Bengali Hindus, and for the first time also against the immigrant Muslims. Mass hysteria was so well evoked that the simple Assamese villager felt that by killing the minorities, he was doing a patriotic act for his state. The agitation leaders were able to project themselves as new messiahs, ready to lead the people to a better future. However, today in the aftermath of the traumatic violent Assembly election and the flush of generous funds from the centre, much of the movement's potency has been lost. Despite the strong regional feelings still prevalent, it is doubtful if in the coming elections in Assam a regional party can ever gain a foothold in the state.

Seema Guha, Guwahati

Land of the Underground

Insurgency continues to stalk Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura but peace may return to Mizoram

ON 16 February, one of the numerous army vehicles which criss-cross the hillroads of the north east, was passing through the deserted Chassad Kangapt Road, a little more than ten kms from the Burma border, when suddenly 13 unsuspecting armymen on it came under extremist fire from three directions. All 13 armymen, including a junior commissioned officer, were killed. One light machine gun, three sten carbines and nine self-loading rifles were taken from the security men before the attackers dispersed into the hills. Later they were identified as members of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) a pro-Beijing Naga extremist organisation, one of the many ethnic terrorist groups operating in the north-east.

Except Meghalaya and Arunachal this is a familiar scene. In the rest of the north eastern states various tribal and radical organisations have been active. Ambushes on security men, bank hold-ups and gunning down of class enemies have become routine occurrences, especially in Manipur. Today the older insurgent groups like Z.A. Phizo's Federal Nagas and Laldenga's Mizo National Front (MNF) are no longer active. Today Phizo's revolutionary government in exile in Burma is a more or less scattered and spent force not too actively concerned with events in Nagaland; while, with Laldenga ready to begin negotiations with New Delhi, there has been a lull in insurgent operations in Mizoram. Younger groups like the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur, the National Socialistic Council of Nagaland and the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) are today holding centre stage. However, despite the present lull in insurgent activity in Mizoram, the MNF is continuing to provide aid to the TNV and help train the Tripuris in guerrilla tactics.

The TNV, an extremist tribal organisation bent on liberating Tripura from the clutches of "outsiders," in this case the Bengali refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan, has been consistently supported by the MNF as a result of the excellent relationship the TNV leader, Bijoy Hrankhal, enjoys with the Mizos. Hrankhal, a Christian, had come in close contact with the MNF leaders while studying in a Catholic institution in Shillong. Thus when he began thinking in terms of organising an underground movement he realised that he could go for advice and assistance to the Mizo Christian underground. Bijoy Hrankhal realised that without an armed struggle he could not not free his fellow tribals from exploitation at the hands of the plainsmen. Tripura, which had originally been a tribal kingdom ruled by tribal *rajas*, had gradually been flooded by plainsmen from the adjoining erstwhile East Pakistan. Today Bengalis, who constitute nearly seventy per cent of the population, are gradually dispossessing the tribals of their land and driving them deeper into the interiors. When

Hrankhal asked for help the MNF was ready to oblige the TNV, especially since both groups were bent on ultimate secession and considered the Indian government to be their common enemy.

Paradoxically the tribals who had initially formed the first CPI(M) bases in Tripura turned towards the TNV. While many of the older tribals remained sympathetic to the CPI(M), the younger generation, many of whom had benefited from missionary education, felt that the CPI(M), which had by now extended its influence over the Bengali settlers, no longer had the interest of the original inhabitants at heart.

At the moment, the TNV has been conducting hit-and-run raids on unsuspecting security personnel and non-tribals of the state from their bases across the border. In the first week of April, eight CRPF men were ambushed and killed in a daring attack by TNV extremists, in Tripura's troubled north district. Since then, though minor incidents have been continuing no major incident has occurred. However, with the TNV making easy escapes to their hideout across the border, terrorist attacks are expected to continue.

The CPI(M) government of Nripen Chakravarty has been assiduously trying to win over sections of the tribals who have been alienated from the party. As a first step towards allaying the suspicions of the tribals, the state government passed the Autonomous District Council Bill in the Assembly to ensure that tribal belts and blocks would be directly administered by the elected tribal representatives. This has since been passed in Parliament. The Marxist government has also been wooing the extremists and trying to bring them back to the mainstream with generous offers of financial assistance. Mr Chakravarty, with the help of tribal party leaders, has been in constant touch with extremist elements who wish to return from the cold. Paramilitary forces in charge of combating the TNV are, in private, critical of the state government's soft stand on the extremists. The Tripura chief minister is however convinced that his method of cajoling and trying to convert tribals to the Marxist ideology would in the long run be more efficient in controlling secessionism than the strong arm tactics of the security forces. Mr Chakravarty asserts that the army and CRPF's operations in other north eastern states have convinced him that an understanding attitude would prevent the large-scale alienation of the local population which has occurred in the other states. Despite the chief



Binanda Jamatiya (left) surrenders to the authorities

minister's attempts to win over the tribals, TNV activities from across the border continue for the present, with or without connivance of the local villagers. The state government hopes that once the centre arrives at a settlement with Laldenga, New Delhi can persuade the MNF to stop giving all-out support to the TNV.

The NSCN operation in the last one year has been confined more to the Naga dominated Ukhrul district of Manipur than to Nagaland. The NSCN headquarters is in the loosely administered jungles on the Burmese side of the international border. It also has a strong foothold in the Naga dominated Ukhrul district of Manipur. The NSCN is a relatively new pro-left insurgent group which was made up of radical young elements disillusioned with the Federal Nagas led by the aging leader in exile, Mr Z.A. Phizo. The NSCN leaders, Isacc Swu and Muivah who belong to the Sema and Thankul Naga tribes respectively, had initially turned to the Chinese for help and had been convinced by the Chinese leaders that unless armed struggle had a powerful ideological content it would remain as futile as the earlier Naga insurrection led by Phizo.

The NSCN is a cohesive ideologically committed group attempting to stregthen the various extremist organisations of the north east by taking a leading role in attempting to bring them together under one umbrella. Various insurgent groups who try to contact the Chinese for arms and training in guerrilla warfare, are often directed by Beijing to approach the NSCN. The NSCN has been training members of the ULFA, the Assam-based latest addition to the extremist list of the north east. The NSCN has also been in contact with the leadership of Manipur. It has been responsible for a number of political killings in Manipur. Ukhrul, the most powerful NSCN stronghold inside Indian territory, has witnessed a number of brutal killings of politicians of the district.

Despite being disciplined and well organised, the NSCN following is generally confined to the Semas, Thankuls and other smaller clans settled in the border areas of the state. The NSCN is unlikely to receive support from the majority of the Nagas who, being staunch Christians, are still suspicious of the NSCN for its links with communist China.

The PLA, one of the most dreaded and committed of the north-east terrorist groups seems to have passed its days of glory, with its once charismatic leader Bisheswar Singh contesting the Assembly elections Unlike the other terrorist groups of the region secession from the Indian Union is not the aim of the PLA. The PLA manifesto has made it plain that it is waging a war against the "Delhi bandit" with the hope of finally liberating the entire nation from its vested bourgeoise class. With the death of most of the front ranking PLA leaders like Kunjebehari, the capture of important leaders like Samba and the surrender of large numbers of disillusioned cadres to the authorities the PLA has curtailed its activities for the last three years. The present PLA leader in the absence of Bisheswar is Temba Singh, the last of the original band which went to Lhasa to be trained by the Chinese.

Seema Guha, Guwahati

COVER STORY

Calcutta: Unemployment and Despair

Unemployment has grown with development

For the people of this spirited, yet much-maligned city, hardship has a permanent quality—especially for the thousands living on the social fringe, eking out an existence as jobless vagabonds and touts who often gravitate to crime. Throughout the history of Calcutta, discontent has endured—exploding in violent phases like the Naxalite movement which pursued an impossible dream. And the single most important factor behind the social unrest is, and has been, unemployment.

A city that has for ages sheltered and sustained a large migrant population from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and Bangladesh offers very little to the local Bengali youth. The result: a growing army of the unemployed. According to official records, in June 1983 the number of unemployed in West Bengal stood at 37 lakhs. In 1977, when the CPI(M)-led Left Front government came to power, it was only 14 lakhs. There was a 207.65 per cent increase in the number of registered job-seekers in the state between July 1977 and December 1983. The total employment generated in the organised sector during this period rose only by 1.26 per cent. According to an estimate of the latest figures, the number of jobless persons has increased threefold over the last seven years.

To add to the problem, employment in the public sector in the state shrank in 1984 While 8,606 vacancies were filled during 1983 in central, state and semi-government undertakings and local bodies, the number dropped to 6,950 in 1984. Even of the vacancies notified by the public sector, the percentage of persons absorbed in these posts fell from 42 to 40 over a year. Official records relating to employment opportunities during 1984 show that 3,421 vacancies were notified by the central government in the state. Against this, 1,859 vacancies were filled up. The vacancies filled up in 1983 stood at 5,994 and 1,960 respectively. The state government, for its part, filled up only 2,997 out of 7,817 posts in 1984. During 1983, the figures were 6,661 and 3,411 respectively. In the private sector, only 764 vacancies out of 6,554 notified were filled up in 1984. In 1983 only 567 jobs were offered against 4,088 vacancies.

An obvious result of frustration is protest. Today, unemployed young men and women have organised themselves into groups to articulate their demands—often violently. Recently, there was tension in Kurseong, near Darjeeling, when members of the Parbatya Beker Sangha held a demonstration outside the office of the local fire brigade to protest against the recruitment of 17 people from the plains. The SP and the subdivisional officer rushed to the spot to prevent any untoward incident. It was not before the demonstrators got an assurance from the deputy commissioner that only hill people would be given jobs in future that they finally dispersed. It was a fine example of how restive a peace-loving people can become if they are denied jobs. In another incident, 418 members of the West Bengal Unemployed Society including 15 women, courted arrest at Dacres Lane after the state labour minister refused to meet them. There also exists a "Sara Bangla Bekar Samiti" which fights for the cause of the jobless.

A demonstration by jobless youths



The protests have a good reason: unfair recruitment is rampant all over the state and merit is rarely rewarded. Many government organisations recruit persons who do not come through employment exchanges. And there is enough corruption in the recruitment for jobs. A member of Parliament was sometime ago accused of signing a large number of papers which were being used to give false certificates of residence to people in Durgapur for supporting claims forjobs. Prabir Sengupta, the minister of state for labour, told newsmen that a civil official who had detected offenders in some cases had not prosecuted them. And when the newsmen asked the minister why the MP in question had not been brought to book, he replied "It's not easy to prosecute an MP."

The irony of the situation is that despite the increased pace of development activities, the percentage of total workers in West Bengal has recorded a steady fall over the past two decades, according to the 1981 census. Calcutta, however, is an exception. But the availability of jobs is still far short of the demand. The fact is that although West Bengal gets the maximum bank credit from the public sector banks under the employment promotion programme, things are still at a sorry pass. Out of the total of Rs 106.09 crores given by the public sector banks as on 31 December 1978, the eastern region accounted for Rs 35.51 crores, with West Bengal topping the list with Rs 23.27 crores.

Not enough is being done to tackle the problem. According to the records of the West Bengal Industries Development Corporation (WBIDC), West Bengal has in the past one year or so been moving steadily towards sophisticated, capital-intensive industries. While this would undoubtedly ensure a modern industrial base for the state, it would at the same time seriously threaten about five million job-seekers. A list of 32 new industrial projects assisted by the WBIDC, including six expansion projects, reveals that with an aggregate capital outlay of over Rs 91 crores, these units have a job potential of less than 4,000 persons.

Nirmal Mitra, Calcutta

UP: Communalism Runs Deep



Brickbats strewn on a street in Moradabad, the scene of bloody rioting

Often it only needs a small, harmless pebble thrown across, on just a few words—communalism is a monster that is easy to provoke. More so in Uttar Pradesh where most incidents of communal rioting have taken place in the country since independence. In the beginning there were only a few centres—Kanpur, Aligarh and Varanasi. Then over the years, the communal virus spread across the state. Some old centres like Kanpur and Varanasi became less volatile, while new ones reared their ugly heads. But Aligarh held its ground as communal riots broke out repeatedly in the nations capital with all its gory, fractious trappings. Recurrent communal riots have wrecked the city's conscience, built walls of fear and suspicion and doomed life to a divided existence. Aligarh today, as it has been for sometime now, is a city permanently under siege.

Then there are the fresh flashpoints of communal tension—Meerut, Moradabad, Sambhal, Maunath Bhanjan, Bulandshar, Pahasu—where in the last five years communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims have taken place again and again. In most occasions, a small spark has ignited the riots.

There are several levels on which communal clashes have taken place in Uttar Pradesh in the last few years: between Shias and Sunnis and of late between Akalis and Nirankaris and Hindus and Sikhs. Kanpur, which had been spared Hindu-Muslim riots for a long time was beset by clashes between Akalis and Nirankaris in 1978. Eighteen people were killed in the violence then. Again, reflecting the mood in Punjab and Delhi, there were clashes between Hindus and Sikhs following the assasination of Mrs Indira Gandhi in November 1984. Since then, tension between the two communities has always been on its edge, threatening to overflow into violence. On the other hand, the state capital Lucknow's sorrow has been the volatile animosity between the Shia and Sunni populations of the city. There is threat of violence almost on every Muslim festival.

There is evidence in Lucknow; as in other places, of the foreign forces that come into play, as far as creating communal tension is concerned. The Shia and Sunni sects have built rival mosques named Saddam Hussain Masjid and Ayatollah Khomeini Masjid in different parts of the city and allegations are that they are funded by foreign agencies. Also having a stake in arousing communal passions are the local politicians and the entire state machinery as a whole. This is how the vote bank will remain intact. For others it is just a question of fanaticism. Officials and policemen have, on several occasions during such riots, been found wanting in impartial and secular thinking. Then there is ofcourse, the question of political power and elections. Such has been been the tendency built up over the years, that politics in the country, even though it professes to be secular, is anything but that. Elections are fought on the basis of religion and caste. And till such time when attitudes change, communalism will always live somewhere beneath the surface, ready to serve its mischievous masters. The state, though troubled by communalism, has also produced some of the most secular minds in the country. But it seems time has only buried their voices. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi of Kanpur was one such person. He was killed while trying to control a riot in the pre-independence days and his body was so badly mutilated by the rioters that people could only recognise him by his slippers. After that they forgot him and all that he stood for. Kanpur never even gave him a memorial or remembered his anniversary. And only a few years ago, when some people organised a programme in his memory and called a Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister to inaugurate it, the press was aghast to see that only a few dozen people had turned up to commemorate the martyred hero of secularism.

Sankarshan Thakur

Refugees to Humanity

The influx of Tamils from Sri Lanka has created social tension in Tamil Nadu

Time hangs heavy with the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who have been in Tamil Nadu for nearly three months now. If last year was the summer of torment, this year it is the summer of discontent as far as they are concerned. Living a rootless, desultory existence in an alien land can beappalling, and the refugees are anxiously awaiting their return to their homeland.

There is a total of 5,157 refugee families comprising 21,074 persons at present in Tamil Nadu. They have been dispersed into refugee camps in all the districts except Kanyakumari and Nilgiris. In the coastal areas they have been put up in the cyclone relief shelters and in the interiors they have been housed in wedding halls. So far the central government has spent Rs 1.3 crores on the refugees. Cash doles are given every fortnight as are subsidised rice at 57 paise per kg. An average-sized family gets about Rs 180 per fortnight. In other words, the centre has to spend Rs ten lakhs every fortnight on the refugees. According to the regulations, refugees are not provided with employment as they are not recognised as citizens of India. They have to subsist on the doles given by the government.

This correspondent toured a few refugee camps in the coastal areas to assess the mood of the refugees. The cyclone relief shelters are double-storeyed circular structures so as to offer least wind resistance in the event of a cyclone. The Tamil Nadu coast is vulnerable to cyclones and gales. Such shelters are built with a view to providing temporary accommodation for not more than a week. In each one of them about 200 Tamil refugees have been accommodated for nearly four months at a stretch. The shelters are relatively clean when one bears in mind that 200 people are crammed in them.

All the refugees had fled from Sri Lanka to escape oppression, persecution and terror. At that time, anything seemed better than the living conditions in their homeland. Simeon (42) had a tragic story to recount. He is a supplier of fish to the government corporation in Pesalai, a village inhabited mostly by fishermen. What led him to believe that he had no future in his homeland was the way his 30-year-old cousin, Pathi died. Early in the morning a couple of armymen raided his house, dragged out Pathi who was hiding in the bathroom and shot him dead. His finger was chopped off and the gold ring taken away by the marauders. A few days later, Simeon's son disappeared. He does not know where his son has gone. Obviously the boy must have joined one of the militant groups.

But in Madras there is no threat to their life. They are free but far from happy. The fault lies not with the state or the central government; in fact the state government officials have done a commendable job in housing the refugees. Talking to the refugees this correspondent found that they had four major complaints. Firstly, the money given to them was insufficient Secondly, the climate does not suit the Tamils from Sri Lanka. They find Madras too hot and humid and a number of the children are suffering from skin diseases. Thirdly, the refugees are increasingly finding it difficult to spend their time, since they do not have any work to do. Past experience has shown that invariably refugee camps degenerate into criminal dens. Many of the camps become brothels—the wives and daughters are often forced into the flesh trade by their menfolk to supplement the income. The men start drinking heavily and often drunken brawls break out. Gambling and smuggling are also common features. But this time the authorities are extremely vigilant.



Refugees on their way to a camp

The fourth complaint which a few refugees had was the dispersal of their family members. In a number of instances the families crossed over to India in stages. As a result they are now in different camps in different parts of the state. Some families have approached the authorities for help but the overworked officials have not been attaching much importance to this problem.

In a number of the camps there were posters of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) headed by Sri Sabarathnam. According to the refugees some people had come down from TELO and assured the refugees that the situation in Sri Lanka would soon improve and they would be able to return soon to 'Eelam.' In some camps members of the Eelam Revolution Organisation (ERO) also came and spoke to the refugees. Some of the refugees confided that a number of young refugee boys went away with the EROS and TELO activists.

All the refugees, without a single exception concurred that they wanted to return to their homeland. Tamil Nadu is a temporary sanctuary but their future eventually lies in returning to their homeland. They do not expect to see their house and land to remain intact but the yearning to get back to familiar surroundings is puissant. They firmly believe that India is in a position to help restore normalcy in their homeland. They are also hoping that, should their stay in Tamil Nadu prove to be long drawn, they will be given employment by the Indian government. So you have a person like Arulanandam repairing his fishing net. He figures that if he does not return to his homeland to pick up the threads of his livelihood he will be able to do so in Tamil Nadu soon. But here the Indian government just cannot oblige at this juncture, however sympathetic they are, unless they take a policy decision on this matter like in the case of the Tibetan refugees; the government authorities expect them to return to their homeland. The government on its part wishes to take no chance and has therefore prepared detailed documentation to trace each and every refugee at the time of sending them back

Anita Pratap, Madras

SPECIAL REPORT

Why Vasantrao Patil Resigned

The reason, apparently, was his 'humiliation' by the centre. But it was a clever ploy against Sharad Pawar

Former chief minister Vasantdada Patil's resignation was unexpected. His switch from a posture of confrontation with the high command to that of a person who has thrown in the towel when the chips are down, is equally intriguing. But his game with the high command is not over with his resignation. According to political observers it has only begun; he was not only given a say in the choice of chief minister Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar, but the ministers he wanted retained were also kept; his favourites were promoted and those he wanted out were dropped unceremoniously.



Mukesh Parpiani

Vasantdada Patil

Dada's handiwork is interesting. Vilasrao Deshmukh, who was in his cabinet, was dropped as he was the nominee of the union home minister S.B. Chavan. Anil Warhade was a nominee of the MP, Mrs Usha Chaudhari, who is one of the few Marathas trusted by the high command. So he was dropped. Shivaji Rao Moghe, is another Maratha nominee and a close confidant of union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who owed his victory to him. He belongs to the Aandh Adivasi caste which dominated the Washim constituency and has also been excluded.

Among those included are Mrs Damayanti Deshbhratar who is from Nagpur and rabidly opposed to Nasikrao Tirpude and Saroj Khaparde; Gangadhar Kanturkar, a Deshmukh from Nanded who is anti S.B. Chavan and Ram Meghe from Amravati, who is a foe of Usha Chaudhari, and union minister Vasant Sathe. Ramchandra Patil is from Osmanabad and is against union minister Shivraj Patil.

Justifying Dada's political manoeuvrings, a close confidant of his said, "Why should he not have his way? The central government has six ministers from Maharashtra—S.B. Chavan, V.P. Sathe, Vithalrao Gadgil, Narasimha Rao, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Shivraj Patil, who are all anti – Dada. All, except one, are non-Marathas. Then the MPCC(I) is headed by Prabha Rao who belongs to the Tirpude group. The centre by its treatment to Dada has humiliated Maratha pride and so Nilangekar's cabinet has the largest representation of Marathas than ever before. Nine of the 12 cabinet ministers are Marathas and three former ministers of state who have been promoted are also Marathas."

But anti-Dada forces believe this ministry will not last long. Dada has won the first round. Rajiv Gandhi gave in to him because on the eve of his important foreign visits he did not want any political upheaval in Maharashtra. In good time, Dada's power over legislators, ministers and the party as a whole will diminish, they say, because the Congress practice has been to cling to the chair and not to the person.

Among those who were promoted are Anantrao Totpe who represents Pune (rural). His elevation is thus expected to minimise Sharad Pawar's hold there. Shivajirao Deshmukh from Sangli is a Dada man.

The CM-in-waiting?

Sharad Pawar, the Congress(S) leader, is probably one of the most destabilising factors in the state's politics. Political circles here which are unable to believe that former CM Vasantdada Patil resigned for purely emotional reasons, namely continuous humiliation by Rajiv Gandhi and the caucus, interpret Dada's move as one to scuttle the smooth entry of Sharad Pawar into the party. That Sharad Pawar will join the Congress(I) is now being accepted by most of his partymen, barring a few who owe allegiance to the Shetkari Sanghatana. Pawar's men, of course, do not believe or even expect that Sharad Pawar will get the chief ministership the day after he walks into the party. They cite the instance of a senior person like Y. B. Chavan who had to wait patiently for some position, or the younger A. K. Antony who had to wait two years before being made AICC(I) secretary.

It will, however, be interesting to see what excuse or cover Sharad Pawar gives for entering the Congress(I). He fought on the Progressive Democratic Front plank and won primarily on the slogan of "Maharashtra *asmita*." In Bombay the slogan of "*Marathi mansa cha asmita*" is very much in the air. Dada is being hailed as the symbol of this "asmita." The question is how will Sharad Pawar enter the party under these circumstances? Has Dada really queered the pitch and spiked his ambition again? Arun Mehta, a close confidant of Sharad Pawar, said, "We all know the colour of the self-respect of Dada. He was the one who begged to be made chief minister for a day. He realised that if Sharad Pawar comes into the Congress it would be at his (Dada's) cost. So he resigned. He will soon be forgotten."



Sharad Pawar

If Sharad Pawar was the catalyst for Dada's resignation, he is expected to be the cause of the possible break-up of the Progressive Democratic Front. Of course, Sharad Pawar saw to it that theFront was not formalised during the last Assembly election, under the pretext of wanting to study whether it would attract the provisions of the anti-defection law. The Janata and PWP have all but disowned him. Shetkari Sanghatana leader Sharad Joshi has threatened that they will have agitations against Sharad Pawar wherever he goes in Maharashtra if he defects to the Congress(I). Congressmen in the ruling party are understandably united on one issue, that while they welcome him into the party they will not permit him to become CM. However, their views can be discounted because the high command has its way of imposing "their man." Scores of legislators, for instance, confess privately that they just don't know how and when Shivajirao Nilangekar was elected "unanimously."

Which leaves one more exciting option for Sharad Pawar—forming a broad front with Dada, Tirpude and all other groups hurt by the high command's reckless political manoeuvres of playing one section against another. Politics is a game of probabilities and since Sharad Pawar's description of Congress(I) culture is vague, he can form a non-Congress(I) government, and call it a 'true' Congress government.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

Vijaysinh Mohite Patil, though not known to be a man of calibre, was taken into the ministry to neutralise the influence of Sushil Kumar Shinde who has been playing a double game in trying to woo Sharad Pawar.

Vasantdada Patil was shrewd enough to make full use of the political compulsions that cramped the high command's style of functioning. It looks like they played into his hands deliberately and Dada made as much political capital out of the situation as he could.

When political observers say that the game has only just begun, it means that in the days to come, the high command will do its best to wean away Dada's so-called followers from his camp while Dada himself will try to see that his team gets stronger.

Dada has several options before him. Ever since Sharad Pawar's famous speech on Congress culture, Dada, a clever political strategist,



Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar

realised that Sharad Pawar was trying to stage a comeback and that he would be welcomed. Dada knew that he would be at a disadvantage. He was peeved because he was not even consulted. Dada also knew that he had burnt all his bridges with the high command. His complaint that he was being humiliated was not a figment of imagination. As even Rajiv Gandhi's admirers say, he should not have called Dada to Delhi if he did not intend to see him. G.K. Moopanar, the AICC(I) observer, said that Dada was asked to wait for a day. But the new Governor of Maharashtra was scheduled to land in Bombay the next day and the former CM wanted

'Observers' or Power-brokers?

Everytime there is a political crisis in Maharashtra, among the first people to arrive in the city of Bombay are the so-called AICC(I) observers "in-charge" of Maharashtra. "In-charge" is a nebulous term fraught with hidden dangers and traps for the state. For instance G. K. Moopanar and union minister P. Shiv Shanker were the observers. What do they really know about Maharashtra? Mr Moopanar comes here only a day after the crisis sets in and then flies in and out of the city or sometimes stays put for three days, as in this latest instance, to oversee the changeover from Vasantdada Patil to Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar. The only other occasion on which Mr Moopanar comes to Bombay is to speak allegedly on behalf of the city's most notorious underworld don called Varadarajan Mudaliar who is now in Nasik jail, detained under the National Security Act. Both of them are Tamilians. If until now Varadarajan has stayed out of the clutches of the law, it is largely due to the "good offices" of Mr Moopanar and the influence he wields over successive chief ministers whom he "helps"

And how are chief ministers chosen? In the case of Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar, one sat for hours at the state guest house, "Sahyadri", where the so-called observers were interviewing legislators to assess their views on who should be the next chief minister. The MLAs went in and came out in barely a minute; yet Mr Moopanar told a press conference later that he had discussed issues with them. What discussions can one have in a minute?

In fact, young veterans in the Congress(I) recall the earlier days when an observer in charge of Maharashtra had to go from district to district and meet representatives of the party at all levels to try and understand the issues and problems involved. Some workers even wonder, if Maharashtra is not getting a raw deal from the centre, and whether these so-called observers ever give the Prime Minister a correct picture of what is happening in the state. The observers act as middlemen between the state chief ministers and the Prime Minister. Rajiv Gandhi, in particular, has had no time to meet representatives of the state, as several young Congress workers have been complaining. His understanding of Maharashtra would necessarily be through these observers who know practically nothing about the state. Yet these observers manage to bully chief ministers. They have their favourites in the state. Mr Moopanar, for instance, is said to be "patronised" by Murli Deora, the BRCC(I) chief and the MLC-in-waiting Moti Daryanani, who look after all his needs in Bombay. In the same way, the "needs" of Sitaram Kesari and others too are looked after by other rich people, it is alleged.

In the days of Sanjay Gandhi, it is said that Youth Congress office-bearers used to travel throughout the state and knew workers from every district. But today besides Bombay and perhaps Pune, the youth leaders are ignorant of the problems of the party in vast areas of the state. There are various reports about money allegedly changing hands between the observers and state leaders to help them remain in power. There are reports that some years ago an observer became an enemy of a certain former chief minister because not enough money was being put into his pockets.

Rajiv Gandhi will have to look into this institution of "observers" if the situation between the high command and the state governments is not to deteriorate. The state governments also seem to depend entirely on the observers for their stability because wrong decisions taken by them would harm the interests of the state. How, for instance, did the same high command which found Shivajirao Nilangekar unfit for being given an Assembly ticket now find him suitable to rule the state? Who connived with Dada, and why, to keep Nilangekar out? Answers to these questions would surely reveal the persons and policies that are wrecking the political stability of the party and the state.

In the old days it is said that M. L. Fotedar, R. K. Dhawan and Arun Nehru used to build channels of influence between themselves and various state leaders in order to bolster their images in the Prime Minister's eyes.

Olga Tellis, Bombay



G.K. Moopanar (left), AICC(I) general secretary, releasing the Assembly Election Manifesto along with Srikant Verma (right) at the AICC office in New Delhi in February

Dada's Last Days in Office

The 83-day stint as chief minister for the fourth time was Vasantdada Patil's shortest. It was marked by controversy almost from the first day. He had suggested the name of Dr W. Sherekar, Marathi-speaking minister from Bombay, but the high command dropped his name. Dada explained the omission as a "clerical error" and said it would soon be rectified.

Then came the municipal corporation elections during which he was in confrontation with Murli Deora, the BRCC(I) president, who had made people with police records candidates. When Dada was asked about it he said "people will not vote for them." When the Shiv Sena won the corporation elections in Bombay with a thumping majority and began talking of a cut-off year to stop the influx of immigrants into Bombay, the chief minister got involved in a controversy in Delhi on 6 May when he said that there would have to be some cut-off year and something had to be done about the overcrowding in Bombay.

Matters between him and the high command worsened over issues like the border row where also Dada made it known privately that he was prepared to resign on the issue. Things came to a head by May. Here is an account of the last few days of Dada in office:

•20 May: Dada went to Delhi to try and get the five-member list of the Governor's nominees to the Legislative Council changed. But he was told that it would not be changed and the names of Mr Tirpude and others would be left.

•22 May: Dada, in reply to a question about the functioning of the party, told reporters that there was a need to discuss whether one person should hold both the post of Prime Minister and party president.

•24 May: Dada claimed, "I was quoted out of context" and that it was only party workers who were discussing the issue.

•25 May: Dada is likely to be summoned to Delhi by Rajiv Gandhi to explain his observations.

•27 May: Dada repeated at a meeting in Pune that the party functions only during elections. He said, otherwise, one witnesses a lock on the taluka office of the Congress committee. And there was no one even to pick up the phone. He said, even when workers met him, they only had tales of bickering to tell.

•28 May: Rajiv Gandhi reportedly rang up Vasantdada Patil and asked him to come to New Delhi. There was speculation that Dada would be taken to task for his pronouncements on his now famous "one-person-one-post" observation.

•29 May: Mrs Prabha Rao, who belongs to the anti-Dada faction, was made MPCC(I) chief, displacing the inefficient Prof. Kamble. The appointment was made by Rajiv Gandhi, without the knowledge or consent of the chief minister Vasantdada Patil.

•30 May: The CM returned to Bombay without meeting Rajiv Gandhi. He told friends that he was not interested in continuing, and said he had nothing to say.

•31 May: The chief minister decided to resign on 1 June unless Rajiv Gandhi came up with a peace formula during his visit to Bombay the next day.

•1 June: Dada told friends in the morning to wait for 24 hours. There was tension at Varsha as everyone waited for Dada to return after seeing Rajiv Gandhi off at Santa Cruz airport. The AICC(I) observers were bargaining with him, making all kinds of offers to get him to withdraw his resignation. They promised to return around 10.30 pm. After they returned, Dada called for his car to take him to Raj Bhavan. He had written out his resignation letter in Marathi, in his own handwriting—as he told waiting reporters. He was back by 11.15 pm. When reporters asked him the outcome, he handed over to one of them, Mr Sukrut Khandekar of *Kesari*, the Governor's letter typed in English, accepting his resignation with "regret." Dada asked the journalist to read it aloud in English.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

to be there to receive him. Besides, as an old Congressman, Dada was familiar with the delaying tactics of the high command. When they wanted a chief minister out, they would keep him waiting. For instance, the late V. P. Naik was kept waiting for five days before he could meet the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; Siddhartha Shankar Ray was kept waiting for seven days, and H.N. Bahuguna, for ten days. Dada was not going to let such a thing happen to him.

He had built up a smoke-screen of humiliation meted out to him, which matched the mood in Bombay at least, if not the whole of Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena *pramukh* Bal Thackeray has already come out with an editorial saying that Dada is the true symbol of Maharashtra's self-respect. However, the converse is also true—that Dada has eaten so much humble pie at the hands of the centre, that is the late Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, that he is probably suffering from political indigestion. His threats to resign had become a joke because he always swallowed them, whether it was in the appointment of the then MPCC(I) president Prof. S. M. I. Aseer or the non-appointment of a Marathi-speaking minister from Bombay. So much so that when he threatened to resign last month, if Mrs Prabha Rao's appointment as MPCC(I) president was confirmed, he was not taken seriously.

The Patil - Nilangekar ministry promises to be a shaky one for two reasons. It represents only one group in the Congress, namely the Dada group. All other groups have been deliberately hurt politically, or ignored. There is no alternative left but for those left out to fight for their survival and this is when the political tremors will start. Several legislators are already unhappy as is evident from the talk in the crowded MLAs' hostel. The new chief minister, like all his predecessors, is holding out the carrot of appointment of some ten new ministers in the near future. But they all know that this hardly ever materialises.

Mr Patil - Nilangekar is an able administrator, having held various portfolios from dairy to irrigation and cooperation ever since the time of V.P. Naik. But he starts with a handicap of being a captive of his immediate predecessor. He was appointed on a political turnabout, having been considered unsuitable to get an Assembly ticket in March and then being made a chief minister in June seems funnier than the March Hare's tea-party. His job will be toughest because not only will he have to contend with malcontents in his own party, but he will have powerful opponents outside his party like Sharad Pawar and A.R. Antulay.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

BORDER DISPUTES

When Policemen Killed Policemen

Thirty-one die in clashes between Assam Police and Nagaland Armed Police

The unprecedented "police war" along the sensitive Assam-Nagaland border area in the Merapani sector of the Golaghat subdivision of Jorhat district, has officially taken a toll of 31 lives, with the recovery of 13 more bodies. In the full scale "mini-war," the Nagaland police forces using mortars, petrol bombs and medium machine guns completely outnumbered the Assam Armed Police and "won" a decisive victory pushing deep into Assamese territory and occupying the Merapani police station. After the ceasefire was announced on Thursday and the two governments ordered their forces to go back to their original positions, the Nagaland Armed Police burnt down the Merapani police station before leaving the area. The Assam Rifles have taken control of the area and an uneasy truce now prevails.

Despite the ceasefire announced by Hiteswar Saika and S. C. Jamir, the chief ministers of Assam and Nagaland respectively, at the insistence of the home ministry, the Nagaland forces are helping civilians in their depredatory missions across the disputed border. The Assamese villages in Joypur, Rattanpur, Bheluguri and Dayalpur in the Merapani sector remain under attack. According to the minister of state for forests Mr D. N. Rajkhowa, 50,000 villagers living along the Merapani sector have fled in terror from their homes. Fifteen relief camps at Golaghat and Furkating are accommodating the refugees.

Tension along the 420-kilometre Assam-Nagaland border has been building up since the end of April. On 20 April, the Wokha district authorities in Nagaland erected a barbed wire fencing with concrete posts and the Nagaland Veterinary Centre at Merapani encroached into Assamese territory. The Assam police protested,and seized the fencing material lying on the Assamese side of the border The Nagaland Armed Police (NAP) force then overran the Merapani police station. Since then, skirmishes have been continuing. The NAP then killed an Assamese villager of Dayalpur under the Merapani police station. On 1 and 2 June, the village of Ratanpur was attacked by the NAP and a number of civilians were injured in the firing. This was followed by the unprovoked attack on 4 and 5 June by the NAP and finally the exchange of fire between the two forces

Skirmishes along the border have been frequent In January 1979, armed Naga villagers with the help of the Nagaland Armed Police launched a midnight attack on unsuspecting settlers of Chunnajan in the Sarupathar area of Golagha killing more than 60 people including women and children. Most of the dead were tribals and Nepalis settled in the cleared reserve forests of the area. Since then, the area has never been free of tension

Like Meghalaya and Mizoram, Nagaland was once a part of Assam. Nagaland became a separate state in 1963 when the Naga Hills district was demarcated by a notification issued by the British in 1925. Since then, the demarcating line fixed by the 1925 notification has been accepted. However, after independence,the Nagas had declared a number of times that they were not happy with the British line of demarcation. After Nagaland became a full fledged state, the state government of Nagaland once again brought the boundary question to the notice of the centre. The home ministry then appointed the Sunderam Commission to go over the boundary disputes. The commission submitted its report in 1976 and against Nagaland's claim of 4,000 square metres of Assam's territory, it awarded just 300 square meters as Nagaland had based its claims on it's right of occupation during the pre-British period. The Sunderam Commission also suggested that Dimapur, the largest commercial town in Nagaland should be given to Assam. None of the recommendations of the Sunderam Commision have been followed as the then Nagaland chief minister Mr Vizol had openly declared that the commission's report was not acceptable to Nagaland.

After the 1979 incident, a *status quo* had more or less been maintained with occasional violations mostly by the NAP. The Assam government has not been conciliatory towards the Nagas and has restrained the Assam Police from taking the initiative against the NAP. The two important English dailies of Guwahati, *The Assam Tribune* and *The Sentinel* lashed out at the Assam government criticising its weakeness and vacillation. They felt that the government was not strong enough to guard the life and property of its citizens.

Much of the Naga thrust into Assam is because of the rich forest reserves which fall within the state's boundary. With their own forest resources depleted because of the high consumption of plywood in the saw mills of the state, the businessmen, and the rich contractors have been largely responsible for keeping the border issue alive and trying to exploit Assam's forest reserves.

Seema Guha, Guwahati



Hiteswar Saikia



S.C. Jamir

MRS GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

Progress in the Trial

The prosecution identifies five eyewitnesses

The recording of evidence in the Indira Gandhi murder case began on 6 June. The special judge, Mahesh Chandra dismissed the petition of Kehar Singh, one of the accused, for holding the committal proceedings in an open court. Turning down the plea for an open court trial, which had taken up a week of proceedings, the special judge in his order, stated: "What makes a proper court is a qualified and an impartial judge, a competent defence counsel and a fair opportunity of defence.The rest is a matter of form only." The 12-page order assured that the holding of trial proceedings inside the jail would not have any "demoralising effect on the witnesses or affect their veracity and truthfulness."

The three accused, Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh, seated as usual inside the bullet-proof glass enclosure in the makeshift courtroom listened attentively as the chief public prosecutor, K. L. Arora, named them as the murderers of Indira Gandhi. Separate charges against them were read out by the public prosecutor and details of evidence, which had been missing from the chargesheet, were presented before the court.

Of the 144 witnesses mentioned in the chargesheet, the prosecution has now identified five persons who were present at the spot on the morning of 31 October. The five eye-witnesses to the assassination are Narain Singh, head constable in the Prime Minister's security, Lawang Sherpa, storekeeper at the PM's house, ASI Rameshwar Dayal who also received bullet injuries during the shoot-out, Nathu Ram, personal attendant of the Prime Minister and R. K. Dhawan, special assistant to Indira Gandhi. Three other eye-witnesses who saw the accused persons throw up their hands in surrender after shooting the Prime Minister are Dinesh Kumar Bhatt who was Mrs Gandhi's personal security officer, Makhanlal Fotedar, political adviser to the Congress president and sub-inspector Ramji Lal.

Evidence against the accused persons was recorded on 6 June when the contents of a diary seized from the house of Balbir Singh, a sub-inspector in the late PM's house, were produced. Balbir Singh's diary, according to the prosecutor, gives a month-by-month description of the conspiracy hatched by the three accused persons and the events leading to the assassination. The diary's contents will form the core of the arguments against him. The entry that Balbir Singh had made in the diary after the army action in the Golden Temple in June 1984, reads: "I felt like killing. But I was put on duty outside 1, Safdarjung Road, residence of Mrs Gandhi." In July, Balbir Singh had met prosecution witness Dalip Singh, who is presently detained under the National Security Act. Balbir Singh's meeting with Satwant Singh, days before the assassination is also mentioned in the diary. The prosecutor told the court about another witness account which stated that Balbir Singh had earlier claimed he would kill Mrs Gandhi if Rs 14-15 lakhs was given to his family after the assassination. Besides evidence against Balbir Singh, details of other evidence against Kehar Singh and Satwant Singh, the gold *kara* and gold ring belonging to Beant Singh which had been recovered from the residence of Kehar Singh, the statement of Bimal Khalsa, widow of Beant Singh and details of the *amrit chakhana* ceremony attended by Kehar Singh and Beant Singh, were placed before the court.

Arguments were taken up by the defence counsel, the following day. P. N Lekhi, counsel for Satwant Singh alleged that the prosecution was hiding the "real identity of the persons responsible for the political murder." Lekhi claimed during his long argument that "the real assassins" of the late Prime Minister were "still roaming free." During the course of arguments, Lekhi raised many questions: Did Satwant Singh shoot Indira Gandhi? Did he shoot in conspiracy with others (accused) and did Mrs Gandhi die of the bullets fired by Satwant Singh? He also demanded to know why Sonia Gandhi, who had been present at the spot of the assassination and who had taken Mrs Gandhi to the hospital, was not named as an eye-witness in the case. The defence counsel also challenged the authenticity of the chargesheet and the post-mortem report

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

CRIME

The Godfather: Arrested

Varadarajan Mudaliar is imprisoned

In the annals of Bombay's crime history, 5 June 1985 will be remembered as the day when the don of the city's underworld was arrested in Madras by a Bombay police inspector after a prolonged war on organised crime. It was difficult to impris-



Varadarajan Mudaliar

on a man as rich and powerful as Varadarajan, who had numerous "associates" among politicians, policemen and even journalists. But it happened, proving the DCP. zone IV, Y.C. Pawar's assertion that the law would eventually win. Before Mudaliar was arrested and imprisoned in Nasik central jail, a proclamation by a city metropolitan court stated that his property would be attached if he failed to surrender to the police within a month of its declaration. The court order was put up in the railway station and the office of the Bombay Tamilar Peervai, an organisation which he founded in his domain—Matunga.

The police were instructed to "clean up" the city, infested with warring underworld figures. The then police commissioner J.F. Ribeiro signed the order for the detention of 26 of the city's godfathers on 29 April. Among them were Varadarajan Mudaliar and his cohorts, Mohinder Singh Vig alias Soma, Khaja also known as Thomas

Kurien and Darshan Kumar Dhall alias Tillu. The police also arrested Karim Lala, a big name in Bombay's underworld under the National Security Act, and Mudaliar's aides demonstrating that it meant business. The Dholakia brothers, Arvind and Mahesh also surrendered when the question of attaching the property of absconders arose. But Mudaliar refused to surface and was reported to be in Delhi and then in Madras, where he was finally caught.

The threat to attach his property could not scare Mudaliar who has always managed to find a legal loophole. He has never been jailed except during the Emergency. Mudaliar filed an application for anticipatory bail under Section 438 of the CRPC in the Madras High Court, stating that he was engaged in film production. His plea was dismissed by Justice David Annousami and Mudaliar was arrested by the Matunga police, who brought him back to Bombay, before sending him on to Nasik central jail.

From his humble origins, Varadarajan became one of Bombay's most powerful men. His functions were attended by eminent people, and he organised *padayatras* by top politicians. Finally he emerged as a media figure, hailed by the press as the godfather of Bombay. He has made and marred the fortunes of local politicians. His Ganesh festivals and contributions to charity are well known. He even supported the Sri Lankan Tamil liberation movement and donated Rs 25,000 to the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

However, the scenario changed quickly. Changes were being made in the home department after a number of decisions by officials allegedly favouring the mafia led to disagreements with the police. Bombay's former municipal commissioner B.G. Deshmukh took over as chief secretary, dismissing home secretary B.K. Chowgule's aspirations for the post.

What had hitherto been an isolated battle by DCPs, with Y.C. Pawar leading the crime-busters, became an organised move. Pawar's efforts to eradicate crime led to a unique counter-attack, with three cases filed against him by the mafia. The harassed policeman has been given a special advocate now. All the moves suggest that the don's fortunes have declined.

Varadarajan came to Bombay in the early sixties, and began his career as an illicit liquor distiller starting on the payroll of Chella Muthu, a small-time hood. Gradually, he began mediating between the illiterate Tamils and the police, becoming a spokesman for the former. By the Seventies, his push carts and petty distilleries had given way to an organised business with a fleet of vehicles and a Rs 50 lakh turnover. The period between 1970 and 1984 saw a tremendous influx from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Many migrant labourers who could not get work, joined the don's empire.

With the crackdown on the Sion—Koliwada illicit distillery network, the underworld activities have shifted to the more distant suburbs and smuggling to the Raigad-Ratnagiri coastal areas. It was in this area that Mudaliar suffered a major setback. The seizure of a vessel carrying Rs 46 lakhs of contraband off the Ratnagiri coast was linked to the Bombay Tamilar Peervai and Mudaliar. This led to the arrest of Ulhas Ghosalkar, editor of the *Ratnagiri Times* and some of his colleagues. The houses of Mudaliar, Khaja and Soma were raided by the Directorate of Revenue and Intelligence. On 27 March 1984, Mudaliar was, however, released on bail by a Ratnagiri magistrate. Soma and Khaja were detained under COFEPOSA by the Customs.

Whether his political clout is on the wane, has to be seen. Recently, a senior Congress(I) functionary reportedly tried to intervene on Mudaliar's behalf in his personal capacity but could make no headway. On the other hand, while Mudaliar has been imprisoned, his aides are free. The day Mudaliar was finally nabbed, Khaja was released by the NSA advisory board. Tillu was released last month and Soma was set free on the ground that he should have been detained under the Bootleggers and Slumlords Act as the police had cited these offences to detain him under NSA.

Lekha Dhar, Bombay

KERALA

Minister Quits

Succumbing to pressure

Mr R. Balakrishna Pillai, the controversial energy minister, resigned from the Karunakaran government recently. He was one of the founders of the Kerala Congress and a trade union leader, born into one of the wealthiest families in the state. It was his brilliant oratory that made him an important political leader in the state. But as a high caste Nair Hindu, he was slightly out of place in a party (the Kerala Congress) that keeps mainly Christian interests in mind. Finally, it was his weakness of playing to the gallery, that led to his downfall.

During the state meet of the Kerala Congress in Cochin recently, Mr Pillai stated that only a Punjab-style agitation would open the union government's eyes to Kerala's needs. But realising that he would not get away with what he had said, he denied saying anything about a Punjab-style agitation. But all the pressmen who had reported the speech stood by their reports which everyone including the chief minister K. Karunakaran, believed. The Congress(I) insisted on an apology from Pillai, but an apology after a denial would have been too unbecoming of a man who has always made his own rules.

Just when it seemed that the Congress(I) and Kerala Congress would part ways, a writ petition was submitted to the High Court by K.C. Chandy, a Congress activist and son of the Madhya Pradesh Governor K.M. Chandy, who was president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. Justice Radhakrishna Menon, while admitting the petition remarked that if the minister had indeed violated his oath of office, it would be in keeping with the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy if he stood down while the petition was being heard. The petitioner said that he could prove that the minister had indeed called for a Punjab-style agitation and in doing so, had violated the oath of office. Legal experts also pointed out that the minister was liable to be punished under the new Anti-Terrorist Law which says that even an exhortation to such anti-constitutional activities is punishable. "Some people were after my blood and they have got it," Pillai told newsmen soon after his resignation. In a way, the writ petition saved the UDF ministry, otherwise, the Kerala Congress would have had to disown Pillai or head for a split.

Binoo John, Trivandrum

R. Balakrishna Pillai



TENNIS

Set to Match the Best

Amritraj brothers to coach promising youngsters

A time will come when the Amritraj brothers will no longer be India's top tennis stars. An exit, however, need not necessarily mean a total break from a game that they love so much. While they will continue to play top level tennis for a few more years, they realise that their days are almost over. The Amritraj brothers have decided to give back something to the game that made them famous. With the U.S. based biscuit company, Nabisco Brands Inc and its associate, Britannia Industries Ltd, they have set up the Britannia Amritraj Tennis Foundation (BAT) in Madras to develop young Indian tennis talent.

The prime objective of BAT is to spot the best tennis talents available in the country in the age group of ten to 14 years and coach them so that they can find a place in the Davis Cup team and do well in the junior Wimbledon level. At the moment, the BAT has been set up with temporary facilities but should it progress along the expected lines, its sponsors will go in for permanent facilities with an investment that could exceed Rs one crore, according to R. K. Lal, vice chairman and managing director of Britannia Biscuits. For the inaugural batch, eight boys in the age group of 13-14 have been selected on the basis of their potential—Jay Merchant, Gaurav Matekar and Sridhar Bhabhalia from Maharashtra, K. P. Balraj, Prasanth Shetty and Bunesh Venugopal from Tamil Nadu, Rohit Rajpal from Delhi and Rafi Farooqui from Hyderabad. Trials for the selection of the trainees were conducted during December 1984 by Vijay and Anand Amritraj who personally played with and evaluated in all 30 boys, out of whom these eight were finally chosen. The BAT will at present make use of the training facilities at the Madras Christian College. The boys will continue with their studies at the MCC school. They will be put up in a self-sufficient private hostel. Coaching will start at six am with jogging and stretching exercises and about two hours of tennis practice. After classes are over, there will be three hours of tennis practice in the evening followed by 45 minute aerobic classes. The trainees will lead a tightly regimented life and the training will cover not the only physical aspects and coaching but also nutritional intake and mental discipline "to develop the instinct to win." Mrs Maggie Amritraj, mother of the Amritraj brothers who has considerable experience in nurturing tennis players of international acclaim will also be closely associated with the project. She will play "mother" to the eight boys. Apart from the boarding and lodging of the trainees, their schooling will also be looked after by the sponsors.

Two experienced American coaches, specially selected by the Amritraj brothers, Ted Murray (31) and Frederic A. Roecker (33) have already been roped in by the BAT. Both of them come from Peter Burwash International of Texas, USA, which is a well-known company specialising in providing the services of expert tennis coaches. They have come equipped with video taping equipment which will be used as a training device. The services of an Indian coach T. Chandrasekhar have been obtained from the Railways Sports Control Board on loan. The BAT has also employed a marker and ground staff.

Vijay and Anand Amritraj will be making frequent trips (in intervals of four to six weeks) to Madras to personally coach the boys and Vijay Amritraj states that the boys would not be dropped by BAT even if they found there was superior talent in the country. However, if any of the boys decided to drop out on their own volition the sponsors would reserve the right to demand a refund. Lal pointed out that they were promoting a project of this sort because it would be a significant contribution to Indian sports—"We have a social responsibility apart from the contribution we make to the economy of the country by way of our day to day operations." Britannia and Nabisco are undertaking the responsibility for the financing and administration of the scheme which will later be a full-fledged permanent centre. However, if the scheme does not yield results, it may be abandoned. Apart from the coaching, the boys will also be given an opportunity to play in the international circuit for juniors.

At the press conference, P. L. Reddy, secretary, All India Lawn Tennis Association asked why Ramanathan and Ramesh Krishnan, also based in Madras, were not involved in BAT. He pointed out that they were also involved in the development of tennis potential in the age group of 15 to 18 years. The scheme to train Indian talent was conceived by Vijay Amritraj 18 months ago in America. Rounds of discussions between the Amritraj brothers and the Nabisco culminated in the setting up of BAT. Vijay Amritraj pointed out that the scheme was open to girls and ideally they would like to take in at least two girls. But the practical obstacles that came in the way of girls (marriage, babies and more babies) often curbed their potential so much so that there were better returns in coaching boys. If BAT runs smoothly it might play a major and vital role in putting India on the world tennis map.

Anita Pratap, Madras



Anand and Vijay Amritraj (third and fourth from left) with the young stars

Dubious Deal at Dam Site

Is the Orissa Forest Corporation guilty?

When the Orissa Forest Corporation (OFC) handed over the Rengali dam reservoir area in Dhenkanal district to the dam project authorities through the forest department in February last year, it had not anticipated that whatever it wanted to suppress would soon be exposed. While surrendering the area of over one lakh acres, the OFC had stated that it had cleared the area of all forest growth. The OFC officials had thought that the dam would be completed before the 1984 monsoons and the reservoir area would be submerged covering up all the leftover trees and vegetation. But to their misfortune, the dam remained incomplete and several lakhs of trees and high stumps were discovered by the dam authorities. The OFC sought more time (up to the end of March 1985) to clear the submersible area. But what is suspected is that "false vouchers (were) prepared for the earlier work." According to an estimate about Rs two crores might have been misappropriated.

The OFC has also not been able to complete the work by March this year as promised. A.K. Ray, chairman of the OFC, while admitting this to SUNDAY, hoped that the reservoir area would be cleared before the onset of rains this year. "I have engaged not only the Deogarh division (of the OFC) but the adjacent divisions," he said. According to the OFC, 70 per cent of the area had been cleared.

But why was the job not completed during the four years when the OFC was engaged by the forest department as its sole contractor to clear the submersible zone to make it fit for pisciculture which forms part of the multi-purpose dam project on the river Brahmani? "There was total obstruction from the forest department. The DFO (divisional forest officer) prevented us from working. That is the reason why I have protested to the government," Mr Ray replied.

How then has the OFC handed over the area when lakhs of trees and stumps were later discovered? To this, Mr Ray replied "We must have cleared the area before the handing over." He, at best, admitted that there might have been some coppice growths which were natural. But it is baffling as to how even such growths were possible when the trees had to be cut flush to the ground, meaning that the stumps, which have sprouted shoots, should have been removed. The OFC, as Mr Ray said, was aware of the World Bank's stipulation that no stumps could remain as it would impede fishing. It is now highly doubtful whether the OFC will be able to clear the area before the monsoons. The two other agencies concerned with the job, the forest department and the Rengali Dam Project, have pointed out that the OFC had bungled. Said a letter from the office of the chief engineer, Rengali Dam Project, "The OFC failed to clear the area as they were (only) interested in valuable timber available in the approach locations." The chief engineer himself wrote down the figure of left-out stumps and trees given by the forest department (after the OFC's surrender of the area) from the actuals. The DFO of the dam project area who was the forest department's local representative also noted "there were a large number of high stumps in the area worked by the OFC."

The trouble between the OFC, the forest department and the Rengali Dam Project came up when the dam authorities engaged private contractors in May last year to clean up the trees and stumps in the area already shown by the OFC as cleared. The private contractors were engaged to cut the forest growths and carry them away free of royalty. The reason for this step was to ensure the full clearance of the area without further delay and make it feasible for pisciculture. The dam authorities' measure, though earlier okayed by different authorities, was objected to by the OFC. As the OFC lobby is very strong, the action of the dam project authorities was condemned by the government and the OFC was given back the job of clearance of the same area which it was supposed to have achieved a year ago. No action is reported to have been contemplated against the OFC for its earlier failure. The only victim of the entire affair is the DFO of the dam project area against whom proceedings of suspension have been initiated. His demand, contained in a letter to the chief conservator of forests on 6 February 1985, that "all the problems on clearance of Rengali reservoir be thoroughly enquired and the actual facts be sorted out or else the whole thing will remain in darkness" seems to have been ignored. His letter reveals that he had to agree with the action of the dam project chief engineer and act in accordance with "the resolution passed previously by the revenue divisional commissioner (northen division), chief conservator of forests Sambalpur circle, chief executive OFC and other officials."

The DFO's letter also reveals that the then forest minister Harihar Karan, now a Congress-I legislator took unusual interest in the matter of the private contractor's job and on 29 November 1984 issued instructions to allow timber transport (TT) permits to the private parties engaged by the chief engineer (dam project) "on collection of some royalty from them." The royalty was considered to be nominal. It was only after the OFC authorities took up the matter with the chief minister that the private parties were eliminated altogether, it is reliably learnt. But the OFC is reported to have lost heavily. When asked how much the loss was, the OFC officials told this correspondent that the accounts for the Rengali area were not recorded separately but were included in the total accounts of the several OFC divisions responsible not only for the reservoir site clearance but with other jobs.

Sarada P.Nanda, Bhubaneswar

Trees and stumps in the area "cleared" by the OFC



CRIME

A Natwarlal's Ram Rajya

Criminal runs a "parallel government" in UP

Ram Rajya was never so easily established. Beni Ram Yadav did it sitting in a three-room shack in Bidhnu, a country-town about 20 miles away from Kanpur. He appointed "district magistrates" and "police inspectors," issued warrant and public decrees, framed laws, arrested people, pronounced judgments—an entire government subsystem that functioned in Kanpur, Gonda, Behraich and Etawah districts of Uttar Pradesh. For years his Ram Rajya flourished. Then sudden ly. in early February this year it went bust.

While on his rounds, an officer from the Chamangunj police station of Kanpur, came across a rather strange signboard. "Colonelgunj police station: officer-in-charge, Munnalal." He was surprised because the Colonelgunj police station is somewhere else and the place did not look like one at all. He knocked at the door but was told that "station officer saheb" was away on his beat. The police officer came back the next day and found Munnalal in the "police station." When asked to produce his credentials, Munnalal showed an identity card issued by the "Karma Veer Ram Rajya Bharat Society Samiti" and signed by Beni Ram Yadav, *Pradhanadhyaksha* (chief presiden') of the organisation. Munnalal was immediately arrested and interrogated. During the questioning he had named ten other people—"*karam veers*" as he said of the Ram Rajya Bharat Society Samaj—running a parallel government in central Uttar Pradesh.

The police raided the Bidhnu head quarters of the organisation, arrested seven persons including Beni Ram Yadav and charged all of them under Sections 120B (conspiracy), 171 (impersonation) and 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code. The four-page FIR at the Chamangunj police station listed all the articles recovered from Beni Yadav's house in Bidhnu. A large number of police uniforms complete with insignia, badges of rank, caps, whistles and documents including blank *challan* forms, arrest warrants, forms used by the police under various sections of the Criminal Procedure Code, oath forms that members of the society were supposed to fill in, certificates of "training" despatch registers, cash receipt registers and some copies of the "declaration of the establishment of Ram Rajya" issued by Beni Yadav sometime ago. Also recovered was a copy, perhaps the only one that Beni Yadav had cared to print, of the constitution of the organisation. Material including identity cards of the "vanguards of Ram Rajya" is still freely available in Kanpur

Beni Yadav's doings seem less an effort to run a parallel government and more a convenient way to make a fast buck. Beni Yadav was just another 'conman' who tricked people whom the administration remained unaware of Fifteen years ago, Beni Ram Yadav, a village youth registered (registration No 550) the Karam Veer Ram Rajya Bharat Society Samiti as a social service organisation and then turned the social service organ into a moneyspinning racket. Netaji, as he is known by the people of Bidhnu, then began gathering his staff. For only Rs 238 he promised to make anyone a "district magistrate" or a "police inspector." He gave each member of his society an identity card, and the title of *karam veer* and invested them with unlimited powers. They were so wide that *karamveers* were virtually unaccountable to anyone. They could carry any kind of arms and distribute them to people of their choice, they could seize vehicles, search any house and arrest people (who incidentally could not be bailed out under the laws of Beni Yadav's society).



A Ram Rajya "policewoman"

While they went around flaunting their uniforms, identity cards and powers, Beni Ram Yadav accumulated money. He constructed a *pucca* two-storeyed house at Hridaypur Shimbhua, his native village some distance away from Bidhnu where it still stands. His whereabouts or those of his family are still unknown. They have all been missing ever since he was granted bail a few days after his arrest on 18 February. But there is someone around who knows Beni Yadav. Ram Khilawan was a middle-aged man with a perpetual frown on his face. He used to be the "treasurer" of the Karam Veer Ram Rajya Bharat Society Samiti. When the police came to arrest him he managed to escape saying he was only a *pratinidhi* (representative) who was responsible for recruiting members for the society. "I did it as a friend.... Beni of course made a lot of money.... it used to pour in in the form of taxes collected from the districts...he has got all the money," Ram Khilawan said. He does not know where Beni Ram Yadav is today or what he is doing. Neither do the Kanpur police who have flashed an alert in all neighbouring districts know about Beni Yadav. Perhaps, sitting in some obscure region Beni Ram Yadav is planning a new move.

Sankarshan Thakur, New Delhi

BHOPAL TRAGEDY

The Catastrophe on Screen

A London TV film blames Union Carbide

Six months after the tragedy at Bhopal, "London Television's *World in Action*" presented an hour long in-depth investigation of the catastrophe. It unveils a story of bad engineering, reckless cost-cutting and a disregard for people's lives. The most striking example of callousness was the sale of tee-shirts in stores in Connecticut and West Virginia saying "Kiss a Carbider today" and "I'm a lovable Carbider." This is a public relations campaign by Union Carbide in order to regain its image in the USA. It has been supported by its employees scared to lose their jobs in the West Virginia plant which is similar in design to the one in Bhopal. A resident of the town, who is campaigning for the closure of the plant which has just been reopened said, "There is no other word for it but obscene To wear something like this after Bhopal. Just obscene." The investigations of the TV team show that the American company was

aware that their methods of making and storing deadly MIC gas were dangerous, that Union Carbide bequeathed to Bhopal a dangerous plant, ignored warnings and in a fierce bout of cost-cutting drove the plant through the safety barriers in contrast with the company's claim that it did nothing that caused or contributed to the world's worst industrial accident.

With the aid of confidential Union Carbide documents and interviews with former key employees speaking out for the first time, the documentary team says that Bhopal was a disaster just waiting to happen. It says that Union Carbide had a very strict safety operations manual which instructed safety officers all over the world to send in a report of accidents and fatalities to the head office in the US. Hence, there could be little truth in the Union Carbide statement that they were not aware of the various accidents that had been taking place in Bhopal from 1982 onwards, the many warnings and the growing fears of the workers of the factory. Indeed, it quotes a Union Carbide operation manual saying, "A certain amount of toxic gas release and emission is unavoidable and unpredictable."

The team interviewed Ian Swift, an expert in safety systems. He had worked with Union Carbide from 1975 to 1980. Mr Swift categorically said that the three-stage safety system in Bhopal was inadequate and he indentified critical deficiencies in the system. He said the scrubber (the second line of defence should the deadly MIC gas be released from storage tanks) at best could have dealt with only one-third of the MIC stored and the flare tower, which was designed in the US could burn out only a fraction of the lethal gas.

Comparisons were made between the plant in West Virginia and the one at Bhopal. Union Carbide's chairman Warren Anderson had said: "The safety systems were just as good." However, after examination, the documentary says that the West Virginian plant is better maintained, there is no dangerous cost-cutting at the expense of safety—the crucial refrigeration plant was not shut down. Most important, it had an evacuation plan and a computerised alarm system. A safety official at the plant said, "Our plant wouldn't operate without such an evacuation plan."

Mr Swift said that one knew as early as in 1976 that safety systems like the one in Bhopal couldn't cope with a leak of gas and liquids since they had only been designed for gas flow. According to him, there are at least 50,000 safety systems for chemical production throughout the world which would be inadequate if a Bhopal type of leak occurred. It is a reminder that the tragedy of Bhopal could happen again because some companies are too preoccupied making profits and cutting losses to be bothered by safety requirements.

Kanta Talukdar, London

DIPLOMACY

India: The Friend in Need

Rajiv Gandhi's trip is welcomed by Bangladeshis



Gen. Ershad(left) with Rajiv Gandhi

Aloke Mitra

The 250-minute long flying visit to Bangladesh by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on 2 June was a trailblazer. Most people in Bangladesh, though surprised by the sudden decision, have taken his initiative not only as a good neighbourly gesture but also as a sign of his new brand of politics.

The Indian Prime Minister, accompanied by the Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene, left Dhaka within ten minutes of their arrival, for Urir Char, one of the worst affected islands. When they reached Urir Char, much of the island was under water. Rajiv Gandhi wearing a gum boot, walked through the slush to the briefing centre on the island and visited other places to distribute relief materials to the survivors. The leaders spent about 50 minutes on the island before returning to Dhaka. After a brief press conference 30 minutes later, they were back in Delhi. The visit by Rajiv Gandhi and J.R. Jayewardene, however, left a visible and lasting impact on the people's mind. Rajiv Gandhi told newsmen that the purpose of the visit was "to show that we care for Bangladesh and the Bangladeshis at the time of their distress and when they are down." The presence of Sri Lanka's President, J.R Jayewardene was also significant. Replying to a question, he said he was "looking forward to the SARC summit anxiously," thus removing doubts about Sri Lankan participation in the summit.

Mr Gandhi said: "The visit was very very short but we are very much moved by the warm feelings of the people in the affected areas in spite of their sufferings." The trip, he felt, would lead to stronger and closer ties between the two friendly neighbours. Though he seemed quite overwhelmed, he did not mince matters. He said: "There was tremendous devastation.. by the cyclone. We have done our little bit to help." But he made it clear that he had not come to Bangladesh to either discuss or solve the Ganga waters problem, at a time when the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) ministerial level meeting was in progress in Dhaka but thought that his visit would further improve relations between the two countries and help to solve the outstanding issues.

However, President Ershad and Rajiv Gandhi did discuss bilateral issues and all international matters

of mutual interest including the SARC summit schedule in Dhaka next December, on their way to Urir Char and on their way back to Dhaka. Bangladesh's foreign adviser, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury while briefing newsmen said: "I have reasons to believe that the discussions ended on very positive and friendly note," and appeared optimistic about the solution of some of the outstanding bilateral issues in the near future. This was the first time President Ershad and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, were meeting after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's funeral. During their brief discussions on bilateral problems in November, President Ershad had told Rajiv Gandhi that had he (Rajiv Gandhi) played golf, they two could solve their problems in the golf course!

Rajiv Gandhi's brand of diplomacy has generated a positive reaction. A well-known Bangladeshi architect, with strongly anti-Indian opinions, told SUNDAY recently, "This man (Rajiv Gandhi) means business He is young and has come with refreshingly new ideas and has dynamism. He gives us hope " The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry's newly elected President Mahbubur Rahman, lauded Rajiv Gandhi's gesture. He too believes, that the Indian leader's positive thinking would yield positive results in the near future President Hossain Mohammad Ershad was pleased with the unique gesture of the Indian Prime Minister and described the visit as a "significant development in the spirit of regional cooperation " Ershad said that the visit had demonstrated the extraordinary gesture of solidarity and sympathy towards the people of Bangladesh and added that the visit was a source of inspiration to the cyclone-affected people. "We are deeply touched by this gesture," he said.

Syed Kamaluddin, Dhaka

SRI LANKA

A Small Step Forward

Talks between India and Sri Lanka end on a hopeful note

The joint communique issued at the end of the visit of the Sri Lankan President J. Jayewardene and national security minister L. Athulathmudali was only a small step forward in solving the Tamil problem. It reiterated only the peripheral issues that have been taken for granted—that India has a role to play in the ethnic crisis and that the present problems should be solved quickly. No fresh proposal was put forward, though Jayewardene said that the regional autonomy he envisaged, would ensure elections for the constitution of the district councils, with representatives from the area. Later, more rights and powers would be given to the district councils, culminating in the setting up of a coordinating council. He also promised to grant amnesty to Tamil militants provided they laid down their arms.

The adjectives used by both governments to describe the talks were "cordial, frank, sincere and useful." But how useful the talks actually were can only be judged by the course of events in Sri Lanka. The two governments have decided that "immediate steps" should be taken to defuse the situation and create a proper climate so that a political settlement can be evolved within the unitary structure of Sri Lanka. Romesh Bhandari, foreign secretary however, did not spell out the 'steps' as it was up to the Sri Lankan government to decide on that This is a comedown from G. Parthasarathy's days who as Indira Gandhi's special envoy had outlined the workings of provincial councils that would provide regional autonomy to the Tamils

The joint communique states, "The two sides further agreed that all forms of violence should abate and finally cease Every effort will be made for the speedy restoration of normalcy in the northern and eastern provinces. This will be conducive to the early return of Sri Lankan citizens who are in India, to Sri Lanka "

The only progress the Indian government made was to record that "all forms of violence" must cease. Mr Bhandari clarified that it referred both to terrorist violence and army actions against civilians. The joint communique issued after Bhandari's visit to Colombo in April had given the impression that terrorist violence must first stop if talks are to be held. Even here, it has not been made clear whether terrorism should end first, or whether both forms of violence should stop simultaneously. Neither has a time frame been mentioned. It is clear that the two governments began their search for a solution all over again. Thus, the nuts and bolts of a permanent peaceful solution will come much later, if it does at all. The trip has disappointed the Tamils who feel that the exercise is a way of buying time.

According to sources, the Sri Lankan government has promised to restore civil administration in the Tamil areas, the moment India persuades the Tamil terrorists to stop fighting. This is likely to reduce tensions for



Sandeep Shankar

Rajiv Gandhi(left) with Sri Lanka President J. Jayewardene

the Tamils who live in fear of the Sri Lankan troops.

With Jayewardene showing visible signs of aging, it is the 48-year-old national security minister, Lalith Athulathmudali, who has begun taking charge. The Oxford-educated minister and in all probability Jayewardene's successor agreed to meet this correspondent recently. In the course of the exhaustive 90-minute interview, Athulathmudali made a number of things clear. Under no circumstances would the President ever agree to bring the north and the east under one umbrella as initially suggested by the provincial councils. The two regions would be carved into two districts because the Tamils are not in the majority in the area. The ruling UNP holds ten of the 12 seats in this area. This is a testimony to the fact that the people in the region support the government. But TULF leader Mr Amirthalingam is firm on this score and walked out of the all party conference when the government made known its decision to bifurcate the region. Mr Athulathmudali, however, said that his government was prepared to discuss the issue with the people of the east. He said the kind of regional autonomy envisaged by the UNP government revolved around the provincial council with the only difference being that there would be two districts instead of one. He said the Tamil areas would have more powers than the union territories of India.

But terrorist activity has increased in the recent months. According to Athulathmudali, "The Tamil terrorists who have finished their training in Tamil Nadu and have crossed over with weapons are now confronting us. The Tamil Nadu training camps are the biggest obstacles in curbing terrorism. I know for a fact that there are training camps in Coimbatore, Thanjavur, Mettupalayam and Coonoor. We have these training camps on video. I have a lovely film of Sri Sabarathnam (leader of TELO) inspecting a camp in a lovely place between Coimbatore and Mettupalaym. I have sworn evidence taken by the local police in a small town where a poor farmer was killed (by Tamil militants) because he gave protection to a small boy from Sri Lanka who ran away from one of the training camps." "I know for a fact that Mr Pirabhakaran (leader of LTTE) sends his boats from Vedaranyam (in Tamil Nadu) to Velvetithurai and Nagerkovil in Sri Lanka."



Pirabhakaran

Athulathmudali accused the militants of being brutal and racist. The killing of the ex-convicts of the Kent and Dollar farms in November 1984 by the LTTE was "done in the most brutal fashion.' He states that he has a recording of Pirabhakaran ordering his men to kill 300 Sinhalese in the Anuradhapura massacre. He also pointed out that in a bank robbery conducted sometime ago, Uma Maheshwaran (leader of PLOT) killed the Sinhalese guards while he chose to gag the Tamil guards.

Admitting that a major problem in finding a permanent political settlement was the Sinhala opposition parties, the minister stated that the most crucial aspect of a settlement was to make it last. He felt that a consensus would have to be evolved and said that he had an open mind about negotiating with the Tamil militants. Referring to SLFP leader Mrs Bandaranaike's assertion that any fresh proposal would be opposed unless it was put before the people, the minister said that, he was willing to concede this point as "any proposal that is ultimately agreed on will gain in strength by being accepted by the people." Asked whether that would mean another referendum, he replied, 'I don't want to talk about the special modalities...the key sectors of public opinion will get an opportunity to express their views.'

Mr Athulathmudali denied that his government had opted for a military solution to end the crisis. He said the military had to be strengthened to counter the terrorists. "History says that when faced with acts of violence governments in power have to resist it. But we don't make the mistake of thinking that resisting violence is the solution." He said the morale of the armed forces, contrary to what the terrorists say is very high and claimed that the programme for the settlement of armed Sinhalese in predominantly Tamil areas was a response to the LTTE attack on Sinhala civilians. While such a programme can lead to civil war, he felt that the repercussions would be greater if Sinhalese civilians continued to be killed. They were armed only to defend themselves against the Tamil terrorists. Why did'nt he post troops in these villages instead of arming civilians? Mr Athulathmudali's reply was: "It is quicker to arm civilians than train soldiers as the latter requires four to five months to be trained and Pirabhakaran will not wait for four or five months till I train my soldiers." He feared that killing civilians would result in something worse than a crisis of confidence against his government.

Mr Athulathmudali said that as soon as terrorist violence ended, army actions would stop and the country's ethnic problem would be settled. Talking in a lighter vein, he said that he and Pirabhakaran are both born on the same day—26 November. He hoped they would have more in common and would eventually become friends. "There are so many important things to do in Sri Lanka than shooting at each other. And these people (the militants) who are doing all sorts of terrible things now must one day, come into the mainstream of politics."

Anita Pratap, New Delhi

Understanding the Police

His severe police cap and gentle hazel eyes may look incongruous together. He happens to be a police officer with an impeccable record. Ved Marwah, the first union territory cadre officer to become New Delhi's police commissioner, recalls his first posting 29 years ago at Diamond Harbour, West Bengal: "I had a huge house on the banks of the Hooghly. There was no running water or electric-



Ved Marwah

ity but I had three pankhawallas and two launches at my disposal. For a boy from arid Peshawar, the abundance of water all round was a delight." Subsequent postings as DIG (VIP security) and IG (Mizoram) were less comfortable and in his own words "more demanding and adventurous." Decorated many times, the police chief specially remembers the gallantry medal he received in 1974. "How can you forget pellets that are still lodged in your head?" he laughs. Has he any new ideas on how to improve the police's tarnished image? "The police have pride in their job and organisation. We must make their working and living conditions more humane to enable them to be sympathetic while dealing with the public. You can't pay a constable an unskilled worker's wages and expect him to behave like a London bobby," he said. Mr Marwah continues to live in his old house. He has not moved into the official residence of the commissioner, and the only signs that show his change in status are a few bouquets of wilting flowers.



Mulk Raj Anand

Honoured Indian

International recognition came the Indian novelist Dr Mulk Raj Anand's way when his name was announced for this year's International Academy for Philosophy of Art prize. The 80-year old author whose popular works include *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *The Big Heart*, *Morning Face* and *Confessions of a Lover* was chosen as one of the two laureates for his contribution "as an Indian novelist writing in English and as a poet devoted to the values of freedom and peace..." The other writer chosen for the prestigious award is Dr (Miss) Florence Hetzler, professor at Fordham University, New York.

Doubles for Life

With the ageing Vijay Amritraj spending more and more time on tennis schools and showbiz, the chubby-cheeked 21-year-old son of Ramanathan Krishnan, arguably India's greatest tennis player ever, is the one tennis fans are looking up to for miracles on court. Ramesh, a rising star in today's highly competitive world of professional tennis, and winner of the junior Wimbledon and French Open titles, won another round recently, this time off court. His new partner for life is Priya, a college student and a friend of his sister Gowri.



Ramesh Krishnan with wife Priya



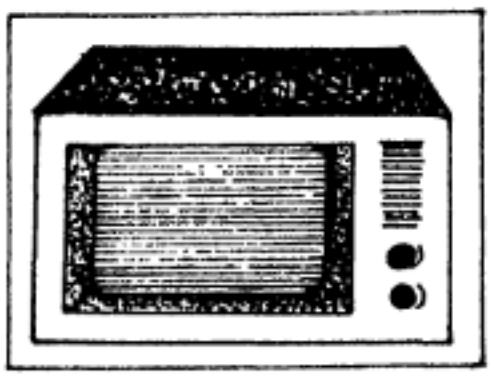
Kalpana Jhingan

The Light in Her Life

The large almond-shaped eyes are sightless but a pretty smile lights up Kalpana Jhingan's face when she talks to you: "I was confident of passing," she says, talking about her recent success in the class XI board examinations. "But I never hoped for a first division, because you can never be sure of results in a secondhand examination." Kalpana had to dictate her answers to a writer and was given an extended time limit.

A student of Modern School, Delhi, Kalpana finds her *alma mater* "the best part of my life after my family". As she tires easily, she cannot devote much time to music. She cheerfully shrugs off this disadvantage. "I can listen to all the music I want to." One of Kalpana's favourite pastimes is to listen to the Gita being read by the person closest to her —her grandmother.

Television for Deaf People



The visual medium can make an impact only if it is completed by sound. Millions of viewers have been deprived of this unique audio-visual facility which television provides because of their physical handicap of deafness. However, they need not despair, as French television has now introduced a special teletext system of providing sub-titles, which inserts a few lines on the top of the screen to make for better understanding. Moreover, the sub-titles remain invisible to those it does not concern. A miniaturised decoder is made available to help the deaf with the sub-titles, which can also be attached to the television set.

Fatal Spirit

In the United States, alcohol is the third leading cause of deaths among old people. More than 20 per cent of those aged 61 and above, are alcoholics. A large number of them turn to alcohol to escape from the problems associated with growing old. Symptoms such as "falling and breaking of the hip," confusion, forgetfulness, changes in behaviour, and failing health among the elderly are often passed off as senility or the "ageing process."

Sponge: The Latest Contraceptive

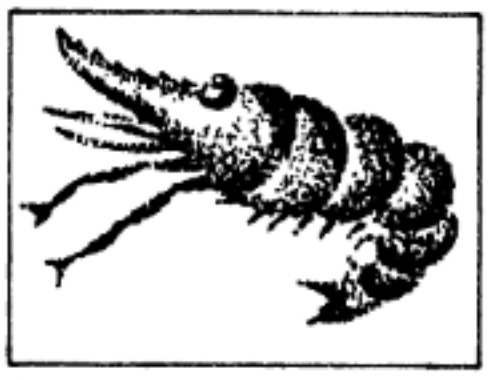
The latest contraceptive to hit the American markets is the sponge. Thirty four million sponges have already been sold and an estimated one million American women have used it. The sponge, which fits inside the vagina, can provide contraceptive cover for 24 hours without additional spermicide. It is said to be 89 to 91 per cent effective. However, doctors in Britain are still sceptical about the efficacy of the sponge as a contraceptive device.

Visionary Creatures



A series of experiments by a Swiss research team shows that ants use two different forms of vision for finding their way back to the nest after foraging for food. One depends on recognising landmarks and the other on the ability to use patterns of polarised light in the sky as a compass. The scientists say that an ant can easily be trained to find a food source more than 20 metres away from its colony. Having arrived at the food, the ant will grasp the bait and run home along a straight path, selecting the proper direction even if the insect is removed to an unknown territory and prevented from seeing either landmarks or the sun; the celestial pattern of polarisation is sufficient as a compass cue.

The Long-distance Traveller

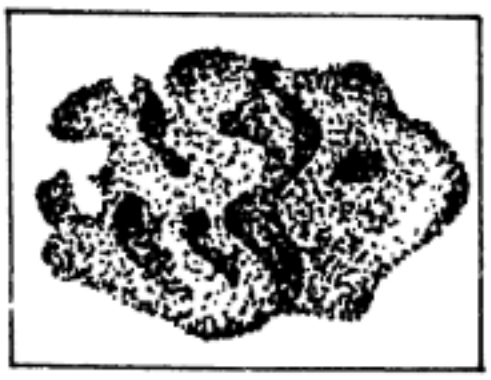


Some lobsters, known as sluggish creatures of the deep, may cover 100 miles or more each year. Many appear to complete a long-distance circuit and return to their starting point, according to Mary Cerullo of the University of Maine Sea Grant College Programme who is undertaking a research on the movements of large lobsters in the Gulf of Maine. The research seems to confirm what lobster men have known for decades—that lobsters tend to migrate farther offshore in search of deeper and warmer waters in the winter, then return in the springtime. The study could also shed light on how the movements affect the lobster population. Although most of the lobsters moved two to seven miles from where they were released, 11 per cent were tracked an average of 60 miles, including several that later returned to their original release area.

Occupational Hazard

Occupational hazards often go hand in hand with one's job, but none are as strange as the tale of the glove maker of Somerset (England):a woman who made leather gloves at home suffered from an over-active thyroid gland. She was put on radio-iodine but the level of the thyroid hormone circulating in her blood dropped below normal. The effect was that she changed from a rational person to a confused one and was admitted to hospital with a severe stomach ache. On examination it was found that the large bowel was perforated and a peculiar yellow worm-like mass was sticking out. This mass turned out to be 800 elastic bands, which were used to keep the glove leather bundles together. Later, it was discovered that her nephew had been putting them in her tea.

Meteorites: Clues to Life



Meteorites from space contain tantalising chemical clues to the origin of organic life. But while chemists find such pre-life materials as amino acids (which are building blocks of proteins, or the bases that form units of the genetic code), they have been unable to explain how these crucial compounds have arisen. Now two scientists from the university of Alabama, Thomas J. Wdowiak and David G. Agresti, report the presence of tiny particles of magnetite in a meteorite that fell near Orgueil, France, in 1864. These particles could have been the catalysts that encouraged the chemicals to form. The Orgueil meteorite is 3.5 per cent organic material, which includes amino acids. Such pre-life chemicals have been found in other meteorites. Also, Cyril Ponnamperuma, of the University of Maryland, recently announced that the Murchison meteorite contains all five of the bases that combine in different ways to encode genetic instructions.

Illustrations Prabir Sen

BEGINNING 16 JUNE 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This is a favourable time for lovers: you may go ahead with your marriage plans. You are likely to gain money from unexpected sources. The domestic front will be peaceful Sportsmen and artists too can expect a good week A pleasant surprise awaits you at the end of the week. Professionals should deal with their superiors with tact Avoid going on pleasure trips

Good dates: 17, 18 and 20.
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South-east



LEO (15 August—14 September) Businessmen will be confronted with bright prospects. do not hesitate to undertake risky ventures Lovers will find their parents in a compromising mood However, this is not a very good week for professionals. Students should exercise caution in accepting opportunities Your children may be demanding but deal with them sympathetically Avoid pleasure trips.

Good dates: 18, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: East



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) Students and those unemployed are likely to receive good news. While students may get a chance to study in prestigious institutions, a job is in the offing for those of you who are unemployed Friends and relatives will be of great help. Do not neglect your health and consult a physician at the slighest indication of illness. Lovers should avoid unnecessary arguments.

Good dates: 19, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: West



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) A job is in the offing for those of you who are unemployed A letter from abroad will bring unexpected good tidings. Professionals and businessmen are likely to perform well The home front will remain peaceful However, your detractors may try to harm you, so be on the alert Businessmen should not indulge in speculation Take care of your health and diet

Good dates: 18, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) A lucky week is ahead of lovers and eligible bachelors Your work will be appreciated by your superiors Businessmen too can go ahead with their expansion plans Some of you may even come across unexpected windfalls Sportsmen and artists will prosper during this phase A letter at the end of the week will bring you good news

Good dates: 16, 19 and 20
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South-west



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) Some of you are likely to gain money through unexpected sources. This is also a favourable week for courtship and marriage alliances. Those in government services can look forward to a promotion Students too will fare well in their examinations Businessmen should carry on with their projects Those above 50 should take care of their health.

Good dates: 17, 18 and 19
Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is a good time to get married Students are likely to get opportunities to study abroad A promotion or a better posting is in the offing for those employed. Women can expect to receive expensive gifts such as clothing and jewellery Businessmen can go ahead with their projects for expansion. But do not neglect your health and avoid spicy food.

Good dates: 17, 18 and 20
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: West



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) The professional front will continue to be inspiring Businessmen and public sector employees will prosper You will come in contact with an influential person Matters pertaining to property will be resolved in your favour. A journey during the middle of the week will prove to be financially profitable This is not the right time for marriage

Good dates: 19, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) Rely on your business partners for help. Students will be feted for their extra-curricular activities. If you are unemployed, there are bright chances that you will get a job A good phase for matrimonial negotiations You can expect to go abroad. A member of your family will misunderstand you and this could lead to strained relations.

Good dates: 19, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is a favourable period for marriage negotiations. An unexpected journey is in store for you. Peace will reign at home Professionals are likely to get a promotion Businessmen too will make steady progress. Speculative ventures will yield good results. Some of you may receive money or property through unexpected sources. But keep a sharp eye on your health.

Good dates: 17, 19 and 21
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) A good phase for those in love as well as for speculators The domestic scene will remain peaceful The mail will bring you good tidings However, keep away from legal matters and do not consult your friends and relatives on crucial issues Be prepared for setbacks on the professional front Your deteriorating health will add to your worries.

Good dates: 17, 18 and 19
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (15 March—14 April) Professionally, this will be a lucky week for you. Those of you who are on the look out for life partners, will be successful during this period. A major event is likely to take place. Financial gains may come your way but you might have some difficulty in retrieving money let out. Use tact and caution while dealing with your colleagues Someone close to you might create problems

Good dates: 16, 17 and 20
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: South

For those born between 15 May and 14 June

You are honest and trustworthy but sometimes you have a tendency to overestimate your own capabilities. It is only with your very intimate friends or those whom you greatly admire, that you admit your faults. However, once you have recognised the 'fault,' you try to eliminate it as far as possible. Nature is a great source of joy to you and helps you to regain confidence when you are feeling down-and-out.

VARIETY

CHESS

The art of provocation has been perfected by a number of British players over the years, though it stems largely from distant shores Michael Basman, who is of Armenian extraction, must claim ultimate responsibility for most of the frivolous ideas we see being played around the country today, but his standards have been picked up and borne with considerable success by players such as Tony Miles, Jim Plaskett and Julian Hodgson

Broadly the idea is to draw an otherwise timid but solid opponent out of his shell by the judicious use of a few 'bad' moves early on Against somebody who will simply ignore you there is very little point, but it is amazing how quickly some players can be persuaded to dig their own graves

White B Karoly, Black J Hodgson Brussels 1984

1 N–KB3 P–QN4 2 P–Q4 B–N2
3 B–N5 P–KR3 4 B–R4 P–N4
5 B–N3 N–KB3

Julian's eccentric opening is not especially bad, but neither is it especially good. The extraordinary expedition on which White now embarks would however be sufficient to justify any opening

6 Q–Q3? B–K5 7 QxP

He could admit he is an idiot and retreat Q–Q1 rather than proving the point by taking the pawn

7 . . . N–B3 8 P–B3 R–QN1
9 Q–R4 RxP

After just nine moves a winning position, with Black as well!

10 QN–Q2 Q–N1 11 R–B1 P–K3!
12 P–K3

DIAGRAM

12 . . P–N5 13 N–K5 RxN!
14 KxR Q–N7+ 15 R–B2

The point of Black's tenth move is revealed on 15 K–Q1 B–R6!

15 BxR 16 QxB N–K5+
17 K–Q3 Q–N4+! 18 KxN

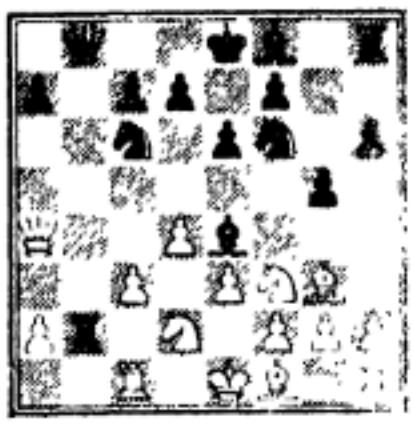
Instead 18 P–B4 would cost the queen – 18 N–N5+ 19 KxN Q–N7+

18 P–B4+ 19 K–B4 NxN
20 PxN

More charitable was 20 BxQ N–N3 mate

20 . . P–KR4 21 K–N5 Q–B4
22 Resigns.

Hodgson (Black) to move



Karoly (White)

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Passes to show the values for an opening bid, or a specific range such as 8–12, have become common in the tournament world. Whatever the technical merit, they create problems for opponents who have not spent many hours working out a defence The World Bridge Federation has got to the stage of appointing a committee to examine the permissibility of such systems, at any rate in pairs or multiple team events Mind you, this committee will probably take as long as the average government commission to make a report, and then it will be ignored on the grounds that such methods are becoming more familiar.

One thing I am quite sure of is that Australian teams have been flattered by the uncommon use of an unfamiliar style On this deal from the Epson tournament in Japan two Australian pairs [illegible] were East West

Dealer North Love all

	♠ 6 3 ♥ J 9 4 2 ♦ K 9 7 3 2 ♣ J 8	
♠ K J ♥ A 8 6 3 ♦ 10 ♣ A 9 7 4 3 2	N W E S	♠ A 8 7 ♥ K Q 10 7 ♦ Q 6 5 ♣ K Q 6
	♠ Q 10 9 5 4 2 ♥ 5 ♦ A J 8 4 ♣ 10 5	

A pair from Kaohsiung [illegible] the East-West cards to Sydney

made it This was the bidding at the other table

South	West	North	East
—	—	No	No
2♦	dble	No	No
2♠	dble	all pass	

East's pass showed upwards of 14 points South's Two Diamonds was 'multi' West's double of Two Spades was for penalties

The defence began with ace and another club East returned the ace of spades (grotesque – his partner must hold the king) and the contract was made A well deserved 17 match points to the men from Kaohsiung.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1 Which English war-hero is called the Achilles of England?

2 What do the following have in common Camille Pisarro, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas?

3 What do the initials ISKCON stand for?

4 The Sanskrit play *Ratnavali (The Pearl Necklace)* was written by a famous Indian king Who?

5 What is pin money?

6. The city of Rome is believed to have been founded by two brothers who were weaned by a she-wolf Name them

7. Who are able-bodied seamen?

8. How is James Andrew Brown Ramsay, a former Governor General of India, better known as?

9 Name the revolutionary leader who was born in Argentina, became a minister in the Cuban government and was killed by Bolivian soldiers in [illegible]

10. *The Tree of Life, Riders in the Chariot, The Solid Mandala* and *The Eye of the Storm* are books which have been written by an Australian novelist and playwright and a Nobel Prize winner Name him.

11. What is an *ektara*?

12. Name the French chemist whose researches into fermentation led to the science of bacteriology. He also found a cure for hydrophobia

13. In European history, what are the Hundred Days?

ANSWERS

1. The Duke of Wellington.
2. They were all French impressionist painters.
3. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness.
4. Harshavardhana.
5. The amount of money a woman keeps for her personal expenditure.
6. Romulus and Remus.
7. A skilled and experienced sailor
8. Lord Dalhousie.
9. Che Guevara.
10. Patrick White.
11. A musical instrument with one string
12. Louis Pasteur.
13. The days between 20 March 1815 when Napoleon Bonaparte reached Tuileries after his escape from Elba and 28 June, the day of the second restoration of Louis XVIII

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



SHRIRAMPUR: In keeping with the times, tape-recorders have replaced priests in performing nuptials during the busy marriage season in this prosperous sugar town. The immediate cause for introducing this novel method, however, is a dearth of *purohits*. In many wedding pandals, tape-recorded *mangalastakas* are played to unite couples in holy matrimony. Such tapes are available in plenty in view of the rush season. In many villages in the district, marriages are being postponed but for a different reason. The drought has put a premium on water and guests are unwilling to attend wedding receptions if there is no guarantee of water supply—*The Times of India* (Hari Agrawal, Muzaffarpur)

NEW DELHI: Amazing and incredible though it may sound, a young researcher on international relations at Jawaharlal Nehru University here can discharge electricity from his body. Mr Satyaprakash, studying for a doctorate in Asean-China relations, can make a bulb (60 watts, or even 200 watts) feebly glow, and even light an electricity-tester with any part of his body, including the head. Demonstrating his prowess, Mr Satyaprakash, 28, first gets closeted in a room for about two minutes and performs some breath-control—*Searchlight* (Minhajus Salam Rizvi, Aurangabad)

GUDALUR: The primary health centre at Pandalur, near here, which was upgraded and declared open on 10 May, was closed the very next day. Dr H. V. Hande, the health minister, declared the health centre open on 10 May, which had a bed strength of 24 and was constructed at a cost of Rs 5.89 lakhs. The residents of Pandalur felt happy that the long-pending demand to upgrade the health centre had been fulfilled at last. But to their utter dismay they found that the centre was not functioning on the next day and the reason given for the same was that there was no adequate water supply. The beds brought from Udagamandalam to Pandalur for the inaugural function were also taken back—*Indian Express* (R. Vasudevan, Udagamandalam)

BHARATPUR: A 'made in heaven' marriage in village Aoo in this district turned out to be a 'made in hell' one when the bride's side realised that the groom, who came to marry, was not the Tom they had settled the marriage with, but was Dick. When the word went round the tiny village that Tom was not Tom but Dick, the villagers decided to deal with the groom's party 'properly' and what followed was a virtual stampede. The irate bride's side relieved the groom's party of all the ornaments and garments they had brought all the way from Mathura and they also treated the visitors with utter disdain. Dick's father and other members of the party were beaten up while Harry, the middleman who settled the marriage, was tied to a chestnut tree for his efforts and his scooter was also 'seized.' The appearance of the groom's party soon became most unbecoming of such a ceremonial occasion: torn clothes and swollen faces all black and blue. Soon, the bride's aides, sitting back with the satisfaction of a job well done, realised that the bride was anointed and a groom had to be found. No problem—they knew of a foodgrain dealer's son in Deeg who was of marriageable age and they promptly united him in wedlock. One groom's loss is another's gain but then all's well that ends well—*Rajasthan Patrika* (P S. Walker, Jaipur)

BIJAPUR: An assistant executive engineer of the public works department, who set out on a treasure hunt following a dream his servant had, is now having his "find" investigated by the police. According to a complaint filed by the servant, he dreamt two months ago of a pot of gold buried beneath a tree, and took to performing *poojas* to help him identify the spot. Soon after, he was dismissed for negligence. Coming to know of the dream, the engineer launched a search in his garden, unearthed the pot, and was in illegal possession of the gold, the complaint said. The police have seized a copper pot from the engineer who told them that it only contained coal—*Indian Express* (B.K. Salwan, 99 APO)

WITHOUT COMMENT

It's a little difficult to say, because when you meet him, you talk to him, it is all very nice, but a few weeks later, the Pakistan government does something which is totally contrary to what they have been saying—Rajiv Gandhi, on his relationship with Zia-ul Haq, in an interview to the National Broadcasting Company

I could find an inner beauty in him. He was somewhat different from others, deeper and wiser than his outward looks—Sonia Gandhi, speaking on what attracted her to Rajiv Gandhi during the Cambridge days, in an interview to *Dharmayug*

Rajiv Gandhi, like his country, is a blend of contradictions—David Hartman, interviewer of Rajiv Gandhi on the ABC

That is because he did not have anything else to do—Jyoti Basu, on being asked about the appointment of Pranab Mukherjee as the West Bengal PCC(I) chief, in *The Telegraph*



If the Congress(I) does not break up, the country will break up—George Fernandes in *The Statesman*

If politics is a cesspool for Mr (Amitabh) Bachchan my request to him is to quit it—Santbux Singh, brother of V. P. Singh, in *The Statesman*

She (Pupul Jayakar) only thinks anything which is 5,000 years old is art—M F Husain in *India Today*

All this business about being a great actor is bunk. You can be a Lawrence Olivier but it won't get you anywhere unless you sell—Mithun Chakraborty in *The Times of India Sunday Review*

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

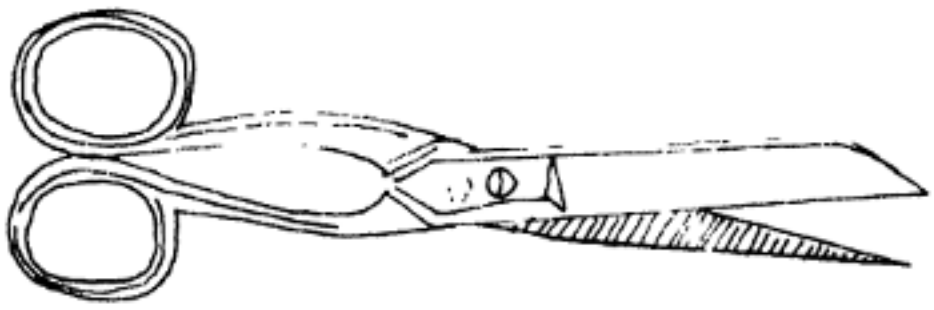
Word Play

R	A	T	I	O		A	L	L	Y
O		E	N					O	
M	E	N					A	N	T
A		D			T	I	N	G	
N				R	U	T			
	A	R	E		R				
					N			U	S
S	O	U	R						
					L	I	N	E	R
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A C C D E E E E E E E E E
F H I I I N O O R S T X

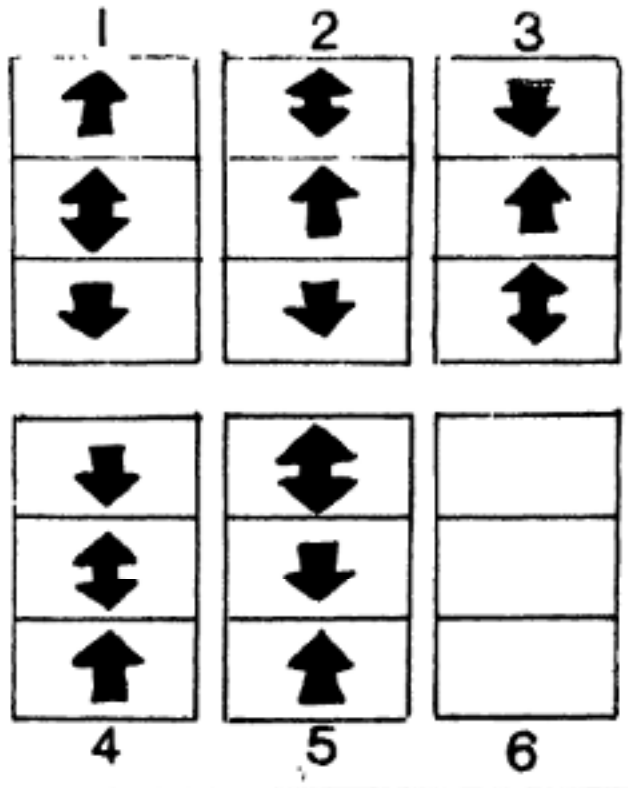
This is a disjointed crossword. Can you fill in all the letters given above so that the words interlink, as they do in a normal crossword? Formation of new words will be necessary.

Eye Wash



What's special about this pair of scissors?

Blankagrams



What shapes will go into the empty boxes in figure 6?

Wit Sharpener



In the photograph of the fashion parade finale above Miss Blousy is to the right of (but not immediately) Miss Zig Zag. Miss Chuni is next to Miss Black. The dotted dress is immediately to the left of Miss Spots. And, only one person is wearing the outfit described by her name.

Who is wearing what?

What's in a Word?

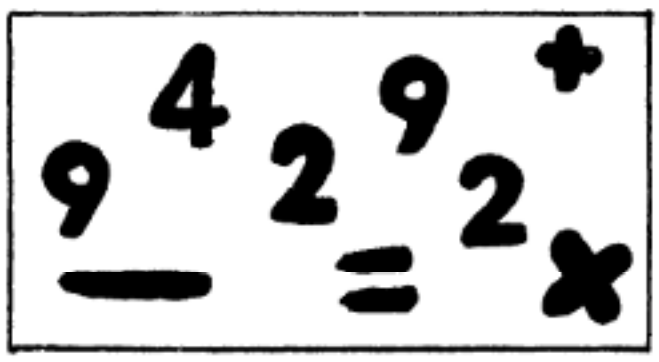
Words (or sentences) which read the same backwards and forwards are called PALINDROMES. Examples: MALAYALAM, KAYAK, ABLE WAS I ERE I SAW ELBA, WAS IT A CAR OR A CAT I SAW, etc.

There are words which read backwards, but not the same; example. LIVED—DEVIL. Can you find these words, with the help of these clues.

1. Existed—Satan. LIVED—DEVIL
2. Fashionable—conveyance on tracks.
3. Takes off skin—shut-eye
4. Clock—send.
5. Make merry—see-saw?
6. Begin—short-crust pastries
7. Curves—type[illegible] ribbon

IMPORTANT: All are five letter words.

Quick Think



Can you use the numbers and the symbols to form a simple mathematical sentence (an equation)?

Eye Wash



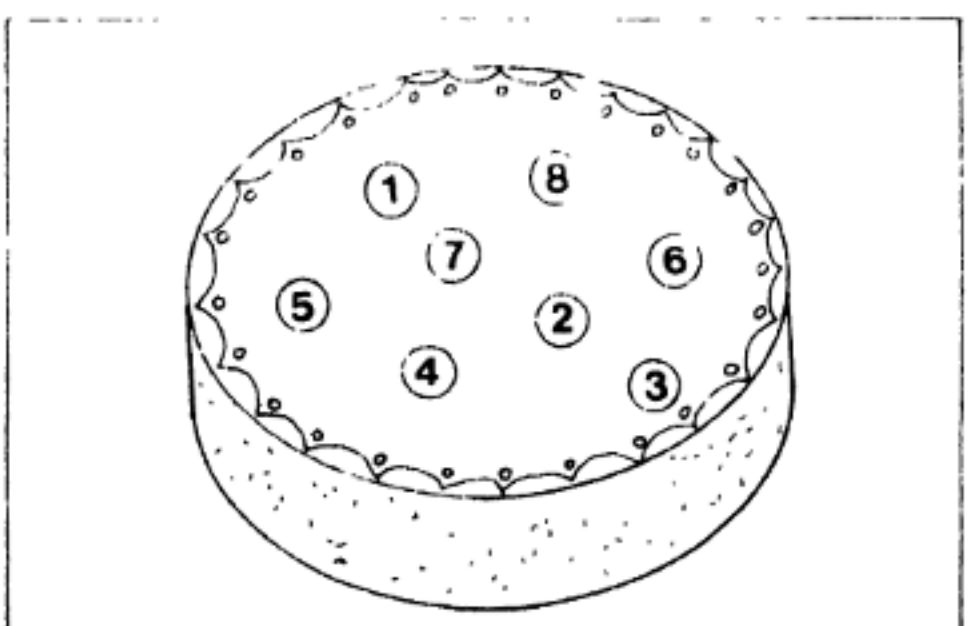
This was the basket which Joey came across when she was going through the garage where her father's stuff from college days was kept. Her father did his BSc (Physics) from Baroda University when he was 19 in 1948.

Study the column carefully and without referring back answer these questions.

1. What was the name of the person who found the basket?
2. What is the name of the artist?
3. Do the artists' initials appear anywhere else in the picture?
4. When was the father born?
5. Where and what did he study?
6. Did the string from the ball pass over the book or under the book?
7. In the vertical panels on the basket, which was the odd one out?
8. What was the sub-title of the column?

How many of the above questions were you able to answer without a peep back?

Mind Bender



Ma Maxima had baked a delicious cake for her son's birthday. She had slipped in columns of 25p coins; the number in each column is indicated in the diagram above.

When her four children sat down to eat the cake, how should they divide the cake so that each child gets the same amount of money?

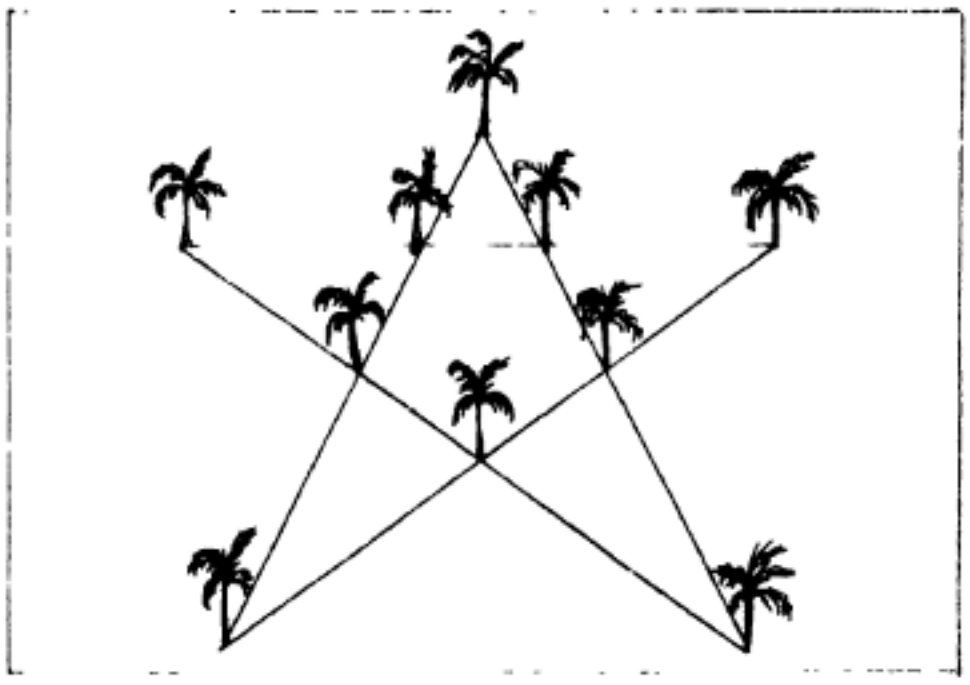
Word Power

What's so special when someone:
EATS A FEAST: KRAFT (CHEESE) STEAK, A BAKE, SAKE AND TEA for breakfast?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

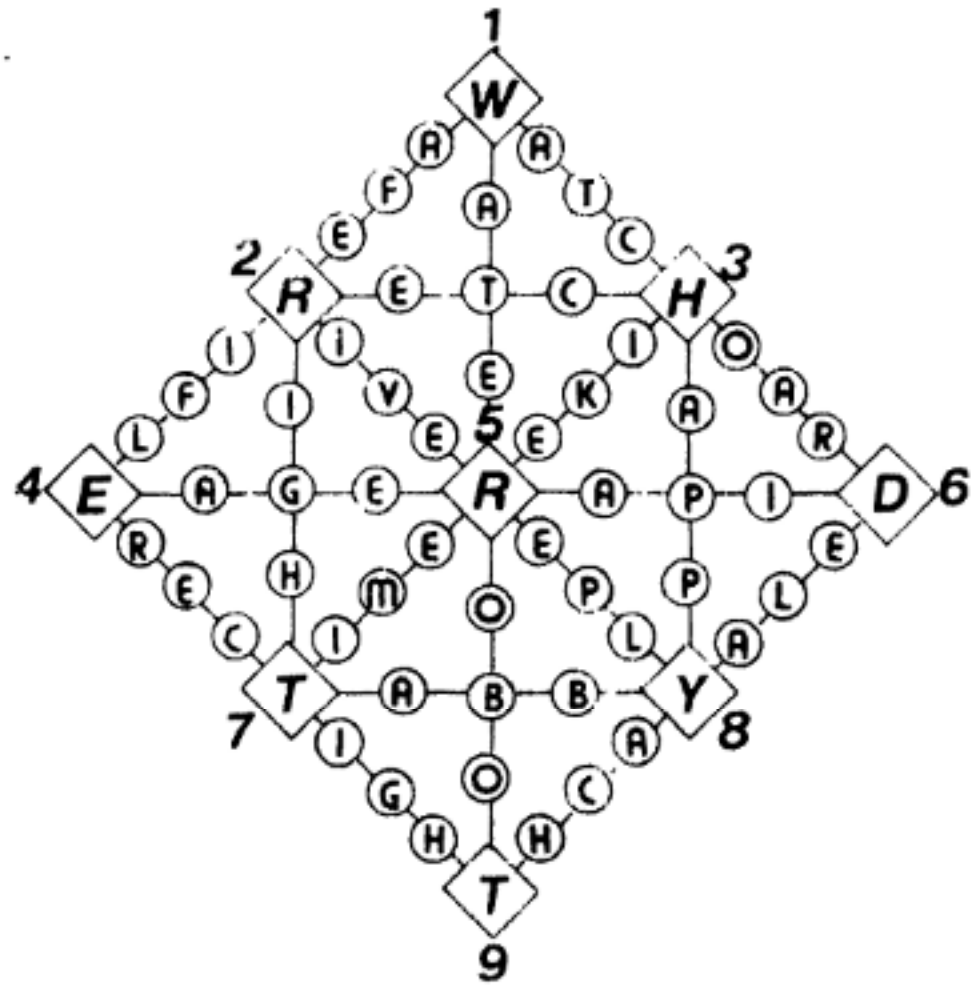
Quick Think: 2 6 5 4 3 1 2 5 4 2
Sketch a Word: On the other hand, merry-go-round, about face.
Letter Power: There are seven fs. One tends to miss out the f in of.
Shoe Search: 4 left, 6 right.

Mindbender:



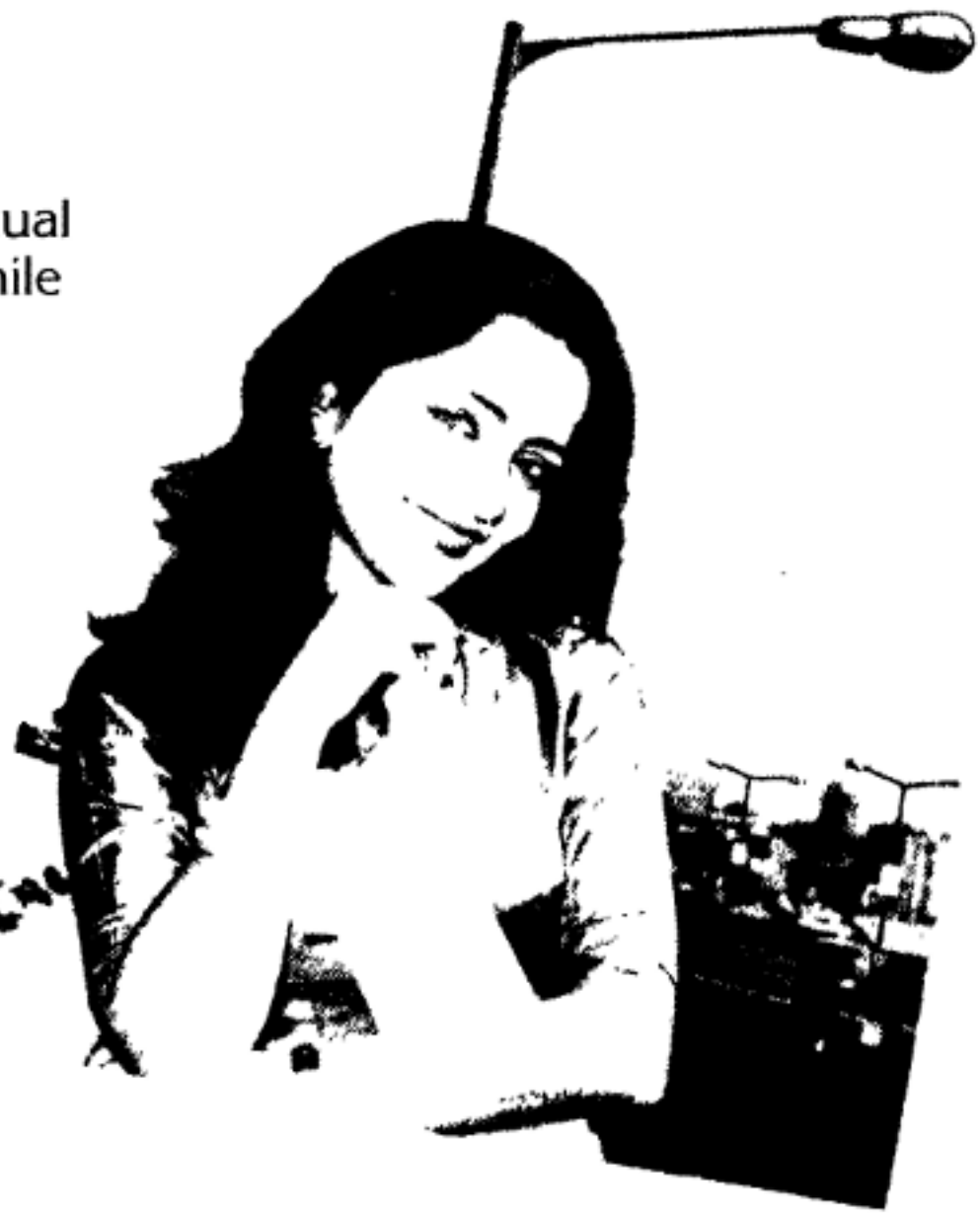
Witsharpener: Are you sure that you haven't fallen into the trap of adding $2 to $2 to $27 and incorrectly coming to the figure $ 29. In fact the cost of the room was $27 minus the $2 that the bell boy kept.

Diamond Diagonals:



How not to grow a lamp-post from a friend's head and a few tips on good composition.

Composition is one of the most elusive and individual aspects of photography. While everyone agrees it's an absolute necessity, they all have their own concept of what it is! There is the modernistic school of thought, the traditionalist, the static and dynamic style and many more. But you don't have to bother about all that. Here are a few simple guidelines that can make your photography so much better ... compositionally speaking.



dia Photographic Company Limited – a Kodak affiliate

Composition and organisation

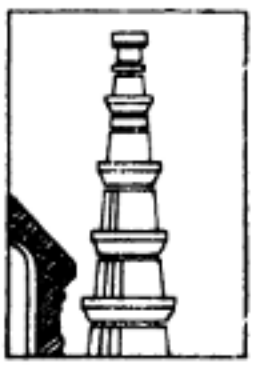
Simply put, composition is visual organisation. It includes, but is not limited to how you place your subject in the frame – and the effect that it will have on all the other elements in the picture. Compose carefully and you can emphasize your subject (which is what you want to do) while keeping all unnecessary and distracting things out of the picture (which is where they should be).

Good composition involves the choice of vertical or horizontal framing, the position of the camera subject placement, contrasts and isolating details.

This isn't as difficult as it may sound, and with a little practice, it will become very easy ... and your pictures better.

Vertical or horizontal

Simple. A palm tree, the Qutab Minar and Amitabh Bachchan need vertical frames. A mountain range or a seascape need a horizontal frame. In both cases, you've added to the height and the width. For portraits, use the vertical format, it adds character.



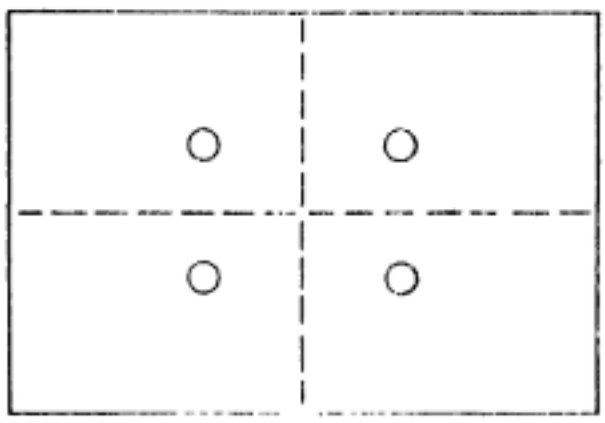


Static or dynamic

A balanced picture makes for a Static composition. It would probably be a picture shot on a quiet, calm day. A Dynamic composition is one in which the picture seems to 'move' – a picture tilted, placed at a slant or distorted would be 'dynamic'. Work out your 'response' before you shoot. And shoot.

Framing

While there's nothing wrong with putting your subject squarely in the centre of the frame, you can change your pictures dramatically by placing your subject to the left or right of the centre or a bit higher or lower than usual. One peek through the view-finder should be enough to decide.



Framing action

The ground rule for shooting action: anticipate. Try to set your focus first, try to get to the best shooting point, and get there in time. Not too difficult at all. Fill the frame; get all the action. Pick a shooting distance that lets you fill at least one quarter to one third of the picture area with significant action. And please keep a safe distance if the action is dangerous!

Framing the outdoors

A basic point for shooting the outdoors: find a dominant feature of the landscape and concentrate on it. Filling the frame with the principal subject is vitally important. Frame your scenics with a person or object in the foreground and you'll add interest and depth and that important sense of scale. Remember: a foreground feature that contrasts in colour and/or tone with distant areas is more effective in creating the illusion of depth than one that looks similar

Contrast and shock

Contrasting elements are the building blocks of intelligent composition. Almost any kind of contrast helps structure a photograph. Contrasts of tone, colour, sharpness, size and subjects are fair game. Like a white flower in a bunch of red roses ... a child in a crowd of grown-ups ... a crow among doves . . just be careful not to overdo it.

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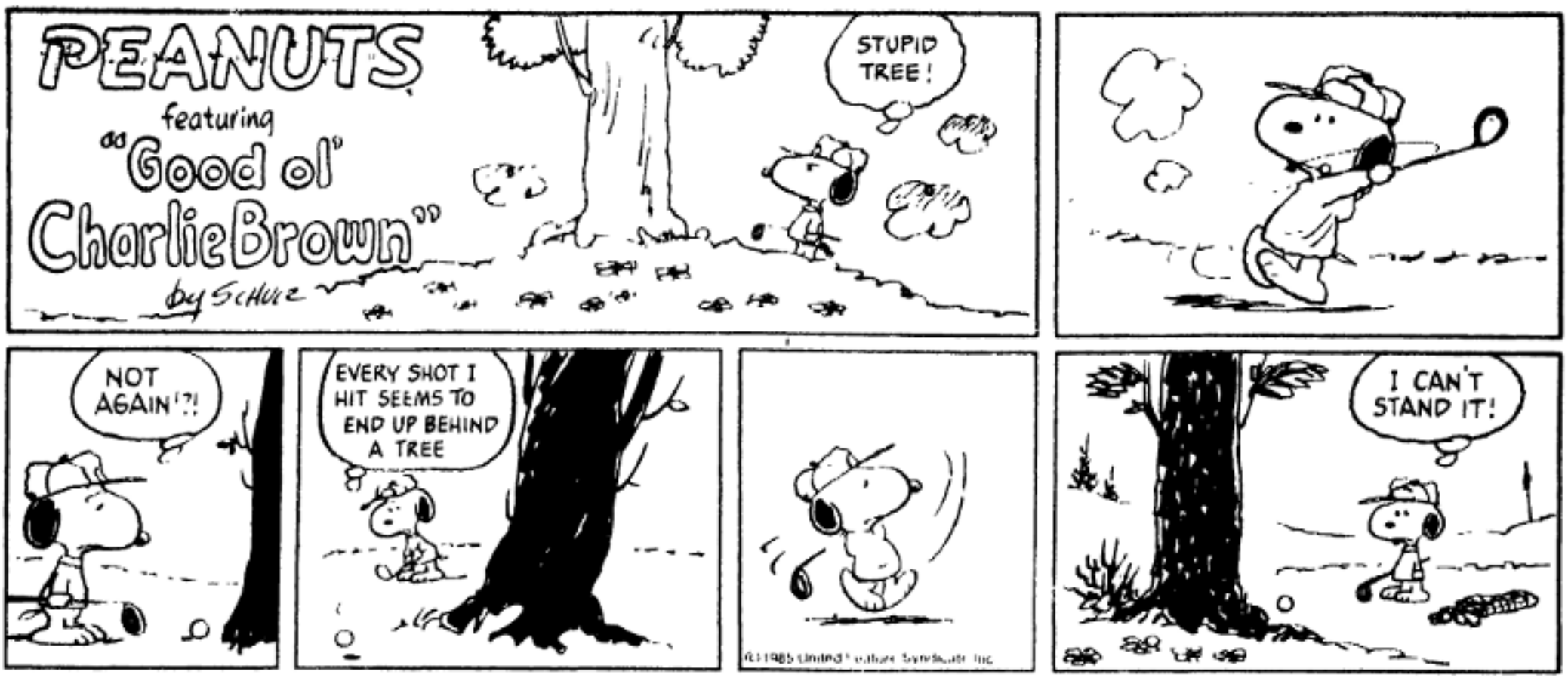
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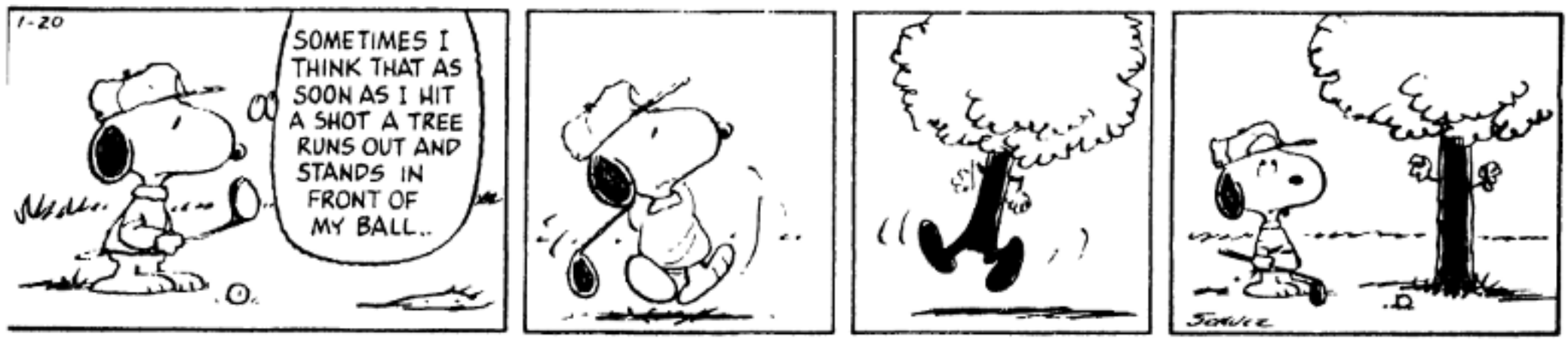
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ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND OLDEST CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE IN INDIA

Three days before *Arjun* was released *Dharmendra* was a very nervous man. He cancelled all shootings, got drunk and snubbed people at the slightest excuse. "I don't know what is happening to me. Everytime one of my son's films is about to be released, I get such fits," Dharmendra confided to a friend. This time he was more worried because two of *Sunny's* films had fared badly and a lot depended on *Arjun*. However, the father was relieved to learn that the audience had shown a favourable response. Dharmendra even celebrated the occasion by throwing a couple of parties.

It took just one photograph to start the love story all over again. *Smita Patil* wore a *Kanjeevaram* sari and with a *mangalsutra* round her neck and *sindoor* in her *maang*, she clung on to *Raj Babbar* and posed for a leading film weekly. After that gossip magazines, friends and enemies took over. Every day the two have been receiving scores of calls wishing them a happy married life.

Poonam Dhillon has at last learnt lessons the bitter way. For years she wasted most of her time in the dreamworld of *Ramesh Talwar* till one day Ramesh walked out of her life to marry the girl her mother chose. It took quite some time for Poonam to recover but as soon as she did she swore not to get involved with any man in future. Her decision is paying rich dividends as directors and producers are queueing up to sign her.

The last time *Padmini Kolhapure* went on a holiday abroad she became part of a controversy that was reported in all leading dailies: the actress was linked to a young executive of a leading airline. Just when scribes were resting their pens, Padmini has once again taken a flight to America and Europe. The tinsel city is agog with rumours that she has gone out with her elusive friend from the airline.

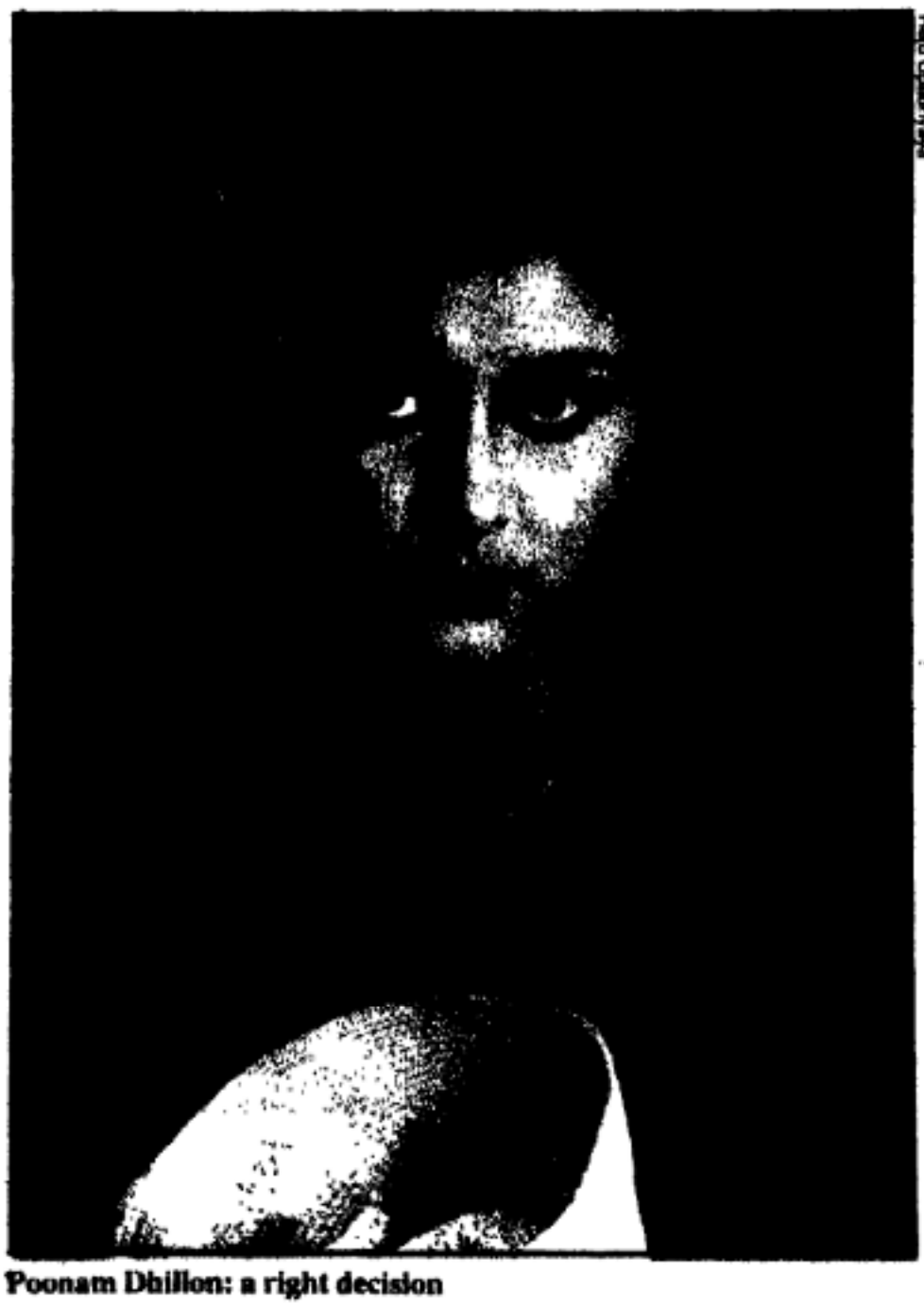


Simi: enemies around

Suddenly *Simi* is back into the limelight not because she has turned director and churned out her first movie, *Rukshat* starring *Mithun Chakraborty*, *Marc Zuber* and *Anooradha* among others. Insiders in the industry are talking of how Simi had mesmerised her producers with her charm and taken them for a ride. They are sure of the fate of the film but Simi is banking on her ultimate judges: the audience.

With the release of *Boxer*, good times are back again for *Parikshat Sahni*. His wife, who had left him with the children when he was going through a crisis, both financially and career-wise, has finally come back to him. Prior to the film's release, Parikshat was in dire straits. Films were not coming his way and consequently there was no money trickling in. He took to drinking to ward off the frustration. *Boxer* changed all that. His performance in the film was widely appreciated, with the result that more offers started coming his way. The film even changed his lifestyle: he cut down on drinking and started taking his career more seriously. "Loneliness can be like living in hell. I am happy the bad times are over. I am now free to concentrate on my career," says Parikshat.

After a rather long period of absence, *Silk Smitha* is back to titillate her audiences. Her next Malayalam film awaiting release is *CID* in which she has been shot in a rare posture: with a lot of clothes on. The producers are waiting with bated breath as to how the audience will react.



Poonam Dhillon: a right decision

DELHI DIARY

Capital Stars



Kamia Malhotra

Bombay's filmworld and Delhi's elite seem to have begun an exchange programme. While film stars from Bombay—Amitabh Bachchan, Sunil Dutt and Vyjyanthimala—have joined Delhi's elite after winning the Lok Sabha elections, the children of Delhi's elite are joining films in a big way. The first to make it to the glamour world was Amrita Singh, the daughter of the Emergency heroine, Ruksana Sultana. Now authoress Uma Vasudev's daughter, Kamia Malhotra, has signed up for *Vishwaas*, in which she will act along with Shashi Kapoor, Raj Babbar, Smita Patil and Raj Kiran. Kamia has been seen occasionally in the television soap opera, *Humlog*, in which she plays Kamia, the spoilt, rich girlfriend of Nanhe. Apart from Amrita and Kamia, Asish Chanana, son of former union minister of state for industry (and a Sanjay Gandhi favourite, who has now been dropped), Charanjit Chanana, has joined films. He is acting in *Aag aur Shola*, which also stars Jeetendra. Things indeed have changed in the capital over the past decade. The first occasion when Delhi's elite interacted with Bombay's filmdom was when Gautam Sarin, son of the distinguished civil servant, Harish Chandra Sarin (presently India's ambassador to Nepal) joined films in the mid-Seventies.

Arun Nehru's Nominee

The Indian Youth Congress National Council has now been freed of ministerial clutches. Till recently, all the young ministers in the centre were members of the council. In the reconstituted body, only Gulam Nabi Azad, by virtue of being a former IYC president has been retained (Azad was the president before Tariq Anwar). While many new faces have been inducted, one name which stands out is that of Ashok Singh of Rae Bareili. Till recently, he was a general secretary of the UP unit. He is the son of Dhunni Singh, a contractor in Rae Bareili, who is known as Arun Nehru's man in the constituency. Arun Nehru is not totally out of favour.

One-time Hero, Now Foe

The opposition has not learnt any lessons from the crushing defeat in the last Lok Sabha polls. Pulling each other down still seems to be the favourite game. A recent example is the length to which the BJP has gone to harass their one-time hero and now deadly foe Dr Subramaniam Swamy. After his defeat at the polls, Dr Swamy accepted a visiting professorship in economics at Harvard University. The BJP vice-president Mr Ram Jethmalani then inspired his son Mahesh and his law junior Mr Jaisinghani to move an application in the Metropolitan Court in Bombay to restrain Dr Swamy from leaving the country. Mr Jethmalani used the argument that a defamation case filed by the former BJP mayor of Bombay, Mr Prabhakar Pai against Dr Swamy in 1982 would be jeopardised if Dr Swamy left the country. Recently the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Mr Mahulkar, ruled that no such jeopardy was likely and Dr Swamy has been allowed to go abroad.

The defamation case took a dramatic turn when Dr Swamy (who is conducting his case without lawyers and appearing in person) made Mr Pai admit under cross-examination that although he (Mr Pai) has been practising medicine and dispensing drugs, he did not hold any degree in medicine nor is he registered as a practitioner with the Indian Medical Council as is required under the law. The magistrate then advised Dr Swamy to file a counter case under section 420 of the IPC against Mr Pai if he wanted to pursue the matter. It remains to be seen what Dr Swamy will do when he returns from abroad

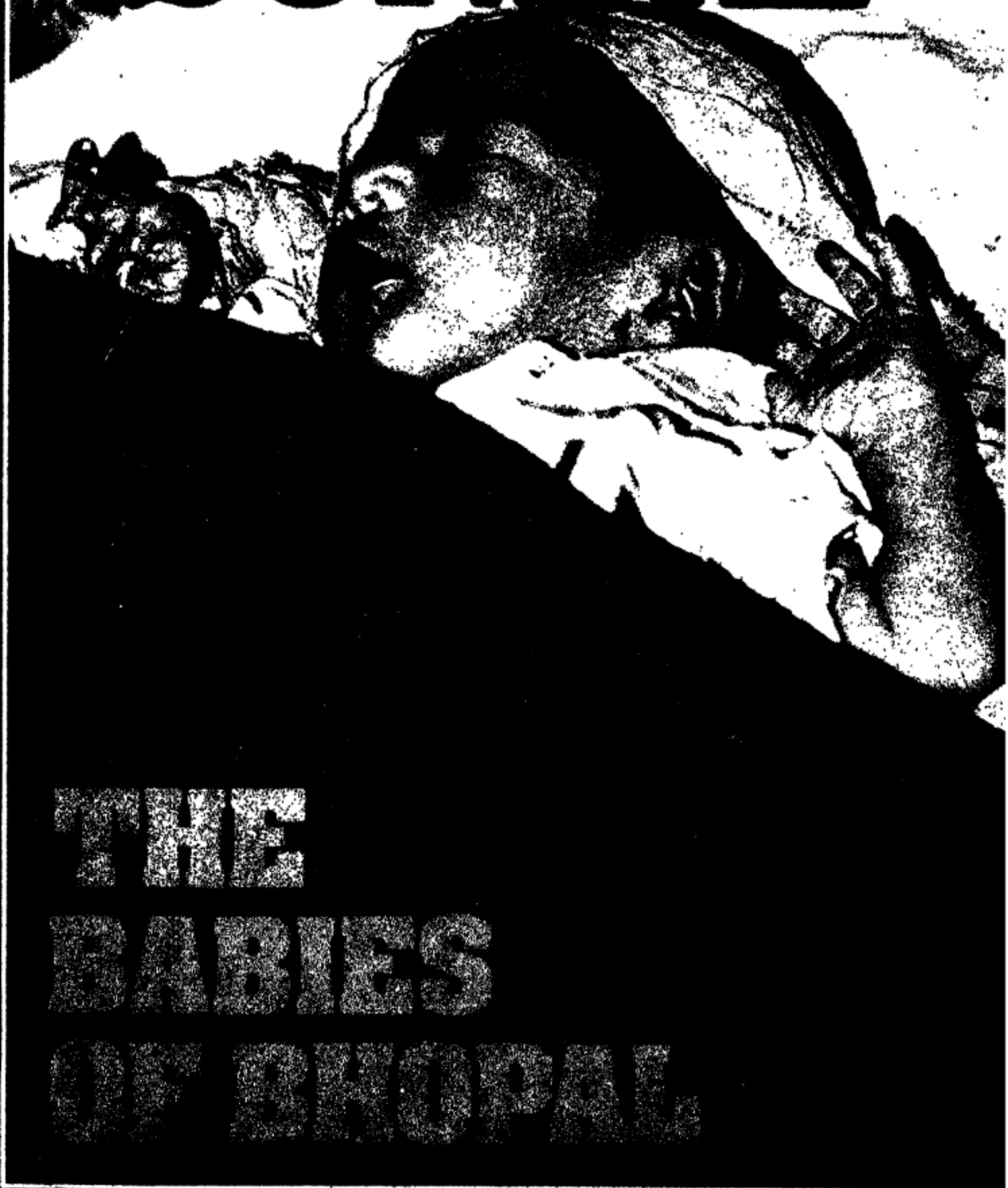
Pawar's Power Game

Sharad Pawar's courtship with the Congress(I) has created strange problems. While the Maharashtra chief minister, Vasantdada Patil, has been making critical statements about the state of the party organisation, opposition leaders like George Fernandes of the Janata Party and K. P Unnikrishnan of Sharad Pawar's own party, Indian Congress (Socialist), have been going to the press with statements regarding Pawar's intentions. Unnikrishnan has been categorically denying that his president is leaving the sinking ship. Fernandes, on the other hand, has been making it public that the leader of the Maharashtra Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) of which the Janata Party is a partner has been holding parleys with the ruling party and will soon quit the opposition ranks. Sharad Pawar himself has not made any public statement on this subject so far. The lack of affirmation or denial from him has added to the confusion. Meanwhile, Pawar's associate, Suresh Kalmadi, has of late been seen in the company of important ruling party functionaries. A dinner hosted by Kalmadi in Delhi recently has become the envy of the ruling party circles. The Prime Minister's closest aide, Arun Singh, attended the dinner. He has not been seen in the houses of many ruling party MPs so far. His presence at Kalmadi's dinner, therefore, has raised the latters stock among Delhi's elite. Incidentally, Sharad Pawar was in Delhi the day Kalmadi hosted the dinner. Pawar, however, chose to fly back to Bombay without attending the feast. Was he trying to ward off embarrassing questions about his future

D.E. Nizamuddin

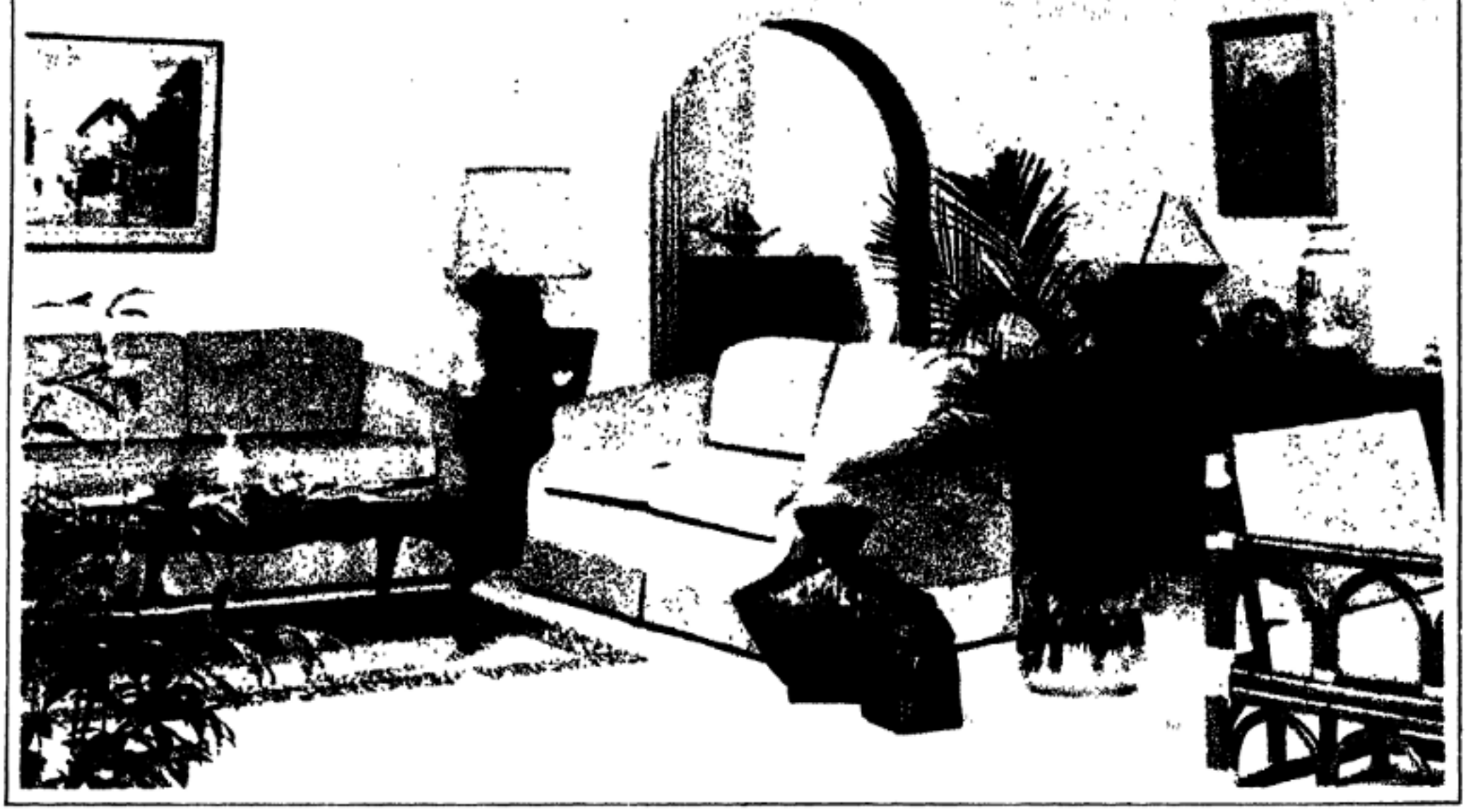
Mischief in Kashmir

SUNDAY



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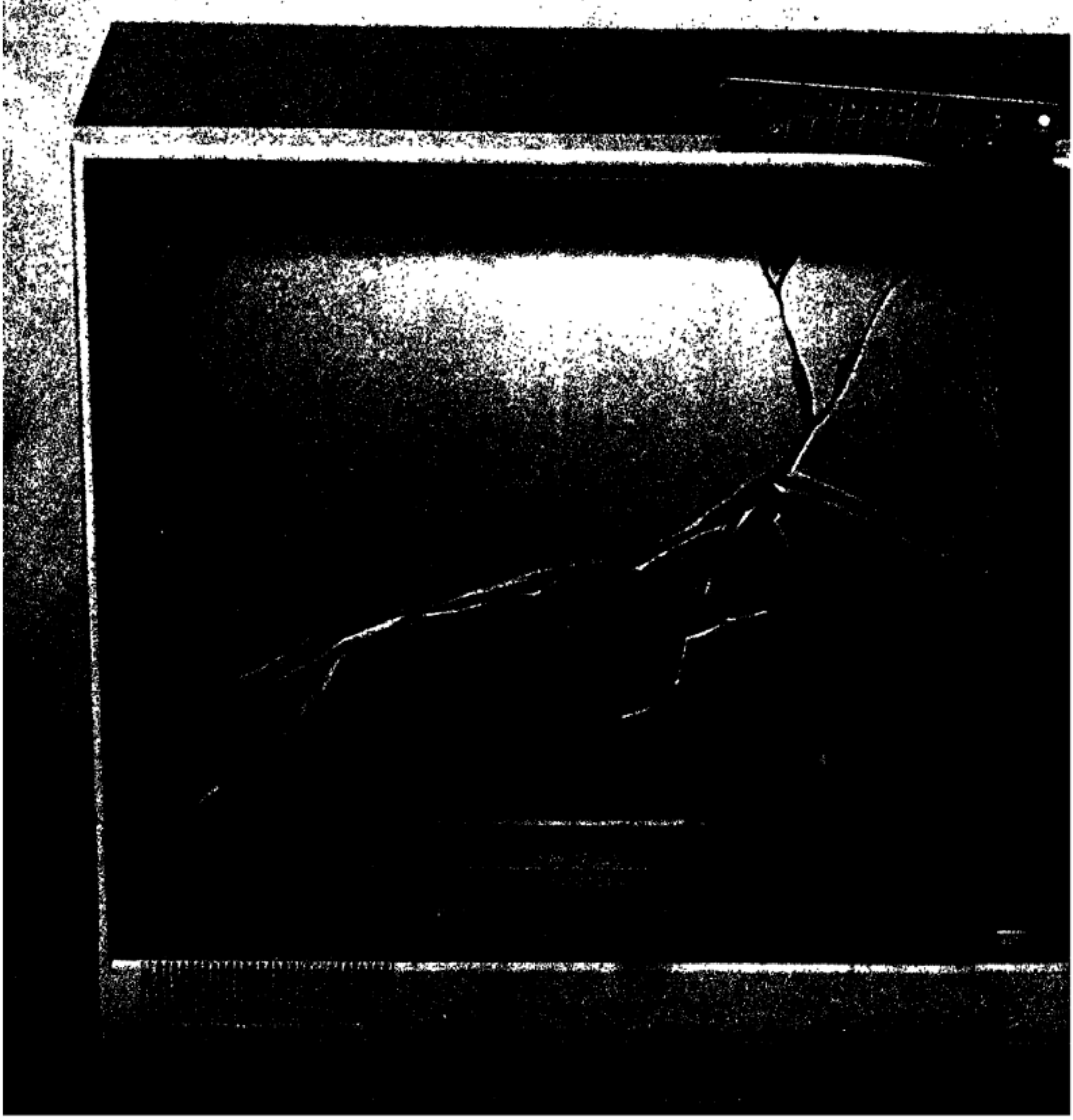
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Gujarat: Peace at Last?

Even as violence continues to rock the walled city of Ahmedabad, the agitation leaders announced the withdrawal of the controversial anti-reservation stir. Is peace round the corner or is it just a temporary ceasefire? Tushar Bhatt reports.



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Mischief in Kashmir

Sometime back, Dr Farooq Abdullah survived a bid on his life. Shortly afterwards, his supporters were fired upon in the Valley. Are his opponents hatching a conspiracy to eliminate him? Sankarshan Thakur and Yusuf Jameel investigate.

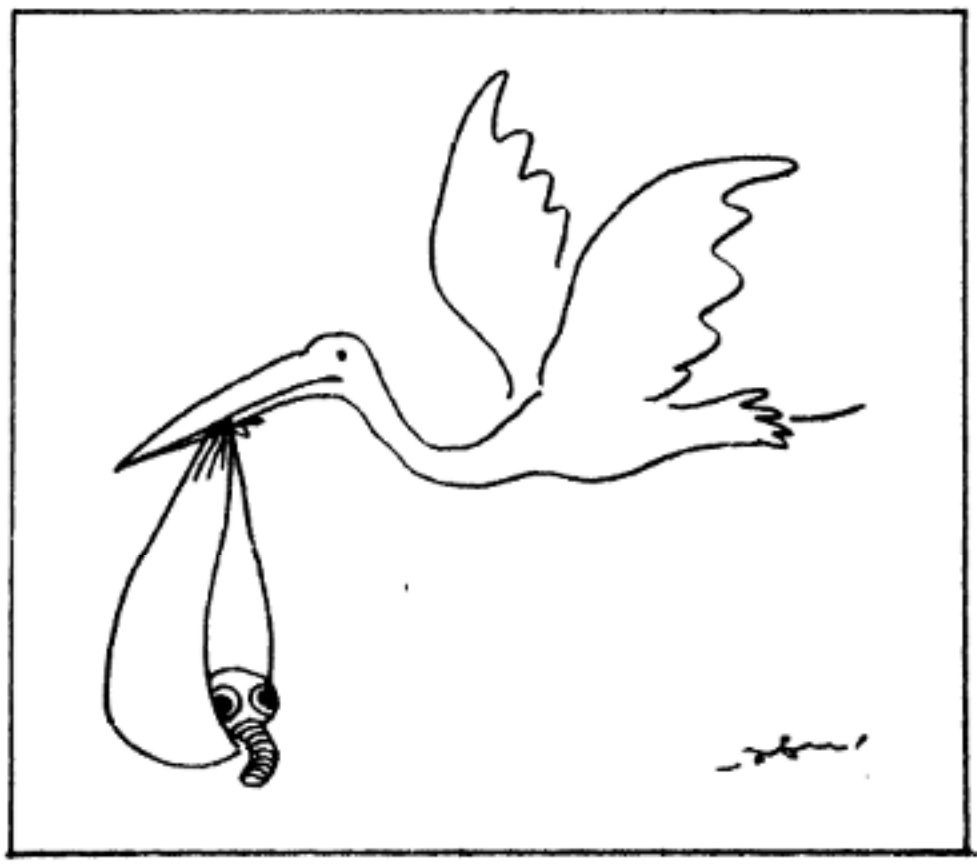
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EXCLUSIVE/KULDIP NAYAR



'Disciplining' the Press

The Tamil Nadu government is known for its unkindness to the press. Not surprisingly then, the privilege motion against Paul Raj, the editor of the Tamil monthly *Vaniga Ottrumai* (Business Unity), was revived in the new Assembly, and without initiating fresh proceedings the editor was sentenced to two weeks' imprisonment. To add insult to injury, the state's finance minister and leader of the House, V.R. Nedunchezhiyan, said that the punishment awarded to Raj should be a lesson for other newspapers and journals.

This smacks of vindictiveness because the privilege alleged to have been breached was of a particular House and should have ended with the Assembly's dissolution. Besides, the second Press Commission has stated that a "limitation of one year should be prescribed for taking cognizance of publication of offending material in the newspapers on the ground of breach of privilege."

However, it was more disturbing to learn that the case against Paul Raj was resurrected to take "revenge" on Cho Ramaswamy, editor of the Tamil satirical fortnightly, *Tughlak*, against whom two privilege motions are pending before the Privileges Committee of the Assembly. This was revealed by the Speaker of the Assembly, P.H. Pandian, to his long-time friend Paul Raj. A call to Cho confirmed the disclosure. Cho also asserted that the state government had given an indirect warning that his writings were "too dangerous" to be allowed.

In the hands of the government the privilege motion seems to have become an effective tool for punishing bold writers and editors.

When Arun Shourie wrote under the caption, "Pretty little lies in Parliament" in *Indian Express*, H. R. Hidayatullah, the then Rajya Sabha chairman, observed: "The newspapers are the eyes and ears of the public and if every citizen has a right to criticise the actions of others, so also the newspapers whose profession is to turn the light of publicity on the irregularities of public actions." The 1966-67 British House of Commons Select Committee on Parliamentary Privilege states specifically that penal jurisdiction should be exercised "sparingly" and "the power to commit for contempt should not be used as a deterrent against a person."

Imprisonment for breach of privilege or contempt of the House is very rare. For instance, in Goa, Daman and Diu, when a newspaper editor was sentenced to imprisonment and refused to express any regret the committee of privileges recommended that it would be sufficient to admonish the editor. In fact, "reprimand," "admonition" or cancellation of press cards are the usual modes of punishment. In a well-known case the editor of *Blitz* was summoned to the bar of the House and reprimanded. The Committee had even suggested a lighter punishment like cancellation of the correspondent's Lok Sabha press gallery card and Central Hall pass.

It is the responsibility of the press to inform the public about the decisions of the government, debates held in Parliament and Assembly or the statements of ministers and other members. Already on many occasions the press, heeding the requests of the Speakers in Parliament and Assemblies, has abstained from publishing certain remarks of various members. Even this is a denial of the people's right to know what their elected representatives say. But when members behave in an obscene manner, as has happened in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, is the press to be blamed for reporting it?

In fact, to prove a breach of privilege against a newspaper, malice has to be proved. In 1958, *Jagran* of Indore was hauled up for breach of privilege for criticising the conduct of a member of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly. The privileges committee ruled against it saying that the editorial in question did not contain "any false statement deliberately made or any words indicating malice of the writer."

The Tamil Nadu government is bent on taking "revenge" on Cho, it is not a question of what he has written but one of disciplining him. There is no clear dichotomy between legislative privileges and freedom of the press. But when the party in power tries to use a privilege motion to pick on independent writers, the democratic structure is indeed in danger.

Legislative privilege exists to help the House conduct its business and maintain its authority. But in a democracy, as was revealed in the case against Ramoji Rao, editor of *Eenadu*, freedom of the press is extremely vital; it cannot be tampered with in the name of privileges, which, in any case, should have been codified by now for pressmen.

Freedom of press, pronounced in a Supreme Court judgement, is the Ark of the Covenant of Democracy because public criticism is essential for the working of its institutions. The role of dissent has become more vital now to counter official propaganda. Cho's case is a challenge to the press and should be taken up with as much zest as the Bihar Press Bill which was ultimately withdrawn. If left unchallenged, the privilege motions might become a convenient weapon with which to muzzle the press.

Not only the press, but anyone who dissents runs a risk. It is a frightening thought that if chief ministers like M. G. Ramachandran were to have their way, the child who sees the Emperor wearing no clothes and says so may be served with a breach of privilege.

In a democracy, freedom of the press is extremely vital; it cannot be tampered with in the name of privileges, which in any case, should have been codified by now for pressmen.

A Flight to Death

The solemn mood of *Sudden Death* (7—13 July) still haunts me. Callous terrorism has resulted in the tragic death of 329 innocent passengers and crew. While investigations are still underway I have no doubts that the disaster was caused by a bomb explosion on board since the possibility of structural defects and engine failure is very remote. I was shocked to learn that the United States permits schools, like the one run by Frank Camper, which train terrorists to thrive on its soil. As Shubhabrata Bhattacharya points out, the Kanishka crash should serve as an eye-opener to the US government.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• The world was shocked at the disaster. So many innocent lives were sacrificed for the cause of terrorism. It seems that human life has no value. Why should we become the prey of terrorist activities?
Ingana Paul, Durgapur (West Bengal)

• I was moved to go through the report of Ashis Ray. Apparently the cause of the crash had been a bomb explosion but I failed to understand as to how the aircraft managed to take off with a bomb in its cargo hold. It merely proves that security arrangements at Toronto and Montreal had not been adequate, whatever the concerned authorities might say. Steps should be taken to ensure that no such tragedies occur in future.
Kaushik Sarkar, Calcutta

• It is paradoxical that the US government allows institutions that train terrorists to operate while at the same time cries hoarse over terrorist activities in Nicaragua and Cuba. It would not be unjust to blame the US administration for the tragedy in which hundreds of our countrymen were brutally killed.
Monilal Ghosh, Calcutta

• Most of the experts, investigating the Kanishka crash are of the opinion that there was a powerful explosive hidden in the aircraft's luggage hold. The terrorists trained by Frank Camper played an active part in the sabotage. The US government should ban this type of schools to put an end to international terrorism.
Sanjib Barua, Buxarah (West Bengal)

• Now that the black box and the cockpit voice recorder have been recovered, the reason behind the crash of Air India's flight 182 can be found out. Whatever be the revelations I have one question: Why was the aircraft allowed to leave even when the sniffer dogs "went beserk" at the Toronto airport?
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)



• The report made painful reading. The tragedy was caused by people bent on destroying India's unity.
Amit Sharangi, Rohini (West Bengal)

• Everyone in India and abroad mourns the disaster. People are filled with hatred towards the dastardly acts of the terrorists. The extremists are fighting the government but a lot of innocent lives are being sacrificed in the process. It is due to the inefficiency of security forces that the terrorists succeed in spelling terror.
Malay Kumar Nandi, Calcutta

Once is Enough

Corruption reigned supreme during the Emergency (*Never Again*, 23-29 June). Politicians, policemen and government officials minted money. None dared to raise their voice against the culprits. Considering the agony suffered by millions of innocent people during the Emergency, the defeat of Indira Gandhi in the 1977 elections was inevitable.
D. Balakrishna, Tumkur

• The cover story should serve as an eye-opener to those who think that an Emergency is the only antidote to the ills plaguing the country.
Chandra, Madras

• Poverty cannot be fought by evicting the poor from the slums. I was surprised to learn that Khushwant Singh supported the slum-clearance drive of Sanjay Gandhi during the Emergency.
Rakesh Arakere, Pali Marwar (Rajasthan)

• I was not convinced by the arguments put forward by Khushwant Singh in support of the Emergency. Mr Singh often condemns violence and the use of coercion but his support of the coercive methods employed by Sanjay Gandhi was unequivocal. A government which requires an Emergency to enforce law and order must be thoroughly inefficient. Mr Singh's contention that he did not support press censorship although he supported Emergency does not sound convincing. He should bear in mind that the Emergency was clamped with the sole purpose of propping an unpopular government.
Sugato Lahiry, Muzaffarpur (Bihar)

• Shrikant Varma justified the declaration of the Emergency, in *A Lesson Forgotten*, with the argument that the opposition parties had created an atmosphere where the imposition had become inevitable. But the truth is that the 1974 stir was not originated by the opposition parties. The misrule of the Congress government evoked the anger of the people. The nation's economy was in a shambles. Corruption had become the rule of the day. Thus the people revolted. The government resorted to coercive methods to suppress the people. The final blow to Indira Gandhi came in the form of the Allahabad High Court verdict. Jayaprakash Narain became the prime target of the government because he not only provided leadership to the movement but also gave voice to the people's simmering discontent. But Mr Varma, always busy framing charges against the opposition, refused to admit these facts. Obviously, he himself has forgotten the lesson the people taught his party in the 1977 general elections.
A. Ramachandran, Jamshedpur

Not Innocent

The investigative report on the release of Adil Shahryar (*The Case of the VIP's Son*, 30 June—6 July) was excellent. Although Rajiv Gandhi returned home from the US without any concrete achievement, he succeeded in releasing Adil, son of Mohammed Yunus, a trusted lieutenant of Nehru-Gandhi family. In view of the number of charges against him, Adil cannot be innocent.
M. Srinivasa, Sambalpur

Down with Terrorism



I was shocked by the unfortunate tragedy that struck Air India. International terrorism is on the rise since a number of foreign governments openly support extremism.
Niraj Kumar, Patna

Humane Convict

I was filled with wonder to read the news item *Donor from Death Row* (23—29 June). Shashikant Parmar has proved that all condemned prisoners are not brutal. Rishikumar Mittal, the receiver of the kidney, has rightly stated that Paramar is an 'angel' to him. Sadvichar Parivar of Ahmedabad should be lauded for its efforts to reform the prisoners. I would also like to congratulate Haribhai Panchal and his organisation for initiating reformatory activities among the prisoners.
Gopalbandhu Dash, Tomaka (Orissa)

Man of Guts

Sunday has done justice to R. Gundu Rao by publishing his interview *(I was Among the Nearest and Dearest to Mrs Gandhi,* 23—29 June). Mr Rao is a man of guts and he is committed to his work. As he has said in his interview, he was very near to Mrs Gandhi.
Anil Dubey, Bijapur

Promoting a Party

The Television Games (30 June—6 July) rightly pointed out that the national network is being utilised to project the good image of the Congress(I). The way a number of sponsored programmes are being dropped is unjustified. Moreover, it is common knowledge that Doordarshan authorities illtreat their sponsors. Doordarshan should grow up as a neutral body.
K. Ravichandran, Ahmedabad

• The report was timely and well-researched. The Doordarshan authorities have become highly irresponsible and whimsical in their attitude. *Chitrahaar*, for instance, never commences on time. Two particular songs, apparently promoting the cause of national integration, are being telecast regularly. Dull and boring films are shown while the foreign lively TV serials are getting a step-motherly treatment One still cannot fathom the reason for discontinuing *Different Strokes.*
Arvinder Singh Walia, Calcutta

Money from Skeletons

Feeding on the Dead (30 June—3 July) portrayed Indians in a poor light. The sale of pilfered skeletons abroad fetches astronomical sums with the result that many medical colleges are finding it difficult to carry out their day-to-day work. The government should regulate the export of skeletons.
Jayan R, Itanagar

•Ritu Sarin's article contains facts which need clarification. The name of the pioneer of the skeleton business is not Satyanarayan Sen but Sanker Narayan Sen, who is my father. Reknas Limited was a public limited company and he was the managing director and not the proprietor as stated. But it is true, that the shareholders and the directors decided to wind up the business due to unhealthy competition. Reknas Ltd. never compromised on the quality and craftsmanship of the specimens as they were intended purely for medical studies. The business, started by my father in 1937, was neither a 'secretive' nor a 'sordid' affair. His shop was actually a workshop over 20,000 sq. feet in area, employing at least 75 Bengali youths who were taught how to treat and prepare skeletons. These skeletons were used for medical and biological studies all over the world. My father has been honoured several times by medical universities abroad for his craftsmanship. Finally, my father was never in the book publishing business and has definitely not been 'forced to revert to it.'
Diti Sen, Calcutta

Reckless Carbide

The Catastrophe on Screen (16—22 June) pointed out the defects in the safety devices at Bhopal's Union Carbide plant, as revealed by a London TV report. The references to "bad engineering, reckless cost-cutting and a disregard for people's lives" bear ample testimony to the fact that the safety aspect was utterly neglected. Ian Swift suggested that the "three stage safety system in Bhopal was inadequate".

Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)

We regret that as Khushwant Singh is out of the country it has not been possible to publish his column, *Gossip Sweet and Sour*, in this issue—Editor.

THE BABIES OF BHOPAL

The nightmare continues. Even seven months after the killer MIC gas leaked out of a tank at Union Carbide's Bhopal plant, its victims continue to suffer and die—or be born dead. Out of every three children born to women who were pregnant on the night of the disaster, finds Ritu Sarin, only one survives. Many are born deformed. And nobody knows if the trauma will end with this generation, or the next.





Left: the twins both called 'Guddu,' who died within a couple of days of being born and right, Rani, a five-day-old victim of the gas leak

A child is born. It is past midnight inside the dank labour room of the Sultania Janana Hospital, Bhopal. Three attendants wash the tiny infant and routinely hold him up to give his mother her first glimpse. "*Tumhara ladka paida hua hai* (you have given birth to a son)," says one nurse as she pats the child to make him cry. There is no response. In the dim light the skin of the child looks macerated and bluish. Within minutes, a senior doctor is called in. He looks down at the curled figure, asks for the mother's medical record and scrawls in the column for details of the birth: "Stillborn boy weighing four pounds, born to mother." Then he rushes out to the maternity ward to attend to another patient about to deliver. Outside, there is silence as the father looks expectantly at the white-clothed figures washing hands in the waiting room. Then comes the sound of weeping from beyond the green curtains of the labour room. "*Yeh bhi gas kand ka baccha paida hua hai* (Here is another child of the gas tragedy)," says the nurse as she shows the father the shrivelled face of his newborn

The dead child is the unnamed victim of the holocaust of 3 December in Bhopal when 40 tonnes of lethal gas spewed out of the Union Carbide factory. More than 200 days after the accident, the death toll from the world's worst industrial disaster continues to rise. While official figures are static at 2,500 killed, others estimate that over 15,000 lives were lost because of the 30-minute release of toxic gas into the atmosphere. Whatever the count of victims, Bhopal became the scene of an unimaginable calamity, an incomparable tragedy. The tragedy of entire families being wiped out because the air they breathed that night was laden with choking death, the tragedy of sleeping children who woke up to find themselves orphaned by whiffs of an unknown killer, the tragedy of hundreds of those who could not identify their loved ones among the heap of corpses and simply lost them forever in the death and destruction of that black night. It was, and still is, the tragedy of the thousands who survived the nightmare only to face years of physical disabilities. But the tragedy which is manifesting itself today and which threatens to be the cruel fallout of the Bhopal disaster—the tragedy of a mother who knows she may give birth to a dead or deformed child; a Carbide child whose fate was sealed inside its mother's womb.

Once the deleterious effects of methyl isocyanate exposure were known to have caused serious respiratory, pulmonary and neurological defects, hesitant questions were asked if the grim aftereffects of the exposure would be felt on the progeny of the victims as well. At the time of the disaster there were more than 3,000 pregnant women living in the areas which were declared "gas-affected." What would be the implications for the future generations if teratogenic (damaging to foetuses) and mutagenic (causing genetic changes) effects were discovered in children born to these women? Unfortunately, no awareness was created by the state authorities about the dangers of childbirth even after the effects of MIC exposure on the reproductive system were obvious. Many women complained of abnormalities in menstrual flow, polynorrhoea and suppression of lactation. These complaints were attributed only to the "severe stress and strain" on the female population of Bhopal. Even when in the month of December itself a high rate of infant mortality was recorded in affected areas of old Bhopal and some deformities were noticed among children born to mothers in their third trimester (third month of pregnancy) at the time of the exposure, mere neonatal surveillance recommended by gynaecological experts. The effects of the gas on childbirth would only be apparent among children born after July to mothers who were in their first trimester on 3 December, they said.



Gopal Jain

A prematurely born child which died ten hours after birth

It is now July. The foulness of death and disorder pervades the Sultania Janana Hospital, the largest maternity hospital close to the affected areas, where over 20 children are born every day. The expectant mothers who have been gas affected are suffering from acute abdominal pain, vaginal discharge besides respiratory and other complications. The three maternity wards are full; women lie in corridors and passages and often share beds. In one bed of the maternity ward two affected women who had just delivered were seen sleeping. Shanti Bai and Basanti Bai are sisters. Both were in the initial stages of pregnancy when they fled their homes in Chola Mandi, close to the Union Carbide factory, with thousands of others to escape the death blowing with the wind. One sister described how during that horrific night, she stumbled over dead bodies as she ran, and finally collapsed to find herself in hospital the next morning. After that, she had to be admitted to the same Sultania Janana hospital twice during her pregnancy. Nobody had advised her about the possible effect of the gas on the child she was carrying, about the chance of an unnatural child being born to her.



Gopal Jain

Children with pulmonary and respiratory problems at the MIC ward in Hamidia Hospital

Now both the cribs on either side of the bed shared by the two sisters are vacant. The children died within three days of each other. A daughter was born to Shanti Bai who lived for only four hours. How did she know it was the gas that killed her child? As Shanti Bai sobbed uncontrollably, grieving the loss of her dead child, the nurse says the child was "eaten by the MIC," as is the case with many of those born to victims in the ward over the past six months. The baby was underweight, with blackish skin and club feet. No, she does not have her medical records since she had insisted that the doctors should write her child had died of MIC poisoning.' Instead, they confiscated her papers and issued her discharge slip immediately.

There was more trauma for the unfortunate mother, even after the sorrow of losing her child. Two days later, her sister went into labour. Basanti Bai had completed ten months of pregnancy and when the boy was born it was a barely three-and-a-half pounds. Shanti Bai was rushed in an ambulance to the Hamidia Hospital with the gasping child and put in the intensive care unit in room number 124 there. There are two incubators in the unit for premature or underweight newborns, many born to MIC-affected mothers. Rarely does a child survive at the unit these days. The son of Basanti Bai did not; he was buried at the Chola Road *ghat* before Basanti Bai could come out of the recovering room of Sultania Hospital. She handed over her medical records (registration number 210/4019 MIC). But again, the cause of death is not stated Kalu Ram, husband of Basanti explains that whenever he wanted that gas poisoning be written on the papers he is clutching, doctors demanded: *"Kya tumhe apne mare hue bacche ke liye muawza chahiye?* (Do you want compensation for your dead child?)" There can be no compensation for Kalu Ram. But if others are getting Rs 10,000 from the *sarkar* per person killed by the gas, why should he not get money for his own child which has been killed by the same gas? The doctors will not listen. So he now takes his wife to the collector's office to complain.

There is obvious criminal negligence in this large maternity hospital of Bhopal and other small hospitals where MIC victims are giving birth Both at Sultania Hospital and Hamidia Hospital, watchmen have been posted at the entry gates of maternity wards. Senior doctors have received written instructions from the health department not to discuss MIC cases with any outsider, foreign expert or journalist. Entry into the maternity wards can only be made unobtrusively late at night. And one has to step cautiously into the intensive care unit of Hamidia Hospital, a closely watched chamber of death. Both these places are the focus of serious medical attention and in spite of figures released of a normal rate of congenital malformations and stillbirths, doctors are clearly worried about the high incidence being recorded. Instructions have been pasted outside the labour room at Sultania Hospital for all the placentae of MIC victims to be sent for examination to the Bhopal Medical College, where teratogenic effects of MIC gas are being examined. There are other instructions for the dead children to be taken for post-mortem to the forensic department of the Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal.

While hospital authorities give an "experiments-are-in-progress" reply, attendants and midwives in the hospitals tell the truth about the bizzare observations of childbirth these days. Travelling in the ambulance which carries cord blood samples, placentae and ailing children to Hamidia Hospital, one learns that four to five children are dying every day only at the Sultania Janana Hospital, with more than ten placentae being sent for experiments to the Gandhi Medical College. The register of samples sent for examination shows a sharp increase in the month of July. Said the superintendent of the hospital, Dr (Mrs) Saxena, "While there has been no rise in congenital malformations as yet, we are closely monitoring births to gas victims in the third trimester, for any unusual increase."

There are different versions of whether children being born to MIC victims in Bhopal could indicate disaster epidemiology and reveal congenital malformations that could be scientifically claimed to be a result of the December gas disaster. There are the sorry tales of mothers who have lost their offspring or who are bringing up deformed infants, the shocking accounts given by the junior staff of hospitals, midwives and nurses who insist they have never seen any birth-and-death cycle of this kind before. Against this is the official version of births and deaths and accounts of senior doctors who are under instructions not to talk. There is an attempt to cover up disclosures of the nature of deformities or abnormalities being recorded and an attempt to declare the situation has been normal till date. In

spite of the apprehensions being expressed the world over about the likely teratogenic effects on newborn children, no concerted effort has been made to educate pregnant women or inform them about the danger they may face during childbirth. In fact, when some women had approached public hospitals for undergoing medically terminated pregnancies, they were assured normal pregnancies.

On the other hand, some private nursing homes in new Bhopal where expectant women had gone for abortions were saved the sorrows of defective childbirth. Not that unnatural births have not been recorded at any private nursing home and only occurred in hospitals like the Sultania. The Ghoois Nursing Home and Termination of Pregnancy Centre at Karbala Road has recorded a distinct increase in the number of cases of congenital malformations and stillbirths. Said Dr (Mrs) Charanjit Ghoois, who runs the centre and is carefully monitoring all births, "Since December the number of stillbirths have doubled in the cases of women who were exposed to MIC. Spontaneous abortions increased three times among women who were then in their second and third trimester. Some of these children died of asphyxia as foetuses." She showed this reporter photographs of what she calls a "typical malformed foetus" and others of babies born at her clinic who could not live beyond a few hours.

There has been no study of the incidence of neonatal mortality among MIC-affected women delivering in homes, hospitals and nursing homes. The government-sponsored study being conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is the only scientific examination being conducted of the teratogenic effects of MIC. It has revealed figures of congenital malformations equal to the national average of one to two per cent of all births. The Madhya Pradesh health minister, Balendu Shukla, told the Vidhan Sabha that the ICMR survey would cover 3,000 pregnant women in a population of 88,000 people living in the severely affected areas. Till June, out of the 1,350 newborn babies examined, 16 were found to be physically deformed and there were 60 cases of premature births. The cases of deformities include children suffering from congenital hearts, imperforated arms and impaired eyesight, all of which, Dr Ashwini Sayal, who is working in the ICMR project, explained, could be found in cases of "normal retardation."

Another survey conducted by volunteers of the Friends Medico Circle at the Jayaprakash Nagar, situated opposite the Union Carbide factory, however, revealed an abnormal incidence rate of abortions and premature births. The survey was conducted among 621 families and of the 171 expectant mothers, 94 were pregnant on the fateful day (3 December) and had been receiving treatment for MIC exposure. Out of them, 57 had delivered—34 women had normal babies, 22 had undergone abortions and one premature birth was recorded. Of the children born, one was stillborn and two died immediately after birth. Of the 22 [redacted]en who had abortions, only one had her pregnancy terminated, the rest had aborted spontaneously. A third examination was conducted by the Nagrik Rahat aur Punarvas Committee, a voluntary health organisation. The report presented by the committee concluded that 29 of the 38 patients who were pregnant in December gave a history of first or second trimester abortion.

Now the third trimester births are being anxiously watched for it is in the first three months that the child develops and is most prone to deformity. Though it will be the third trimester births that would be most important to assess the rate of congenital malformations, there is every indication that the situation is graver than the authorities are willing to



A malignant tumour which grows everyday on the head of a girl in Jayaprakash Nagar



Gopal Jain

A child from a premature birth lying in the Intensive Care Unit of Hamidia Hospital

admit. Therefore, instead of conducting wider medical surveys covering all areas and medical attention being given to newborn children, an attempt is being made to cover up the pathetic plight of these babies. Under the plea of long-term experiments, a separate assessment is being done by the authorities, the results of which may not be known for a long time. By then, hundreds of MIC-exposed mothers will deliver deformed babies.

Of the children who have died, only 47 autopsies have been conducted to examine the cause of death. The results, though closely guarded, are revealing. The autopsy report (Number 1275/MLI/766/85) of a deformed male child born to Saraswati, living in Kenchi Chola, gives the cause of death: "Dead body of child came with a history of gas exposure on the night of 3 December. Death appears to be poisoning as a result of irreparable gases and its complications." The child had been born at the Sultania Hospital, treated later at the Hamidia where it was declared dead.

The autopsies on children born deformed or premature to MIC victims have been conducted under the supervision of Dr Heeresh Chandra, head of the forensic medicine and toxicology department of the Medical College, Bhopal, who had also conducted autopsies on 731 persons killed by MIC till the end of December. Says Dr Chandra: "The results of autopsy on these children give the same picture as the autopsies conducted on the first and second days. There is clotting of the blood and effect of the gas in the liver and lungs, as found in adult victims. It is clear that these children have been severely affected in the embryo stage." He further explained that in some children the cause of death was haemorrhage of the brain and lungs, rare in deaths of newborn children. He added that in the autopsies conducted, a pattern of deformity could be noticed. Many had dilation and liquidisation of the brain cavity, resulting in the softening of the blood tissue which makes it difficult for the child to survive. A similar observation had been reported from other hospitals. The very first child which was called the "freak child of Bhopal" was born at the Vallabhbhai Patel Hospital, Bilaspur. The mother of the child had been present in Bhopal and was living in one of the affected areas when the gas leaked. The child born to her had cavities instead of eyes, a deformed head and scorched skin. Ever since the birth of the deformed child in Bilaspur, there have been many reports in the local press of cases of retarded babies being born to MIC-exposed mothers.

According to Dr Heeresh Chandra, experiments being conducted by the ICMR and other institutions on the placenta and cord blood of children being born will reveal the full ramifications and perpetuating effects on the progeny of the victims. So far, he has found evidence of carbamylation in the cord blood samples which proved that the poison in the gas had affected the child in the womb. There were other autopsies conducted which reveal that serious damage had been done to babies, impairing their faculties. The autopsy conducted on twin boys, both named "Guddu" in the records, provided further evidence. The twins were born in the Bajaria area on 8 March—one of them died within 24 hours of being born and the second boy survived for two-and-a-half days. The examination of the tissue extracted from the limbs of the two

children revealed signs of poisoning and their lungs, liver and brain were also badly damaged by the gas.

The continuing calamity of the children of Bhopal is not only the trauma of mothers giving birth to children who die because they are too weak to sustain life, but extends to the children who live on and who will perhaps become the living testimony of the physical horrors and disabilities that ensued after the gas leak. It is estimated that out of every three children born to victims, only one survives. The Madhya Pradesh government is not willing to admit the enormity of the problem but a visit to the room number 123, where infants are receiving treatment, is enough to show that there is something unusual and sinister about the plight of these children. A teacher from Indore, who had brought her two-year-old daughter suffering from meningitis, for treatment at the hospital, described the sad scene in the ward and the intensive care unit next to it. Every day children were dying. Even at that moment, a boy measuring not more than the size of a palm, was lying stiff and silent inside one of the incubators—an innocent lump of flesh and bone, with a blood-stained bandage around its blue-black waist where the umbilical cord had been cut, the precious cord which, instead of giving life and sustenance, had passed on poisonous death. The child was lying unattended. Its father had gone to the Sultania Hospital to fetch its mother Both parents, the junior doctor on duty explained, had been affected by the "killer gas."

While the incidence of stillbirths and deformities is stated to be "few and normal," could it be a coincidence that when one tries to locate the house of a deformed child in Jayaprakash Nagar which is listed in the ICMR survey report and one reaches a wrong address, you discover that a child had died immediately after birth there too? Jayaprakash Nagar, one of the worst affected localities, and its residents have barely recovered from the loss of life and cattle. Their situation was aggravated by the pathetic compensation being given to them. A short distance away is Nechli Chola, Dwarka Nagar, where there were relatively few deaths. There have likewise not been many cases of unnatural births to exposed mothers here. There is, however, Saraswati Bai, wife of Hari Ram, a Union Carbide assistant operator, who gave birth to twins on 14 January. Two of her healthier children stand by her side as she describes her suffering after the gas



Basanti Bai and Shanti Bai at Sultania Hospital

leak and the painful circumstances in which she delivered twins after a difficult labour. The girl born to her died but the son survived. The medical records of Sultania Hospital (registration number 180/80) state the cause of death as "cardiorespiratory arrest." Saraswati Bai is now worried about the health of her pallid seven-month old son. Since birth, he has already been admitted to the hospital twice for respiratory complications—the child has "MIC lungs" and could suffer from serious ailments throughout life.

It is only when such children walk, talk and play that the large scale medical effects that still persist in the progeny of the victims would be known. As it is, young children who were themselves exposed to the gas are reported to have developed complications in the summer months. There is an outbreak of jaundice and repeated complaints of children developing boils and blisters all over the body. The general health of the thousands who are being treated symptomatically and the lucky few who are getting the sodium thiosulphate antidote injections (which is in short supply), are deteriorating, and several experts have already declared that exposure to the gas weakened the victims' resistance to disease. With fresh complications, the months of August and September would be most crucial in assessing the state of recovery of the victims. More so because during these months, (approximately) 700 pregnant women who were most susceptible to the influence of the gas in their early stage of pregnancy, would be delivering their babies. Even the authorities have admitted that in the month of July there has been a marked increase in cases of stillbirths, abortions and deformities. Dr Ishwar Das, relief commissioner for the gas tragedy, admitted that the birth of children is being observed with great caution. "We are fearing that if the plight of these newborn babies is extremely serious at present, an ugly situation could develop," he said.

Worse dangers lie ahead: there could be more cases of congenital malformations and infant mortality in Bhopal. Examinations conducted by genetic experts on new-born babies, have concluded that the tragedy would affect not only those children but several forthcoming generations too. These fears have not been scientifically proved and it is possible that the disaster witnessed in Bhopal today might be checked by the first generation deformation. Only the results of tests and experiments on the bodies of the infants who are no more and the close observation of others who are yet to be born, perhaps crippled and impaired, will reveal the fallout on the babies of Bhopal.

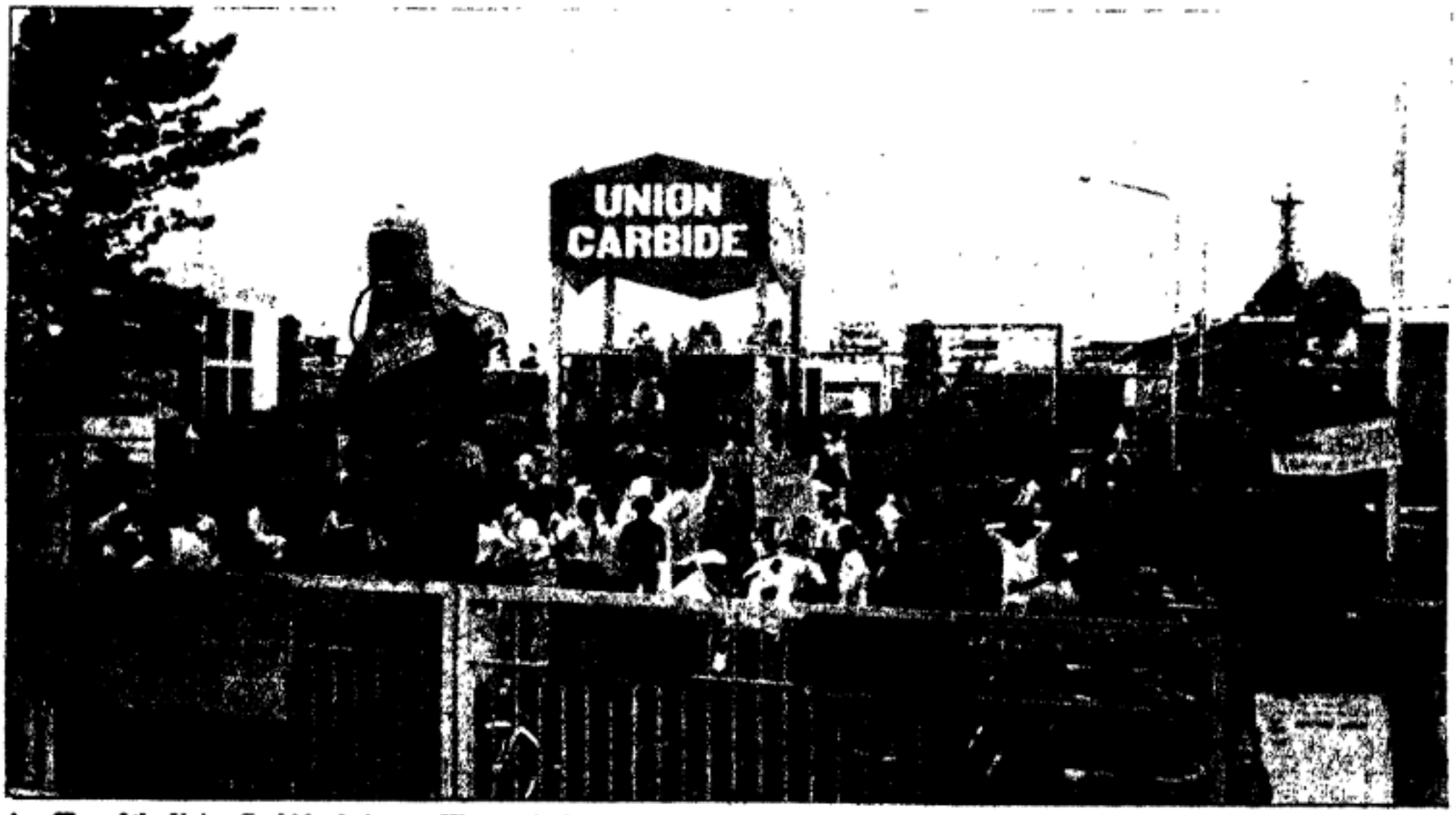
Inside the Poison Gas Plant

Chemicals lying in the compound still pose a danger to the environment

"Safety is everybody's business," read the laminated red-and-yellow stickers pasted outside the offices of senior managers who once manned the Rs 40-crore agricultural products division (APD) of Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) in Bhopal. What a quirk of fate that the six bosses of this largest Indian private sector pesticide company should now be the prime accused, charged with criminal negligence that led to the death of 2,500 innocent people. Among the most qualified technical personnel in the pesticide industry are all wanted men out on bail. They have been reduced to mere ordinaries who seek permission before stepping into the forbidding iron-and-chemical jungle that is the Union Carbide plant. Even Warren Anderson, the chairman of the parent American multinational, Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) was not spared the wrath of the displaced workers and the agitating victims. The key figure of the American company which had a 50.9 per cent equity shareholding in the Indian subsidiary and the man who ruled the empire which netted sales of 9.5 billion dollars last year has found a place among the effigies put up outside the imposing gates of the plant. "*Jeena hai to marna seekho* (learn to die if you want to live)," reads the placard hung around the neck of the dummy of Warren Anderson. The chairman cuts a sorry figure in his place at the centrestage of the parade of effigies, dressed as he is in grey dungarees, a hard plastic hat, safety goggles, gum boots and a fake walkie talkie set tucked under his belt.

How the Union Carbide workers pilfered the working outfit and safety accessories with which they dressed Anderson and company is anybody's guess. The plant is at present under siege by employees since 10 July when their services were terminated by a court order. Trade union leaders of the closed pesticide plant sit in *dharna* at the security guard room, others roam the city in three-wheeler scooters fitted with loudspeakers which blare throughout the day demanding their employment and rehabilitation. The workers are free to walk inside the production and administration blocks of the plant and have remained unrestricted in spite of complaints being registered with the authorities about the Union Carbide workers removing machinery parts, electrical fittings and motor spares from inside the plant. Even after the callousness of the workers and senior officials in allowing the MIC unit to function without its safety prequisites has been exposed, there is further evidence of carelessness of the Madhya Pradesh government and its policing agencies in not guarding the Union Carbide premises.

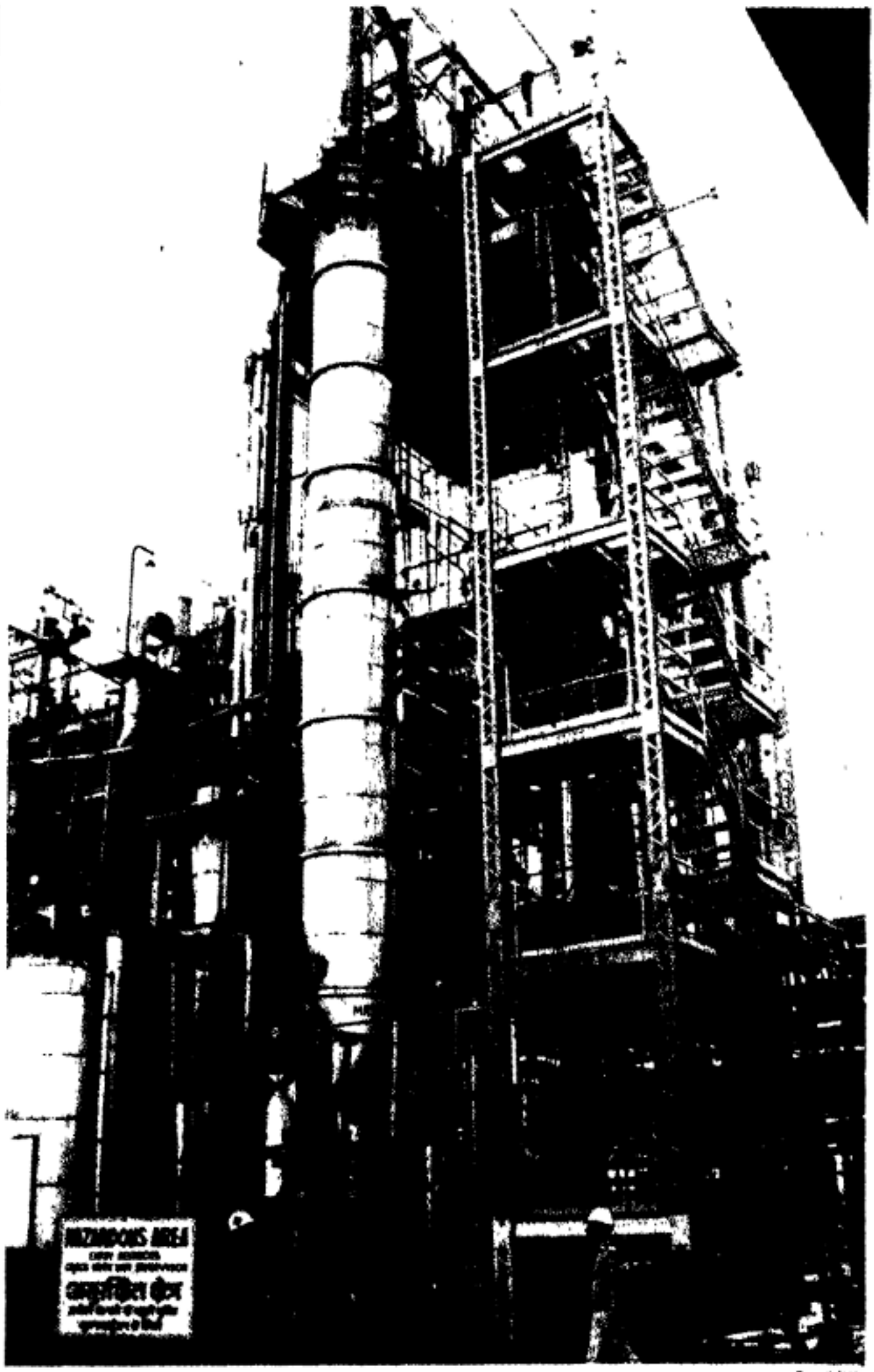
It is only the ill-fated MIC unit inside the plant that is unapproachable to the workers and striking union leaders. This part of the plant is under the protection of a team of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which landed in Bhopal within



An effigy of the Union Carbide chairman, Warren Anderson, at the entrance of the plant on 10 July

hours of the leak to investigate its cause. A visit to the MIC plant shows that the production unit which was once the scene of frantic activity, is now a wasteland of nuts and bolts. Six months have passed since production in the unit was banned. Now the MIC enclosure marked "hazardous area" is thick with tall weeds that speak of the inactivity and inertia that set in since the chemical reaction was triggered off from inside somewhere in the 110-foot tall structure, connected to the underground MIC tank area. The carefully maintained rose garden close to the MIC plant which was the pride of Union Carbide for its beautiful blooms has been ruined by the gallons of toxic substances emptied out of containers and tanks. Even the rose plants, it is said, have been dug out by the workers, who seem to be stealing anything of any value from the premises.

Who would be responsible for any security lapse which may occur inside the plant again, vulnerable as it is to disaster? What is shocking is that in spite of announcements that there is no dangerous toxic substance present in the plant now, an inventory demanded by the CBI revealed that there are more than 1100 tonnes of material which the UCIL listed as "toxic/hazardous/flammable." The CBI investigators, themselves are at a loss, about the nature of the toxic substances stored in the plant—carbon monoxide, phosgene, methyl isocynate and Sevin units—demanded this list two months ago. A comparison of the inventory of dangerous substances stored inside the UCIL plant on 20 June and 25 July showed that there had been negligible disposal done by the company. Among the materials stored till July, CBI sources pointed out that some are extremely hazardous if consumed, inflamed or chemically reacted. These include chlorosulphonic acid (20 tonnes), carbon tetrachloride (2.0 tonnes), stored in bulk, aldicarboxime (3.0 tonnes), orthodichlorobenzene (35.9 tonnes), naphthol (9.4 tonnes), BHC (69.0 tonnes) and methylene chloride (2.0 tonnes) stored in bulk in drums and small containers. There are other toxic substances in the processing systems which have not yet been cleaned. They include thermax (12 tonnes), carbon tetrachloride (74 tonnes), sevin carbaryl (5.0 tonnes) and methylene chloride (1.3 tonnes) the most dangerous in the two-month inventory list is 20 metric tonnes of chloroform still inside the processing systems of the plant. In the first month the chloroform is stated to be "dissolved with MIC etc." In the next month's inventory, the other substances mixed with the chloroform including the MIC have disappeared while the quantity of chloroform remains the same at 20 tonnes. In trying to hide the fact of the presence of the dreaded MIC gas from the CBI, Union Carbide officials have been caught lying.



A view of the structural area of the MIC plant

Gopal Jain

Union Carbide officials are divided in their opinion on the dangers of the large quantities of toxic material inside the plant when the entire complex has been left unguarded and is open to a mishap or mischief. The assistant works manager of the plant, R. Chowdhury, one of the accused in the CBI case, is confident that there is not a drop of toxic material inside: "There is nothing in the plant that can cause harm. We have cleared it up," he declared. On the other hand the resident doctor of the Union Carbide plant, Dr Arya Lohya expressed grave doubts about the security lapses that are going unchecked and which could well result in another unprecedented accident. Said he:

The Burden of Bhopal

Who will compensate the victims of Bhopal who have given birth to deformed children or who have lost their progeny to the continuing effects of MIC inhalation? The unfortunate parents face an excruciating, lifelong dilemma. Some of the children whose growth is being carefully watched by specialists in Bhopal have severe mental and physical handicaps which may impair their growth forever.

A plea for euthanasia of birth-defective children in Bhopal has been made by some experts who fear that these children, suffering from congenital malformations, would be an unbearable burden to their parents—most of whom are among the poorest in the city. These ill-fated children would also pose an insurmountable problem for the state which would not be able to control the effect of such births on future generations. The state government is at present blissfully oblivious of the larger consequences of these births.

The authorities are not even sure whether the parents of children who were born to exposed mothers or children who did not survive beyond a few days should receive monetary compensation or not. According to Dr Ishwar Das, who is looking into the complicated matter of compensations for Bhopal's victims, the parents would surely get equal compensation if the medical records of the birth state that death was due to MIC exposure. The case of compensation for the death of children who are slowly but surely dying in ones and twos every day in Bhopal's hospitals would only become more complex since doctors attending on the mothers are refusing to state the cause of death. If this continues, the parents would not be entitled even to the Rs 10,000 compensation for the death of every member of the family that is being haphazardly distributed. No check is being maintained on the rate of infant mortality among MIC victims, which would only make the task of compensating the parents impossible.

The state has a moral responsibility towards victims who give birth to incapacitated or deformed children. It is the duty of the government to protect the sanctity of human life of its citizens. Immediate steps should be taken in Bhopal to monitor the birth of all infants and make an urgent assessment from hospitals, nursing homes and affected areas to gauge the enormity of the problem and start discussions on the problem of compensations. If the Bhopal disaster had occurred in some other country in the West where the right to withdraw treatment rests legally with the doctors as in the United States then perhaps the demand for euthanasia would have been more vehement. In India, the trauma of giving life to or sustaining the lives of these children is something that only the victims know themselves.

It will be decades before the genetic effects of MIC exposure are known, after children who had been scientifically declared deformed by the gas grow up and give birth to the third generation MIC victims. Then the perpetuating physical agonies of these children and the worst fears of doom would come true. It is feared that more birth-defective children will be born by the end of the third trimester at the end of September this year when the gory picture of such congenital malformations will be complete. The long-term mental and physical effects of MIC-exposure on the victims has set a unique precedent since it was only the people of Bhopal who became the unwitting preys to the unknown killer. The prospect may not be so macabre as the birth of "thalidomide children" in the early Seventies, but these malformed physical weaklings are a reminder of the thalidomide case which stunned the world years ago into realising the effects of unknown chemicals and drugs on newborns. The children of the victims of thalidomide, a sleep-inducing drug administered to thousands of pregnant women in Europe were grossly deformed. Their hands and feet were worst-affected. Some of the children born to the victims of Bhopal have severe congenital defects, including retardation of organs like the lungs and heart and the softening of the brain tissue—children who may live but will remain only marginally alive.

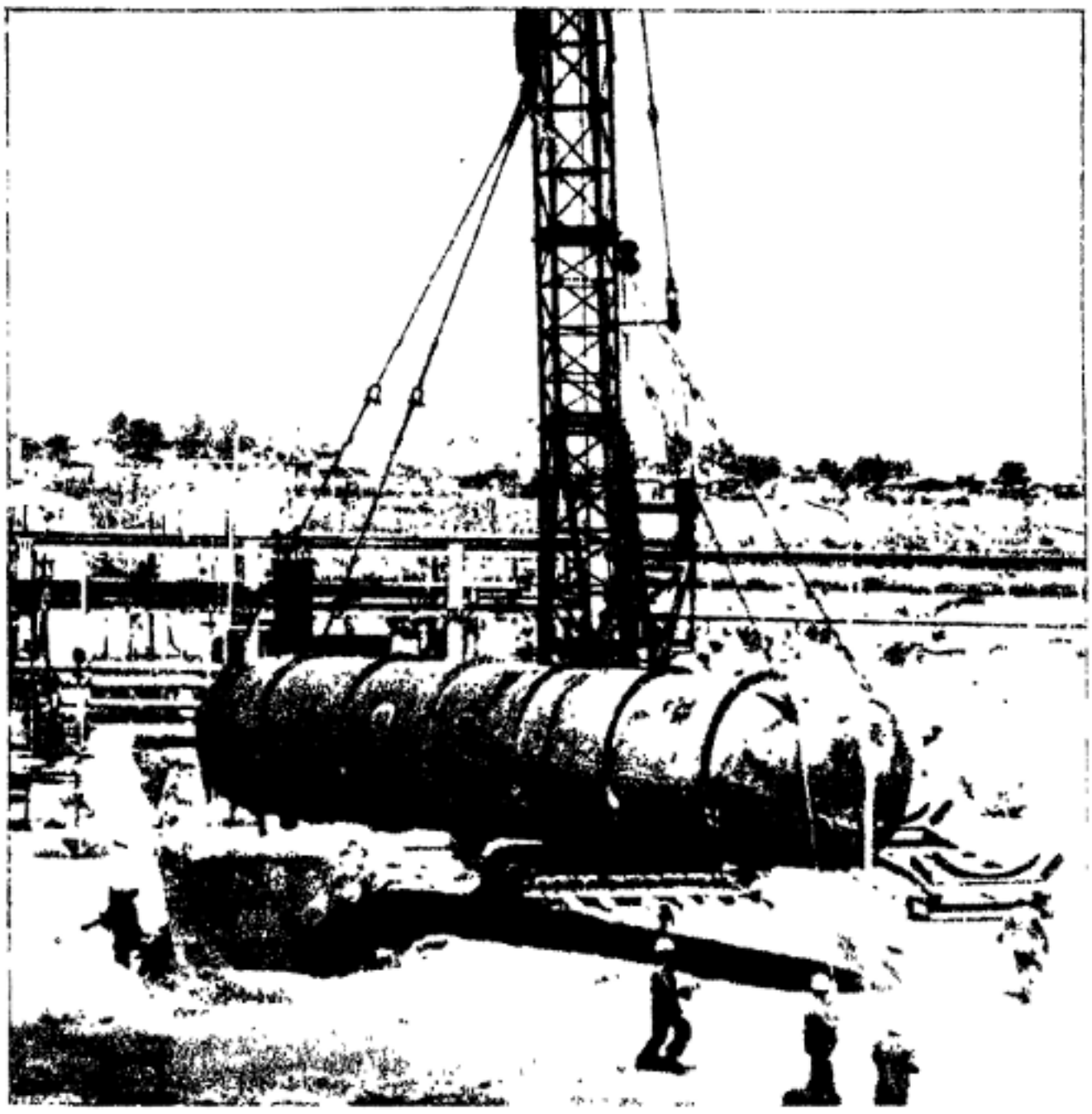
"The Union Carbide plant is still open to danger. There are hundreds of tonnes of hazardous substances stored inside which could trigger off another explosion or leakage if tight security measures are not adopted. Even a heavy rainfall could result in water entering one of the tanks or storage drums with catastrophic consequences." He suggested that the state police should immediately take control of the situation before there is a second disaster within the plant.

A tour of the Union Carbide plant makes you aware of the various ironies that now mock the events of the night of 3 December. Senior Union Carbide officials reveal that safety standards inside their plant were among the highest and most sophisticated in the country, a fact which members of the investigating team concede. The UCIL plant in Bhopal had only a month before the MIC leak received the UCC safety award for the year 1984. The award was given to the Bhopal plant for foolproof safety measures being used in the plant which had not recorded the loss of a single working day throughout the year. It is obvious that though safety precautions were not observed to the book and there were glaring defects, all facilities of basic crisis management were present in the plant. Pinned up on the notice boards outside the office of J. Mukund, the works manager, are circulars issued to all divisions in early November, listing the duties of safety officers and routines of mock-drills six times a week. In the MIC-control room where the pressure gauges have now been sealed by the CBI, hot line connections and emergency alarms are gathering dust. It was in this chamber that the first indications of the high pressure inside tank 610 were noticed. It was at 10.20 at night when the third shift operator noticed that the pressure of the tank was showing 10 PSIG. In about an hour the temperature shot up to 55 PSIG at the top of the scale. The hot line connection was not used. Outside, there are the large water nozzles which can direct jets of water to any point of explosion or leakage. They were trained on the vent gas scrubber at 1 am after all the contents of the tank 610 had been released into the atmosphere. There are other precautionary facilities still in the plant which cost lakhs of rupees to install, but lay forgotten when they were needed most.

There is also the dire negligence of the Union Carbide officials in allowing the three-stage safety device for the MIC unit to remain inoperative for several months. The vent gas scrubber should have neutralised the toxic methyl isocynate by treating it with caustic soda, which was put in an operating mode that night, but there was not enough caustic soda to treat the amount of gas that was fast escaping. The flare tower of the plant which is supposed to burn any gas released was not in working condition and in any case could have controlled only a small leakage. The refrigeration system, built according to international specifications to cool the MIC in the storage tank, had been rendered non-operational by a written order effective from June 1984. There were also the minor structural changes made by the Indian management of the plant specially in the process vent header (PVH) and relief valve vent header (VVH) which led out from the storage tank to the vent gas scrubber. These modifications played a critical role in causing the reaction inside the MIC tank.

The CBI has impounded all documents and records of the company and are giving their case against the chairman of UCC and officials of UCIL the final touches. They have examined 150 witnesses so far and seized 710 documents and are on the point of filing prosecutions in the case. According to CBI officials they have enough evidence to prove the culpability of both the UCIL and the parent UCC in the disaster. They are only awaiting the report of the scientific team of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to complete investigations.

After the proceedings against the erring officials are initiated, the question of what is to be done with the multi-crore APD Union Carbide plant in Bhopal would arise. The government has turned down the UCIL's proposals to continue restricted production of non-toxic materials. The managing director of UCIL, V.P. Gokhale had proposed to set up a rehabilitation centre inside. This request was also turned down. Now, according to the plant's production superintendent K.V. Shetty who is attending office occasionally, another proposal had been mooted for the formulation unit of MIC to be made functional. The MIC itself was to be imported from the Bhopal minor-image plant in Charlston, USA as was the case before production of MIC commenced in Bhopal. This was a proposal that was in fact awaiting the sanction of the UCIL headquarters in Bombay before the accident took place.



Tank no 610 being dug out and lifted by a crane

The CBI has in its custody other plans and proposals sent by the Bhopal APD to Bombay for the MIC unit to be made non-operational and the entire production unit to be shifted, lock, stock and barrel, to Brazil. Both these plans prove without doubt that UCIL was not interested in running the MIC plant in Bhopal any more. The MIC unit was a losing proposition for the company, its capacity utilisation was one-third and the losses of the Sevin unit were multiplying over the past three years. But this was not reason enough for the UCC not to upgrade the security measures at its APD subsidiary at Bhopal as it had done in its own Charlston MIC unit. Financial losses of the MIC division were no excuse for the UCIL to dispense with important safety devices and look the other way when the most critical among them are lying unoperational.

Though the CBI, the ICMR and the UCIL teams have been attempting to discover how exactly the leak occurred, in the six months following the incident, they have not come up with any convincing answers. The complex chain of reactions that took place on the night of 3 December last year may never be known. It may never be known how the gallons of water entered the MIC tank and whether it was water that caused the reaction at all. The sabotage theory hinted at in the UCC report has not been substantiated and the CBI officials complain that all evidence of the stages of reaction were destroyed by the UCC officials in their clumsy attempt to stop the leak after the harm had been done. But what is clear is that it was nothing but criminal negligence and blind disregard for precautions that led to the disaster. The precious Union Carbide Bhopal plant was reduced to scrap the very night the tragic incident occurred. Now it is a huge incapacitated iron monster which will keep gathering dust and rust and continue to be a reminder of the horrors of a rapidly industrialising world; a monument in the city of Bhopal which earned the dubious distinction of causing the death of the largest number of people in such an accident; a relic for posterity at the gates of which curious onlookers stop and take photographs to remember the holocaust.

Ritu Sarin, Bhopal

War and Peace in Gujarat

Even after the announcement of the withdrawal of the anti-reservation stir, violence continues. Tushar Bhatt reports.

"Perhaps my stars are favourable," said the 44-year-old new chief minister of Gujarat, Amarsinh Chaudhary, when asked what it was that led to the accord between the anti-reservation agitators and the state government which resulted in the withdrawal of the five-month stir.

The six-point agreement, arrived at after marathon talks on the night of 18 July, in fact does not have anything substantially more to offer than what the administration had been offering during former CM Madhavsinh Solanki's tenure. Chaudhary may understandably feel luckier than Solanki who himself had earned the unofficial title of a "lucky" man because he was the only CM in Gujarat's history as a separate state to have completed a full term. But, this would mean over-simplifying the matter. The agitation which had over the past 150 days seen the loss of more than 215 lives, led to Solanki's ouster and prolonged disruption of the economy in Gujarat, an industrially prosperous state, had clearly gone on for far too long. For five months, schools and colleges were closed, examinations of lakhs of students had been held up and peace was a remote possibility, what with the situation taking on the colours of communal and casteist strife. The message was loud and clear: enough is enough. And the agitation leaders may have been prodded into making the best of it.

Many people had realised that the government had offered all it could, within the overall framework of the reservation policy of the Congress(I). Solanki had become an embarrassment to the party high command, not because of the policy but because of the ways in which he sought to pursue it, arousing the fears of deepening inter-caste animosity. His 10 January decision to raise the quota of reservations in jobs and education for the other backward classes, known in Gujarat as the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) had come just before the Assembly elections were announced. This was quickly perceived as a political carrot dangled before the poor to get votes for the Congress(I). On top of it all, the decision was actually never implemented.

Apart from the loss of human lives and misery caused to the poor and the lower middle classes, trade and industry, according to the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, are estimated to have lost a turnover of more than Rs 2,200 crores. In an interview to SUNDAY a few days ago, the new chief minister himself conceded that in terms of progress in the state, the clock had been turned back by as much as a decade. All this happened in spite of the fact that the Congress(I) had won 149 out of the 182 seats in the state Assembly and 20 out of the 26 seats in the Lok Sabha from Gujarat. Many political observers thought that Solanki's style of functioning had aggravated the situation. In the allotment of tickets for the Assembly elections in March, he had seen to it that all dissidents were dropped. Earlier, he had succeeded in hounding out of the party leaders like Ratubhai Adani, veteran Saurashtra leader. Thus, despite a massive mandate and majority, Solanki virtually stood all alone in his battle against the anti-reservationists.

And, in the eyes of the party high



Shubdev Bhadresh

Armymen keeping vigil in Ahmedabad

command, the cause of it all, the upward revision of quotas for the SEBC, was not needed at all. Mr Rajiv Gandhi had won the Lok Sabha elections with an unprecedented majority and the result would have been repeated in the Assembly polls, although a little less dazzlingly. Logistically, it was a decision that belonged to the era of the late Indira Gandhi who was not only more pro-reservationist but also followed a policy of confrontation. Her son was beginning with a clean slate and the image of Mr Clean, steering the party back to a position where the Congress represented the country and not just some sections of society. Even then, Rajiv Gandhi gave Solanki as long a rope he could partly because it would be setting a wrong precedent to sack a recently elected popular ministry on account of widespread rioting.

Thus, when Amarsinh Chaudhary, a chosen successor of Solanki, occupied his mentor's chair, his task was not only unenviable but difficult to boot. A man with a low profile who was completely overshadowed by Solanki in the recent past, Chaudhary had to establish his credentials independently to create an image of his own. Mr Chaudhary, a tribal who studied to become an engineer, is even more keenly aware of the problems of the underprivileged, having been one of them. He never had money, even to get married or pursue higher studies. Again, as home and education minister in the Solanki ministry which lasted 118 days, he was very much a part and parcel of what was being done.

Aware of this, the high command had tried to persuade the Congress(I) legislators in the state to select Natwarlal Shah, Speaker of the Assembly, as their new leader. But Solanki, whose supporters regard Shah, former Praja Socialist and trade union leader as a potential dissident, stood firm and had his way. This was the second time in recent days that an outgoing chief minister had forced the central leadership to stand by his decision to nominate a successor. The first was in Maharashtra. But once Mr Chaudhary was in, it was important to bring him closer to the other faction in the Congress(I) and put some distance between him and Solanki. The centre appears to have assumed a more active role in advising the state government. Julio Rebeiro, the tough police official who had made his name in Bombay, was sent as director general of Gujarat Police.

There was a shake-up in the administration, too, and M. Sivagnanam, chief secretary, was shifted as chairman of the Gujarat Electricity Board in Baroda and some of his lieutenants were reshuffled. The ten members of the new Chaudhary cabinet also represented a change from the past because these included at least three persons—Babubhai Sopariwala, Amarsinh Vaghela and Sushila Sheth—who are closer to the dissident group. The high command is thinking of replacing Mahant Vijaydasji as president of the GPCC(I). The Mahant is a minister in the Chaudhary cabinet. Within a week of Rebeiro's arrival, the army which has been stationed in Ahmedabad since 16 April was withdrawn. It was one of the longest stays by the troops in a civilian area in recent times. It was a matter of concern because not only did it affect the jawans, but the

The CM Who Had to Go

Madhavsinh Solanki, who was toppled from the chief ministership of Gujarat by the anti-reservation stir is, perhaps, the most bitter and furious man in the state. But he does not show it. The accord between the government and the agitationists does not have very much more to offer than the package solution Solanki had been offering all along. There is just one extra point—the delegation of responsibility to a judicial commission to decide the fate of the present ten per cent reservations for the SEBC, when they lapse in the year 1988.

However, such are the political exigencies that the 57-year-old journalist-turned-advocate-turned-politician Mr Solanki said, "It is a matter of happiness that the agitation has been withdrawn as a result of the accord. It is to be hoped that normalcy would be established in Gujarat as soon as possible and the state will resume its march on the path of progress."

Ever since his ouster on 6 July, Solanki has been living quietly in a privately hired bungalow in the state capital, Gandhinagar. He has not attended the state Assembly and spends much of his time reading his vast collection of books, meeting people and "listening to the birds early in the morning."



Scene of a *bandh* in Ahmedabad

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overall efficacy of the use of the army in such situations rapidly declined.

There was no love lost between the police and the army. The former believed the presence of the latter to be a reminder of their inability to cope with the situation. The lack of coordination was worrying New Delhi a lot. However, the withdrawal of the troops, a courageous step initiated by the new police chief, was not without its consequences. Within less than 48 hours of the withdrawal, communal violence broke out in the walled city areas of Dariyapur and Kalupur. On 17 July, five persons were killed, next day two more died and on 19 July six were killed. The rioting was purely communal in nature and seemed to be part of a process of settling old scores, which had remained unsettled because of the heavyhanded presence of the army. Countrymade bombs too have been used at a number of places in recent weeks. With the withdrawal of the anti-reservation stir, the major task before the government now is to defuse the communal crisis. Chaudhary has promised to smash the supply links of crude bombs, which extend upto Bombay, according to opposition leaders and bring to book the mischief makers.

In the past five months, the agitationists have had a couple of rounds



Madhavsinh Solanki

of discusssions with the government. But the contact had grown weak in June owing to Solanki's efforts to mobilise the support of his Kshatriya clansmen. Later, the stir changed into a sort of Solanki *hatao* campaign, with politicians in the opposition joining in the fray. Their sudden success in removing Solanki was numbing for a while.

The major point of the six-point accord—the 18 per cent hike in the quota for the SEBC—will never be implemented in its original form until a national consensus is arrived at. The present ten per cent reservations due to end in March 1988 will be reviewed by a judicial commission consisting of a sitting judge of the High Court who will head it, and two other retired judges. Its report will be available latest by December 1987. A comprehensive judicial probe headed by a sitting High Court judge nominated by the Chief Justice of India will look into the violence of the past five months. The government agreed to help the probe, make its findings public and take steps on the recommendations in due course. The probe will give its report in six months' time. There are other minor points that remain unresolved, like the release of the arrested workers except those charged with serious offences whose cases would be reviewed. In totality, the accord was only slightly different from the Solanki packages. The difference, however, was vital. According to political observers, the policy in regard to the present reservations for the SEBC is to be reviewed after 1988. The government has decided to entrust the task of reviewing it to a judicial commission. This is very much a job of the elected government of the people. It also meant setting a bad precedent because it was being implied that an elected government could be partisan but a judicial commission was above board. Attractive as it may seem, observers believe that this notion cuts at the root of an elected government.

Despite this, the disgruntled elements in the anti-reservationist camp thought they really had not gained much. Their main demand was for a total abolition of the 18 per cent hike and what has been achieved is a postponement till a national consensus is evolved. This could have been achieved as early as 15 March. This would have saved the lives of most of the 215 who died in the violence over the last five months. These elements, headed by student leaders like Bhaskar Bhatt, announced an Ahmedabad *bandh* on 22 July and a meeting of anti-reservation leaders from all over Gujarat on the following day to chalk out further programmes. They said the agitation would continue and called upon the people and students to go ahead with their boycott of classes and examinations. Some supporters of Solanki such as Mahendrasinh Chauhan, an MLA, were also not happy with the accord and met Chaudhary to urge him to keep the reservations intact. Although it is too early to say what will happen, this could lead to a new realignment in the Gujarat Congress(I) with the Solanki men drifting farther away from Chaudhary. The dissident faction led by Jinabhai Darji had remained silent on the accord at the time of going to press. Darji had last month set up a Gujarat Anamat Samarthan Samiti to protect the reservation policy.

Opposing the Accord

The diehards among the anti-reservationists as also the staunch protagonists of the reservations were sorely disappointed with the accord. Three independent legislators who had rebelled when they were denied Congress(I) tickets, and got elected, summed up the resentment among the other backward classes neatly. The government had "betrayed the trust reposed in it by the downtrodden."

According to the MLAs Karamshi Makwana, Liladhar Vaghela and Shankerji Thakore, "the accord means that the Congress(I) government which had got elected on the massive votes of the backward classes had now opted to side with the upper castes. Significantly enough, the cabinet sub committee which worked out the agreement, did not have a single member from the other backward groups, known in Gujarat as Bakshi Commission Classes."

Several firebrand youth leaders who were the leading lights of the Akhil Gujarat Navrachna Samiti, on the other hand, accused those leaders who had put their signature on the accord on behalf of the agitators with "misleading and cheating the people." Shankerbhai Patel and Vivek Patel had committed a breach of faith. These dissident youth leaders, including four of the six young men detained in March by the government for actively participating in the stir, called upon the students and the people to continue the agitation till the government announced a complete abolition of the proposed 18 per cent hike in reservation for the SEBC, and pledged not to continue the present ten per cent quota for these groups beyond 1988.

The splinter group has also angrily raised the question of funds. The anti-reservation organisations, they claimed, had an enrollment of 1.25 lakh members and had received funds from various sources, but a full account of their money has not been given.

SPECIAL REPORT

Mischief in Kashmir

While the Congress(I) debated its support to the G.M.Shah ministry, an attempt was made on the life of Dr Farooq Abdullah. SANKARSHAN THAKUR reports on the growing instability in Jammu and Kashmir.

Martyrs Day—13 July—often brings tumult to the Kashmir Valley. It is a day of political rabble-rousing. Rallies are held, declarations made and fresh agitations launched. People come out this day and so do their leaders, in all their hues, flexing their muscles. And, if the political climate in Kashmir is uncertain, 13 July is the day to watch out for. Journalists in Srinagar usually go to bed on the eve of Martyrs Day, expecting a hard day's work ahead. This year, however, they were not even spared the calm of the eve. Late at night on 12 July, they were literally pulled out of their beds and summoned to a hurriedly called press conference by the former chief minister and National Conference (F) chief, Dr Farooq Abdullah. If some of them still felt a bit groggy by the time they reached his house, they were shaken fully awake by what Dr Abdullah had to tell them.

An attempt had been made on his life, he said. About eight people armed with axes and *lathis* had stopped his vehicle and assaulted him. The attack, according to him, had taken place on a jungle-road near Tangmarg, about 50 kilometres away from Srinagar while he was coming back from the shrine of Baba Rishi, accompanied by two security guards, his private secretary G.M. Rather and Abdus Salaam, an office bearer of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust. "I would have been killed but for the fact that my security officer began firing and an army-man, travelling the same way, came to my rescue," Farooq Abdullah announced, and, in the same breath, placed the blame for the attack on the Jammu and Kashmir minister for law, Ghulam Hassan Mir. "He was sitting all the time in the Tangmarg dak bungalow, planning this conspiracy to remove me physically from the scene."

The next day, when bombs exploded at a Martyrs Day rally being addressed by Farooq Abdullah and his allies, his allegations were only strengthened. A fresh tirade against the Shah government ensued. But chief minister Ghulam Mohammed Shah, quite unexpectedly announced a high-powered probe into the Tangmarg incident headed by Madan Mohan Khajuria, the director general of the Jammu and Kashmir police. While the announcement of the enquiry scotched all rumours of the



Rajiv Patel

G. M. Shah (right) with Kashmir's industries minister Sanaullah Dar: Is his ministry stable?

attack being a "gimmick" by Farooq Abdullah, initial investigations indicated that Ghulam Hassan Mir could not totally evade responsibility for the incident. The jeep (DLK 5477) in which the alleged assailants were travelling was found to belong to one of Ghulam Hassan Mir's men in the area.

Within a couple of days four persons, including the driver of the jeep, had been taken into custody. Their interrogation revealed that an assault on Farooq Abdullah had, in fact, been made. The Farooq Abdullah group has expressed doubts about the fairness of the enquiry but Khajuria, a man known for his integrity, assured: "We will carry out investigations to the end and there will be no political colour to the findings as long as I am here."

However, Khajuria felt that Farooq Abdullah's case had been blown a bit out of proportion. The general feeling is that some of Abdullah's allegations, including his claim that electricity in the area had been cut off, were exaggerated. There is no electricity on jungle roads, one police officer pointed out. Ghulam Hassan Mir came to his defence saying that there was no conspiracy to kill Dr Farooq Abdullah because the assault on him was part of a tussle for the control of the Auqaf funds at Baba Rishi.

The shrine of Baba Payam-ud-Din Sahib Rishi, a few kilometres away from Tangmarg, is one of the most famous in Jammu and Kashmir, second only to the pious Hazratbal in Srinagar. It receives huge amounts of money every year through donations and this fund is traditionally controlled by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Auqaf Trust of which Farooq Abdullah is presently the chairman. However, Mir alleges that at the local level, there was resentment about the way the Baba Rishi funds were being used by the Central Auqaf Trust. According to him, the locals wanted more money to be spent on Baba Rishi instead of it being taken away to the central Auqaf. So Mir, on his own admission, took out Rs two lakhs from the lockers of Baba Rishi and deposited it in a local account. What is more, Mir's men forced the Auqaf managers out of office at Baba Rishi and replaced them with their own men. Farooq Abdullah says that when the people of Tangmarg came to him and protested about these developments at Baba Rishi he and some Auqaf officials went to the shrine on 12 July to take stock of the situation.

It was while he was returning from Baba Rishi after having counted and



Farooq Abdullah addressing supporters

taken possession of the funds there that Farooq Abdullah was attacked. Mir has maintained *(see interview)* that it was the local people's anger which culminated in the assault. But he has not been able to convince anyone about his innocence in the affair. He has no satisfactory explanation, for example, for his presence in the area at the time of the incident. According to Raj Bhawan sources, even when Governor Jagmohan asked him this question, Mr Mir was not able to furnish reasons. And Mir's argument that tempers ran high because Farooq Abdullah had gone there "like a dacoit" do not seem to hold ground, for Farooq Abdullah is the chairman of the Auqaf Trust and is well within his rights to check the accounts. As a senior official in the state remarked: "Even if Farooq Abdullah had taken away the money, there was no reason to obstruct his way and assault him. At the most, people who were supposedly angry could have gone to the police station and reported the matter. Moreover, they would not have had much of a case

The events that occurred on the Baba Rishi-Tangmarg Road on 12 July suggest more of a planned bid to cause injury to the former CM than a spontaneous outburst of anger. Farooq Abdullah's ochre four-wheel drive was first obstructed by the vehicle that carried his assailants. When he bypassed them, they chased him for about 500 yards and then hit him on the left. As soon as Abdullah's vehicle stopped they sprang out, ready to attack and had it not been for his personal security officer (PSO), Abdul Rashid Baba and Major Gambhir, the army officer who happened to be there, and came to his rescue, the story would have been different.

But even as investigations continued, the controversy was pushed into the background as politics in the state suddenly changed gear. In an unexpected move, late on 17 July the



Mufti Mohammad Sayeed addressing a gathering in Srinagar

Congress(I) high command summoned all its legislators and senior party leaders to New Delhi for a review of the political situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Such was the urgency that the first lot of Congress(I) leaders who left Srinagar by the first flight to the capital on 18 July were accommodated by displacing several passengers with confirmed tickets. The scene had shifted to New Delhi.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's scheduled meeting with the Jammu and Kashmir Congress(I) leaders was delayed but when he did begin his session with them on the evening of 19 July, it lasted more than two-and-a-half hours. He met them, sometimes in small groups, sometimes individually. Among them were the Jammu and Kashmir PCC(I) president, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, the leader of the Congress(I) Legislature Party in the state, Maulana Iftiqar Hussain Ansari, the Speaker of the state Assembly, Mangat Ram and other important leaders like Ghulam Rasool Kar. In all, nearly 40 Jammu and Kashmir Congress(I) leaders held discussions with the Prime Minister. But a prominent absentee was Trilochan Dutt, a Congress(I) MLA from the Jammu region who has been spearheading the lobby for the withdrawal of support to the G. M. Shah government. One senior Congress(I) leader, explaining Dutt's absence, said: "There was no need for Trilochan Dutt to come here. His views on the subject are well known to the high command, he is all for the withdrawal of support." And the principal topic of discussion of the Prime Minister and the Jammu and Kashmir leaders, even though they were evasive about the subject, was whether or not to continue support to the Shah government.

There was a flurry of activity in the Jammu and Kashmir House in New Delhi as the leaders filed in one after another, after having met the Prime Minister and settled into suite number three where the PCC(I) chief, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, had booked himself. The Mufti was evasive. Had his party finally decided to withdraw support from the Gulshah government, already under attack on several fronts? Had the pressure lobby in the Congress(I) succeeded in convincing the centre of the risks of associating itself with the government in Jammu and Kashmir any more? Were talks with Farooq Abdullah under way? Or had they decided to give the disgruntled Congressmen a sop by asking Gulshah to form a coalition government? Why had the centre, out of the blue, sent express summons to Srinagar? Mufti Mohammad Sayeed smiled off all these questions while Iftiqar Hussain Ansari, sitting beside him, kept winking mischievously. "Why are you asking such questions?" he asked "Why do you talk of withdrawal of support...There has been no change in the party's thinking, neither is any move being planned." But was it not true that the Congress(I) itself had become a harsh critic of the Gulshah government and some of its leaders had warned that further support was only eroding whatever bases the Congress(I) had in the state? "Yes, yes," Mufti comforted, "there has been some dissatisfaction among the Congress(I) leaders and the Prime Minister has been told about this. You can say we are just reviewing the situation now, but no change."

The next day, after the Jammu and Kashmir leaders had had further discussions with Arun Nehru and Makhan Lal Fotedar, two important advisers of the Prime Minister on Jammu and Kashmir, they were still not ready to disclose anything further. The same evening came the "final word" of the Congress(I) high command on the situation in Kashmir. General secretary Rajendra Kumari Bajpai stated that there was no question of withdrawing support from the G.M. Shah government, neither was the Congress(I) thinking in terms of joining the Shah ministry. *Status quo*. The two-day stay of the Jammu and Kashmir leaders in New Delhi and the political climate in Srinagar, however, indicated otherwise. Hinted a senior Congress(I) leader who had come from Srinagar: "It is not for nothing that the Prime Minister called all of us so suddenly and spent nearly three hours discussing the matter in the midst of his busy schedule."

Talk of withdrawal of support from the Gulshah government had, in the last few months, become the most popular political rumour in Srinagar. Since the last parliamentary elections it has often been said that the Congress(I) was preparing to pull the rug from under Ghulam Mohammed Shah's feet. The expected change never took place, despite the oft-repeated recommendations of Governor Jagmohan for imposition of Governor's Rule as a first step towards fresh elections in the state. The Congress(I)'s Kashmir policy has been bogged down with indecision because of wide-ranging differences within the Kashmir unit of the Congress(I). One lobby led by top leaders of the Valley has been advocating a collaboration with the Shah ministry while the other one, comprising mostly leaders from the Jammu region, wants an independent presence of the Congress(I) in the state Legislature. The centre has consistently ruled out joining the ministry for it thinks that would be too much of a risk. It would not mind having a share of the spoils, but it is not willing to take any responsibility. And as things stand today, Congress(I) leaders both in the state and at the centre are beginning to feel that even supporting the Shah government now would mean inviting trouble in the future.

At the Aharbal conference of the Jammu and Kashmir Congress(I) in

'There is a Lot of Resentment Against Farooq's Men at the Local Level'

Ghulam Hassan Mir, Jammu and Kashmir law minister, told SUNDAY

***Q:** What were you doing in Tangmarg the day the attack on Farooq Abdullah took place?*

A: It is my constituency and I was addressing meetings in the interior, in Watalpora and Gulbandanpora villages.

Q: But you were in the Tangmarg dak bungalow when the attack took place...

A: Yes, yes. I had gone there for a cup of tea.

Q: Were your men involved in the assault?

A: Look, there are two things about this that I have already made clear. First, it was a matter of the auqaf trust. The people of the local auqaf trust at Baba Rishi were dissatisfied about the way the funds were being used. Most of it was being taken to the central auqaf. The locals had protested. Some days before the incident there had been an agreement between the central and the local auqaf that 90 per cent of the funds would remain at Baba Rishi and only ten per cent would go to the central auqaf. Even Farooq Abdullah's men had agreed to it. Earlier, Farooq Abdullah and his men had been running Baba Rishi like their personal fief but after this agreement, I was made the chairman of the local auqaf and Farooq Abdullah could do nothing. After I came in control, I took stern measures...

Q: You took out Rs two lakhs from the auqaf and submitted it into your account...

A: Yes, but not in my account. In an account of the auqaf which is in my name.

Q: What happened after that?

A: After the agreement, Farooq's men had some complaints... they wanted more representation in the local committee. They also went to the chief minister but he said he would not interfere in the matter. But Farooq's men actually had no case because there is a lot of resentment against them at the local level. *Allegations ka ambar laga tha unke khilaf* (There was a load of allegations against them). So when Farooq Abdullah went there like a dacoit and began counting the money, the people were naturally very angry. But I had no part in the attack on him.

Q: So you agree there was an attack...

A: Some local people might have got very angry and done that I did not know because I was not even aware of Farooq's presence in Tangmarg that day.

Q: But why would your chief minister condemn the attack and order an enquiry if this were not a serious matter?

A: Because he did not know the truth then. He reacted only to press reports which were exaggerated. So was the case with the party president, Khalida Shah.

Q: You are an MLA from Tangmarg where the assault took place. You were also there when the incident took place. Furthermore, as you said, tempers among your people were running high. Was it not your duty to see to it that nothing untoward took place? You did not even react after the incident...

A: As I said, I did not know Farooq Abdullah was coming there. What can you do if people decide to beat up somebody?

June, most leaders had spoken openly of the hazards of supporting Gulshah. Speakers at the conference blasted the government's performance during the last year and said in no uncertain terms that if the Congress(I) wanted to build any credibility in the state it should not have anything to do with the Ghulam Mohammed Shah government—a performance that would have come as an embarrassment to the AICC(I) general secretary, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai and the union health minister, Mohsina Kidwai, both of whom had

In his heyday: Former CM Farooq Abdullah introducing his law minister P.L. Handoo to Governor Jagmohan



gone to Aharbal as central observers. Even though it was said after the conference that it was in the interest of the nation and party to continue support to the Shah government, the reports of the central observers to the high command seem to have set New Delhi thinking about its posture in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Shah government's performance, by any scale of measurement, has not been encouraging. The reason given for the change—or the toppling—on 2 July last year was that the Farooq Abdullah government had failed to deliver the goods. Gulshah was brought in and was accorded the aura of a great administrator who would treat all ills in a matter of months and set Jammu and Kashmir on the path of progress. What has happened during the last year is exactly the opposite. The law and order situation has deteriorated, the anti-India, pro-Pakistan elements continue to operate as freely as ever, the administration has been lackadaisical and corruption has become more rampant—"Scandal Shah" is how people have begun to call G.M. Shah today.

To top it all, Shah's is an unpopular government, every member of which is a defector. Under the uncertainty and political ineffectiveness of his regime, the forces of instability in the Valley have prospered. And what is more, New Delhi's support to the G.M. Shah government has provided fodder to those who make the most of such situations. People like Abdul Ghani Lone of the People's Conference, a man who commands little political support but is capable of mischief, is according to political observers, the man to watch now. Given the opportunity, he could spring a few surprises.

On several occasions, Farooq Abdullah and Maulvi Mirwaiz Farooq have had to prevent him from making provocative remarks, while speaking on the same platform. And notably, while both Farooq Abdullah and Mirwaiz have become red rags for the Jamaat-i-Islami, Lone continues to be their hero. Recently, during the Koran agitation, they carried him on their shoulders while demonstrating in Srinagar's Lal Chowk. It is Lone who is making the most of the existing situation in Kashmir, telling the people that New Delhi wants to keep the people "enslaved" by perpetuating its own regime in the state. Inflammatory language comes to Lone quite easily; he is prone to saying that the question of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan is still open.

In comparison, Maulvi Mirwaiz Farooq is a mellowed man today. His passport was recently impounded by the government but he is now happy that it has been restored to him. "They called me anti-national. How could I be anti-national? I have an Indian passport," he said. Uncharacteristically chastened, the Maulvi said that he saw a change for the better in New Delhi's mood and that he was not in favour of launching any agitation that could degenerate into violence: "What is the hurry, ...sometime or the other, the peoples' will has to be accepted." Mirwaiz perhaps knows the mind of his partner who is more powerful, Farooq Abdullah.

The former chief minister who, at one time, was radically opposed to New Delhi, now says he would be the last man to adopt an uncooperative attitude towards the centre. He is "hopeful" that the centre's point of view regarding Jammu and Kashmir will "soon change." Of late, there has also been talk that he had tried to meet the Prime Minister. Even though the meeting has not yet materialised, they have started communicating with each other.

It is not without reason that Gulshah has suddenly begun talking of a rapprochement with Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah, Farooq's mother, who is known as '*madre-meharban*' in the Valley. These are signs of nervousness and there have been moves for a patch-up within the family. Gulshah's wife Khalida has had some meetings with her sister Suraiya who is on the other side of the fence and Tariq Abdullah has also been approached to arrange talks between Shah and the Begum. But it is Farooq Abdullah who is standing in the way of a family reunion. According to sources in the National Conference (F), he has been advised not to have any truck with Gulshah in order to come to power, as that would affect his credibility in the Valley. Others suggest that Gulshah has his own way of doing things.

Both Governor Jagmohan and Farooq Abdullah have been recommending Governor's Rule in the state but the suggestion, it seems, is unpalatable to the centre. At the same time the Congress(I) camp is not in favour of supporting the Shah government. If Mufti Mohammad Sayeed is to be believed, the Congress(I) in Jammu and Kashmir could not be in a happier position. Both Shah and Farooq Abdullah are seeking its support. But where does the Congress(I) go from such a "sound position?" That might be a question for time to decide. But in the present political situation there is an important lesson for Kashmiris: New Delhi still remains the master of the game.

"It was

Repeated failures of his agitations for the "restoration of democracy" in Jammu and Kashmir have created doubts about the ability of Dr Farooq Abdullah for consistent political work. People of the state as well as those from outside have begun to say that the National Conference (Farooq) is not led by a man capable of leading a sustained struggle. Even political allies like Abdul Ghani Lone have openly spoken of the need for "stronger public action" against G.M. Shah. Dr Abdullah, he says, is not providing the thrust that the movement against the Shah government needs. "Complacent" is the word they use to describe his attitude. The assault on Dr Abdullah near Tangmarg on 12 July did bring forth some of that latent aggression in him but then he did not react the way associates and followers had expected him to. Political observers in the Valley feel Dr Abdullah is becoming increasingly indecisive. He says he would fight back like a tiger and then goes low-key, he launches an agitation and then recedes into the background. In short, there is no more 'kick' in him. But is this because of his political ineptitude and indecision or is it part of the subtle chessplay in Jammu and Kashmir? Is Dr Abdullah biding his time, deliberately lying low? Is he waiting for New Delhi to make the next move? He spoke to SUNDAY at his posh Gupkar Road bungalow in Srinagar. Excerpts:

Q: ***Why was there an attack on you?***

A: It was a conspiracy to kill me. It is so clear. These people had just planned to remove me physically from the scene.

Q: Some people have made out a case that it was essentially a quarrel over auqaf funds...

A: That is the plea they are making. How can there be a quarrel on auqaf funds? I am the chairman of the auqaf trust and if there was any quarrel why did they not stop me at Baba Rishi itself? Why such an attack in the middle of a jungle, in the dark of the night? I was just going down for some tea at my brother's place and there they were in the middle of the road. They tried to stop us and for a moment I did

a Conspiracy to Kill Me"

Dr Farooq Abdullah told SUNDAY

slow down but then Abdus Salaam, one of the auqaf trust officials, asked me to drive through because he had guessed their intentions were not good. We bypassed them but they came after us and 50 yards further down, hit us on the left, denting my vehicle and breaking its windowpane. Then they came down with axes and sticks. Luckily, my personal security officer began firing and there was this army officer who was behind us. He really saved us. Otherwise I would have been no more. It was all well planned, they had even put off the electricity in the area—in Tangmarg as well as in Baba Rishi. How did the lights go off at the same time?



Farooq Abdullah

Q: What is the basis for your allegation that the law minister, Ghulam Hassan Mir, was behind this conspiracy?

A: They were all his men and Mir was masterminding the entire operation sitting in the dak bungalow in Tangmarg. What was he doing there sitting so late in the evening? Does he have an explanation? In fact my younger brother had warned me, several days before the incident took place, about a conspiracy being hatched but I paid no heed to it. I did not think they would stoop so low.

Q: The state government has ordered an enquiry into the affair. Are you satisfied with the way it is going?

A: After so many days they have been able to catch only four men even though they have the names of all persons concerned. Why are they not able to trace the real people behind the conspiracy?

Q: Switching subjects, Dr Abdullah, the political situation in the state is rather fluid, isn't it?

A: You have seen the performance of the Shah government. The raging corruption, the slack administration, the deteriorating law and order situation. How has the situation improved? Shah has not been able to come to grips with the situation at all.

Q: There is talk of a change in the air...

A: Well, I hope the centre is doing some rethinking on the subject. The Congress(I) has called all its state leaders to New Delhi, where they might be reassessing the situation. The time has come when they should do some rethinking on their support to such a government. But some state leaders of the Congress(I) want to continue the alliance for their own petty interests, for small things that they stand to gain from their support to Shah.

Q: If there is a change, what kind of change do you foresee?

A: Well, we have demanded Governor's Rule in the state for some time to be followed by Assembly elections. I think that would be the best way to change things in Kashmir for the better. The Governor has also been recommending the same thing for quite sometime now.

Q: Why is New Delhi not taking any action then?

A: One never quite knows. There are differences within the Congress(I) itself on the issue. But now certainly, the political climate has changed. The Congress(I), too, has realised that the Shah government has not delivered the goods.

Q: You too have changed your stance suitably of late. When you were chief minister you were not ready to have anything to do with the centre. Now you say you want friendship with them...

A: I am the last man who would want confrontation with the centre. I never said that. I will, as always, cooperate with the centre.

Q: But people say that you have deliberately kept your agitation on a low key because you want to convince the centre...

A: No, we are going to intensify our struggle for the restoration of democracy but let me tell you that I will not allow any agitation to be violent. It is easy for people like Ghani Lone to say that the struggle should have more thrust but I don't want to repeat a Punjab here, where you do something and then it goes completely out of hand. I don't want to lose hold on the reins.

Q: But do you think a rapprochement with the Congress(I) or the centre is on the way? Would you go in for it?

A: That is yet to be seen. A lot will depend on the centre too, but I hope there is a change in their attitude because Kashmir is a very sensitive state.

Q: And this talk of an agreement between G.M. Shah and you: Is it true?

A: No.

Q: But there have been some moves recently in this direction...

A: Yes, they have been trying for a settlement but I am not interested. This is not a family battle, this is a struggle for the restoration of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir. I am not in favour of any such agreement with Gulshah or his men.

Hunger in Jhabua

A picture report by Sondeep Shankar on the devastating drought in this predominantly tribal district of Madhya Pradesh.





Driving through the devastated wasteland in the western Madhya Pradesh district of Jhabua, it is possible to travel hundreds of kilometres without seeing even a blade of grass. The very same area once had small hillocks which were densely forested

A predominantly tribal district (85 per cent tribal), Jhabua today, is in the grip of an acute drought resulting in fodder crisis. Thousands of cattle-head have perished due to starvation.

The land has lost most of its top soil and yields only one crop of maize or corn. This is the outcome of sheer lack of awareness and foresight. Fodder is being imported from the neighbouring Gujarat districts and sold to the tribals at the rate of Rs 150 per bale. Each bale of fodder lasts for just about three days when four animals feed on them. This is far too expensive even by city standards. Naturally, the tribals cannot till their land and are being forced to sell the meagre silver jewellery that they have, to feed the cattle. There have been instances of tribals organising themselves and looting the village markets and also a train carrying fodder.







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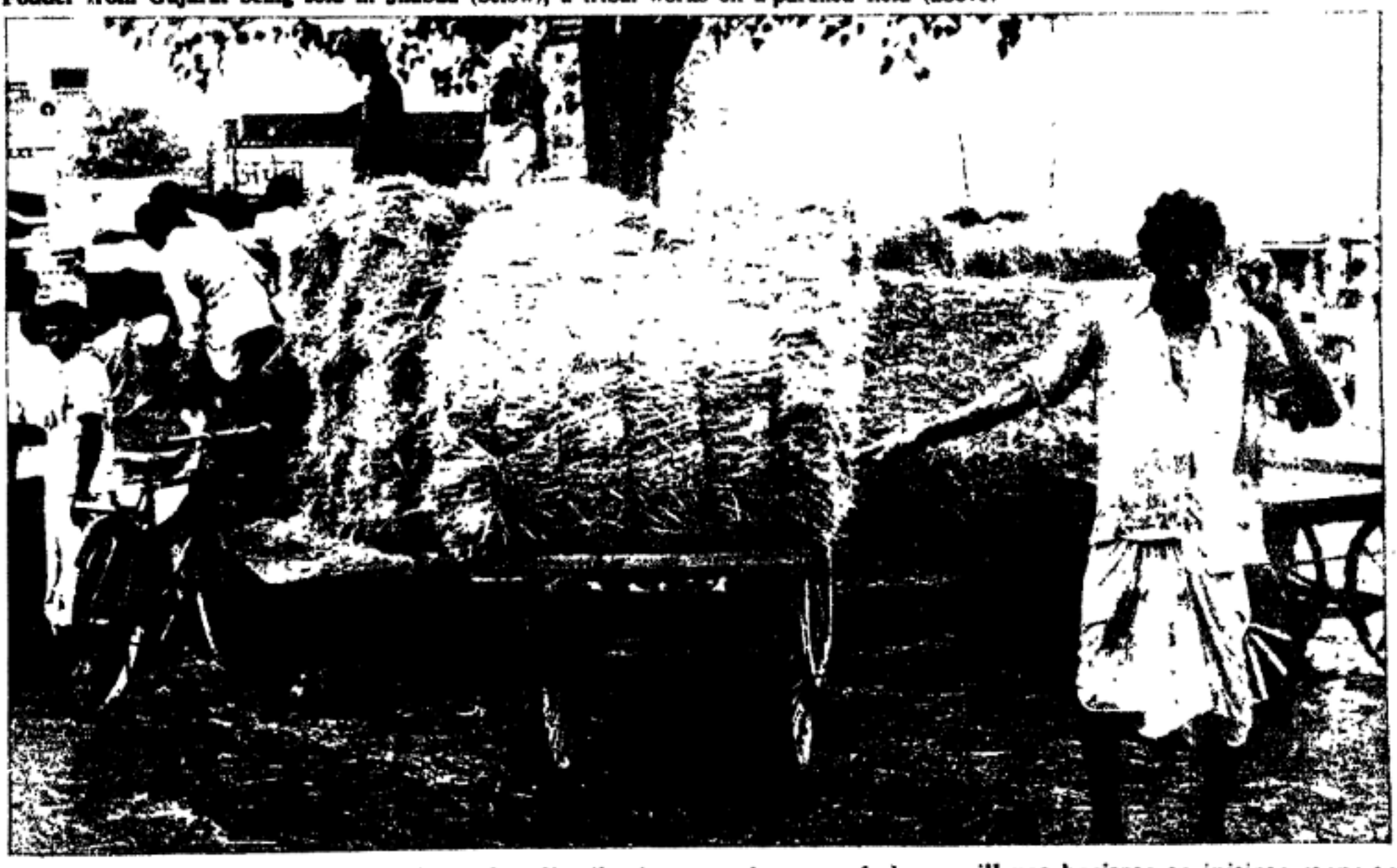
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Fodder from Gujarat being sold in Jhabua (below); a tribal works on a parched field (above)



The Prime Minister's visit to the district raised high hopes among the tribals who saw an overnight development in the form of electricity connections to their villages and fodder distributions on the eve of the PM's visit. The tribals showed him the empty grain storage tanks and told him of the dying cattle. It can only be hoped that the government will not hesitate to initiate steps to alleviate these people's sufferings when the Prime Minister's visit has left them hopeful and within sight of an end to their miseries. ■



Was M
Murde

Bengali screen's most sought-af
succumbed to severe burns on 22 J
Rajiv Bagchi and Srinjo

The struggle finally ended. After battling for over 220 hours, Mahua Roychoudhury, the prima donna of the Bengali screen, succumbed to the severe burn injuries she received on the fateful night of 12 July. In a rare display of spontaneous emotion, the whole of Calcutta seemed to have turned up at the Calcutta Hospital and Research Centre to pay their last respects to a woman whose name had become synonymous with commercial Bengali cinema. All the big names in the industry were there as well as common people, crying and mourning the death of their beloved star one who had struggled against the odds to become Bengal's leading actress. But she could not withstand the most crucial test of her life. Bathing her countless fans in tears and with crores at stake in an industry which had shown signs of looking up, she made an uncere monious exit on 22 July.

Mahua Roychoudhury was brought to the Calcutta Hospital with "second and third degree burns" and admitted at around 2 am on 13 July.

Mahua (she was known as Shipra and later Sonali) was the youngest of three children As a child she knew hunger—life was always a struggle against grinding poverty. Her father, who was once a dancer, was almost perpetually unemployed and lived separately in Dum Dum. Her mother, an employee of the post and telegraphs department brought her up. But Nilanjan, who saw his three children occasionally, was quick to notice that her daughter had talent. Realising that show business was the only escape for his daughter from a life of abject poverty, he encouraged Sonali to participate in the local "functions" and often took her round the film studios of Tollygunge, introducing her to producers. But the movie-moguls remained unimpressed—an average looking girl who was too shy to speak up was not star material, they felt. Sonali's perseverance and her determination to make it to the top, finally paid off. During one of her rounds, she met Jamaal, the make-up man of Suchitra Sen, the reigning queen of the Bengali silver screen. And Jamaal introduced her to Tarun Majumdar, the noted film maker who was looking for a vivacious, young heroine for his film *Sreeman Prithviraj*.

Of the nine aspirants who came for the screen test, Sonali was perhaps the most nervous. But she had a distinct screen presence—the shy gawky teenager coming across as a bubbly and attractive young lady. A very impressed Tarun Majumdar (who named her Mahua) signed her on immediately. *Sreeman Prithviraj*, released in 1976, was a runaway hit and Mahua, as she was now called was innundated with offers almost overnight. But her next release, *Je Jekhane Dariye* ("it was one of my most memorable roles," she said later) and a few more that followed flopped badly. Suddenly, the "rising star" was reduced to a bit player. It was the legendary Uttam Kumar who pulled her out of the rut. Again, her performance in *Sei Chokh*, opposite Uttam Kumar won applause, but the film sank without a trace.

In 1976, Mahua married Tilak



Mahua and Zaheera in a still from *Dour*



Mahua lered?

...r lady, Mahua Roychoudhury, ...ly after a nine-day struggle for life ... Chowdhury investigate.

Chakraborty, a onetime child artiste ... friend of Mahua and even signed ...ilm opposite him. But it was a ...isaster. More successful was her screen romance with new find Sontu Mukherjee and *Seshraksha* gave Mahua a new lease of life. Other films followed, but only the occasional one like *Sabitri Satyaban* and *Pipasa* did well.

If the late Seventies had been a disappointing time for Mahua, the early Eighties were even worse. The Bengali film industry was in a shambles and the few films that were being released were running to empty houses. Mahua hung on, signing any film that came her way for it was a question of her survival. Then came a bit of good fortune. Godfather Tarun Majumdar was planning to make a "low budget" film and he chose a number of newcomers including Tapas Paul, Debashree Roy and Mahua. The film was a box-office blockbuster, and ran for over 50 weeks in Calcutta, a feat unprecedented in recent times. With success came critical acclaim and awards, including the prestigious *Filmfare* award and the Film Critics Award. Said Ram Gupta, the producer-distributor of *Dadar Kirti*, who still sits in his office surrounded by the numerous awards the film has won, "It was only due to the inspired acting of Mahua that the film celebrated its golden jubilee.Tapas Paul, now a much sought-after star,was equally effusive, "Shewas a very mature actress...someone who would go out of her way to help others." After *Dadar Kirti*, Mahua became a celebrity. Then came *Lal Golap*, directed by Jahar Biswas. It was another super hit. Now only national recognition awaited her. And Tapan Sinha's *Aadmi aur Aurat* a television film gave her the opportunity. "It was one of my most memorable experiences," said Tapan Sinha. "The girl's conception of the character s far clearer than mine," he adde Mahua along with Shabana Azmi and Smita Patil were the contenders for the national award for best actress. "The only reason why Mahua lost out was because *Aadmi aur Aurat* was a short film, while *Paar* being a full scale feature film allowed Shabana more scope," said Tapan Sinha. Just when Mahua had reached the peak of her career —she was working in three shifts since 1983 to complete the 29 films that were on the floors— she made her exit.

There are a number of conflicting versions as to how disaster struck Mahua. According to the actress' father. Nilanjan Roychoudhury, "Mahua and Tilak had come down from director Anjan Choudhury's flat around midnight. Tilak had retired for the night when they heard a shriek from the kitchen. We rushed there, and found Mahua in flames. We somehow succeeded in dousing the fire by covering her with blankets but by then most of Mahua's body was burnt. Later she was rushed to the hospital." But why did it take nearly two hours to reach the hospital which was just a few minutes drive from the flat? "We were busy nursing Mahua with whatever we had," was Mr Roychoudhury's explanation. Moreover, what has struck many,



Mahua with Om Puri in *Sankranti*



Mahua in *Sandhya Pradeep*

including the sleuths of the C I D is that the police was kept in the dark about the incident. Only later that night did the officer-in-charge of the Behala police station come to know of the incident through local *thana* officials. In his report to K. K. Kaliya, the superintendent of police, 24 Parganas, the OC observed that he started investigations without any complaint being lodged. The OC added that he had been told by Mahua's family members that the incident occurred when a stove burst. But the OC, after inspecting the flat and the kitchen, found no sign of splinters which are found when a stove has burst. Moreover, Mr Kaliya gathered from the hospital reports that Mahua's back was the most severely burnt and that her face remained unharmed. In addition, the doctors admitted that when Mahua was brought to the hospital she was smelling very strongly of kerosene. "It was as if she had been bathed in oil." Suspicions were raised as to whether the actress had attempted suicide. The police even did not rule out the possibility of homicide. On 14 July, 72 hours after the incident, Mr Kaliya advised the director general of police to hand over investigations to the Criminal Investigation Department.

The family members of Mahua are extremely tight-lipped about the incident. Tilak Chakraborty's behaviour all through was baffling to many, including the police. On the plea that he was injured in trying to save his wife, he shut himself up in the house when thousands of people were gathering at the hospital premises. It was only at the insistence of some friends that he made a brief appearance in Mahua's cabin on July 14. Mahua's father and brother too were avoiding people, journalists in particular, like the plague. A defence lawyer sat in their flat throughout the day and whoever wanted news was directed to him. The fortunate few who succeeded in coercing Tilak or his father-in-law to speak were fed with the stove burst theory.

The CID officials too complained of a "total lack of cooperation from the family members of Mahua." The police officials too refused to divulge anything "as this was an extremely sensitive issue." They seized the bank accounts of Mahua and began questioning the people who carried out financial transactions on behalf of Mahua. The CID initially suspected that at the root of the problem may be money. And they had reasons to believe that. Tilak was an ordinary bank employee while Nilanjan Roychoudhury was without a job all through his life.

At the Calcutta Hospital the CID sleuths kept a strict watch on all the people who came to meet Mahua. They were sure that the actress would come out with something startling and so they pressed the doctors for permission to interrogate Mahua. But her condition being "critical," the doctors did not oblige the police

Bengali Films: Then and Now

For the Bengali film industry, Sir Cyril Radcliffe's stab through the map of Bengal in 1947 was perhaps the unkindest of cuts. At one stroke, the partition of Bengal into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Bengal deprived the flourishing Bengali film industry of more than half of its market. It was a big jolt, which was temporarily cushioned because East Pakistan in the late Forties and early Fifties had no industry to speak of and had to depend on films made in Calcutta. From the Fifties, restrictions began to be imposed on the entry of films made in Calcutta and later, it tapered off to a total ban.

The strongest challenge, however, came from Hindi films. They had begun infiltrating into the traditional stronghold of the Bengali film industry—the *mofussil* areas of West Bengal.

Even though shrinking markets and the onslaught from Bombay have played a part in the decline in the industry's fortunes, the major factor remains the industry's inherent drawbacks. Even in the early Sixties, the industry survived mainly because there were directors like Ajoy Kar, Sushil Mazumdar, Sukumar Dasgupta and Manu Lahiri, who could make wholesome entertaining and technically competent films. They were not master filmmakers like Mrinal Sen or Satyajit Ray whose *Pather Panchali* was released in 1954. Besides Ray never made films for the masses and they were never big hits.

By the early Seventies, there were fewer filmmakers of mediocre rating who could tell decent stories well. There was the occasional *Charulata*, *Bhuvan Shome* or *Goopi Gyne Bagha Byne*, but most films, because of their poor quality did badly.

The continual lack of success at the box office and the lack of money and glamour in the industry has also led to a drain of talent from Bengal. There is no successor to the Uttam Kumar-Suchitra Sen combination which held audiences in Bengal spellbound in the late-Fifties and Sixties. There are also fewer salable stars in the industry today. And while the number of directors like Utpalendu Chakravarty (*Chokh*) Gautam Ghosh (*Dakhal* and *Paar*) and Buddhadev Dasgupta (*Dooratwa*) who have made "art films, there are fewer Tapan Sinhas (*Baidurja Rahasya*) and Tarun Majumdars (*Dadar Kirti*) to make commercial films with finesse, competence and box-office success.

Equally badly affected are the studios. In the Fifties, there were 14 studios in Calcutta: there are only five which are still running and most of them are in very poor shape. Many others have been closed down while some have been converted into motor garages, bakeries, housing estates and godowns. An old studio now houses the local Doordarshan station. The recent trend of shooting on location and in residences has made matters worse.

With the drastic decline in the number of films, most of the film

till 17 July. On 18 July the CID was allowed to record her statement. In her statement, recorded in the presence of two witnesses, Mahua said that "she was injured when the stove on which she was cooking, burst." The CID dropped the case but the report to the director general of police, by Kamal Majumdar, DIG CID, raises doubts on a number of counts:

- Initial reports rule out a stove burst since in that case splinters would have been found scattered;
- The incident may not have taken place in the kitchen at all since initial investigations suggested that things were in order in the kitchen whereas the bedroom was full of burnt clothes. Nilanjan Roychoudhury's explanation is that he had dragged his daughter from the kitchen to the bedroom. But in that case the door curtains dividing the bedroom and the kitchen would have been at least partially burnt;
- Why did it take almost two hours to rush Mahua to the hospital?
- The doctors reported that Mahua's back was severely affected by the fire whereas in the case of stove burst, her front, especially her face should have been severely burnt:
- When Mahua was brought to the hospital she was smelling very strongly of kerosene;



Mahua's husband Tilak Chakraborty with their son

In view of these doubts, though the CID has closed the case, "they are willing to open it if anyone comes forward with a complaint."

Most of the people this correspondent spoke to felt that Mahua's deposition before the police was more of a public statement meant to avoid embarrassment than the truth. There is a section which believes that Mahua could never have come out with the real story as she was under pressure. Most of her financial transactions were carried out on Mahua's behalf by her father Nilanjan Roychoudhury and her husband Tilak Chakraborty. It is said that most of her money was invested or kept in various banks in her father's and husband's name. Ever since Mahua was admitted to hospital, the police have kept a strict vigilance, scanning every visitor who came to see her so that Mahua was not forced to change her mind.

What really drove Mahua to her death? According to her husband, she had recently been very depressed because her shooting schedules in Bangladesh were held up because he had not got her visa. "I am Mahua Roychoudhury and the Bangladesh government has not given me a visa?" she is alleged to have told her husband. But would a fun-loving, friendly woman whose life had been an endless struggle agains' failure, poverty and despair have been so despondent about the delay in getting a visa as to attempt suicide? Would an ambitious actress, enjoying a successful career, shaped by sheer hard work throw it all away in a fit of pique?

That Mahua had something on her mind recently, is fairly clear. Said an insider, "Something was troubling her. She was drinking a lot and even during her outdoor shootings, she never joined her colleagues for dinner (a normal practice) but preferred to lock herself up in her room and drink." What made her tell the criminal investigation department on her death bed that her burns were due to a stove burst even when it was obvious that they were not? Who was Mohua trying to protect? Was the death of this talented performer the end result of a sordid conspiracy? With Mahua Roychoudhury dead, the truth may never be known.



Mahua and Ranjit Mullick in *Abhiman*

stars, including the leading actors and actresses are left with very little work. Most of them including Aparna Sen (*36 Chowringhee Lane*) and Soumitra Chatterjee, who has acted in many of Satyajit Ray's films as well as the younger crop of artistes have been regularly performing on the stage.

But there are signs that the industry has made a minor recovery. With the success of *Shatru* (directed by Anjan Chowdhury) and *Lal Golap*, the studio floors are no longer deserted. Both Tapas Paul and Moon Moon Sen, two of the busiest stars in Tollygunge, agree that the industry is in better shape than it was sometime back. Said Moon Moon Sen, "The industry was in very bad shape a few years ago, but things are picking up because of some recent super-hits and more producers have been approaching me." Tapas Paul agrees: "The situation compared to the time I joined has improved," he said. But whether the industry starved of finances and talent, will survive the crisis and perhaps even thrive, remains to be seen.

SPECIAL REPORT

The Curse of Pollution

The lesson of Bhopal is clear: India is fast becoming a hunting ground of industries which are playing havoc with the environment. The list of the most hazardous units recently brought out by the government should serve as a basis for action. Ritu Sarin reports.

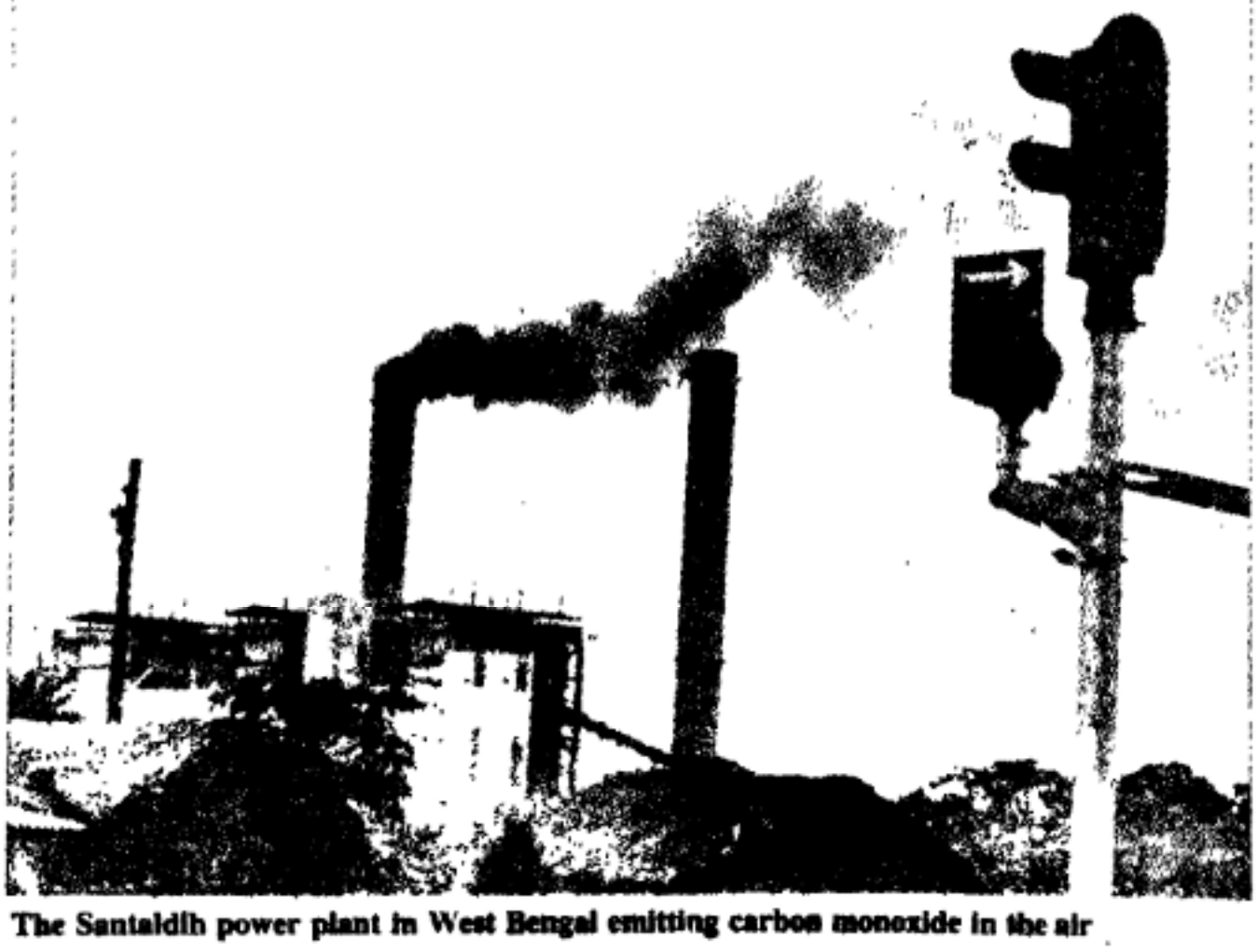
Corrective measures seldom precede the catastrophe. It took the death of 2,500 people and the maiming of 50,000 others in the Bhopal disaster to make the authorities aware of the danger clouds that remain permanently suspended over industries like the Union Carbide which produce toxic substances. But if the questions that the world's worst industrial accident threw up following the gas leak in Bhopal are disturbing, then the results of investigations into further dangers from similar plants are positively shocking. The Bhopal disaster revealed the culpability of the parent Union Carbide Corporation, USA, in the maintenance of its subsidy in India, the gross negligence of the Madhya Pradesh government in its failure to enforce safety regulations in case of an exigency, and exposed the vulnerability of persons living around such industrial units.

Seven months after the Bhopal tragedy, the danger signs are up for all to see. The government has identified between 6,000 and 7,000 chemical units as hazardous. Findings of the state governments and also of the foreign experts, who have been attracted to India and are using it as an experiment ground for evaluating international industrial safety standards, have exposed the disregard that many of these plants have shown towards adopting safety measures.

The hazardous units constitute industries which produce toxic, highly reactive, flammable or explosive substances. A series of high-level consultations have taken place to evaluate the existing system of enforcing safety measures. The subject of safety and occupational hazards in chemical industries was taken up during the meeting of the labour secretaries on 10 May and the labour ministers' conference on 11 May in New Delhi. Of the industries identified as potential sources of danger, a large number include units producing pesticides and insecticides, drugs, acids and alkalies, sodium and potassium cyanide and rubber synthetics. Nearly 70 per cent of the hazardous units are situated in Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka and Maharashtra, as there is no strong criticism about the inadequate safety measures. Special nominees of the Central Pollution Control Board would be appointed to examine the dangers posed by chemical units.

The potential dangers from such hazardous industries and the closure of units which are found lacking in inbuilt safety measures are being examined by the state governments. The Safety and Health Accident Reduction Action Plan (SAHARA) has been formulated to provide guidelines to the state labour organisation to identify such units and investigate into the threats posed by them. The setting up of the SAHARA is a first step for pinpointing the "danger areas" which would lead to fatalities in case of an accident. Surveys conducted by some of the state governments have revealed that there is not only largescale negligence in the maintenance of some units, the owners of the units have ignored the warnings issued by the enforcement agencies. In Gujarat, for example, in spite of eight minor accidents in chemical and allied units in the past year, the state government has failed to take deterrent steps against the industrialists and officials who have permitted flagrant violations of the labour laws. The task force of the Gujarat government has identified 25 hazardous chemical plants, producing hydrocynic acid, chlorine, carbon monoxide, ammonia, nitrobenzene and phosphorus components. After scrutinising the conditions under which these chemicals are produced, some industries were termed "extremely hazardous for surrounding population and environment." Among the industries being examined for their inbuilt safety measures are the Indian Petrochemicals Limited and the Indian Oil Corporation refinery in Baroda, Tata Chemicals Limited in Jamnagar, Cyanides and Chemical Company in Surat and the Gujarat Insecticides in Ankleshwar.

In spite of the urgent directive



The Santaldih power plant in West Bengal emitting carbon monoxide in the air

from the government, other states are dragging their feet in preparing the lists of hazardous units and thereby delaying effective implementation of the SAHARA plan. The Maharashtra government has now appointed a team of seven experts to visit the factories emitting hazardous gas and enforce safety rules in their premises. One of the large chemical units situated in Chembur, Bombay, the Rashtriya Chemical and Fertiliser plant, has been shut down following complaints about leakages. In Rajasthan, a committee appointed to look into the subject has named three chemical units—the Pesticides India Limited in Udaipur, Modi Alkalies and Chemicals and Bharat Allums Limited, both located in Alwar—which present dangers to life and property. In Punjab, an exhaustive survey was carried out on 810 units, most of which were hydrogenated oil (ghee), pesticide, fertiliser, chemicals and liquidised petroleum gas (LPG) plants. The Punjab state government is contemplating the closure of some 20 plants which have been found lacking in safety controls.

While the first step of improving safety standards in hazardous units is to identify the sources of dangers, a positive move to eliminate the possibility of an accident would only be taken when the government announces its decision to make the owning of such a hazardous unit a cognisable offence. Following recommendations of the labour secretaries and labour ministries, a decision has been taken to substantially increase the penalty for violating safety regulations in units identified as hazardous. An amendment of the Factories Act of 1948 is soontobeeffectedbythe passing of a bill in Parliament which would make labour laws more stringent. At present, the penalties imposed for violations of the Factories Act are imprisonment to a maximum period of three months or a fine between Rs 500-Rs 2,000. Though no separate records are maintained for fines and penalty imposed for infringement of safety status, a recent survey showed that the average fine imposed for violation of safety regulations was as low as Rs 56 per unit and the highest fine imposed was Rs 517. Such fines were levied after the penalty under the Factories Act was enhanced in 1976 to over Rs 2,000.

In the wake of the Union Carbide tragedy and the increased awareness of the threat of a similar catastrophe, a comprehensive legislation is being worked out to cover all aspects of prevention of accidents in hazardous units. The proposals for amendments in the Factories Act are to be examined by the cabinet subcommittee before the legislation can be made into a law. The guidelines before the committee looking into the amendment are clear: "The amended law should provide for stringent penalties for all types of violations and give powers to chief inspectors of factories for the suspension of operation of processes wherever there is evidence of danger to the lives of the employees and members of the general public living in and around the working place. For continued violation of safety and health provisions, the penalties would include



A factory in a locality emitting smoke

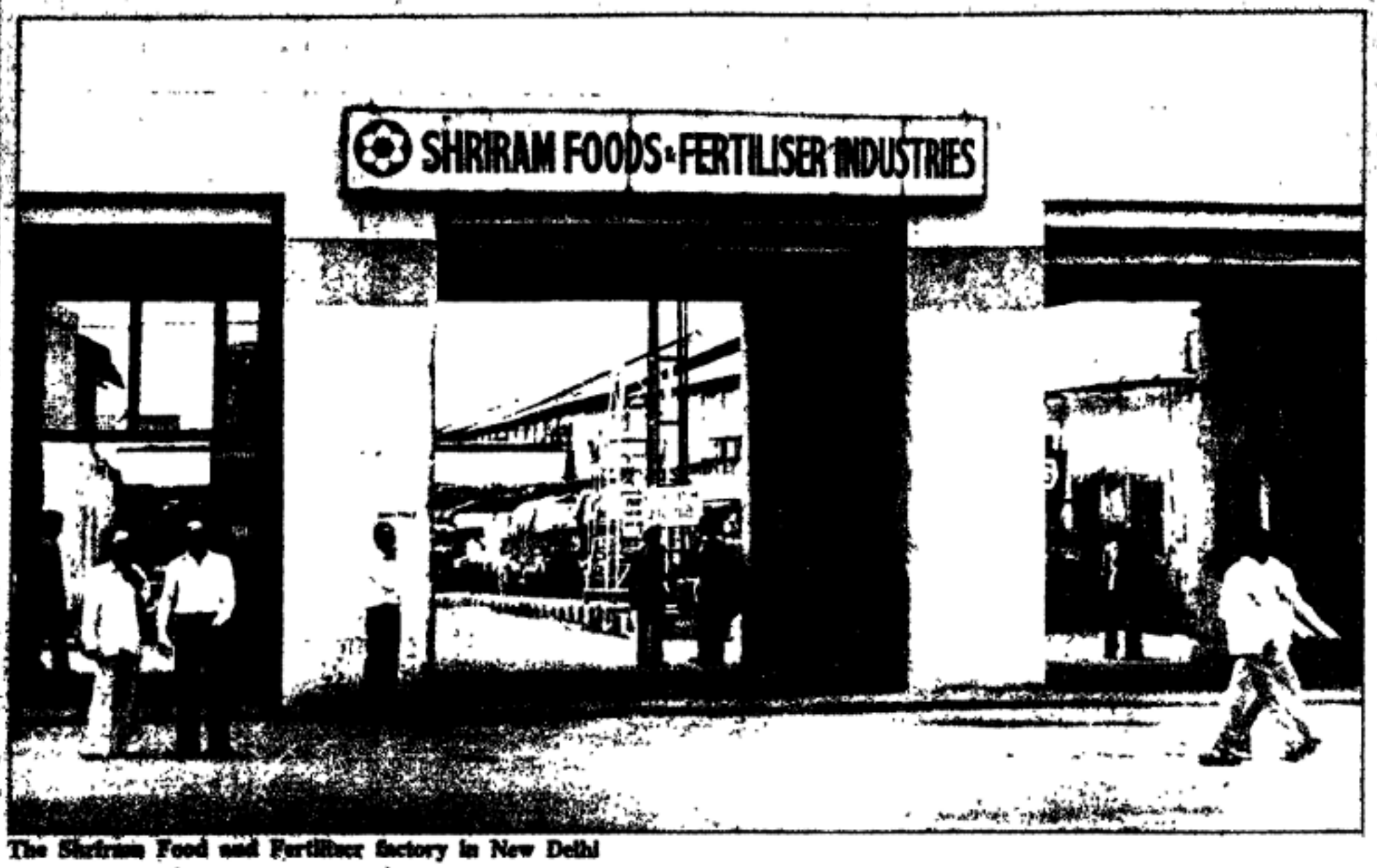
compulsory imprisonment." The amended Factories Act would strengthen the hands of the enforcement agencies to ensure that there is no violation of safety regulations. What is more, it would empower the inspector of factories to announce the closure of a hazardous unit. In the capital, in spite of questions being raised in Parliament on the imminent danger from the DCM chemical plant, no decisions of closure could be taken under the present legislations. Besides, a provision in the act would ensure that the recommendation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), that for every establishment employing more than 1,000 persons there should be a security officer and there should be one inspector for every 100 factories is followed. At present, investigations have shown that there is not even one inspecting officer for every 200 units, many of which have been listed as hazardous. Again, it is in Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal where most of the safety violations have been detected.

The Bhopal tragedy is not the only reason why the government has shown interest in industrial safety. There has been a record rise in accidents and incidence of disease from occupational hazards in these units even before December, 1984. Figures of two previous years of accidents in the chemical and chemical product industry clearly indicate this rising trend. In 1980 there were 10,823 injury cases (with an incidence rate of 32.76 per 1000 workers) in the chemical industry. The number increased to 12,328 the following year (with an incidence rate 37.04 per 1000 workers). Though figures for the subsequent years have not yet been tabulated by the authorities, there has been a further increase between 1982 and 1984, the largest number of accidents occurring in 1983.

Accidents in hazardous industrial units have also been rising in other parts of the world. While about nine million people were injured in 1984 as a result of on-the-job accidents in 64 countries and 24,000 of these injuries were fatal, the situation is much worse in the third world countries than in the industrial north because of the attitude of the Multi-National Enterprises (MNE). In India, the investment of MNE is among the highest in the developing countries. The Union Carbide MIC gas leak has exposed the dire consequence of an accident in such a MNE. Highlighting the plight of hazardous units in India and other countries a report of the ILO pointed out that human beings are being exposed to more and more chemical substances: from 1.6 million in 1970 to over five million today. Among the 60,000 chemicals in common use, exposure limits have been adopted for only a fraction of the agents known to be toxic for the workers and dangerous for persons living around the area of production.

Will India become a playground for the multi-nationals to carry out their dangerous chemical experiments? What is the safeguard for the thousands who live close to the 6,000 chemical units which have been identified as potential sources of danger? Dr A.F. Ellis, consultant ILO and Dr D.H.Slater,toxicologistandmemberof the advisory committee on major hazards in the United Kingdom have suggested that a qualified chemical inspector be appointed to inspect every 100 chemical factories and that stringent labour legislations be immediately passed.

A Potential Killer



The Shriram Food and Fertiliser factory in New Delhi

Will the direction in which the winds blow determine their life or death in case of a disaster? This is a question which 1,500 residents within the one kilometre radius and 9,500 more within the two kilometre radius of the sprawling Shriram Food and Fertilizers Ltd. plant in Delhi are asking. The plant, a chemical unit of the private sector Delhi Cloth Mills (DCM) situated at Najafgarh Road, has been identified as one of the "most hazardous" industrial units in the capital. A recent survey showed that the DCM plant topped the list of 1,500 such units in Delhi which could be possible sources of industrial accidents. Following the Union Carbide Methyl Isocynate (MIC) leak, the Delhi administration has been under pressure to announce the closure of the DCM plant, which produces large quantities of chlorine and other toxic chemicals and is situated in a densely populated area. Restricted by labour laws which prohibit the closure of any plant without substantial evidence of malfunctioning, the Delhi administration has set up an expert committee of toxicologists and environmentalists to investigate into the potential threat posed by the DCM chemical unit and other such hazardous plants.

Any explosion or leakage in such a chlorine plant situated within the metropolis would undoubtedly spell catastrophe for the thousands living around it. The DCM plant was made operational in 1949 and inspite of warnings, its production and storage capacity have increased over the years. Today, the chemical unit, which employs 1,777 persons produces 124 tonnes of caustic soda and 105 tonnes of chlorine every day. Usually about 180 tonnes of chlorine is stored in its two huge 100-tonne tanks and two 20-tonne tanks. Eighty tonnes of the chlorine is utilised for production of hydrochloric acid (HCL) and 30 tonnes transported to the neighbouring plant of Hindustan Insecticides, for production of dichloro diethyl trichloro ethane (DDT) through a pipeline. This has been considered an extremely dangerous mode of transportation.

The Hindustan Insecticides unit has itself been listed as a potential environmentel and industrial hazard. There have been strong protests in Parliament that both these chemical units should be shut down because they "might any day explode and cause extensive damage to life and property."

The DCM chemical plant, its officials have been at pains to point out, has all the inbuilt safety measures prescribed by the Society of Chemical Institute, United Kingdom. The utilisation capacity is a high 99.9 per cent as against the national average utilisation capacity of 86 per cent. Only a few weeks ago in view of fresh directives issued by the government, the storage of chlorine in one of the 100-tonne tanks was discontinued and various other precautionary measures adopted. A detailed project report on the various points of danger located within the plant has been prepared by the labour commissioner of Delhi. It has been pointed out in the report, that the security safeguards in the DCM plant are far from satisfactory, let alone foolproof. The expert committee set up should now examine the imminent threat posed by the plant.

SPECIAL REPORT

Madras' Poisoned Air

Weary passengers travelling by train breathe a sigh of relief on spotting the three gigantic funnels of the BasinBridge thermal power station as Madras is just minutes away. But for the slum dwellers who have the misfortune of living in the Basin Bridge Junction, the thermal station is the cause of their concern. The plant has caused such extensive atmospheric pollution that almost every person residing in the area suffers from respiratory problems. No biological tests are required to gauge the extent of the pollution. Throughout the day the entire area remains covered with coal dust.

Over the years there have been agitations for the closure of the thermal plant as it ceaselessly spewed pollutants into the air. But the power situation in the state is so acute that the state government finds it impossible to shut down the unit. Any plant that uses fossil, fuel and coal emits toxic sulphur dioxide. In the case of this thermal station the suspended particulate matter (SPM) dust in common parlance—is very high, far exceeding the tolerance limits set by the pollution control authorities. Apart from contamination,SPM also causes serious respiratory ailments. The SPM can be treated and made harmless but unfortunately in the case of the Basin Bridge Thermal Station, the introduction of an effluent treatment process is not cost effective. The authorities feel it is better to replace the existing system with gas turbines. But the [illegible] decision has been taken.

While the Ennore thermal station near Madras is marginally better than the Basin Bridge station, it is also guilty of causing atmospheric pollution. The SPM in the case of the Ennore station too,has been found to be high. The foundries in Ennore also contribute to the pollution.

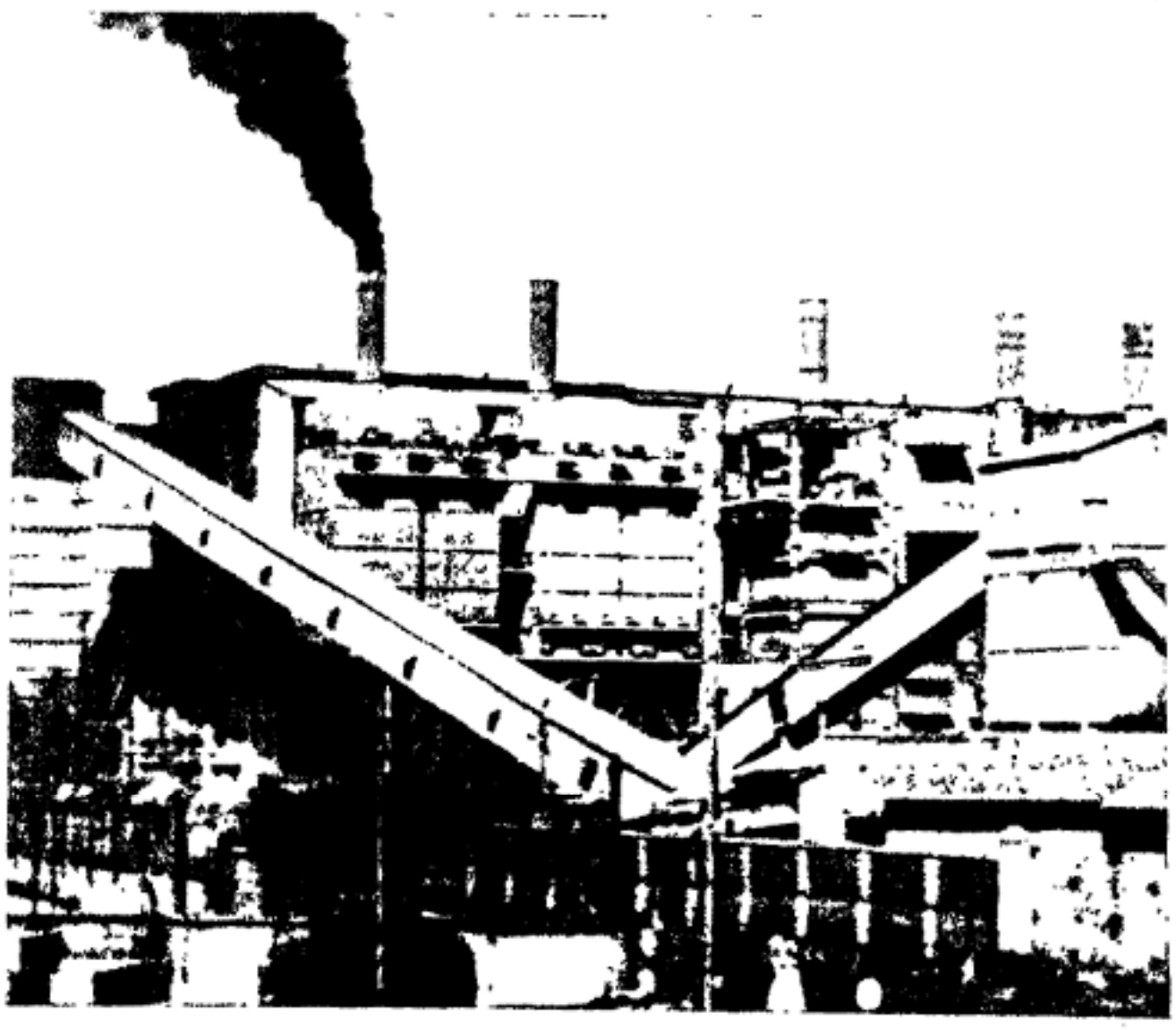
However, the most hazardous industrial units in Tamil Nadu and Madras in particular are the leather tanneries. Of the 430 tanneries in the state about 40 of them are located in Pallavaram, an industrial suburb of Madras. Effluents from these tanneries pollute surface and underground waters. Effluents from leather tanneries have been found to have a high bio-chemical oxygen demand—that is,it depletes the oxygen content in the water making it difficult for the aerobic organisms to survive. Salt (sodium chloride) is also found in large quantities in these effluents. The increased salinity reduces soil fertility: the yield is diminished and finally the land can become barren one day. A lot of chromium is found in the effluents of units using the chrome tanning process. While chromium is not lethal to human beings it kills aquatic life.

Industrial units manufacturing caustic soda, a chemical used for manufacturing rayons,can be hazardous if the effluent treatment or control systems goes faulty. Recently the caustic soda unit of the Kotharis in Madras created panic. Chlorine gas leaked causing eye irritation, congestion in the chest and nausea and several people had to be admitted to hospitals. The incident coming as it did in the wake of the Bhopal tragedy, sent the people running helter skelter.

Cyanide is a deadly chemical present in the liquid effluents of certain engineering units, particularly the plating plants. In Madras there is a large network of automobile ancillary units and hence the plating industry is a thriving one. While some of the major units treat the effluents containing cyanide, by the alkali chlorination method, there are small ones who are not particularly concernedabout pollution.

Oxides of nitrogen emitted by the fertiliser manufacturing plants can be lethal if it comes in contact with hydrocarbons released by refineries and heavy vehicles plying on the road. The effect of the pressure of mercury in industrial effluents can be deadly. Numerous mercury compounds are in wide-spread use in the agricultural, explosives, pigments and pharmaceutical industries. Mercury is also used in large quantities by factories producing chlorine. Only recently has it been discovered that mercury dissolved in water is converted into the deadly methyl mercury by an organic process. Moreover, there are many textile dyeing units in and around Madras which discharge waste into the river with a high saline content. Add to that the zinc released by the galvanising units and the river water is a potential source of health hazard.

Most of the rivers and estuaries in Tamil Nadu are heavily polluted by the discharge of effluents from fertilizer units, chemical industries, steel plants, coal washeries and thermal power plants. In Madras, a number of industrial units are located in the Adayar and Cooum estuaries. Industries like the Kothari and Chemicals, Alkali Chemicals, Madras Refineries, Madras Fertilisers and many



Basin Bridge Thermal power plant

Bengal: Callousness and Neglect

The environment and pollution control department of West Bengal has never been too vigilant in its efforts to ensure industrial security. The recent chlorine gas leaks from two units in Calcutta within a span of 24 hours, laid bare the state's slackness in implementing safety measures. One person died and 32 others, including fire brigade personnel, fell ill after chlorine gas leaked from the Mullickghat pumping station of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC).

A spate of allegations and counter-allegations followed the incident. The CMC officials claimed that the cylinder from which the gas leaked, was defective and the suppliers, Durgapur Chemicals Ltd (DCL) are to be held responsible. However, Mr P. Chakravarti of DCL refuted such a charge. Instead, he claimed that the experts team which was sent by the DCL to investigate into the causes of the leak, had found that the cylinder had been tampered with by the local staff. Another senior official of the DCL also alleged that the Mullickghat staff had been repeatedly cautioned about adopting safety measures as stipulated under the Gas Cylinder Rules 1981 but in vain.

The minister for urban development and local self-government, Mr Prasanta Sur said that the leak could have resulted in a "disaster." The following day, on 12 June, another similar leakage occurred at the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority's (CMDA) booster pumping station at Auckland Place in south Calcutta. Once again a major catastrophe was averted as DCL experts and fire brigade staff rushed to the spot to plug the leak.

The commissioning of yet another potentially dangerous unit, a new zinc smelting plant of the Posts and Telegraphs department, was stopped after a furore was created by a voluntary organisation, Concern for Calcutta (CC). The group objected to the site of this plant, which was to be commissioned near the P & T's telecom factory in the heart of the city. Though Mr H.S. Sodhi, general manager of the telecom factory insists that it is actually a "galvanising plant," informed sources point out that the unit had been set up without prior sanction from the state environment department and the CMC.

The hazards that industrial units using toxic chemicals can pose to the population around it cannot be overemphasised. After the Bhopal gas disaster, the environment and pollution control department of the state, in a flurry of activity, set about investigating into the potentially hazardous industries in West Bengal. As the minister for environment Bhabani Mukherjee put it: "We do not have any units here which use toxic chemicals and gases of the scale used by the Union Carbide in Bhopal." However, the experts are looking into various aspects of industrial safety. the chemicals that the industries plan to use, the design and safety measures and also the mode of storage. Sources at the state pollution control board say that the state of affairs in the fertiliser, pesticides, acid, and chlor-alkaline manufacturing factories are being looked into, as these come under the purview of "hazardous" units. The board has already started legal proceedings against six industrial units in 1983-84 for discharging effluents without adequate treatment. These are: Dunbar Mills, Bengal Distillery (run by Shaw and Wallace Company, which was later withdrawn after they construced an effluent treatment plant), Standard Pharmaceuticals Limited, Chloride India Limited, East End Paper Mills and Everest Paper Mills. Besides, letters of warning have already been sent to Shaw and Wallace Company Ltd. (Haldia), Associated Chemical Industrial Corporation, Durgapur Chemical Ltd, Hindustan Heavy Chemicals, Bengal Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd, Kesoram Rayons Ltd, Jayshree Chemicals and Fertilisers Company Ltd. The Phosphate and Company Ltd, Fertiliser Corporation of India (plants at Durgapur and Haldia), Hindustan Lever (chemical plant at Haldia). The chief inspector of factories has also booked units like the B.D. Khaitan and Company, Bharat Minerals and Chemicals, Shaw Wallace and Company Ltd, Tata Fison India Ltd, New Industrial Chemical Private Ltd, Coalite Chemicals Private Ltd and SGN Synthetic Private Ltd.

Adite Chatterjee, Calcutta

others are located around the Ennore estuary just off Madras. SUNDAY learns from reliable sources that an estimated 7,75,000 litres per day, 2,52,000 litres per day and 4,49,000 litres per day of industrial waste with metallic elements are released into the Adayar, Cooum and Ennore estuaries respectively.

A study of the amount of the pollution along the Madras coast from Pulicat to Kalpakkam revealed that the sea off Ennore has a greater concentration of metallic concentration due to the effluents discharged into the sea. A large number of fish die every year around the Ennore estuary due to water contamination. The sea here is also affected by organic pollution due to the discharge of sewage water. The BOD was also relatively higher in the area according to a CIFRI report published in 1984.

The Water and Air (Prevention and Control) Act enacted by the central government was enforced in Tamil Nadu in 1981. In 1982, the Pollution Control Board was set up and the next year the government stipulated that all existing units as well as new ones being commissioned required the "consent" of the board. This was a means to check whether the units were properly treating toxic effluents. From August 1984 the board has begun prosecuting offending industries. So far action has been initiated against 249 units under the Water (Pollution and Control) Act and against 120 units under the Air (Pollution and Control) Act. The units against which action has been taken are thermal units, iron and steel plants, tanneries, cement, paper and pulp, chemical textile and dyeing and starch-making units. Laws relating to the contravention of the Water Pollution Act are more stringent than the laws of the Air (Pollution and Control) Act. While the former provides for imprisonment for a term not less than six months, which may be extended up to six years and a fine, the latter provides for imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months with fine which in some cases may be as high as Rs 10,000. So far, the courts have penalised five industrial units in Tamil Nadu with fines of Rs 10,000 for violating the provisions of the Air (Pollution and Control) Act.

Many industries have not incorporated systems to process industrial effluents because of the high cost of effluent processing plants. In fact, this is an area where a lot of research is needed. The waste disposal problems are enormous and ought to be solved through effective techniques.

Anita Pratap, Madras

SPECIAL REPORT

Bombay's Factories of Filth

"I was going home from the airport around 9.30 last night (19 July) and along the road I could smell ammonia, even though I was a mile away from the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertiliser (RCF) plant. I can well imagine what the people in the area were going through. What is strange is that the next day's newspapers did not carry a word about the leak and there was obviously a leak of ammonia from the area," insisted P. Abraham, a scientist working with the Society for Clean Cities (SOCLEEN). Abraham who has been running a crusade against the phenomena of the ruinous "acid rain" in the Chembur area is pessimistic about the situation being rectified, despite the hectic activities of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and the two other organisations, namely an environmental safety committee and a sub-committee which the MPCB has spawned. "Everything looks good on paper," said Abraham. "It is in the implementation that everything is wrong, because very little actually changes."

The three-member Evironmental Safety Committee (ESC) formed in January 1985 after the tragedy ot Bhopal and the fears about the effects of hazardous, dangerous chemicals among the local population, has already submitted a list of 15 industries which it has surveyed and has given recommendations on. Said Dr R.K. Garg, director of the chemical engineering group of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Bombay, and chairman of the ESC, "We have finished a survey of 40 companies manufacturing or dealing with chemicals, pesticides, and hazardous chemicals, gas and other incendiary substances. We have submitted this to the MPCB which in turn has to submit it to the government of Maharashtra." C.D. Oomachen, chairman of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, who has been trying to make the Thane-Belapur and the Bombay region safe from a tragedy like Bhopal, has to work within the confines of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. He said he had appointed a high-powered committee, including the chief inspector of factories, additional director of industries, chief inspector of licences, and deputy director of explosives etc., as they have the powers to literally ransack an industry to get the requisite information. "It was like a marriage between a pauper and a princess," he said. "We have very limited powers, but with these other people with us, we do have more powers."

In March this year, following the report of the environmental safety committee, the MPCB created a standing monitoring committee (SMC) to check the industries surveyed by the ESC maintained the set standands. The committee include Dr V.V. Kale, additional director of industries, Bombay, who is the chairman of this committee, V.R. Damle, executive engineer, Bombay Municipal Corporation, V.N. Kholkute, chief inspector factories and S.K. Patil, member secretary of the MPCB. This committee is supposed to have visited the factories on a regular basis and also examines the reports of compliance received from the above industries at periodic intervals and sends their assessment to this board with any further recommendations for necessary action as may be required. This report is expected to be given next week. For some reason the reports are not disclosed to the press though the people have the right to be informed about a matter concerning their health and survival.

Despite the fact that high-powered committees are trying to control pollution, the people are cynical about the callous managements and connivance of the factory inspector who is the main culprit behind the pollution.

The reports on the 15 factories given in the first instalment were scary. What makes it worse was that it seemed the committee had tried to play down the dangers. Note this paragraph pertaining to the RCF: "During the earlier visit, the committee had noted that the loading and unloading of sulphur was being done manually. The committee was informed that this was not the normal practice and that mechanical equipment was used for the purpose. At the time of the earlier visit, the dumpers were not in working condition. RCF agreed to ensure mechanical handling of sulphur at all times." (Why is the committee shy to say whether mechanical dumpers were being used during its current visit or not?)

In the case of Bombay Soap Factory in the heart of central Bombay Grant Road, the committee said, "There is a casual approach to safety aspects. The company deals with a dangerous chemical called hexane which is stored in large amounts even when the plant is not in operation. It has suggested that the present plant location is contrary to the provisions of the Maharashtra factory rules and it should be shifted to a suitable area immediately. This was in March and till today that company still exists there and is owned by a politically very powerful group, Ahmed Oil Mills.

Indian Explosives Ltd was found to be storing butanol and methanol in a non-flame proof area in the factory in the Sewri industrial belt. In fact, butanol is stored near the cyanide handling unit which is highly dangerous.

These are just a few of the 15 mentioned industries. The other 11 companies for which the reports are ready are powerful multinationals and private sector units like Sandoz, Bayers, Indophil, Rallis India, National Fluoride, National Organic Chemicals, Century Chemicals, Indian Dyestuff Industries, Deepak Fertilisers, Hindustan Insecticides, Century Rayon, Siddheshwari Sulphur, Tata Thermal, and Herdillia Chemicals.

Despite the fact that high-powered committees are involved in trying to control pollution and health hazards from the chemical based industries in the Bombay-Thane-Belapur area, the people in these areas are cynical about the callous managements and connivance of the factory inspector who is the main culprit behind the pollution. One resident of Kalyan said he would like to invite any member of the environmental committee to come and have a bath or wash his clothes like the people do in the Ulhas river which flows via Kalyan into the Thane creek. The river has multi-coloured water from the effluents of Indian Dyestuffs, National Rayon, Century Rayon and other companies.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

AIR INDIA CRASH

Evidence from the Deep

The explosion theory remains the most likely explanation

"Cruising at 31,000 feet. Speed: 850 kilometres. Direction: Heathrow. Everything normal." This was the last message that Captain H.S. Narendra of Kanishka the Air India Boeing 747, transmitted to the Shannon air control tower before it plunged into the Atlantic Ocean killing the 329 people on board. A split-second after the message was received, Flight 180 disappeared from the Shannon airport radar and only its fuselage was recovered from the ocean bed about 180 kms off the coast of Ireland. The 45 million dollar Jumbo Jet which had completed 23,600 hours of flying time disappeared within seconds and there is every indication that the aircraft went down with its engines running, after an explosion on board. However, the possibility of a structural defect or mechanical failure having caused the crash cannot be ruled out—at least till such time the decoding of the aircraft's "heart and lung," the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and digital flight data recorder (DFDR) is completed.

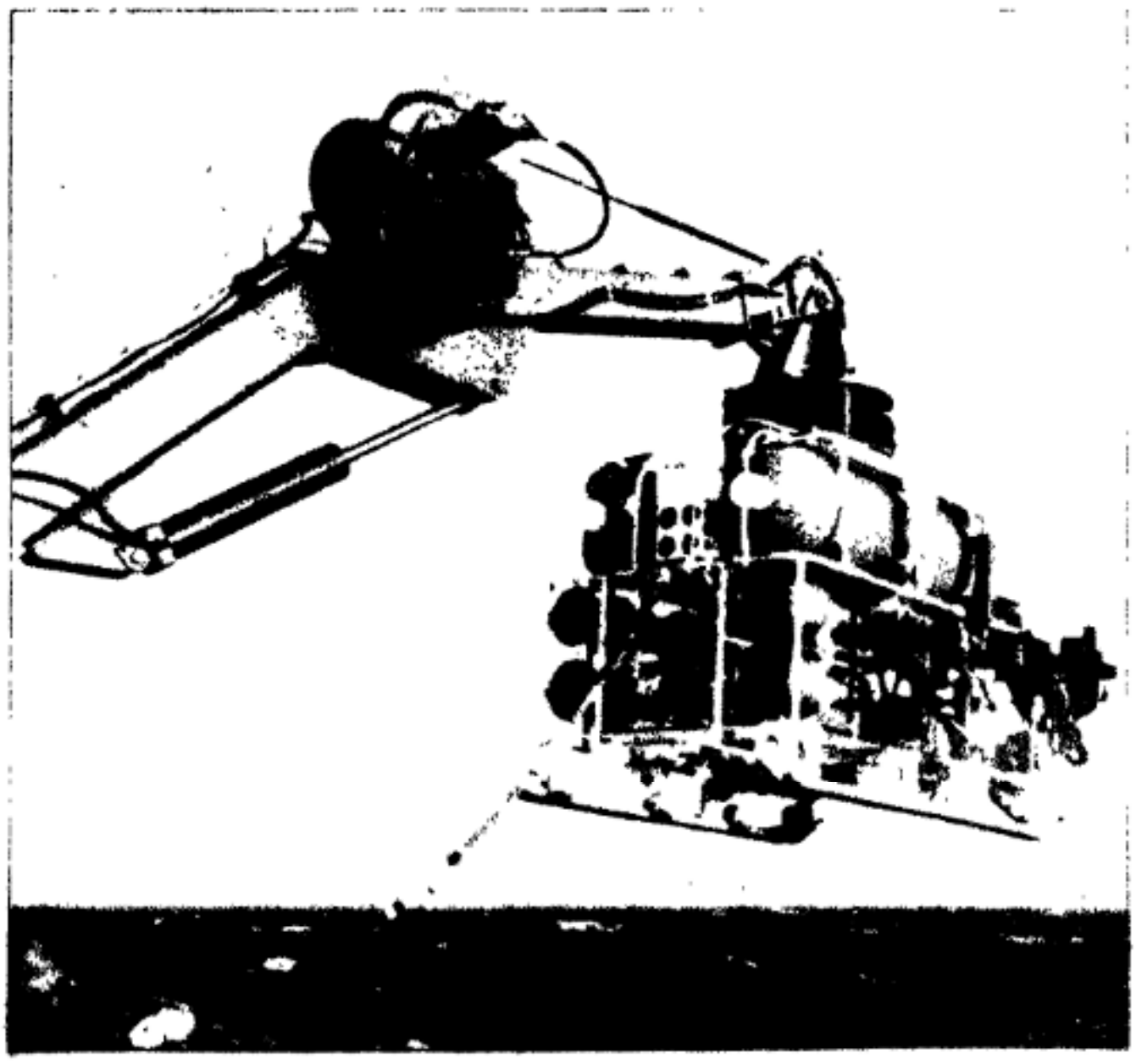
The two critical instruments of the ill-fated Boeing, called "black boxes" though they are yellow-orange in colour, are the most vital pieces of evidence with the investigators who are reconstructing the events that led to the crash. The CVR and DFDR were recovered after a miraculous million dollar operation conducted for the first time at a depth of 6,700 feet below the sea. The instruments were successfully recovered from the seabed by the robot submersible named Scarab lowered by a French ship, Leon Thevenin The black boxes were brought to India on 13 July. Decoding of the data has begun in Bombay at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR). Decoding of a similar nature was done after the air crashes of 1976 and 1978. The CVR and the DFDR are likely to provide invaluable assistance to the enquiry commission headed by Justice D.N. Kirpal in discovering the nature of the crash.

In 1978, when another Air India Jumbo had crashed off the Bombay coast, it had taken searchers 27 days to regain the black boxes from a depth of no more than 70 feet. In this case, the salvage team was scouring the seabed 6,700 feet below the surface Never in the history of civil aviation had such an ambitious venture been embarked upon by any airline to recapture the vital recorders. In fact, both in financial and technological terms,this attempt was quite unprecedented. And the diligence was rewarded. In the early hours of Wednesday, 10 July, Scarab I spotted the CVR and in another few hours, had successfully hauled it on to the mother ship. The robot was lowered once more and by the following morning, the DFDR too had been lifted on board the Leon Thevenin

The Scarab is an incredible machine, and an unqualified compliment to Man's ingenuity. It is designed to assist firms like Britain's Cable and Wireless and the United States' A.T. and T to lay communication networks below the sea. Armed with a powerful searchlight, aided by television cameras and equipped with manipulator arms, Scarab I identified the black boxes, picked them up and delivered them safely on to the Leon Tivinen, being monitored manually at all times from this vessel.

Thereafter, and in view of the water pressure exerted on these recorders for two and a half weeks, the CVR and the DFDR were placed in water cans to simulate the earlier prevailing conditions, and prevent any possible shocks on the systems. It was in this state that the black boxes were brought to Cork, put on an Aer Lingus flight to London en route to the Air India flight to Bombay.

After the Kanishka crash, the "black boxes" which are present inside every aircraft have suddenly become household words. The decoding of the electronic messages inside the two small instruments (which will be complete by September this year) is being anxiously watched by aviation experts across the world. The CVR is basically a small microphone mounted in an overhead panel in the cockpit of the aircraft and is electronically controlled to pick up any sound or warning. It is expected that the transcription of the magnetic tape inside the CVR would contain the voice of the pilot, instructions to the air control tower and the sound of explusion, if any.



The submersible robot Scarab, being lowered from its mother ship Leon Thevenin

When a Lockheed Electra broke up in the air in a similar fashion and crashed over Pennsylvania in the United States, the CVR recorded the sounds of the plane breaking up. The DFDR records the operation of the actual systems existing in the aircraft like the power setting of the engine and records the course of the aircraft, its altitude and airspeed to give evidence of any structural failure in the aircraft. There are about 300 parameters present in the DFDR. Till the end of July the computerised decoding of 40 parameters of Kanishka's DFDR had been completed.

While it would be too premature to assess the cause of the Kanishka accident, there is sufficient evidence to make one believe that a sudden explosion had taken place in the aircraft. For one, the aircraft disappeared suddenly from the radar screens and dropped like a stone into the sea. Its wreckage was spread over 20 square kilometres and its fuselage had disintegrated into tiny bits. Secondly, it must be remembered that there were as many as five safety controls in the Boeing that would have guided the aircraft to safety in the case of an engine failure. There were alternate, electronic, manual, and hydraulic controls and the Kanishka, flying at 31,000 ft had the capacity to glide for 50 miles in case of an engine failure. Another vital piece of evidence to support the explosion and sabotage theory is the autopsy report of the 130 victims of the tragedy, whose bodies were recovered from the seabed and taken to Cork for examination. The autopsy reports show that victims did not die from drowning but were killed in the air in less than half a minute after being sucked violently from the rear to the front of the aircraft. The force that caused their death was so strong that the victims had smashed their heads against the seats of the aircraft. The final evidence to support the explosion theory would be confirmed with the discovery of even a small particle of explosive substance from the 350 tonnes of debris of Kanishka still lying at the bottom of the sea.

The fact that Air India has chosen to consign the recorders back to India has been criticised by a few Western airlines. These companies and other vested interests are yet to reconcile themselves to India's technological progress and feel that the Indian authorities lack the capability to decipher the contents of the CVR and the DFDR.

The two black boxes in Kanishka were the latest and most sophisticated among those that are used on Jumbos, and may have a lot to tell if the last few seconds of this aircraft's airborne journey have not been missed due to the alleged total electrical failure. But there is some validity in the charge that Air India might have prematurely concluded about there having been an explosion in the forward luggage hold of the plane, which caused the tragedy.



Air India personnel unloading a box containing the black box at London airport

This, in fact, was confirmed to SUNDAY by an Air India official after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had said that that a bomb blast was behind the crash in a television interview on Britain's Channel No. four. Said the official, "It is still too early to pass a final judgment on the affair."

There are various lobbies operating to guide the progress of investigation. The Canadian authorities are supporting the theory that structural failure or mechanical defects had caused the explosion in an effort to prove that the lax security measures at Montreal airport did not cause the catastrophe. Any argument to support the theory of structural defect in the Air India Jumbo Jet is unfavourable for the American Boeing company whose business would suffer a major setback if it is proved so. The whole story of Flight 182 and the vital clues to the cause of the crash are still hidden in the two 40 pound black boxes which are being decoded under tight security.

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi and Ashis Ray, London

water. Rayalaseema was also the scene of an important agitation last year, which NTR has just managed to control. It is therefore, imperative for NTR to fight for the fruition of the revised Telugu-Ganga Project, to prevent any more agitations in the area.

Karnataka's position is equally piquant. On the face of it, it would appear churlish to refuse water to Andhra Pradesh, especially since it has not utilised its own quota. But Deve Gowda claimed that the state has already "committed" the 700 tmc of water to various projects even when the projects themselves are in the doldrums for lack of funds. The Karnataka government believes that if it gives up its share today, it will suffer in the long run when its projects are completed. As Gowda remarked sarcastically: "They (Andhra Pradesh) are not spending 540 crores on the revised Telugu-Ganga Project as a temporary measure." What he meant was that once Karnataka leased out the water, Andhra Pradesh would demand it as a permanent right and since the water tribunal award can be revised after 2000 AD, it may even succeed in acquiring permanent rights, leaving Karnataka in the lurch. But it is apparent that the stances of both the state governments are controlled by political necessities rather than humanitarian considerations.

The complexities of the dispute apart, the controversy is hotting up every day. NTR on his part has sought to prove that the excess water rightfully belonged to Andhra Pradesh. At a press conference he quoted the clause 5HC of the Bachawat Award: "The state of Andhra Pradesh will be at liberty to use in any water year the remaining water that may be flowing in river Krishna..." But Deve Gowda bounced back with another press conference where he accused NTR of misquoting or not quoting the clause in full. Gowda said the same clause went on to read "...but thereby it shall not acquire any right whatsoever to use in any water year, nor be deemed to have been allocated in any water year, water of river Krishna in excess of quantities specified hereunder: 800 tmc to Andhra Pradesh, 700 tmc to Karnataka and 560 tmc to Maharashtra.

However, what has worsened the situation is the emotional response of NTR and the hawkish stance of Deve Gowda. NTR, in his inimitable style, declared that the work on the revised Telugu-Ganga Project, already underway, would go on no matter what objections were raised. Deve



Courtesy R.K. Laxman, Times of India

Gowda, on his part, declared that he would fight till the end to see that the spirit of the tribunal award was not violated and warned of serious repercussions if Andhra Pradesh violated the agreement. At the last count, the dispute was brought to the notice of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. In reply to newsmen's questions during his recent visit to Madras the Prime Minister indicated that he would personally talk to the chief ministers of the two states in a bid to resolve the dispute. All the same, for the time being, the Krishna water dispute joins the long list of interstate squabbles in the country.

Chidanand Rajghatta, Bangalore

KERALA

Merger Move

The Muslim Leagues to unite

The Muslim League which split in 1974 is now on the verge of a merger, proving that political ideologies come only after the needs of the community. At the time of going to press, the All India Muslim League (AIML) which has four MLAs, has decided to sever its alliance with the CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front (LDF) while the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) with its ten MLAs is still with the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF). Ironically, it was the CPI(M) which served as a catalyst for the merger by attacking the Shariat or the Muslim personal law. The CPI(M) general secretary, E.M.S. Namboodripad had recently suggested that the Shariat aimed tosuppress womenand, he said, the CPI(M) cared more for the problems of the people than the support of the AIML. Naturally the AIML leaders have accepted the IUML resolution supporting the Shariat.

An IUML leader, Seethi Hajimla who said in the Assembly that any hand which is raised against the Shariat will be chopped off, told SUNDAY that EMS has been trying to woo women voters among the Muslims. "Shariat is a law given to us by Prophet and all Muslims have to live by that. Why should there be a common civil code? The Shariat is very clear on issues like marriage and divorce and gives utmost respect to women. The Shariat does not encourage polygamy either," she added.

That the united Muslim League will remain with the UDF is clear but there is a section in the AIML which feels that it should stay away from both the fronts. The United Muslim League will have 14 MLAs in the Assembly making it a strong pressure group within the UDF much to the discomfort of the Congress(I) which is watching with dismay the rise of small but powerful communal parties. Early this year, the two factions of the Kerala Congress (the Mani and the Joseph group) also merged, sparking off a unification trend in the state's political set-up which till recently has been characterised by fissiparous tendencies.

After the exit of the AIML the LDF will become "leftist" in the true sense of the term. A truly leftist front has always been the dream of EMS Namboodiripad but the state's communal politics has forced him to compromise.

The constituents of the UDF, espe-

cially the Kerala Congress are not happy with the Congress(I) especially after the incidents which forced their senior minister Balakrishna Pillai to resign. While the Congress(I) continues its campaign for one party rule, there are chances of the communal parties—the Kerala Congress, the Muslim League and the National Democratic Party (now two factions) uniting to form a communal front. Such a situation will only help the CPI(M) led LDF.

People in Kerala are quite disgusted with the policy of bargaining with communal parties, something which has characterised the three year rule of the UDF. And chief minister Karunakaran's rule-at-any-cost attitude is the main reason for such compromises. The state is also passing through a financial crisis.

The National Democratic Party of the high caste Nair Hindus is the only regional party which is now split. Their nominee in the ministry, Ramachandran Nair, the health minister, had to quit as the other faction wanted their nominee to be minister. The ruling front liaison committee has now asked the NDP factions to unite and then nominate a minister.

Binoo K. John, Trivandrum

CONGRESS(I)

No Entry for Now

Sharad Pawar keeps his options open

Will Congress(S) leader Sharad Pawar, who has been asked to postpone his entry into Congress(I) for the moment, hit back at the *volte face* by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi? Politically it had been a slur on Pawar's image when Rajiv Gandhi answering a question about Sharad Pawar joining the Congress(I), in a televised press conference, said, "not for the moment." But sources close to Pawar said that he had been given to understand that after former chief minister Vasantdada Patil was eased out, he would be given the chief minister's chair. Rajiv Gandhi's decision to defer Pawar's entry following Vasantdada Patil's resignation has only added to the former CM's strength at the cost of Mr Pawar's image. But a section of his followers feel that Patil's resignation has affected Pawar's course of entry into the ruling party, though it is clear that Vasantdada Patil timed his exit to queer the pitch for Mr Pawar. Vasantdada Patil also made "self respect" an issue so that it was difficult for Mr Pawar to enter the Congress(I).

That Sharad Pawar was hurt by Vasantdada Patil's action was obvious when he chose to attack the former chief minister in his speech in reply to the budget proposals. In a scathing attack on Mr Patil in the state Legislative Assembly, Pawar said that those who have resigned on the issue of self-respect of the state, should have done it on some concrete issues rather than on personal grounds. He added that the state leadership has failed to protest against the proposals of the union government which were not in the interest of the state. Mr Pawar also said that there were three CM;s who spoke about taking up the 'no industry district' issue with the centre and though they have gone, the policy continues at the expense of the state.



Sharad Pawar: minor setback

Mr Pawar has several political options.He can wait till Rajiv Gandhi invites him to join the party. He can also work towards toppling the government of Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar . There is tremendous discontent in the party as Mr Patil's cabinet is still very heavily loaded in favour of one section of the Congress(I). There are various sections that are dissatisfied because they are not represented in the cabinet and till today, the chief minister has not been able to clear his five nominees for membersip in the Legislative Council.

The party's functioning in the state still seems to be dictated by the whims of the AICC(I) observers. For instance, G.K. Moopanar, AICC(I) general secretary, recently wrote to the MPCC(I) president Mrs Prabha Rao, recommending the name of a person for the seat for minorities in the council. Mr Moopanar, with or without the consent of the Prime Minister, wrote that Mr Rajiv Gandhi was among the MLAs, MPs and other party members who wanted Mr S. Khan to get the seat.

Mr Patil-Nilangekar's ministry seems a stable one but its moment of truth will come after the monsoon session of the Assembly ends in early August. He will then have to expand his cabinet which he has been promising for some months, and it will be a moment when his troubles will begin anew. Sharad Pawar who believes in manipulative politics is waiting for this opportunity. It is believed that many legislators have been meeting him and he needs about 54 persons to walk out of the Congress(I). According to sources close to him, such a situation may arise and that, they conclude, would be the best way of paying back Rajiv Gandhi.

Pawar has no love lost for the Patil-Nilangekar government,a fact obvious from the way he supported the Shiv Sena in the mayoral elections in Bombay. Members of his party have asserted that they shared their first and second preference votes with the Janata Party and Bharatiya Janata Party in the recent elections to the Legislative Council and gave their third preference votes to the Shiv Sena which enabled Sudhir Joshi to be elected after Congress(I)'s Satish Pednekar was eliminated in the third round of voting.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

TAMIL NADU

All Set for a Comeback

Rajiv Gandhi's visit boosts Congress(I)'s image

The massive Congress rally in Madras on 15 July might lead to the resurrection of the party in Tamil Nadu. For 18 years the Congress had been confined to political wilderness by the Tamils who were bitten by the Dravida bug. Under Mrs Gandhi's leadership the party adopted a strategy of political expediences, marrying and divorcing one of the Dravida parties without any qualms. The Congress(I)'s alliance with the AIADMK in 1977 was broken and a new relationship established with the DMK in 1980. As the DMK's fortunes began to sag, Mrs Gandhi with characteristic insouciance, veered close to the AIADMK that was soaring to new realms of popularity under MGR. The Congress(I) AIADMK alliance was a resounding success in the 1984 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

All along, the Congress leaders in Tamil Nadu were puppets in the hands of the Delhi based bigwigs of the party. The party fell into utter bad times with no local support, no credibility, total inertness in the party's rank and file, rampant factionalism and above all no local leaders of stature.

On 13 July one saw a new, revitalised and exuberant Congress in the state. The sheer high spirits of the party cadre talks about an upswing in the party's fortunes in the years to come. The Congress rally was held to mark the centenary celebrations. It was held on 15 July to coincide with the 83rd birth anniversary of the late Congress stalwart K. Kamaraj. The procession was ten kms long with Congress volunteers packed like sardines. In between the thick surge of people were the vans and gaudy floats depicting the various landmarks in the history of the Congress. Apart from the staggering size of the rally, what was noteworthy was the excitement that generated about having a *darshan* of Rajiv Gandhi.

All credit for the thundering success of the rally goes to G.K. Moopanar the AICC(I) general secretary. His men were given the charge to conduct the rally. Mr Palaniyandi, Mr Ramamoorthy and others belonging to the Moopanar clique, attended to the arrangements with zeal and meticulous care.

The security that was provided for the PM was unprecedented. The entire area was sealed so that the public was not allowed to witness the procession from where the special dias was erected for the PM to watch the colourful pageantry. The dias was shielded on three sides and from the top with 15 mm steel plates thick enough to stop a bullet fired from a powerful rifle from a distance of 100 metres.

At the press conference, when he was asked if the massive rally led him to believe that the Congress could now stand on its own feet and stage a comeback in Tamil Nadu, the PM said, "I hope so. I have always said, even when I was a general secretary of the AICC(I), that the Congress should stand on its own feet. That policy has not changed." However, he hastened to add that it did not imply that the arrangement with the AIADMK would be terminated.

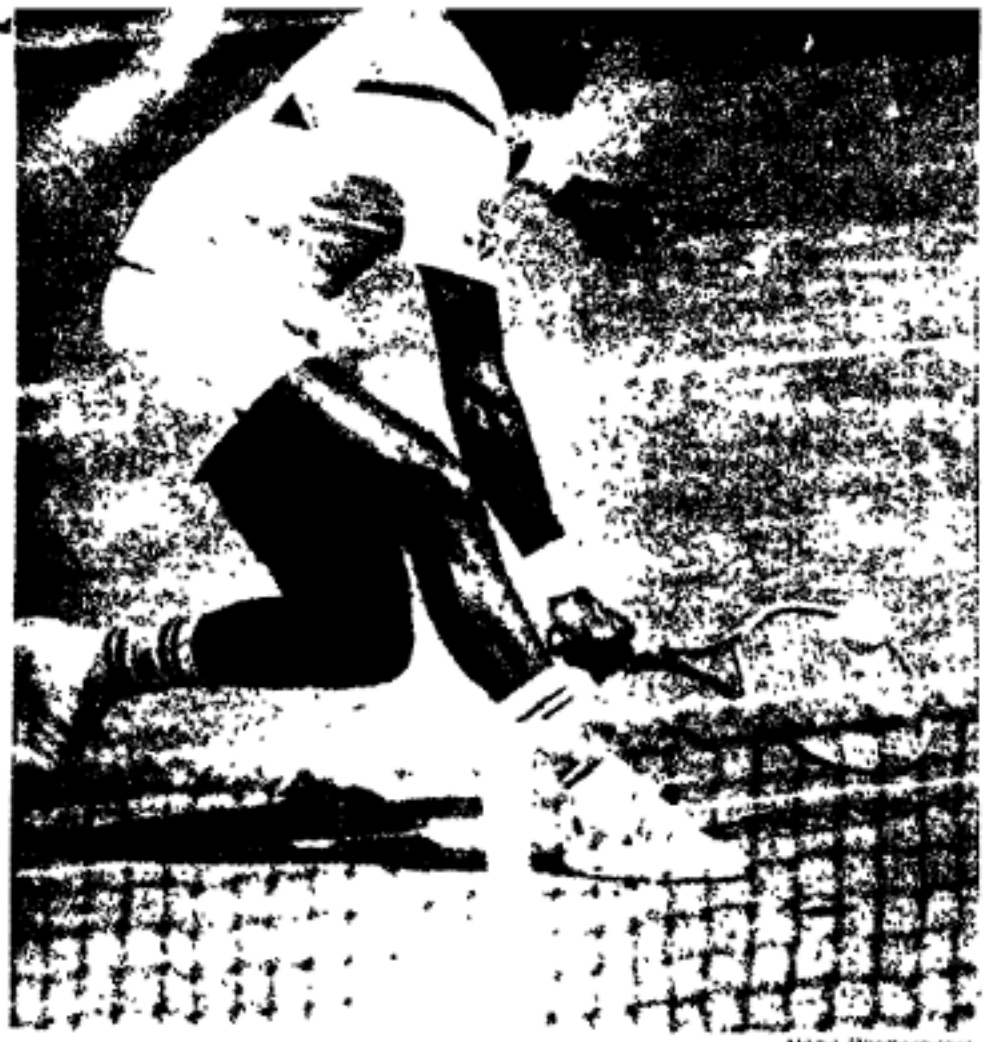
Anita Pratap, Madras

Concert for Ethiopia





More than 160,000 people crowded into the Wembley and JFK stadiums at London and Philadelphia respectively on 13 July for the Live Aid rock concert organised to raise $50 million for the victims of the famine in Ethiopia. The Soviet Union was among the hundred countries which participated in the 16-hour telecast and Poland paid $20 per minute for live television coverage. The picture above shows participants David Bowie and Paul McCartney (left and centre) and right, Tina Turner with Mick Jagger. Others who took part include Joan Baez, Santana, *The Who* and Crosby, Stills and Nash. The show was organised by Irish rock star Bob Geldof (above right).



Nikhil Bhattacharya

Vijay Amritraj: right tactics



Nikhil Bhattacharya

Krishnan: smooth strokeplay

TENNIS

Indian Summer at Wimbledon

Vijay Amritraj and Ramesh Krishnan enthrall tennis-lovers

Like two kites in a summer wind, Vijay Amritraj and Ramesh Krishnan soared high in the Wimbledon skies belying the void that exists in Indian tennis. As always, they did India proud. As always, they fell when greater success seemed within their grasp.

Vijay Amritraj, flashing his captivating smile provided welcome relief to spectators whose senses continue to be assaulted by the behaviour and utterances of some of the top stars. His victory over the talented 11th seeded Frenchman Yannick Noah was the *piece de resistance* of his Wimbledon journey. The dusky Frenchman, an exciting physical player who moves magnificently and flings himself acrobatically to retrieve impossible shots, seemed to be handicapped by an injury to his left thigh. A Frenchman sitting next to me in the press box confided that Noah is afflicted by an unidentifiable virus. I can still see him virus and all, chasing an Amritraj dropshot, bounding from behind the baseline like a gazelle, getting his racket to the ball before it died, but hitting it into the net, then vaulting the net, and confronting a surprised Amritraj "eye-ball" to "eye-ball." Ever since he won the French Championships in 1983, Noah has slipped into a valley, pinned down by niggling injuries and mental pressures, imprisoned in the demanding pressures of an over enthusiastic French public.

Vijay Amritraj, in sharp contrast, with his back strapped in a support, conserved his stamina, measured his effort in short bursts of powerful serve and decisive volley. Vijay made the breakthroughs by chipping his opponent's service on the rise and moving rapidly to the net, hustling his opponent and putting pressure on him to produce a winning volley out of Vijay's telescopic reach. It was a tactic that paid rich dividends and could have also got him past Heinz Guenthardt of Switzerland for a place in the last eight. But Vijay had drawn deeply on his limited reservoir of stamina and the wiry, wily Guenthardt, an expert doubles player, found the correct angles and openings once too often. Noah had taken the sting out of Vijay's game.

For Vijay the vintage years are fading away, the sleek deadly breathtaking winners which stunned the greatest players in the game, are few and far between. It is sad that his rich talent could not blossom into a victory in one of the Grand Slam tournaments. It seems he lacked the perseverance and the all consuming effort to reach the summit. Having said that, one wonders if a few lucky breaks in some of the epic matches he lost at Wimbledon, would have catapulted him to the top of the tennis world.

Ramesh Krishnan, who unlike Vijay, has less behind, and more ahead of him, had his best Wimbledon ever. To the cognisant the Krishnan magic is like a magnet. They enjoy the cool inscrutable facial mask with the smooth, silent but deadly counterpunch which is the hallmark of Ramesh's game. One of the rungs to the very top, is an additional demolishing shot, like Lendl's forehand, or Connors' doublehander, or McEnroe's service. This, it seems, is what he lacked, when he had Connors by the jugular—a set each and 5 games to 2 in the third. Connors moved into an audibly higher gear, as he pulled out an extra step from his 33-year-old limbs, to chase Krishnan's shots like a predator making a kill. He broke loose from Krishnan's grasp and hammered his way to a decisive victory. A total fifteen service breaks in this match were the statistics which highlighted the very high quality service return of both players and a need for Ramesh to develop more penetration and variation on his serve. By Spartan training and dedication, he has built up his stamina and sharpened his game and reflexes, under the watchful eye of his father and Harry Hopman, to top international level. Hopman was enthusiastic and optimistic about Ramesh's chances of climbing higher and did not rule out hopes of success in some of the major tournaments.

Where would Indian tennis have been but for the Krishnan and Amritraj families? In a very tough world, they have overcome the shortcomings in the Indian tennis scene, with amazing dedication and enterprise and total family support so rare in modern tennis.

Naresh Kumar, London

INDO-PAK RELATIONS

The Big Chill

Good neighbourliness gives way to bad blood

Relations between India and Pakistan have recently touched a new low. While there have been many sweet words and gestures of friendship and of good neighbourliness during the recent Indo-Pakistan joint commission meeting held during the first week of July in New Delhi, relations soured thereafter. Although the report made by American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) of Pakistan's successful testing last month of US-made Krytron electronic triggers for nuclear bombs, may not have come as a big surprise to the India government, this report as well as Pakistan President Zia-ul Haq's recent references to Kashmir just two weeks before Pakistan foreign secretary Niaz Naik's visit to India have worsened relations between the two countries considerably.

Moreover, reports of the special court trial in Lahore of the 14 persons who highjacked the two Indian Airlines planes to Lahore (1981 and 1984) have increased tension between India and Pakistan. On 11 July, Harminder Singh, one of those on trial for the 1984 highjacking, is reported to have said in court: "Has not India highjacked an entire state with millions of people in retaining its control over the territory in Jammu and Kashmir?" Harminder Singh, as reported in the Pakistani papers on 12 July is said to have told the court that the two objectives of the highjacking were to draw the attention of the world to the "determination of the Sikh community to set up an independent homeland and to bring India's illegal detention of Kashmir to an end."

The trial is being seen here as an attempt by the Pakistan government to politicise the proceedings in order to use the special court as a platform for propaganda against India. The inclusion of Ganga Singh Dhillon, an American citizen, in the list of defence witnesses (this list has not yet been sent to India) has also provoked sharp reactions in New Delhi. G.S. Dhillon (whose wife is a close friend of President Zia's wife—the two women grew up in Kenya) made a few provocative statements when he visited Nankana Saheb in Pakistan last November. The *Nawai Waqt* of 6 November 1984 quoted G.S. Dhillon as saying that "the persons who had murdered Indira Gandhi were held in the same esteem as was Alamdin



Gen Zia: blowing cold

in the eyes of the Muslims." In the 23 November issue of *Jasarat* Dhillon said, "Indira Gandhi's assassins are heroes for us." Dhillon is also reported to have said in *Nawai Waqt* that Sikh troops in the Indian army would not remain silent anymore Nor would Sikh employees working in the Indian government remain silent spectators.

Ironically, the holding of the trial was initially seen an indication of Pakistan's sincere efforts to improve its relations with India. It can be recalled that 1984 was a bad year for Indo Pak relations: with the Indian government accusing the government of Pakistan of encouraging terrorism in India. The two foreign secretaries had met in Islamabad last May and were scheduled to meet again in New Delhi later in the year to discuss bilateralism, but the meeting was called off because the Indian government believed that Pakistan was training pro-Khalistan elements

In April this year, after the announcement of the trial of the hijackers of the two Indian Airlines planes, foreign secretary Romesh Bhandari went to Islamabad. In July, the Indo-Pakistan joint commission met in New Delhi and at the end of the month the two foreign secretaries were supposed to meet once again in New Delhi. But the olive branches soon withered and old suspicions re-surfaced. When the two foreign secretaries met in Islamabad in April, the Pakistani officials led the Indians to believe that the trial of the highjackers would be over in three months. The trial is far from over.

Trade was the biggest stumbling block during the joint commission meeting Interestingly enough, President Zia in July 1978, in his first import policy announcement after he took over, banned trade with India and in January 1980, President Zia compared Kashmir to Palestine and Namibia during the Islamic foreign minister's press conference The question now doing the rounds in South Block must be: 'What does the General next door really want: war or peace?"

Madhu Jain, New Delhi

THIMPHU TALKS

Slow Progress

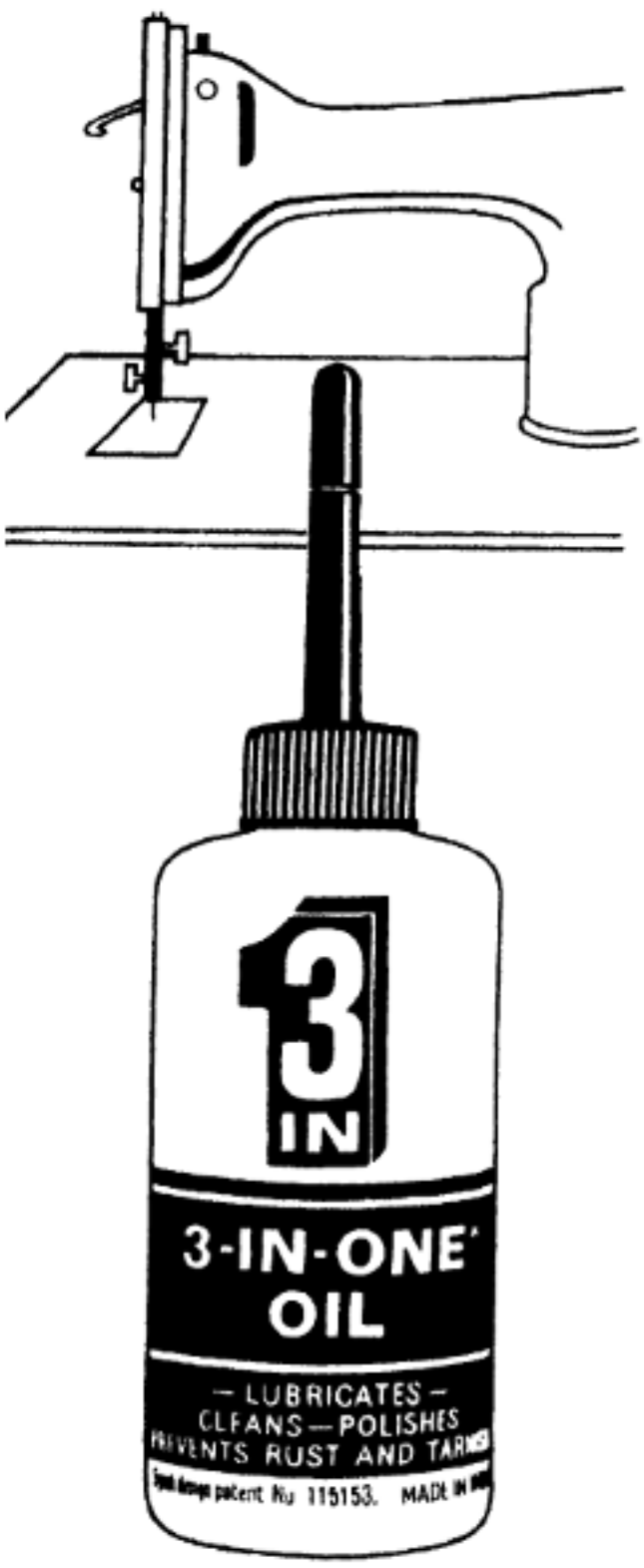
The negotiations are adjourned till 12 August

The most significant outcome of the peace talks arranged by India in Thimphu between the Tamils and the representatives of the Sri Lanka government is that the Tamil militants have been dragged from the battlefield into the negotiating table. Since the racial holocaust of 1983, the militants have emerged as a force to reckon with and in the circumstances, any settlement arrived at without the participation of the militants would be futile. But for the first time, the militants were recognised as a political force by the Sri Lanka government. This is a moral victory for the guerillas.

The militants, unfortunately, reacted negatively and at first, boycotted the talks in protest against the "serious violations" of the cease-fire agreement by the Sri Lankan armed forces. It was difficult for the militants to overcome their fear that the Sri Lanka government was out to cheat them. They felt that the Thimphu talks would meet with the same fate as the All Party Conference (APC) of 1984 when the TULF lost face. The militants maintained that they could be brought to the negotiating table only if the Sri Lanka government first submitted to the demands for regional autonomy.

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They felt their participation in the talks would equate them with the TULF in the eyes of their people. One can understand the government of India's problem. It had taken a considerable amount of pressure to get the Sri Lanka government to agree to negotiate with the militants whom they had described as terrorists. But just when they had persuaded the Sri Lanka government, the Tamil militants proved to be intransigent.

The centre summoned the leaders of the four main militant groups that have formed the Eelam National Liberation Front. Stressing the imperative need to attend the talks, India impresed upon the militants certain inevitable advantages of the Thimphu talks. First by negotiating with the militants, the Sri Lanka government has agreed to recognise them as freedom fighters who represent political aspirations of the Tamil people. The political legitimacy given to the militants by the Sri Lanka government has made India's position easier. India can no longer be accused of harbouring Tamil 'terrorists.' But the militants' total rejection of the TULF was unreasonable in the context of the negotiations. The TULF had an advantage because of their sheer experience in this sphere as the militants are novices in the art of negotiations and need a 'guiding force.' Regarding the militants' fear about the insincerity of the Sri Lanka government it has been said that if the Sri Lanka government again failed to put forward a proposal that met the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils it would stand indicted in the eyes of the world. If the Sri Lankan government is insincere, then the Indian government would have the moral sanction to take appropriate steps to solve the problems of the Tamils.

With India's persuasion, the Thimphu talks got going from 8 July. The Sri Lankan delegation was led by the President's brother and legal expert Hector Jayewardene. The Tamils were represented by the TULF, the PLOT and the ENLF that comprises LTTE, EROS, EPRLE and TELO. The talks which were restricted to violations of ceasefire began under high security and total secrecy. Even at Thimphu, one of the world's most geographically isolated places, elaborate care was taken to ensure that the participants were cordoned off and no information was given out to journalists.

The talks which began on a cordial note progressed well as long as it focused upon the strict implementation of ceasefire. The Sri Lanka delegation announced the release of 643 Tamil political detenus (according to official figures there are 1197 prisoners while the Tamils claim that 2500 persons are under arrest). However, the talks ran into rough weather over the question of regional autonomy. Mr Jayewardene's offer of the district councils was in principle identical to what was presented to the TULF at the time of the All Party Conference in December 1984 and was totally rejected by the Tamils. As Mr Balasingham, official spokesman of the LTTE told SUNDAY "How can they expect the militants to accept proposals which even the moderates (the TULF) rejected?" As the talks threatened to break down with the Tamils rejecting the proposals which did not in any way fulfil the aspirations of their people and the Sri Lankans inclined to adopt a 'take it or leave it' attitude Romesh Bhandari, the Indian foreign secretary rushed to Thimphu to resume the talks which were then adjourned till 12 August. Significantly it is the first time that the Tamils have been able to put up a strong united front. This itself is half the battle won because the Sri Lankan government had quite previously capitalised on the internal dissensions among the Tamils.

Mr Balasingham made it clear that the Thimphu talks could be resumed only if the Sri Lanka government first puts forward fresh proposals for regional autonomy. They would require a new set of proposals as a basis for negotiations. However, at a press conference in Madras on 15 July, Rajiv Gandhi indicated that it would not be proper for the Tamils to establish these sort of preconditions. Mr Balasingham emphasised that the militants could not afford to extend the ceasefire in view of the arms purchases by the Sri Lanka government. The government has been shopping for guns, ammunition, gunboats and aircraft from Pakistan and China while the ceasefire is in force. Moreover, men are being sent for commando training in Pakistan. In the circumstances it would be suicidal for the militants to extend the ceasefire.

The Tamil militants deny reports that India is favouring them. They have claimed that India is exerting pressure both on the Tamils as well as the Sri Lanka government. However, the militants have urged India not to force them to accept proposals that do not meet the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils unless the Sri Lanka government's proposals are meaningful and effective.

Anita Pratap, Thimphu

SRI LANKA

The Plot to Kill Jayewardene

Was it a move to discredit the Tamils?

The bomb plot to allegedly kill President Jayewardene in Colombo on 11 July has led to more scepticism than outrage. The 'sensational disclosure' prompts question marks, not exclamation marks. There was something so fishy about the whole episode that the Sri Lanka government allowed the incident to fizzle out. And that in itself causes eyebrows to be raised.

On 11 July at a hurriedly convened press conference, minister of state Anandatisa De Alwis announced that an alert police officer had foiled a plot by the Eelam Revolution Organisation of Students (EROS) to kill the President. According to him, at 6.45 am, the police officer detected three persons behaving in a suspicious manner in a jeep parked near the St Lucia cathedral about three kms from the President's office. He noticed that the youths were fiddling with a device inside the vehicle. The police officer tried to apprehend the youths, but though he managed to capture the driver, the other two ran away. One of them, however, was caught by the public and handed over. Two packages of Indian made gelignite weighing 50 kg and 70 kg, wired together with a timing device set for 9.00 am were seized from the vehicle. Three youths, Ranganathan, Ranjan and Jeyakumar, all belonging to the EROS were arrested. According to Mr De Alwis, the youths confessed that the target was the Presidential secretariat as the President would have been driving in to his office at the time of the explosion.

The amateurishness of the whole plot made it look highly suspect. The EROS has successfully exploded bombs in and around Colombo. Since the July holocaust of 1983, the EROS exploded eight bombs in Colombo including the bomb blast at the Lanka Oberoi Hotel in September 1984. They were also behind the bomb blast at the Katunayake airport during British Premier Margaret Thatcher's visit and also masterminded the bomb blast at the army headquarters on 29 April 1985 in which four military advisors and two sentries were killed. In this blast, the Taj Samudra and the Intercontinental Hotel were also damaged. In the circumstances it is difficult to believe that they would have failed so badly in this attempt. Another fact that raises doubts is that the press had published that the President was suffering from influenza. He had cancelled all engagements and was recuperating at home. Again, it is difficult to believe that the EROS members did not check this before attempting to assassinate the President.

Strangely, a number of contradictory statements were issued by the government. While De Alwis claimed that the target was the President's secretariat, the Colombo police indicated that the bomb was probably meant to be placed at the Colombo High Court which is now hearing the case of a Roman Catholic priest, Father Abaranam Sinnarayer, who has been charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The timing of the alleged bomb blast is significant. It came the day after the Tamils had rejected outright, the proposals for autonomous district councils put forward by Hector Jayewardene in Thimphu where the peace talks were going on. The Tamils are therefore convinced that the whole plot was stagemanaged by the Sri Lanka government to discredit the Tamil militant organisations. According to the Tamils, the plot was a move to sabotage the Thimphu talks so that the Sri Lanka government could wriggle out of a political settlement with the Tamils while shifting the blame for the breakdown in the talks on them.

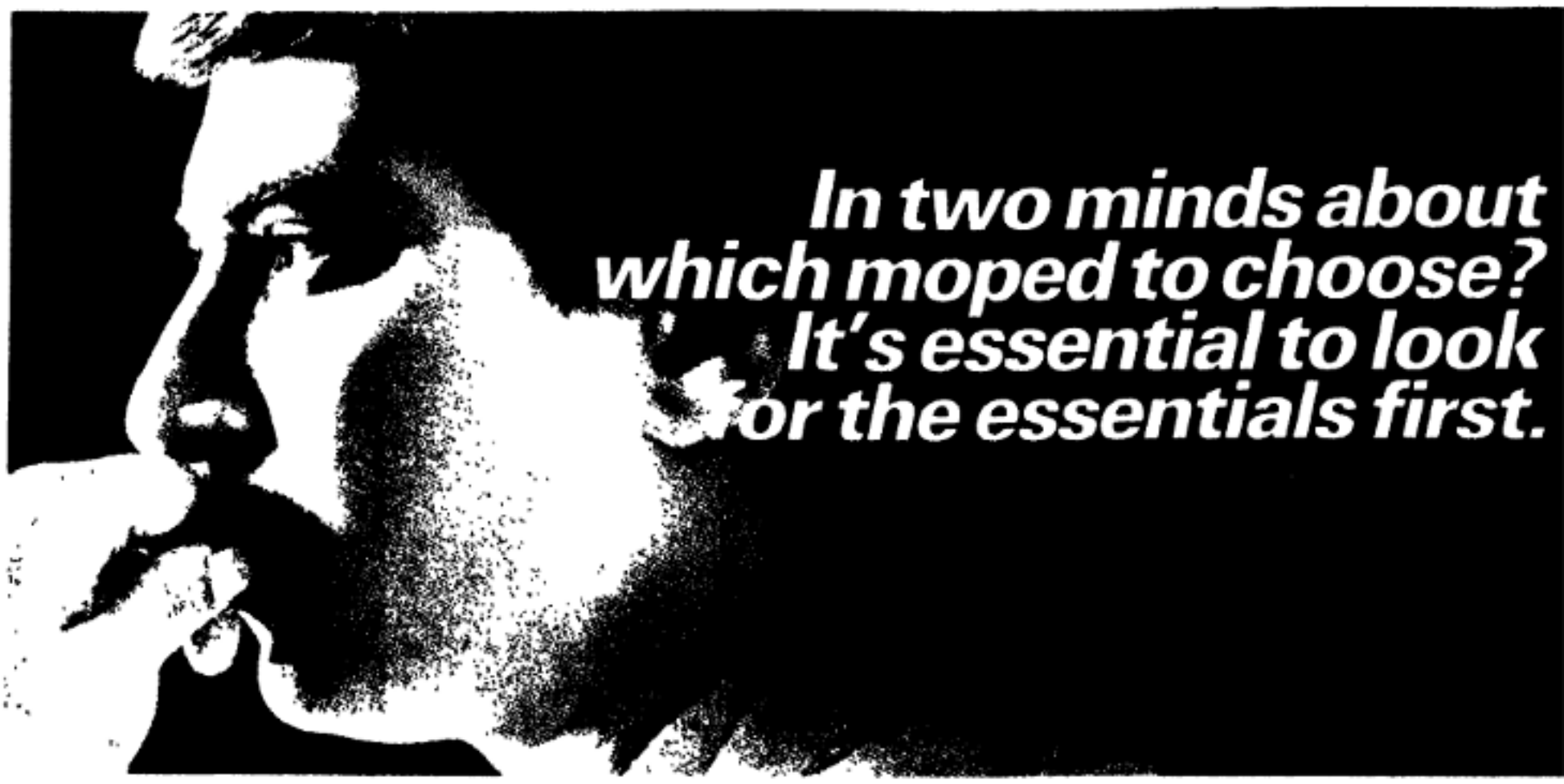
All the six Tamil groups have denied the involvement of EROS in the bomb plot. The denials were issued at Thimphu and at Madras. The Eelam National Liberation Front comprising the four main militant groups including the EROS stated, "The Sri Lankan defence ministry, the police headquarters and the information ministry have come out with contradictory statements which indicate that the story is a baseless lie invented by the Sri Lankan government to tarnish the image of the Eelam Liberation movement. The adoption of such notorious tactics clearly shows that the Sri Lanka government has no sincere intention to bring about a fair and just solution to the Eelam national question by peaceful negotiations."

In an interview with SUNDAY, the 35-year-old executive committee member of EROS, V. Balakumar said, "Our organisation has never believed in annihilation of individuals. We have consistently been against murders and bank robberies. In fact, we have had differences of opinion with other Eelam groups over these issues. Our main emphasis has been to damage tourism and to deliver a lethal blow to Sri Lanka's economy. This is why we have been staging bomb blasts in Colombo, particularly in hotels so that tourists will be forced to keep away from Sri Lanka. In some of the blasts, a few persons have been killed accidentally, but it has never been our intention to kill an individual." According to him, a few members of EROS have been arrested. When asked whether a dissident group of the EROS was responsible for the blast, Mr Balakumar said, "Yes, I have also heard this version. It is just not true. Our entire group is committed to observing the cease-fire. We have no dissidence because decisions are taken at a grassroot level and transmitted upwards. However, I would like to add that dissidence may raise its head if the cease-fire is prolonged."

Anita Pratap, Madras



President Jayewardene: survives



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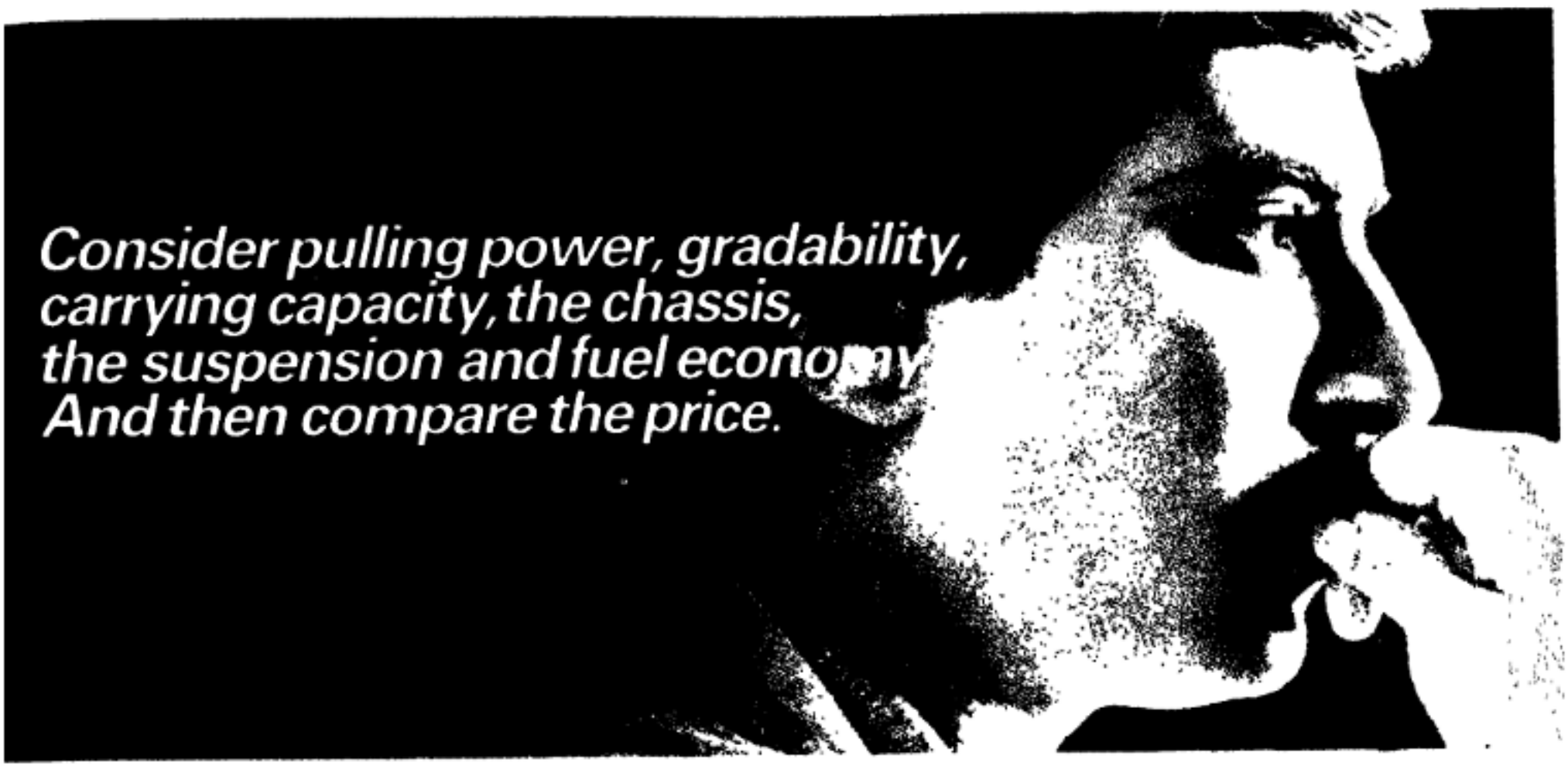


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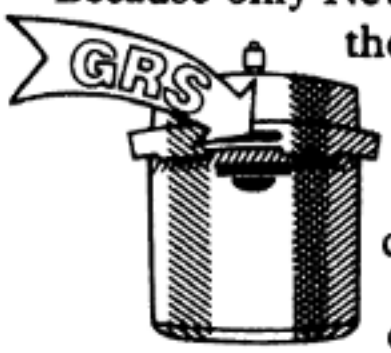
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The Small Screen

With the airing of *Titliyaan*, a satire on the eccentricities of high society women, Shobha Doctor has become a name to reckon with in the field of TV serials. Besides being the chief executive of Concept Advertising, she has also successfully put out four programmes on the national network as an independent producer. Inspired by the success of *Modella Ghazals*, one of the first independent productions to be televised, Shobha went on to make her next serial, *Humlog* which still continues to be a crowd-puller. Though the credits claim that the serial is co-produced by Doordarshan and Time and Video Communications (which is Shobha's production company), it is difficult to believe that Doordarshan's contribution is more than token. *Humlog* is also the only programme which is aired during prime time twice a week. Shobha has also received an offer of extension for *Idhar Udhar* which was stopped after a few episodes. But it is rumoured that she was not happy with the way the serial was shaping up, and has turned down the offer.



Manju Singh (right) and Dimpi Khera, co-producers of *Show Theme*

Another successful producer Manju Singh, whose *Show Theme* lasted for over a year (65 instalments), has got the go-ahead from Doordarshan for her new serial *Ek Kahani*. The programme scheduled to be televised from August will feature a 20-minute-play based on short stories written by contemporary Indian writers. At the beginning of each serial a three-minute time will be devoted to introducing the authors.

Amrita Pritam's *Junglee Booti* is ready for viewing. According to Manju, when the Jnanpith Award winner saw a recording of the play, she was moved to tears. The director is Dayal Nihalani, the one-time assistant to Shyam Benegal.

More and more filmmakers are joining the sitcom bandwagon. Kundan Shah, who directed *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi*, was followed by Sai Paranjpye (*Ados Pados*). Basu Chatterjee too joined the fray with *Rajani*. And now Anil Jejani, who had made a film, *Partner*, a couple of years back, is currently busy with a serial called *Bambai Meri Hai* whose cast includes Benjamin Gillani, Madhuri Dixit and Mazhar Khan.

Shekhar Kapur who failed to make an impression on the silver screen has made an impressive debut in *Khandaan*. Shekhar who always wanted to be a star, however, made it big as a director. With the success of *Masoom*, he graduated to a whiz-director from being just the 'boy-friend of Shabana Azmi.'



Protima Bedi

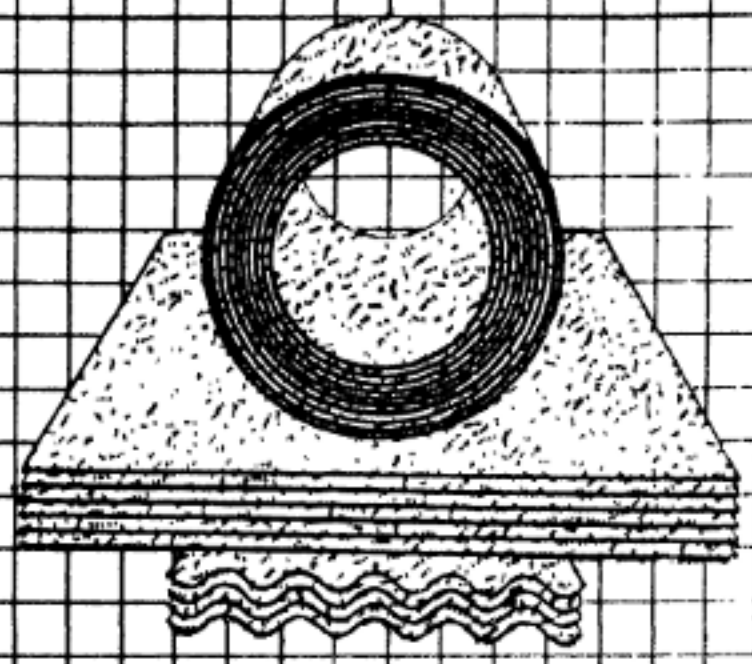
Protima Bedi's guest appearance in one of the episodes of *Khandaan*, has proved to be a disaster. Sex appeal notwithstanding, her poor and boring acting has put off viewers. One only hopes that in future, she will stick to her own domain: Odissi dancing.



(From right to left) Shekhar Kapur, Devi Dutt, Naseeruddin Shah and Pravin Bhatt

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Santosh Ghosh

Sriparna Banerjee

Wonder Girl

A 25-year-old graduate from Calcutta's Jadavpur university Sriparna Banerjee has almost always got what she worked for. In swimming she shattered the state's 50 metre butterfly record for juniors. In 1974, she had broken a 14-year breaststroke record for all age-groups. Inspired by her successes, the West Bengal government made the feature film *Kony*. Sriparna played the lead role in the film, which bagged the President's award.

Sriparna turned her attention to rowing—and excelled again. Today she is the proud winner of more tankards (the most coveted prize in rowing in India) than one can hope for, the latest being for the first place in the just concluded nationals in Madras.

Our Astronauts

After the Rakesh Sharma-Ravish Malhotra combine, it will be the turn of the N.C. Bhat-A. Radhakrishnan duo.

One of them will fly on board the US space shuttle some time in the middle of next year. They are slated to undergo some preliminary training here and further intensive training of six months in the US before being space-bound Whoever goes will actually be the first Indian astronaut.

His task will be to deploy the third Indian multi-purpose satellite, Insat-1C, in orbit.

Bhat is an engineer with the Indian Space Research Organisation, Bangalore, and Radhakrishnan works at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum.

Fighting Illness

Havaldar Yashwant Raoji Jadav is a retired jawan—with a difference. He is said to have been endowed with an extraordinary ability of curing polio victims by a special therapy, which was passed on to him from his guru. Every day dozens of polio victims queue up at his open-air clinic for treatment. How successful his therapy has been can be judged from the fact that he has cured more than 2,000 polio victims.

But now, after nearly a decade's stay in Bangalore, the therapist has finally decided to close shop. Recently, he packed his bags and left for his native village, Sangli, in Maharashtra. Bureaucratic apathy, apparently, prompted him to make such a move. He had threatened to close his clinic before but each time he tried to do so the Karnataka government would thwart his plans, luring him with promises of honorarium, housing and other facilities—most of which remained on paper. He will be missed by thousands of polio victims. One can only hope he continues the good work in Sangli. Needless to say, Bangalore will miss his healing touch.



Mushtaq Ahmed

Yashwant Raoji Jadav

Judging Ballet

To the famous Dhrupadi danseuse from Calcutta, Chetna Jalan, the invitation to be a judge at the international ballet competition in Moscow came as an unexpected honour. Ballet, she believes, is not her territory. But the competition's organisers wanted knowledge of an accomplished classical dancer to appreciate the intricacies and aesthetic value of ballet. She was chosen to assess the performances of famous ballet artistes from Russia, America, Britain, Argentina, Cuba, Turkey Japan and China. She was recently selected joint chairperson of UNESCO's International Theatre Institute dance committee in Canada, along with Robert Geoffrey of the Jefferson Ballet Group of USA.



Chetna Jalan

Love and War

John Masters is not the only writer-soldier in the Indian publishing field. Our own brave warriors too can turn out torrid tales of love and war. H.S. Gill, a senior army officer, already has two novels to his credit. His first effort produced the successful *Ashes and Petals*—a story of war-torn love. The latest book, titled *The Commitment* is, set in his own regiment.

It is a slick and slim hardcover published by Lancer International



H.S.Gill

The Chess Kid

Perhaps not the first—but the best. That was the prize India's chess prodigy Rohini Khadilkar won for her performance in the recently concluded Women's International Chess Championship in Moscow. She beat Asia's first woman grandmaster, Liu Shilan of China and finished 13 in the championship. Her game was adjudged the best in the tournament, and she has been invited to participate in the next Grand masters tournament



Rohini Khadilkar

A Vegetarian Cure



Vegetarian women are about two times less likely than other women to develop gallstones, according to results of what researches at Oxford university described as the largest study of gallstones ever undertaken. The researchers said that the two-year study also showed that gallstones were more common among women who were overweight or had a family history of the condition and that the risk increased with age. Because gallstones are twice as prevalent among women as men and the condition usually strikes in middle age, the study was confined to middle aged women.

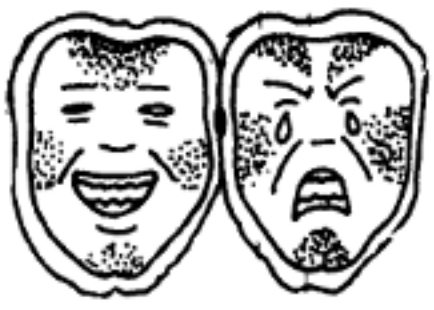
Light: A Source of Food

The discovery of a one-celled organism that uses light for food—the first animal known to do so—could lead to an understanding of how light is converted to other energy forms. Previously, only plants and bacteria were known to photosynthesise, a process in which light is changed to energy. Pil-Soon Song of Texas university found evidence of photosynthesis in a blue-green trumpet-shaped protozoan called *stentor coeruleus.*

Test for Vitamin Deficiency

An inherited vitamin deficiency, which can cause mental retardation in new born babies if not treated quickly, can now be detected by doing a test. Doctors at the Medical College of Virginia say that the victims of this disease do not produce an enzyme that allows their bodies to recycle the vitamin biotin. The resulting symptoms are so subtle that they sometimes go unnoticed until permanent brain damage has occurred.

Curbing Hysterics



Researchers from the university of Rochester (New York) Medical Centre have shown some success in curbing the symptoms of what is called pathologic laughing and weeping. These are the side-effects of multiple sclerosis, strokes, brain injury and some other diseases. In an experiment, they administered low doses of the anti-depressant drug, amitripyline, on 12 patients. While seven of them showed a "dramatic" improvement in 48 hours the condition of the others took a turn for the better. Each of the four patients with uncontrolled laughing responded to the drug, while four of the eight who wept uncontrollably did not.

Antidote for Mountain Sickness



A pill, acetazolmide, for conquering mountain sickness has been successfully tested by the Birmingham Medical Research Expeditionary Society. Above 16,000 feet mountain climbers face problems as their bodies start "to die" because of reduced oxygen intake. Even at much lower altitudes they suffer from nausea and headaches. The condition worsens as they go higher and higher and it is estimated that after spending a couple of days over an altitude of 26,000 ft, most suffer from brain damage. However, tolerance differs from person to person and there are some who remain unaffected even at great heights. Twenty climbers from the society spent two weeks at high altitudes in the Himachuli region of Nepal. Ten of them took placebos (medicine given to humour rather than cure the patient) and ten acetazolmide, a drug long regarded as being capable of countering mountain sickness. The people taking the drug performed 15 per cent better than the ones who took the false pill. What is more important, they did not lose muscle mass at the same rate and remained stronger for longer periods.

Saving an Endangered Species

Successful breeding in captivity of ten numbats, one of the world's smallest marsupials, has raised hopes that the tiny animals—an adult numbat can be held in one hand—can be saved from extinction. According to the *Australian Science and Energy Newsletter,* numbats were once a common sight in southern Australia, but clearing of their woodland habitat has left only two colonies of them in the southern part of western Australia. Numbats are listed as an endangered species by the World Wildlife Fund, which has sponsored the breeding project.

Waging a War on Insects



Research done on a substance extracted from the seed of the *neem* tree has shown that there could be another weapon to fight the war against certain insects, which have for long plagued mankind. Scientists of the Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry, near Munich, have discovered that the substance, azardirachtin, attacks that part of the brain of the insects which controls the hormone level for the reproduction and growth of larvae. Although the larvae survive, they "forget" to reproduce. This amnesia also affected locusts and grasshoppers. The researchers now hope to study the potential usability of azardirachtin as a safe biological exercise.

Illustrations: Subrata Gangull

BEGINNING 28 JULY 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) This week will entail a good deal of expenditure but curb extravagance. Those in business can go ahead with their plans. This is also a favourable period for students. Jobs are in the offing for those unemployed. Those in love are advised to postpone marriage plans. A letter from abroad will bring good tidings. Take care of your health and diet.
Good dates: 28, 31 and 1.
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: East.

TAURUS (15 May—14 June) This is an excellent week for lovers: you can proceed with marriage plans Friends and relatives will be very helpful. This is a particularly favourable phase for sportsmen. A promotion cannot be ruled out for those in service. However, businessmen should refrain from taking hasty decisions. The weekend will keep you busy with social engagements.
Good dates: 29, 30 and 31.
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8.
Favourable direction: North-east.



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) Slow and steady progress on all fronts is in store for you this week. Businessmen will bag lucrative deals while a promotion cannot be ruled out for those in profession. Creative artists and sportsmen will also find this phase favourable. The stars shine brightly on the financial front: some of you may inherit property. A good week for lovers
Good dates: 28, 30 and 2.
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8.
Favourable direction: West.



CANCER (15 July—14 August) This is an ideal week for marriage negotiations. On the economic front, some of you will gain through inheritance. Those employed will find their colleagues and superiors extremely cooperative. A job is in the offing for the unemployed. At home, your children will be a source of joy. However, do not involve yourself in legal matters.
Good dates: 29, 1 and 3.
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 7.
Favourable direction: South.



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is a good week for creative artists and lawyers. Social and domestic engagements will keep you busy but do not overstrain yourself as this may have an adverse effect on your health Those in service are advised not to neglect their work However, this is an ideal time to settle lawsuits Financially, some of you may gain money through inheritance.
Good dates: 1, 2 and 3
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) Students should make the most out of this lucky phase Businessmen and professionals should be wary of enemies do not take even your close friends and relatives for granted. The period is ill-signified for lovers. However, the domestic front will provide you with all the inspiration to overcome this bleak period
Good dates: 30, 1 and 2
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) This week you will come in contact with an influential person who will be of immense help to you in the future. A journey undertaken during the middle of the week will prove financially profitable. On the professional front some of you may be promoted. Businessmen will also make steady progress Sportsmen will benefit from this lucky phase.
Good dates: 28, 29 and 1.
Lucky numbers: 3, 8 and 9.
Favourable direction: South-east.



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) This is a week of mixed fortunes. On the financial front you may suffer reverses. One of your close relatives may suddenly fall sick adding to your financial burden However, things look bright on the professional front. This is a favourable period for those in love and intending to get married. Do not overstrain yourself and guard your health.
Good dates: 28, 29 and 30.
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: West.



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) This is a good phase for artists and students Your health will improve markedly Professionals will be called upon to shoulder more responsibilities do not hesitate to accept challenging assignments. The period is good for love and matrimonial negotiations. However, things are not all that bright on the home front
Good dates: 29, 31 and 2.
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 9.
Favourable direction: East



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) This is the opportune time for bachelors to get married. Success in all your ventures is a certainty for most of you. Students will succeed in examinations Politicians will find this phase favourable A letter will bring good tidings. Jobs are in the offing for those unemployed But this is an unlucky period for businessmen.
Good dates: 30, 31 and 2
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4.
Favourable direction: South.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) This will be a successful week for all of you. Push your efforts to the utmost and do not waste time on socialising. Businessmen will get opportunities to expand their business while a promotion is in store for professionals. On the economic front, you may gain money through an unexpected source. Lovers can go ahead with marriage plans
Good dates: 31, 2 and 3
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 9.
Favourable direction: North-east.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is a favourable week for those in love. Housewives will acquire new clothes and ornaments. You may even win a lottery. Businessmen will have serious differences of opinion with their partners. Executives may face problems at office. Be careful about the real estate you own. A pleasant surprise awaits you at the weekend.
Good dates: 29, 30 and 1.
Lucky numbers: 6, 8 and 9.
Favourable direction: West.

For those born between 15 July and 14 August

You are essentially helpful by nature. However, your intense self-consciousness restrains your being over-generous. You are also aware of the beauty and harmony of sound, form and colour. Men born during this period are virile but emotionally sensitive. You are easily given to tears and you often become nostalgic. A long period of depression is quite usual with you. You are possessive and desperately in need of understanding. Women born during this phase do not hesitate to take up challenging assignments.

VARIETY

THIS INDIA



Illustration Debasma Das

PANAJI: It is incredible but true. A teenage girl, Kanchan Desai, was singing with deep devotion at a *bhajan* programme when a cobra crawled up to her, settled on her lap and swayed while the girl sang. The incident occurred at the Mangesh Mahalaxmi Ashram at Curti village, three kilometres from Ponda. The occasion was a *bhajan* during the *Ashada Ekadashi Saptaham* (a religious week of non-stop prayers). The girl continued singing totally oblivious of the presence of the deadly reptile on her lap. A woman seated close to her saw the snake and raised an alarm. Thereupon the snake slipped away from the girl. But when the *bhajan* session resumed, it reappeared and this time crawled to the ashram sanctum and lay coiled round the stone image of the deity — *Indian Express* (P.M. Irfan Ahmed, Madras).

MADRAS: "Go and study geography," was the advice a ruling party member got from the Speaker, P. H. Pandian, in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on 8 July. Raising a point of order during question hour, Dr K. P. Ramalingam (AIADMK) referred to the Sri Lanka Tamil talks and said that the talks were being conducted at "the capital of Burma, Thimpu." Amidst laughter from members, Mr Pandian told the member, "Go and study geography." The electricity minister, S. Ramachandran, pointed out that Thimpu was the capital of Bhutan and not Burma—*Indian Express* (C. R. Sitaram, Ranebennur, Karnataka)

MADURAI: It was a loan under the self-employment scheme for an educated young man, but with a difference. Ganesan, a commerce graduate, has been sanctioned a loan of Rs 20,000 by a nationalised bank—to buy an elephant. The 24-year-old youth plans to hire out the elephant for film shooting and festivals and hopes to make an earning of Rs 40,000 a year—*Deccan Herald* (N. Mohan, Bangalore)

HAJIPUR (Bihar): Right from the pyre which had been lit, a woman was rushed to hospital as she showed signs of life. The incident occurred here on 7 July; she was brought to hospital by some of the pall-bearers. Others had fled crying "ghost, ghost" when the woman got up and tried to come out of the burning pyre—*The Hindustan Times* (H. Majumdar, Roorkee)

DAVANGERE. Can a person steal a car while in jail? Apparently, yes, if you go by the chargesheet filed by the police here. According to them, Subramani of Bangalore stole a fiat car from a house here on 2 March 1982. They said he had sold the car, after changing its number plate on 24 August 1983. But a copy of the court proceedings with the accused says that he was produced before the Sixth Metropolitan Magistrate, Bangalore, on 24 February 1982 and remanded to custody till 10 March for failing to furnish bail. The question is: how can a person in judicial custody be free to travel 175 miles and steal a car?—*Indian Express* (V. Ramakrishna, Tirthahalli, Karnataka)

BOMBAY: A rumour that toy models of Maruti cars would be given to children who could list the number plates of 300 Maruti vehicles has caused a traffic crisis in Bombay and endangered scores of young lives. Attempts were being made by the mayor, the police and Maruti dealers on 9 July to scotch the rumour by using Doordarshan. No one knows how the rumour started. One version is that it began with an advertisement in a vernacular paper that Maruti models would be given to children able to note down the numbers of 300 vehicles. As the rumour gathered momentum, scores of children began to appear along the roads, notebooks in hand and peering anxiously at the passing traffic looking for Maruti cars. Baffled motorists had anxious moments, steering cautiously to avoid knocking down over-eager youngsters darting into the traffic to catch a glimpse of a vehicle on the far lane. One woman motorist driving through Dharavi on the night of 8 July said she was stopped by a hundred children who asked her to sign their notebooks after they had written down the registration number. —*The Times of India* (S. Kamneikhup, Bombay)

WITHOUT COMMENT

Our people think much more; they get going much quicker—Rajiv Gandhi, in an interview with the American quarterly, *Chief Executive*

Politics is not my forte—Madhavsinh Solanki in *India Today*

MGR is a sadist...He derives pleasure from the pain and sufferings of the others—M. Karunanidhi, president of the DMK, in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

We cannot solve the (Assam-Nagaland) boundary issue by the bayonet—Hiteswar Saikia in *The Telegraph*

Criticism does not bother me. In fact, I welcome it...After all, judges are not infallible, and a judgement, once delivered, is public property—P.N. Bhagwati, the new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in *Indian Express*

We seek immortality through the pages of law reporters—Y.V. Chandrachud, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in *India Today*

I will be the richest man in the world one day—Rajendra Sethia in *Onlooker*



There is no God... God is the greatest lie invented by man—Bhagwan Rajneesh, in an interview with ABC

I used to feel like an auntie of an illicit bar—Priya Tendulkar, on her short stint as an airhostess, in *Society*

VARIETY

CHESS

The performance of the English team in taking the silver medal in the Olympiad has fulfilled a long-standing promise. In every Olympiad since Haifa 1976 (where we won bronze) the team has threatened to take top honours, only to draw the short straw in the last few rounds. This time however the final three rounds yielded 10 out of a possible 12 points, compared with an average of about 6 points on previous occasions. The result must bring a smile of satisfaction to all chess enthusiasts in this country, in particular bankers Duncan Lawrie Ltd, on whose financial support the team has long relied.

Individual honours were swept up by John Nunn, who scored a phenomenal nine wins and two draws on board two. Undoubtedly the best result ever by an Englishman in an Olympiad, it formed the platform on which the whole team performance was built. Jonathan Mestel also shone, justifying his modesty in accepting the lowly status of fifth board by walking off with the prize for best score on that board.

Pride of place however must go to John Nunn, who incidentally put his feet up on the rest day by winning the problem-solving competition. The following massacre presented him with relatively few problems.

White: Dr J. Nunn, Black: G. Sosonko. Sicilian Defence. Thessaloniki 1984.

1 P–K4	P–QB4	2 N–KB3	N–QB3
3 P–Q4	PxP	4 NxP	N–B3
5 N–QB3	P–Q3	6 B–QB4	P–K3
7 B–K3	P–QR3	8 Q–K2	Q–B2
9 0–0–0	N–QR4		

Hoping to capitalise on a variation against which John has experienced some difficulties in the past. In doing so Sosonko underestimates the quality of his opponent's preparation.

Sosonko (Black)



Nunn (White) to move

10 B–Q3	P–QN4	11 P–QR3	B–N2
12 P–KN4	P–Q4		

A classic theme: central counter v flank attack, but John has a prepared sacrifice.

13 PxP	NxP	14 N(Q4)xNP!	PxN
15 BxP+	K–Q1	16 NxN	PxN

Best. On 16 . . . BxN 17 RxB PxR 18 R–Q1 Black lacks a satisfactory defence.

17 R–Q3	N–B5	18 R–B3	B–N5?

Throwing in the towel. Instead 18 . . . B–B4 or Q3 would offer chances of resistance.

DIAGRAM

19 RxN!	PxR	20 R–Q1+	K–B1
21 R–Q4			

Not a difficult move. The double threats of RxP and PxB ensure that White is winning back a piece at least.

21 . . .	B–Q4	22 RxB	B–Q3
23 R–Q4	Resigns		

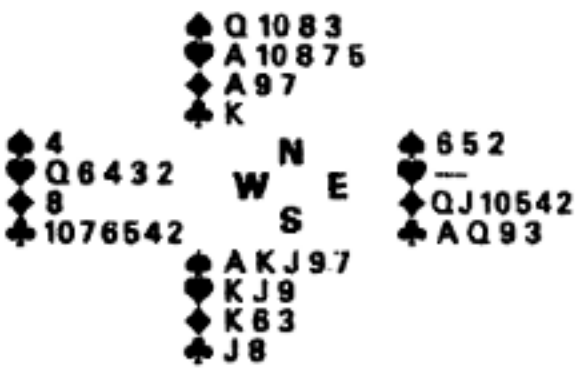
White is emerging with three pawns and a massive attack for the exchange e.g. 23 . . . K–N1 24 RxP Q–K2 25 R–B6.

MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

Of the many thousands of deals played in the Olympiad, I doubt whether there can have been a better one than this, reported in the *Bulletin* by Gudmundur Hermannsson:

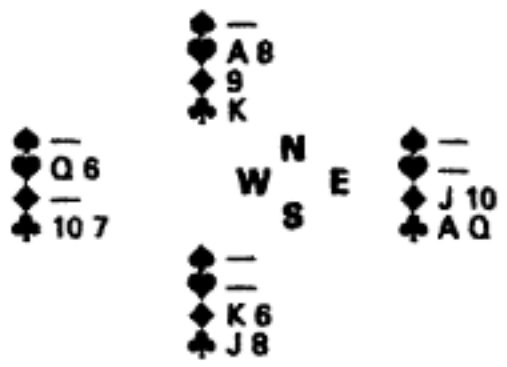
Dealer North Love all





Playing against Australia, the Icelandic North opened Two Hearts, promising 4–4 or 4–5 in the majors. East overcalled with Three Diamonds, destroying the delicate exchanges. South plunged into Six Spades; East doubled, to indicate his desire for an unusual lead; and South, realising the situation, transferred to 6NT.

What should West lead? A club – it's obvious (for five down); but supinely he led a diamond. Now guess which card won the twelfth trick. This was the ending:



When Bjorn Eysteinsson led the ace of hearts from dummy, East did his best, discarding the queen of clubs. A club followed from dummy and South made the last trick with the jack of clubs.

TERENCE REESE

QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. The Emperor of the western Roman empire was called Augustus. What was the Emperor of the eastern Roman empire called?

2. Which novel was once called *Tenderness*?

3. Which country of the world do the Grimaldis rule over?

4. The battles of Marathon, Thermopyle, and Salamis and were fought between whom?

5. *Fifteen Paces* is the autobiography of which Australian cricketer?

6. Which is the world's largest industry?

7. Name the British king who introduced feudalism in the British Isles?

8. The thyroid cartilage, a part of the human body, is better known as what?

9. Utah, Omaha, Juno, God and Sword were code names for what during World War II?

10. What is the English equivalent of the Indian festival Diwali?

11 The Duma was the Parliament of which coutry?

12. What are lentigens?

13 What is the fear of crowds called?

14 In spy terminology, who is a cobbler?

15. What is Dum-Dum fever?

ANSWERS

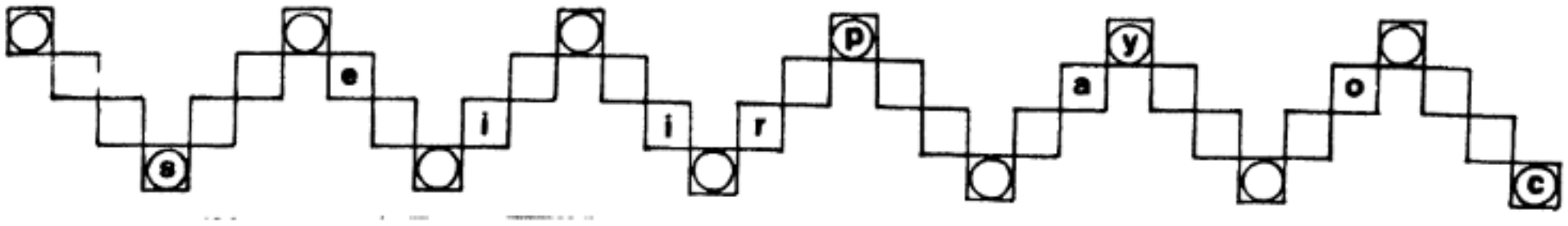
1. Brazilus.
2. *Lady Chatterley's lover* by D. H. Lawrence.
3. Monaco.
4. The Greeks and the Persians.
5. Alan Davidson.
6. Oil.
7. William the Conquerer.
8. The adam's apple
9. The beachheads occupied by the invading Allied armies in Normandy in June 1944.
10. Guy Fawkes Day.
11. Russia, just after Czar Nicholas II was overthrown.
12. Freckles.
13. Oklophobia.
14 The man who forges passports.
15. Kala-azar

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

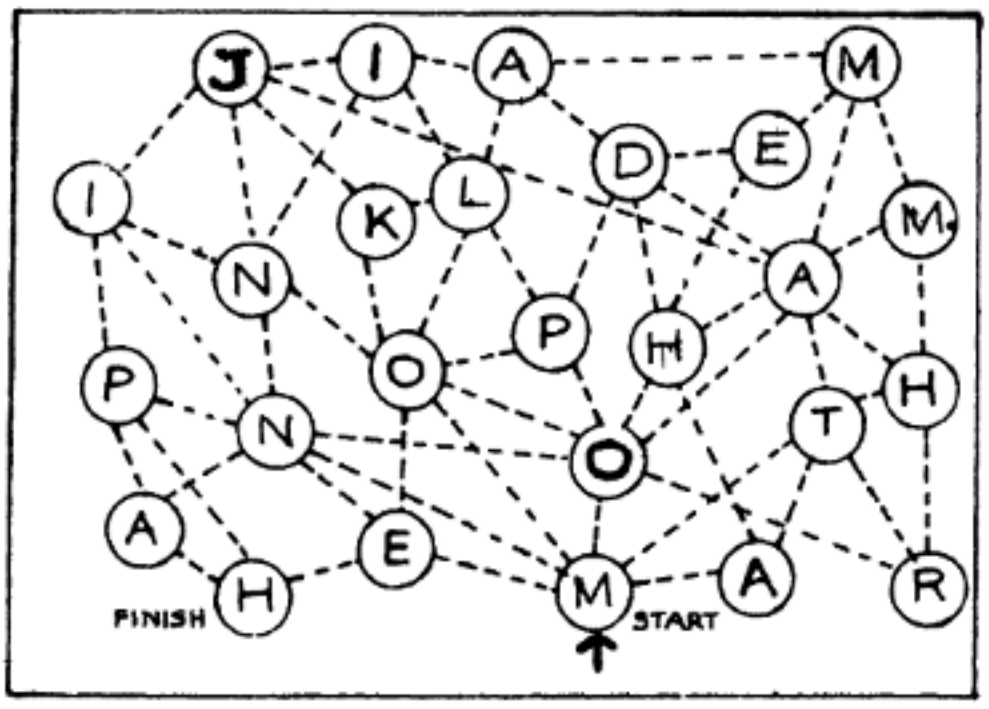
Word Play

a,a,a,a,a, c, d,e,e,e, g,j,j, l,m,m,n,o,o,p,r,r,r,s,s,t,t,t,u,v,w,y



From the letters given above the zig-zag, make four letter words which make sense, and read backwards and forwards. We call these words AMBIDROMES. Examples: SPAN and NAPS, LAGER and REGAL. Some letters have already been filled in the zig-zag, and these have been crossed out from the list.

Personality Plus



The name of a famous person can be spelt out in the maze above by proceeding from the start and moving on to the adjacent letters, without backtracking. The clues given below may help. Can you name the person?

1. He had his early education in Karachi.
2. He returned to India in 1896, after qualifying himself for the Bar, and was called to the Bar in 1897.
3. Two sources of inspiration for him were Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.
4. He was very closely associated with the National Congress.
5. He played a very prominent role in the affairs of India in 1947.

Missing Links

Insert the missing numbers:

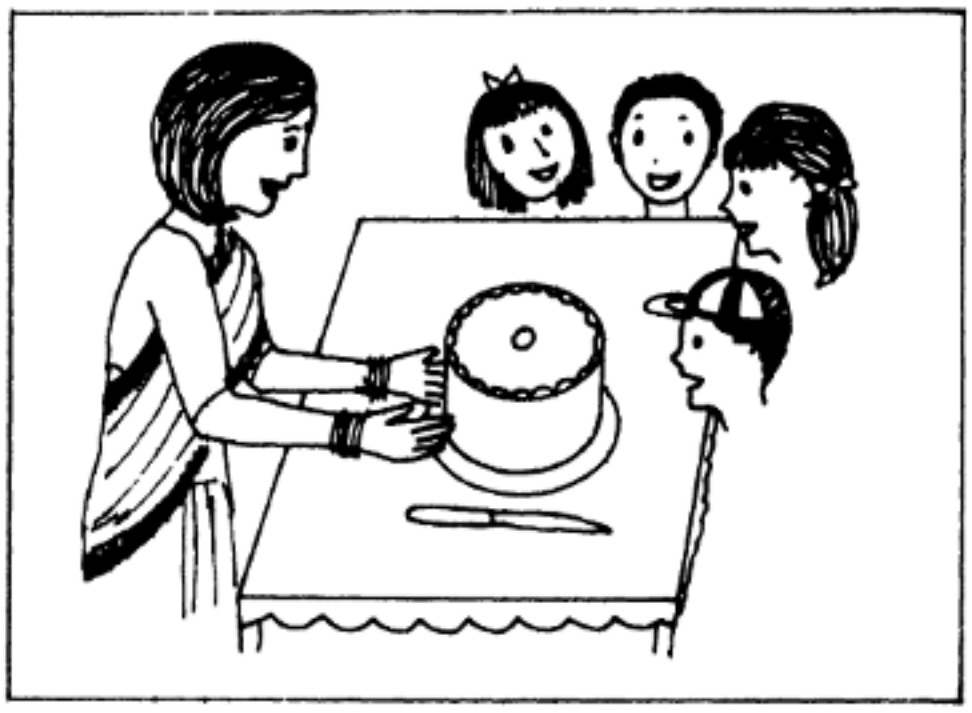
1 3 2 — 3 7 — 9 — — —

Quick Think

Father Fatrsrial was asked one day, how much money he had in his pocket. He took out his wallet and looked in; he said, "One fifth plus four-fifth of what I have, is the number of rupees in my wallet."

How much money did he have?

Wit Sharpener



Ma Maxima is puzzled! She needs to divide the cake into four equal parts for her four hungry children. To add a little excitement, she wants to do this in a different way from the usual. In how many different ways can she do it?

Quizzbizz

One of the following is not a name:

HAZE BLITE
AMA ILK
ORE BETA
BE LUG
MEN TEN LICE

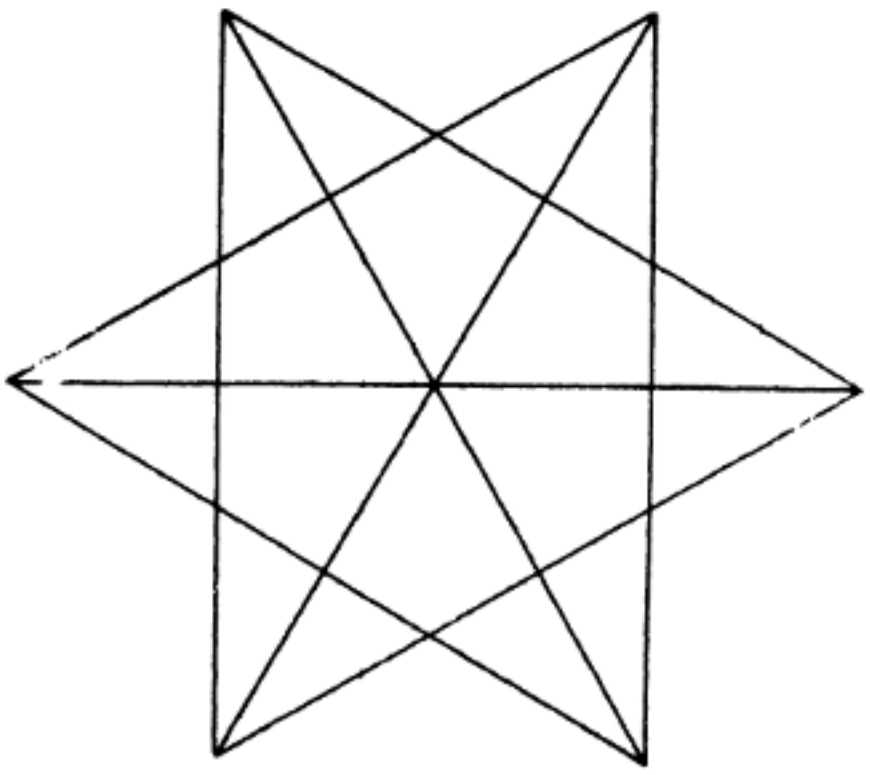
What's in a Word?

Can you fill in the fourth words:

I Barometer: pressure:: thermometer:?
a) fever
b) temperature
c) heat

II Birds: feathers:: fish:?
a) fins
b) scales
c) gill

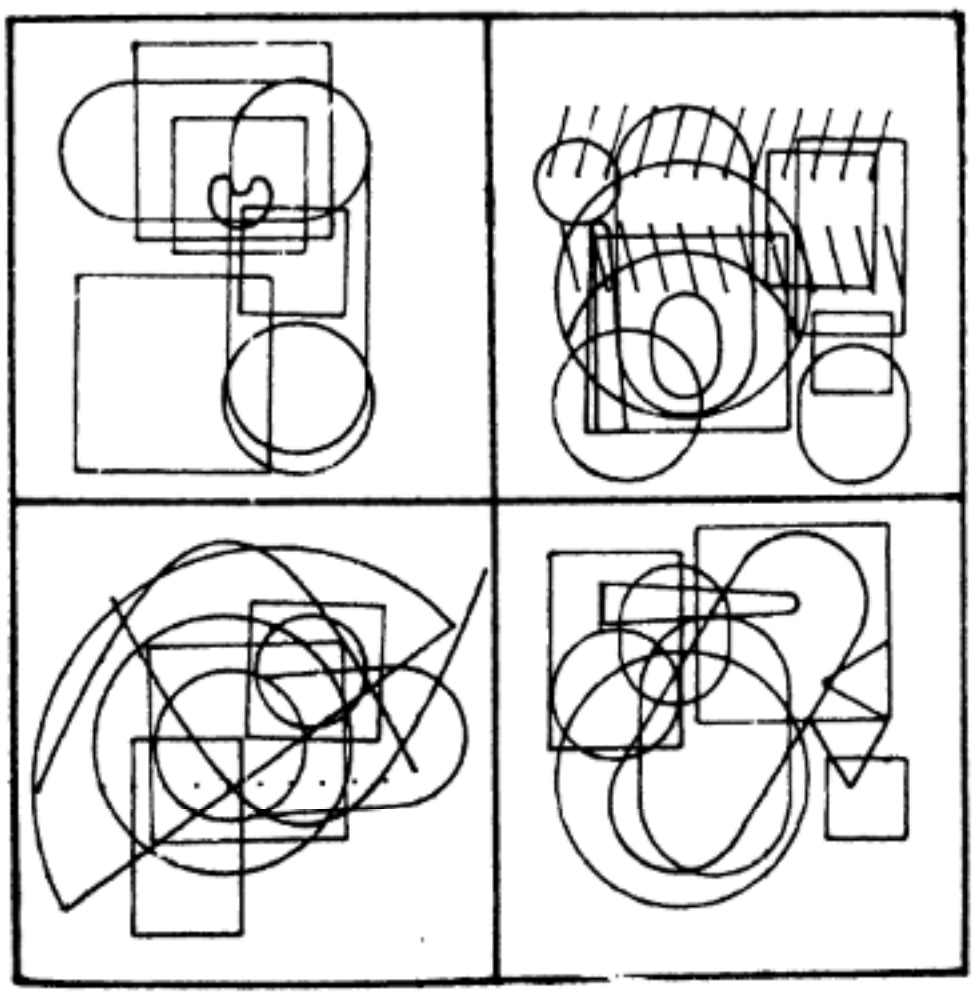
Shape Sleuth



How many triangles and quadrilaterals can you find in this star shaped illustration?

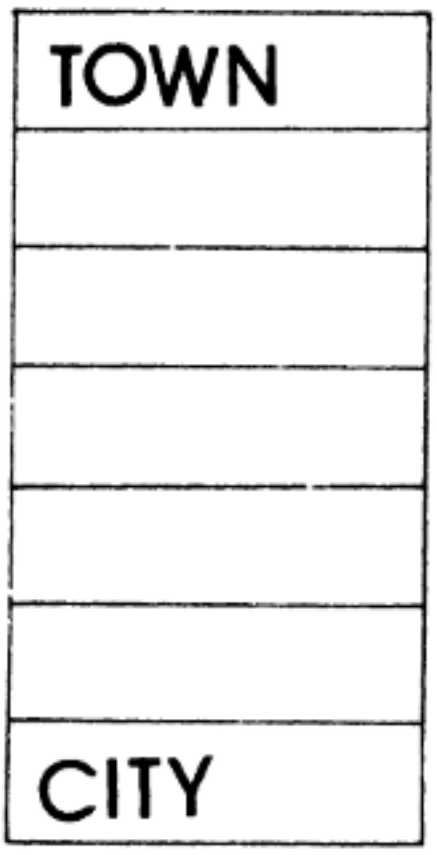
Mind Bender





Which of these four shapes can you find in the figure medleys below:

Blankagrams

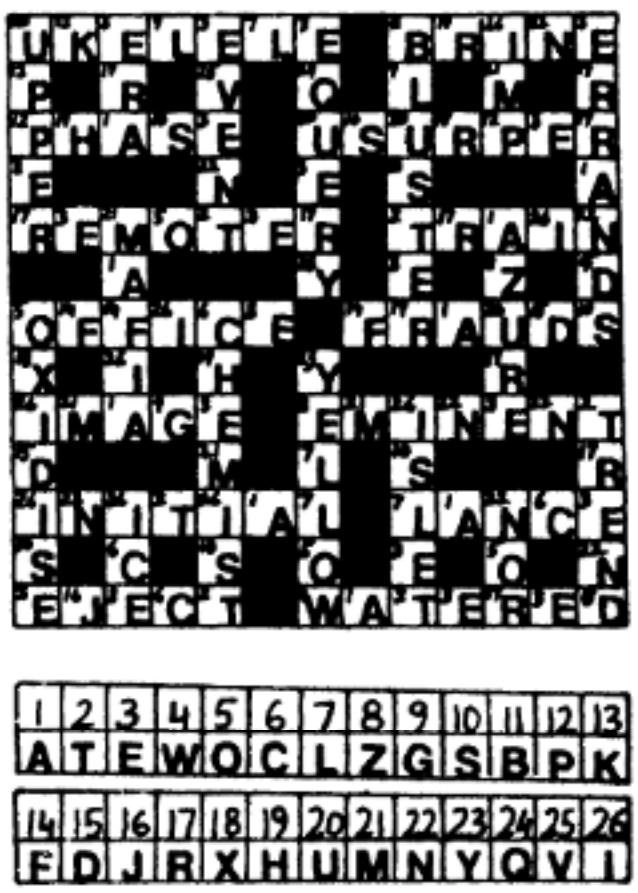


Towns are constantly growing into cities, these days. Change the word TOWN into CITY in the minimum number of steps. We were able to do it in 6 steps. Can you do it in less?

Solutions to last week's Teasers:

Odd One Out: E. There is no double one domino used.
Quick Look: 4 outside, 7 inside.
Quick Think: Z belongs to the lower line. After the first vowel, drop one letter. After the second vowel drop two letters, and so on.

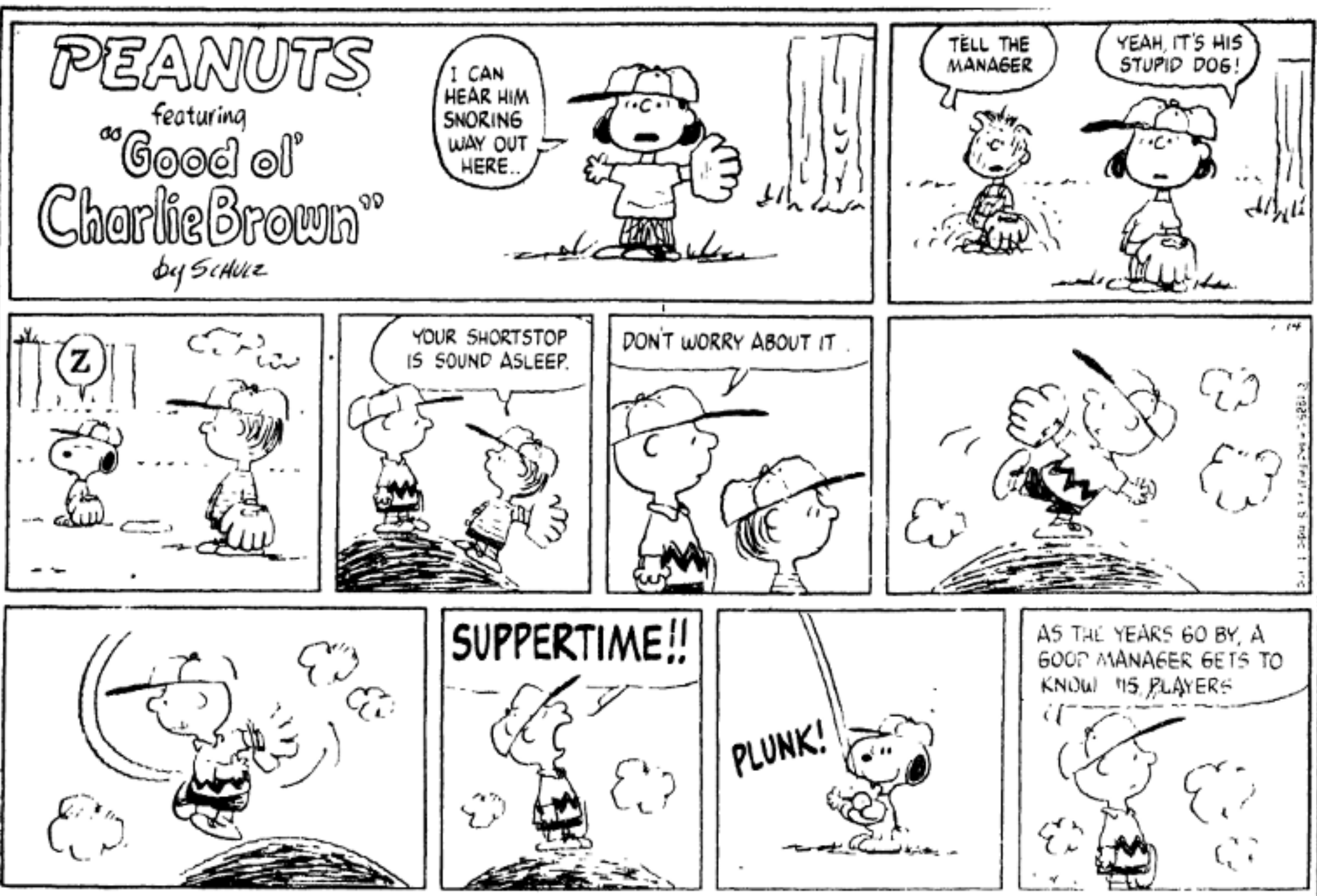
Cryptocross:



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	T	E	W	O	C	L	Z	G	S	B	P	K

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
F	D	J	R	X	H	U	M	N	Y	Q	V	I

Witsharpener: They need 313 sharpeners. A is given the value of 20, B 21 and so on. The value of each letter of the word is added to the next.



SCIENCE

Bringing the Moon Closer

The dollars promised for America's space station ($8 billion from the United States, more than $2 billion from Europe) are beginning to fire the imagination of America's space explorers. A faction of scientists within the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has spent the past year pushing the idea of sending people back to the moon to conduct experiments, build telescopes and, perhaps, set up a permanent colony. Many of their schemes sound fanciful; most are based on impeccable logic.

The argument runs like this. Once the space station is flying, in about ten years' time, going to the moon will be cheaper and easier than it was 15 years ago during the Apollo programme. Two things pushed up the costs of Apollo: having to design all the equipment from scratch, and needing a mammoth rocket—the Saturn V—to escape earth's gravity with enough velocity to reach the moon.

Future moon missions would get there in two hops: from earth to the space station, and thence to the moon. The shuttle can take care of the first hop; all that the second needs is a "space tug" that can be launched from earth and stay moored to the space station in between moon expeditions.

Would it be worth it? Last year, Dr Mendell and his fellow "lunatics" invited a group of scientists to discuss the benefits of going back to the moon for experimenters and explorers. The most obvious beneficiaries would be lunar scientists. They still know precious little about the place or how it was formed: the theory that it could be a lump of earth dislodged when a planet or asteroid collided with earth millions of years ago is back in fashion, for example.

Astronomers, too, are keen to get to the moon. Those who peer through optical telescopes would like to put one on the moon where it would be free from the atmospheric distortions of the earth. Radio astronomers say radio telescopes on the far side of the moon would be shielded from the noise of the earth's own radio emissions. Dr Jack Burns, of the University of New Mexico, has an idea for radio telescope called an interferometer with one leg on the earth and one on the moon. Interferometers already straddle continents on the earth. Dr Burns says the resolution of his earth-moon telescope would be 100 times better.

Dr Mendell admits that these projects could hardly justify a lunar expedition on their own. What if they were combined with a plan to pave the way for manned flights to more distant planets? Scientists are tantalised by the moon's low gravity and lack of atmosphere. It will take 20 times as much energy to launch an object from earth to the space station as from the moon to the space station. Indeed, spacecrafts could probably be launched from the moon without rockets: a decent catapult could do it. If only there was something on the moon worth launching.

Perhaps there is. One estimate says that three out of four shuttle launches in the 1990s will be loaded with liquid oxygen to fuel the space station and its associated spacecraft. The moon, on the other hand, has abundant oxygen chemically trapped in its rocks. Dr Mendell's group believes it might eventually be cheaper to extract oxygen from the moon and transport it to the space station.

***By arrangement with* The Economist**

They tried every trick to create a misunderstanding between *Deepti Naval* and *Prakash Jha*, but in vain. The couple, who were married last year on 1 July are still very much in love and have ignored the rumours that are being floated. Some even went in search of Prakash's first wife whom he had allegedly tucked away in some remote part of Bihar. But they had to return disappointed. Meanwhile, Deepti's past affairs with *Farouque Shaikh*, *Marc Zuber* and filmmaker *Rahul Gupta* were being raked up. Stories were also being spread about Deepti's 'disillusionment with marriage.' "They really tried hard to see that there was trouble, but we behaved like two responsible adults and it paid off," says a mature Deepti.

Farouque Shaikh is a man of word. Ever since he entered the film industry, he had resolved to accept only "good roles" that would fetch him "good money," and he has stuck to his guns. Recently, a leading filmmaker approached him. Farouque liked the role and demanded four lakhs for it. The producer promised to return within a few days but eventually did not turn up. "I don't know why they crib when it comes to paying my price. I have carved out a place for myself in the industry and I know I am good. I am only demanding what I deserve," complained Farouque.

Vijayeta Pandit is heading for trouble. Not only are the producers fed up with her tantrums, but her frustrated sister, *Sulakshana*, too is trying to sabotage her chances. Vijayeta has made a successful comeback after all those years away from the glare of the arc-lights. As one of her directors and well-wisher put it: "She has a bright future ahead of her. But one thing is certain, if she lets her sister do all the planning and talking for her, she will see doomsday soon."



Vijayeta: heading for trouble



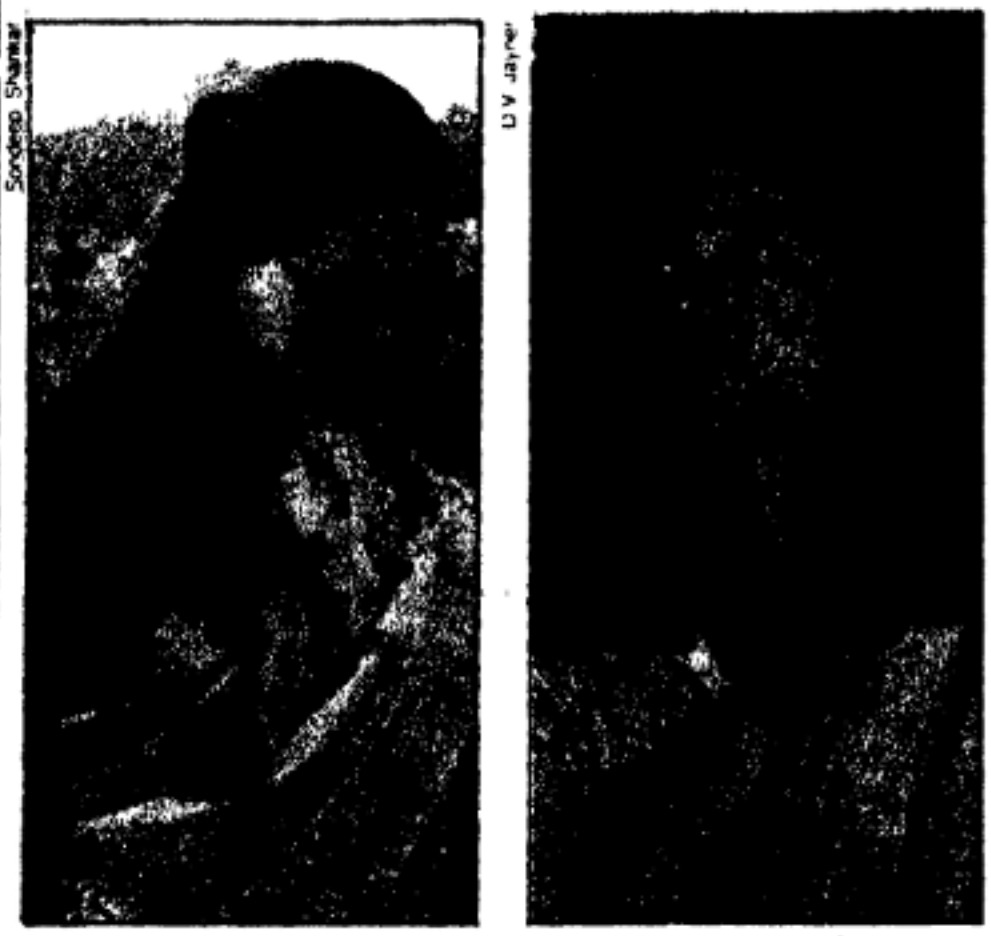
Dimple: independent

With *Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi* and *Om Puri* as the artistes of their films, producers now find themselves on shaky terrain: financiers are not willing to invest in their films while distributors are reluctant to buy the completed films. Says one distributor, who has been in the film industry for years: "I have distributed some of the 'art' films and have lost a lot of money. They make very good cinema but they are big risks at the box-office."

Dimple Kapadia has finally broken all relations with *Rajesh Khanna*. "It's all over between us and there can be no going back now," she says. "How can I live with that man again? I am happy the way I am. All that matters to me now are my two daughters...nothing else."

DELHI DIARY

Family Reunion?



Sonia Gandhi (left) and Menaka Gandhi: revival of trust?

Is Menaka Gandhi drifting back to the Prime Minister's household? Efforts are being made by common friends of Sonia Gandhi and the Prime Minister's estranged daughter-in-law to end the family feud. To begin with, Menaka may be asked to head the Sanjay Gandhi memorial trust. The post is presently held by Arun Nehru. A factor which has acted as a catalyst in the patch-up process is the fondness which the Prime Minister's children, Rahul and Priyanka, have for Sanjay and Menaka Gandhi's son, Feroze Varun

They have persuaded Sonia and Rajiv Gandhi to bring their young cousin back.

Chief Minister, by Proxy?



Madhavsinh Solanki

The appointment of Amarsinh Chaudhary as the chief minister of Gujarat has raised a question: who will be the real chief minister? As home minister in the last days of the Solanki regime, Chaudhary had allowed his predecessor in the home portfolio, Prabodh Rawal, to run the show. Rawal, who was denied a party ticket in the Assembly elections (hence he could not be a minister), even briefed newsmen in Ahmedabad on Chaudhary's behalf in those days. It is well known that while helping Chaudhary to reach the top post, Solanki had not entirely given up ambition for ruling the state. Will the Chaudhary regime be overshadowed by Solanki and Rawal?

A Record, Indeed

On 1 June, Kapal Mehra, chairman of Orkay Silk Mills was levied the highest ever personal penalty by the excise department. His firm was subjected to a fine of Rs ten crores (the highest corporate fine so far) and a personal penalty of Rs 50 lakhs was levied on him. The hearing in his case concluded in Bombay on the evening of 31 May. By noon the next day, a 130-page order, duly cyclostyled, was issued from the directorate of anti evasion (DAE) of the central excise department in Delhi. Where was Kapal Mehra when the order was being issued in Delhi (and quietly leaked out to a news agency journalist) in the afternoon of 1 June? He was standing next to the Prime Minister of India. Rajiv Gandhi inaugurated a polytechnic for the blind at Ambernath, near Bombay at 1 pm on 1 June. The man who managed the function was Kapal Mehra. Was the Prime Minister aware that the person standing next to him was being declared as the biggest ever excise evader by the DAE that afternoon? Apart from the record penalty levied on Mehra, the case has set many precedents. Never before has a 130-page judgement been passed with such haste. The adjudicator, M. S. Bindra, was the person who conducted the raids on the premises of Orkay. It was he who issued the show-cause on Mehra and he only sat on the judgement in the case. Mehra has appealed against the order. Bindra has meanwhile been transferred from DAE.

Detergent Image

If a criminal case against a politician can cost him the Congress(I) nomination in the Assembly elections, then the reverse could also be true: perhaps by being given a ticket for the Legislative Council elections, the politician can be absolved of the criminal charge. A former MLA, Shankarrao Kolhe, a powerful member of the dominant sugar lobby in Maharashtra, was denied the Assembly ticket this year because he was accused of having stormed the Kopargaon police station near Ahmednagar with a mob on 3 November 1984. According to the charge, Kolhe had threatened the police officers with serious consequences if they did not desist from arresting people in connection with the riots which followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The case had been filed on the basis of written statements by the district collector and the DSP, Ahmednagar, who were present in the police station when the incident took place. He is said to have threatened to burn the police station down if the arrests were not stopped. After he was given the Congress(I) ticket for the council elections, the charges against Kolhe were dropped. In the application filed in the court for withdrawal of the case against Kolhe, the state government asserted that what Kolhe had done was only a "verbal exchange" and that he did not assault anyone. The case was dropped in the "public interest," according to the public prosecutor. Detergents are indeed being used to ensure a clean image.

TAILPIECE: Cartoonist Ravi Shankar of the *Indian Express* has found a new name for Italy. In a recent cartoon strip, he commented: "It's not every nation's good fortune to have a nation-in-law."

D.E. Nizamuddin

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(Indian Medical Gazette 118 223, 1984)





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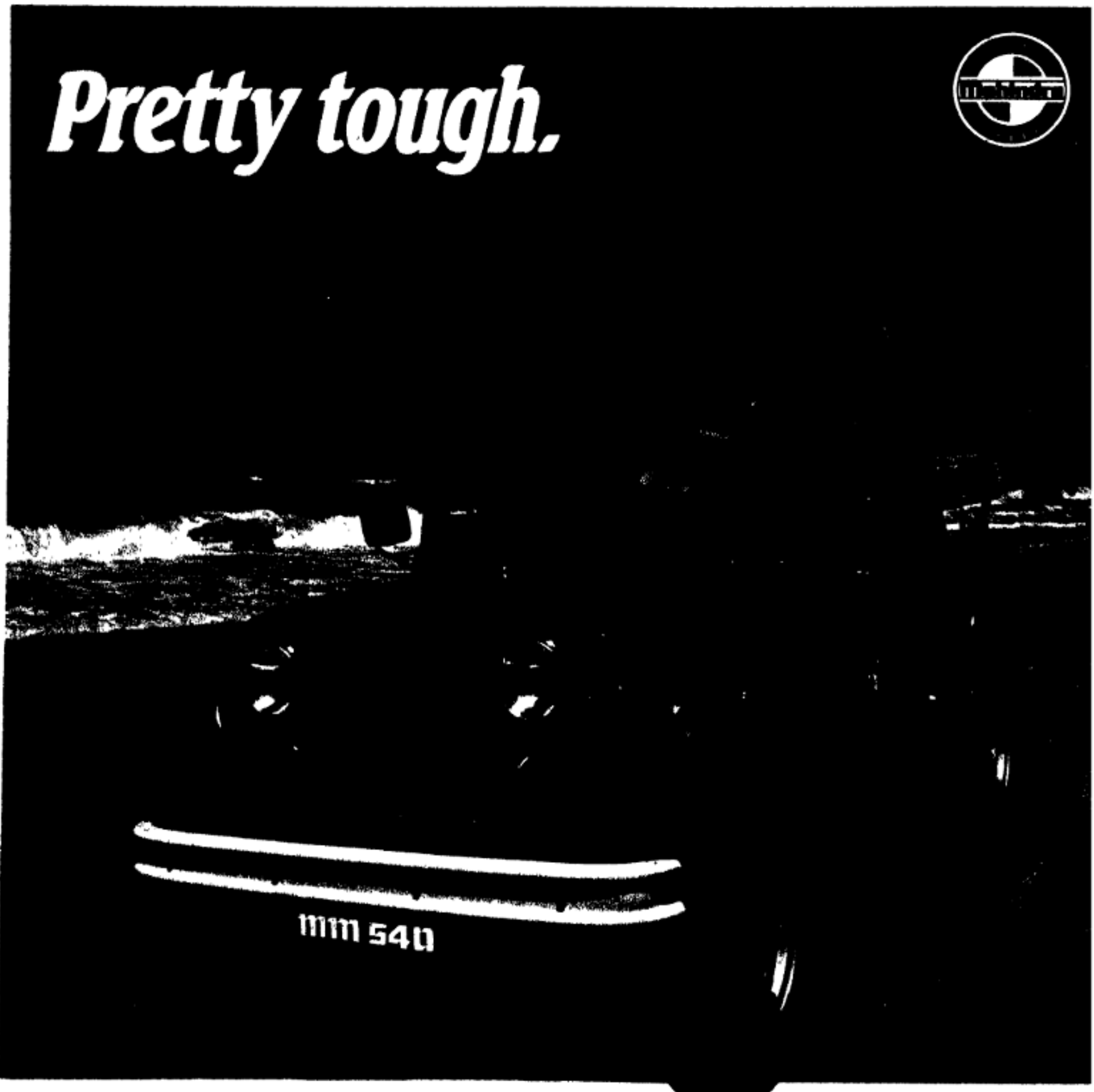
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CLARION C DMHV-1

Sunday Weekly 28 July 1985. Regd. No. WB/CC/256/TN/MS(C)376 MH-By-South-680.

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That's the ***new MM 540 Jeep.*** *In an exciting range of colours.*

OKINGS OPEN

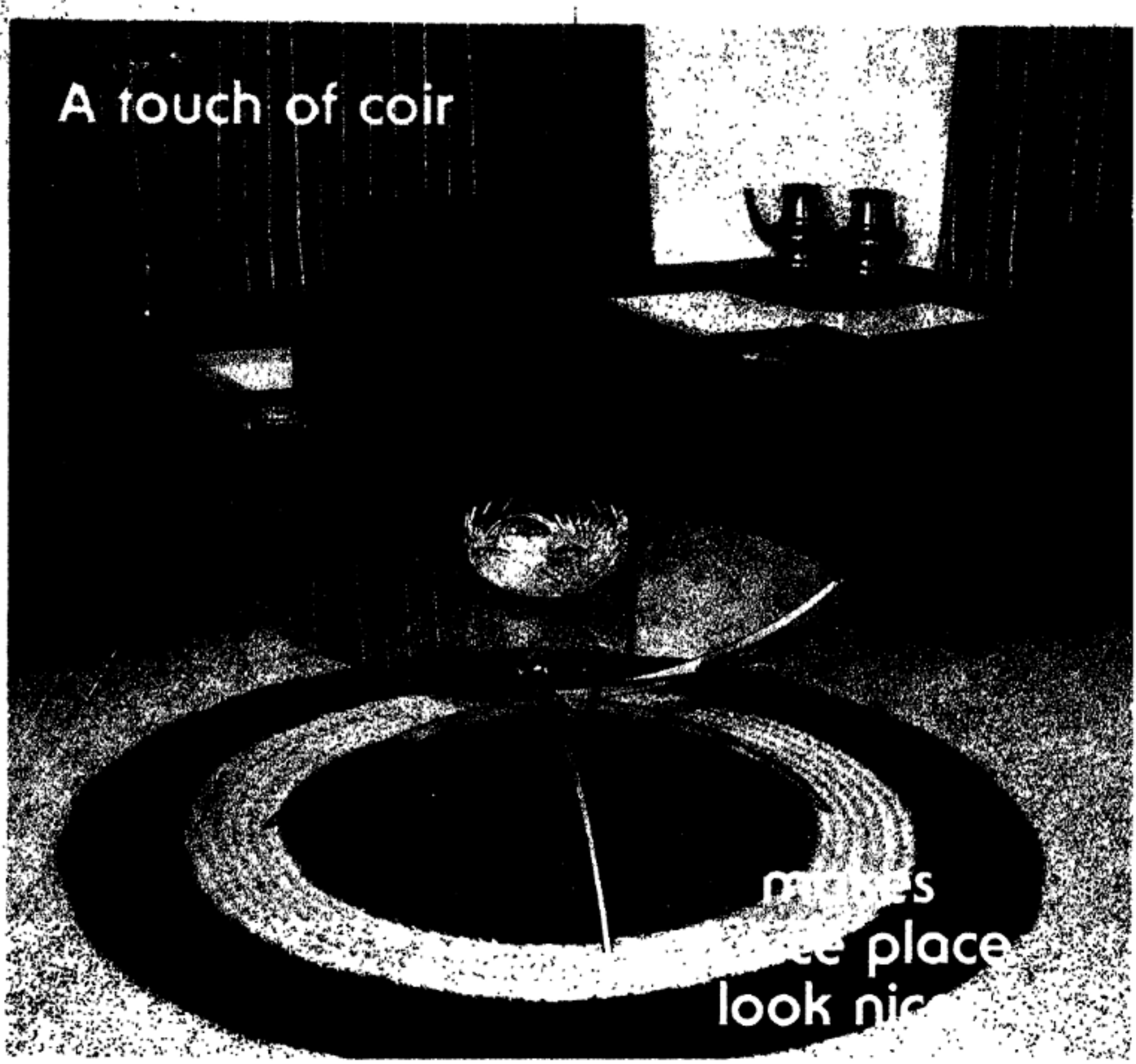
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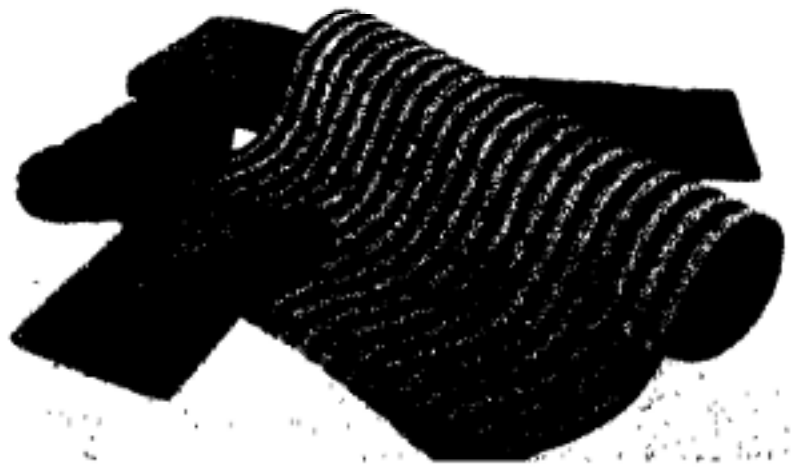
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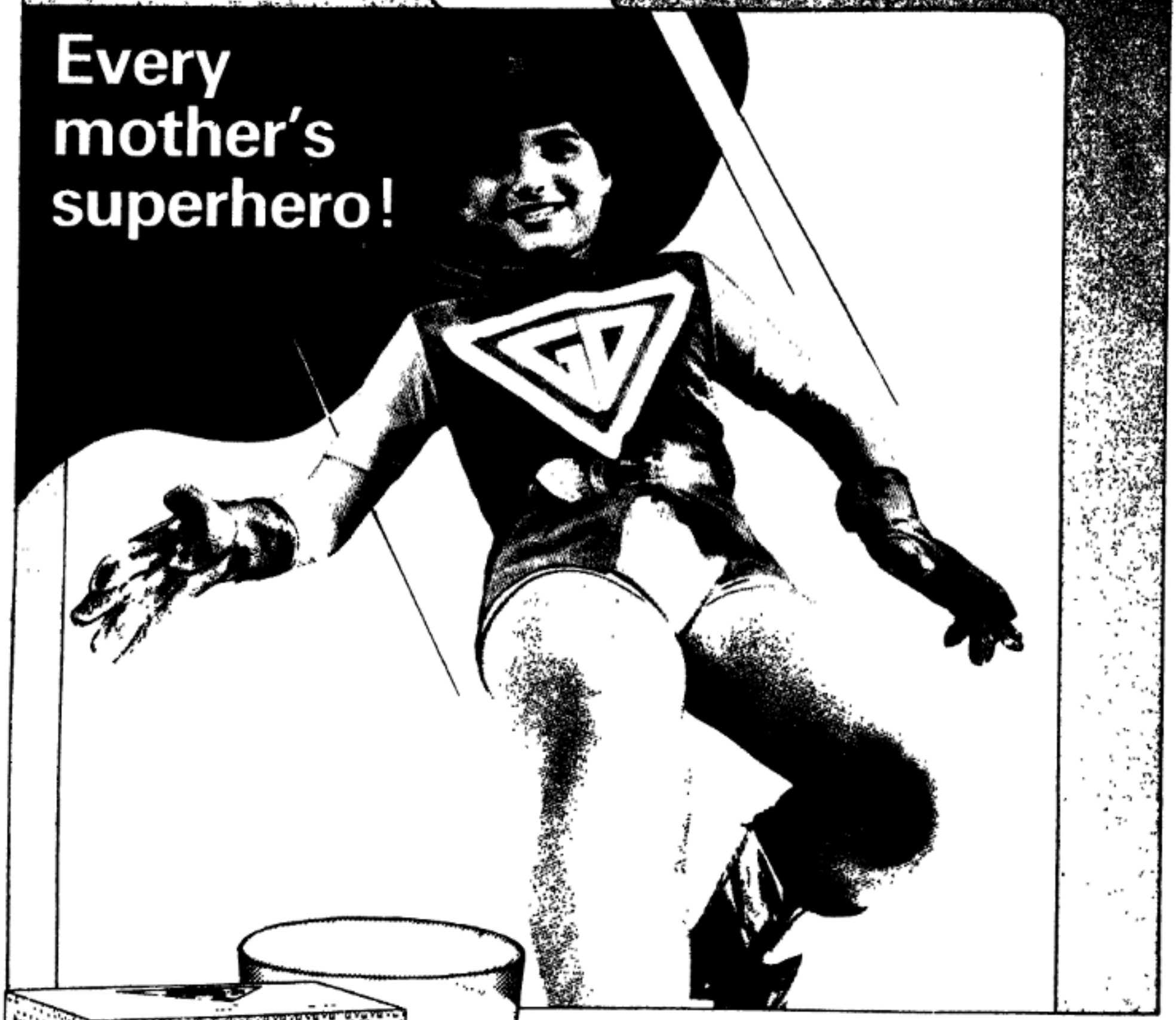
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Cross-currents

SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA

A Patna-datelined news agency report which appeared in the inside pages of most newspapers on 3 September has created unprecedented ripples. No Congress(I) leader is prepared to comment about it. Yet the two-paragraph news story has become the talking point among Congressmen. According to the report, a meeting of party workers in Patna has demanded that Rajiv Gandhi's wife, Sonia, should replace him as the Congress(Indira) president. The credentials of Rajendra Singh, the person who issued the statement, are not too well-known. He is a former general secretary of the Bihar unit of the party and is better known for his proximity to the AICC(I) treasurer, Sitaram Kesri. It is this link which has made partymen apprehensive about the origin of the move to make Sonia Gandhi the AICC(I) president. The absence of a denial from any office bearer of the party has added to the confusion. The newsmen covering the AICC(I) headquarters at 24, Akbar Road made futile attempts to elicit a statement from party leaders after the newsitem appeared. Even Srikant Verma, the general secretary in charge of press briefings, was not his normal ebullient self when confronted with the question if the Prime Minister's wife indeed was being groomed for the party post.

Sitaram Kesri is known for springing surprises. In January 1983 he had suddenly resigned from the union council of ministers when there was a talk of a new "Kamaraj plan" being introduced by Mrs Indira Gandhi. He is the treasurer of the AICC(I) and has access to the Prime Minister's house. A move initiated by a person close to Kesri, therefore, is bound to generate interest among partymen. In the past, the induction of Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi had been preceded by similar unprecedented moves from unknown quarters. In the case of Sonia Gandhi, though she is often seen accompanying her husband on his official tours at home and abroad, there has so far been no indication that she is interested to join politics. Since her marriage to Rajiv Gandhi in 1968, Sonia Gandhi has never been projected as a political person. Till some years back, her role was confined to the Nehru-Gandhi household. With her husband joining politics, she too crossed the barriers of her home.

Dissatisfaction has been growing in the Congress(I) ranks over the past one year. The denial of tickets to many sitting members both in the Lok Sabha and in the state Vidhan Sabha elections has created a large bunch of disgruntled partymen. Many senior leaders have not been accommodated in the council of ministers either at the centre or in the states. But the dissatisfaction among legislators and parliamentarians has been tackled by the Anti-defection Act. The MPs have now been put under the scrutiny of computers. Data is being fed about their parliamentary performance and their visits to the constituencies. This new pace of working has not quite fitted into the Congress culture.

Inaccessibility of the Prime Minister and his aides to party leaders has become a major complaint. In this background, when a move to induct Sonia Gandhi is initiated by unknown persons in a state capital, one cannot rule out the possibility that it is a move aimed at questioning the ability of Rajiv Gandhi to hold two posts: that of the party president and the Prime Minister of the country. Had the name of anyone other than Sonia Gandhi been suggested, that person could have then invited the wrath of the powers that be. In the case of Sonia Gandhi, a Catch-22 situation has arisen. No one other than Rajiv Gandhi himself would like to comment on the proposal. And, for the Prime Minister, it may have been considered improper to comment on the statement of a former PCC(I) general secretary emanating from Patna.

While the move to induct Sonia Gandhi as the Congress(Indira) president was initiated in Patna, the name of Mrs Gandhi disappeared from the campaign posters in Punjab which have been put up by the party named after her. The decision to retain Mrs Indira Gandhi's name as the suffix was a conscious decision taken by her party after the Election Commission decided to recognise the Congress(I) as the real Congress after the 1978 split. (The decision came in 1982.) Having retained her name as the suffix, should the party, now led by her son, ignore her in its election campaigns? Mrs Gandhi's role in Punjab can be criticised in many ways. But so was the case with her role during the Emergency ten years ago. That did not make the Congressmen disown her. Should she be forgotten within less than a year after her assassination? The propaganda material for Punjab may have been prepared by a professional advertising agency in Bombay. But the strategy for selling detergents and paints cannot be extended to politics.

The absence of Mrs Indira Gandhi's name from the election material in Punjab may be a pointer for many changes which are in the offing. Already some of the basic policies of the past are being reversed. The industrial policy drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru is slowly being moved into the archives. Change is essential for progress. The old cannot be retained just for the sake of traditions. But while ushering in the "new," the basic edifice should not be totally dismantled. In the Congress centenary year, the traditions built over the years and tempered at first in the fire of the freedom struggle and then in the quest for building modern India should not be given up. The Congress has grown through many struggles in the hundred years since it was presided over by a foreigner called Alexander Octavian Hume.

PUNCHLINE/R.K. LAXMAN



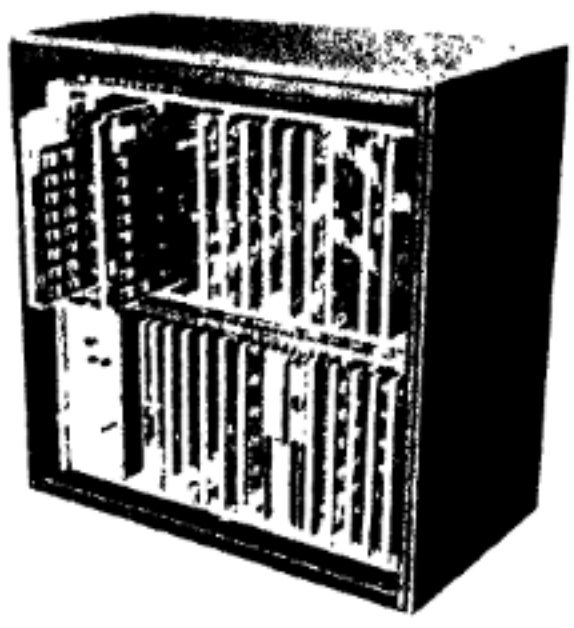
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Nowhere Man

Everytime I write about God, God-lovers send me a flood of hateful letters. So much for God being Love. At the same time I get one or two from young people saying how disillusioned they are with institutionalised religion and how they can be good without believing in God. A few books and traits follow. The latest addition to my collection on the subject is *Of Human Phenomena* (Natraj Publishers) by a young (38) engineer, Phillip D'Souza, working with the ONGC in Dehradun. The dedication is reminiscent of Nirad Chowdhuri's,in his *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. D'Souza dedicates his work "to the British peoples and to their Queen." Unless it is meant to butter up the British High Commission for a visa and a work permit, the dedication does not make sense. However, I did not let that put me off. I was turned on by the prelude that follows on the next page, a song of the Beatles which pretty well sums up my own bafflement over the universe and its creator.

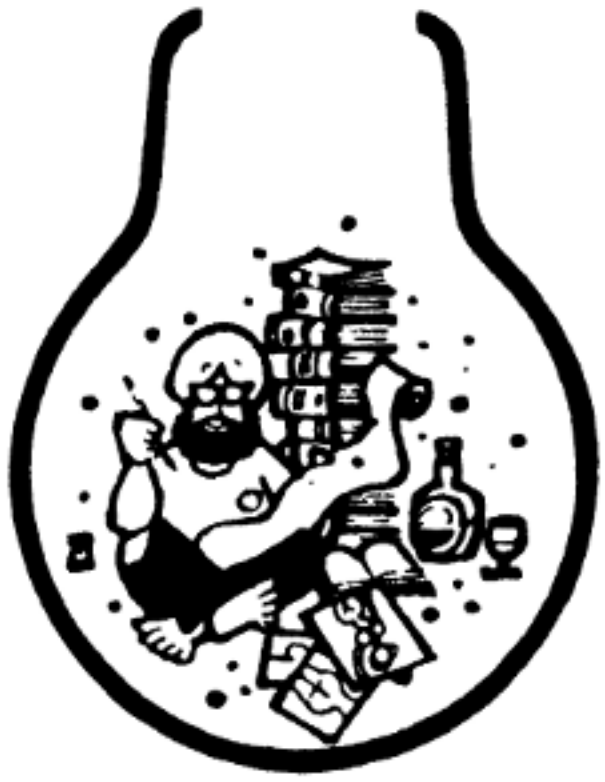
He's a real nowhere man,
Sitting in his nowhere land,
Making all his nowhere plans
For nobody.

Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to,
Isn't he a bit like you
And me.

D'Souza takes Darwin, Newton and Freud in his stride as he puts his own theory of the creator-preserver-destroyer God. It turns out to be quite a thought-provoking thesis put across in flat, dull prose. His only commitment is to reason. And logic needs no embellishment. "Truth needs no defence," writes D'Souza. "It is utter, absolute and immortal It only needs exposure."

New Gadgets

What I look forward to most when abroad is to look for new gadgets. I got my first pen with a light at its tip more than 20 years ago; also a miniature transistor half the size of a match box which could be put in the ear like a hearing aid. This time it was an instant ice-cream maker and a novel key chain. The ice-cream maker consists of a metal cylinder whose walls contain a chemical which when kept in the deep freeze section of a frigidaire becomes so cold as to be able to solidify the cream mixture within five minutes. A



churner is fixed to turn the ice-cream to edible consistency. The key chain has a small receiver attached to it. If you misplace it all you have to do is to whistle. The receiver is activated and lets out a bleep or music to tell you where it is. Unfortunately you cannot use it for your car keys while driving in Delhi. Every passing scooter and blare of a car horn rouses it to bleep. I also saw many ingenious devices to trap burglars and frustrate car thieves. I could not buy them as I did not have enough foreign exchange. Why can't our scientists invent such simple things?

God Exists

A good example of how believers bamboozle non-believers by using obscure language and parables which have no analogy to prove the existence of God comes from the Court of Queen Catherine the Great. The Tsarina was perturbed over the influence of the French Savant, Diderot, had acquired in Russia and feared that unless checked in time her courtiers would also turn to aetheism. She commissioned the famous mathematician of the times, Euler, to engage Diderot in public debate on whether or not there was a God. The court was assembled and the two adversaries faced each other. Euler knew that Diderot knew nothing about mathematics. So he opened the debate with a mathematical proposition:

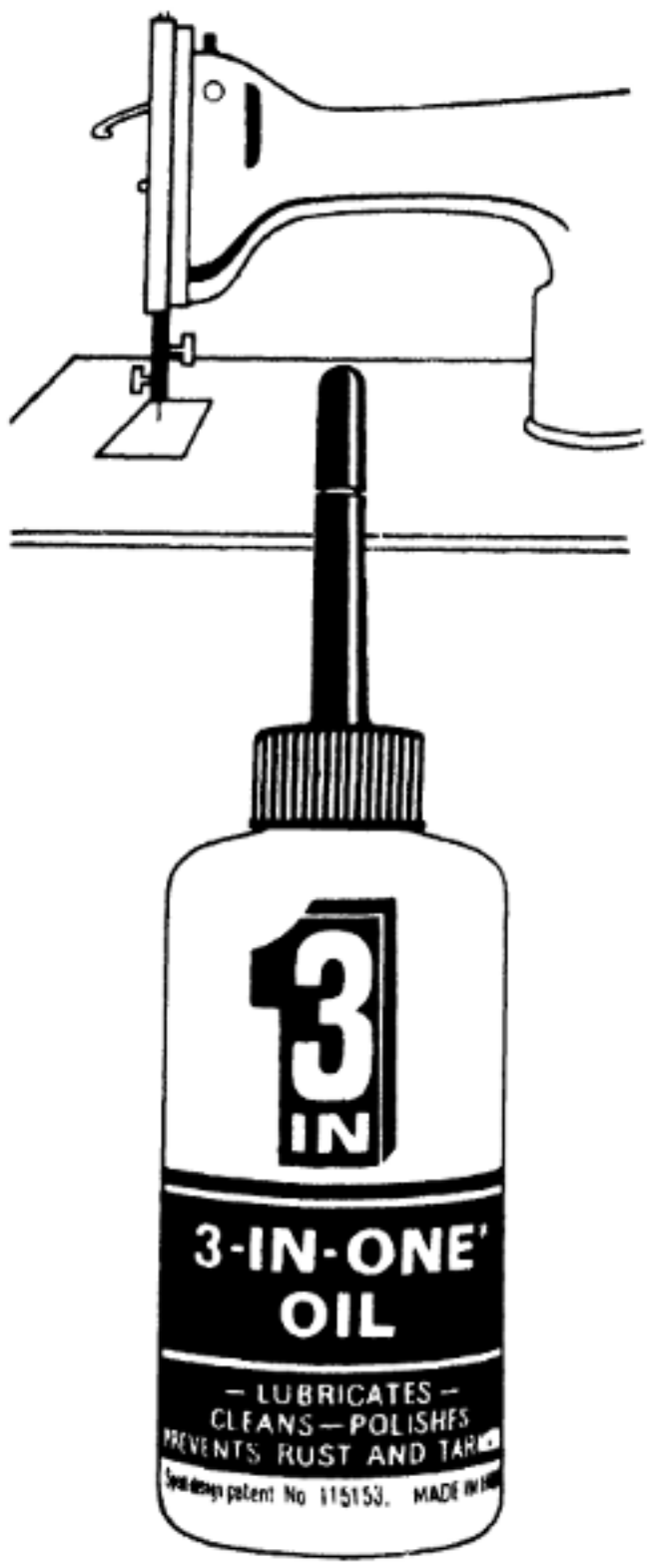
$A + B^N/N = X$

(A plus B to the power of N when divided by N is equal to X).That clearly proves that God exists. Now monsieur Diderot, it is for you to reply.

Diderot had no answer.

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The people's confidence in Peerless deepend further during 1984. New Business worth more than Rs. 3,000 Crores (face value) was secured by Peerless inspite of some odds and adversities. Peerless achieved yet another landmark.

Investments

Guided by its corporate philosophy to ensure absolute security to the Certificate-holders' funds, Peerless invested a total sum of Rs. 525.88 Crores upto 31st December 1984 in Govt. Custody by way of Fixed Deposits with Nationalised/Scheduled Banks, in G.P. Notes and in Units of Unit Trust of India, which fully covers the Liabilities of Rs 460.35 Crores to its Certificate-holders upto that date.

Expansion & Modernisation

To offer prompt and improved services and to better its efficiency, Peerless opened new Branch Offices at Bhopal & Vijayawada and also Organisation Offices at Balasore & Tiruvannamalai. What is more, to obtain a data base and provide cost effective operation, Peerless completed the first phase of Computerisation in its offices throughout the country. Again, with a view to strengthening the Company's operational efficiency, Messrs Price Waterhouse & Co have been appointed to carry out a study of the Financial System and related areas

Target for 1985 Rs. 3,200 Crores

Backed by the trust, that the people have in it, Peerless has set a Target of New Business worth Rs. 3,200 Crores (face value) during 1985 and is confident of achieving it.

Social obligations

To discharge social responsibilities, Peerless made donations & contributions worth Rs. 20.90 lakhs through well-recognised charitable institutions to provide educational facilities, to promote sports and medical research and for various other social & philanthropic causes.

Contribution to National Economy

With a view to participating in the process of the development of the National Economy during the Seventh Plan period in a comprehensive manner, the Company has proposed to open dialogues with the appropriate authorities for rendering assistance to the Central and State Government Industrial Undertakings in the priority sector against availability of suitable financial guarantees and reasonable return

Self-employment opportunities

Upto 31st December 1984, Peerless has generated self-employment opportunities for more than 4 lakh persons. This is unparalleled in the history of any other non-banking savings company.

The Future

To maximise the benefits to its Certificate-holders, Peerless is now exploring the possibilities of introducing some new schemes of savings tailored to suit the people of small means.

Inspired by the lofty idealism of our departed Leader and trail-blazer, Late B. K. Roy, Managing Director, Peerless is steadfast in its mission for dedicated services and in its pledge to work for National Welfare.

Today a unique Company and its unique Team of field force and office staff face the future with renewed hope, vigour and optimism.

SUMMARY OF BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31.12.1984
(Rupees in Crores rounded off)

1983	LIABILITIES	1984	1983	ASSETS	1984
5.47	**1. Paid-up Capital and Reserves**	6.68	11.37	**1. Fixed Assets**	11.83
	2. Secured Liabilities :			**2. Investment in Govt. Custody :**	
334.34	Social Welfare Scheme Fund (Liability to Public i.e. Certificate-holders under the scheme)	460.35	381.37	Investments in Govt. Securities, Unit Trust & Nationalised Banks	525.88
	3. Other Liabilities		6.04	**3. Other Investments**	9.02
			14.62	**4. Cash & Bank Balances**	21.09
101.03	Current & Outstanding Liabilities and Provision	132.72	27.44	**5. Other Current Assets**	31.93
440.84	**Total**	**599.75**	**440.84**	**Total**	**599.75**

Total Investment in Govt. Custody Over Rs. 600 Crores (July, 1985)

Unquestionable Security

The contractual liabilities to Certificate-holders as indicated by this Fund are fully covered by the Fixed Deposit Receipts of Nationalised Banks and Government Securities of equal amount since deposited with United Bank of India who exercises a lien on the same as per arrangement made by the Company to protect the interest of Certificate-holders.
These Fixed Deposit Receipts and Government Securities cannot be withdrawn by the Company save with the permission of the concerned Authorities and that too for payment to Certificate-holders only. As such, the aforesaid liabilities are considered fully secured.

Maturity & other claims paid over Rs. 35 Crores (upto July 1985)

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Elusive Peace

The brutal assassination of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was shocking (*The Death of a Saint*, 1—8 September). He was killed by a group of misguided people who worked for their own personal gains instead of considering the welfare of the nation. Their objective was to disturb the peace and communal harmony of India. The government should deal with such elements with an iron hand.
A. Shankar, Calcutta

• After the signing of the historic Punjab accord, one thought that peace would return to the state and there would be no more bloodshed. But with the return of terrorism, these dreams have been shattered. Sant Longowal has sacrificed his life for the cause of Hindu-Sikh unity. Perhaps, the Sant would not have been killed had not the government declared the elections.
K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore

• Will the tragic death of Sant Longowal finally bring peace to Punjab? The Sikhs must have realised by now that if the extremists are allowed to gain the upper hand it will pose a grave threat to the survival of their community.
Prahlad Ghosh, Calcutta

• I agree with Rita Sharma that the choice of Surjit Singh Barnala as the successor to Sant Longowal was a wise one. Mr Barnala seems to be a capable man and as far as one can make out from his interview with SUNDAY, he is determined to fulfil the dreams cherished by the late Sant. If a lasting peace is brought about in Punjab then the martyrdom of Sant Longowal will not be in vain.
Rajvir Grewal, Calcutta



• The shocking murder of Sant Longowal is the outcome of the announcement of elections in Punjab. The atmosphere in the state is not favourable to holding polls so soon. The elections should be postponed in order to prevent further damage.
S.S. Raju, Bombay

• The assassins of Sant Longowal are traitors who destroyed the most selfless and sincere servant of the Sikh *panth*. The Sant, like Mahatma Gandhi, stood up to the threats of violence and secessionism. Throughout his life, the non-violent soldier fought for the rights of his people and won a victory for which he deserves a place in history.
Rishi Raj Agarwal, Calcutta

• Sant Harchand Singh Longowal sacrificed his life to further the cause of national unity. The Sant helped the Sikhs to regain their honour with his own blood and reduced the chasm of disbelief between the Hindus and Sikhs.
G. Banerjee, Varanasi

• India suffered a heavy loss with the death of Sant Longowal. The Punjab problem was solved only due to the efforts of the Sant. The extremists by defying the Punjab accord is committing a grave mistake. The accord was not only the dream-come-true of Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal, but of the Indian people as well.
Sanjib Barua, Buxarah (West Bengal)

All Quiet on the Eastern Front

The special report, *Assam: The End of a Nightmare* (25—31 August), was absorbing. As rightly pointed out by Tooshar Pandit the Assam problem could have been solved much earlier, thus avoiding loss of life and property. But due to bad administra tion and wrong policies followed by the Congress(I) during the Indira Gandhi regime, the problem not only remained unresolved but grew more complex day by day, endangering the unity and integrity of the country. Credit must go to Rajiv Gandhi and leaders of the All Assam Students Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad for giving priority to the larger interests of the country and sidetracking personal and party interests. It was heartening to learn that the Assam Assembly has been dissolved, for the 1983 elections, when a large number of foreigners had voted, was reduced to a farce.
M.H. Rama, Bhubaneswar

• West Bengal is going to be mostly affected by the memorandum of settlement. As the Bangladesh government has issued a statement saying that the Bangladeshis who had voluntarily left their country cannot return to Bangladesh, the possibility of sending them to that country is ruled out. This will be the first time in history that Indian citizens, deported from Assam, will be stateless. These people will be forced to enter West Bengal as this is the only alternative before them. West Bengal will be facing problems both on the economic and political fronts, due to the influx.
R Rajesh Gupta, Ahmedabad

• The Assam accord is a total surrender of the government to the unreasonable demands of the AASU and the AAGSP. Perhaps, the settlement was rushed through by the Prime Minister in his eagerness to present the nation with an Independence Day gift. The centre's decision to accept 1966 as the cut-off year will spell disaster for lakhs of people. The linguistic minority in Assam will become stateless.
Bijoy Kr. Dutta, Jalpaiguri (West Bengal)

• I share the author's apprehension that the Assam accord "has created more problems than it has solved," for lakhs of so-called foreigners "will now be subjected to harrassment, insult and tyranny." The large-scale killing that was witnessed "in the six years since the anti-immigrant agitation started" and the losses incurred by the state due to so many *bandhs* had adverse effects on the state's economy and peaceful atmosphere.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)

In the article, *Planned Leakage or Industrial Accident?* (15—21 September) Calico should readIlac Ltd (Calico Group) and not as mentioned.

Poor Performance

The report on football was a welcome change from dull political analyses (*Football in the Island of Turmoil*, 25—31 August). It is indeed a matter of pride for all Indians that East Bengal won the trophy outclassing teams from other countries. But the Indian players need not be complacent since the teams which participated, apart from the one from Bangladesh, were all mediocre. Tarun Dey deserves our praise.
A Pradhan, Siliguri

• East Bengal may have won the championship but their standard of play was well below the international level in most of the games.
S.M. Mehta, New Delhi



Tarun Dey: best footballer in Colombo

Crime and Politics

I was startled by the alarming increase in the number of crimes being committed in Delhi (*The Mafia of Delhi*, 18—24 August). After reading the cover story I was convinced that the Punjab terrorists could not be the sole culprits behind the murder of the Maken couple.
Sujit Kumar Mohanty, Barbil (Orissa)

• Rashmi Saksena's report pinpointed the murderers of Lalit Maken and his wife Gitanjali. It is now upto the government to punish the culprits to ensure that such ghastly incidents do not occur.
S. Ravindrachetty, Chittoor (Andhra Pradesh)

Showing the Way

It was heartening to read that the Jaipur Metals and Electricals Ltd., which was on the verge of liquidation, earned a profit of 90 lakhs in 1984—'85 (*An Amazing About-turn*, 14—20 July). The credit goes to the employees for their hard work and dedication. The employees had agreed to the 'charter of demands'set by I.S. Kavadia envisaging a voluntary wage freeze for five years, the revision of production norms, production-linked wages, wage cuts, increased working hours, a total ban on go-slows, strikes, provision of overtime and other allowances. If all of us are duty-conscious and work with honesty and sincerity, then with all the vast, fertile lands and abundant manpower and natural resources, I do not see any reason why India cannot be self-sufficient and economically prosperous.
Nazir Ahmed, Bangalore

• Milap Chand Dandia's report was noteworthy. It is interesting to learn that the new managing director, I.S. Kavadia, was able to convince the employees in agreeing to his proposal which included production-linked wages and a total ban on go-slow, strikes, OT and other allowances. The provision of 20 per cent bonus in case of profits, and that too in distribution of equity shares, acted as an incentive.
Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)

Marathi Vs English

Though it is not wrong to display signboards written in regional languages, their English versions should not be blackened as were done in some parts of Bombay (*Shiv Sena's 'Marathi Mumbai'* 11—17 August). This new line of action on the part of Bombay municipal corporation will only pave the way for growing regionalism hampering the cause of national integration. I do not agree with the mayor, Chhugan Bhujbal, when he says that in cities like Calcutta and Madras, the signboards are written only in the regional languages. However, the BMC's scheme to beautify Bombay deserves praise.
K. Ravichandran, Ahmedabad

A Government that Does Not Care

The grim, pathetic picture painted by Sarada P. Nanda in *Starvation in Kalahandi* (11—17 August) disturbed me. The J. B. Patnaik government has done very little to improve the plight of the starving villagers. With limited resources at his disposal, the young and efficient MLA from Bhawanipatna, Bhakta Charan Das, has done more than what an administration with unlimited resources could do. The article exposed the thorough inefficiency of the Orissa government.
Birendra N. Praharaj, Balasore

• The photographs of the drought-stricken villagers presented a pathetic sight. While on the one hand, the ministers of the Orissa government are leading a lavish existence, on the other,people are dying without food. Instead of making tall promises and fooling the people, the government should take emergent steps to improve the lot of the needy persons on a priority basis.
Param Hans Singh, Arrah

• My heart goes out in sympathy to the suffering masses of Kalahandi. J. B. Patnaik bears moral responsibility for the sorry plight of the poor villagers. Instead of rushing relief to the affected area, the Orissa government tried to hush up the news. However, it was heartening to learn that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited the area and promised all help. I only hope that his promises bear fruit.
A. N. Veeraraghavan, Bombay

• The heart rending report on the drought in Kalahandi made me wonder how the Congress(I) manages to win elections in spite of such criminal negligence. What is the secret of the magic spell that the party weaves to win the heart and minds of the poor illiterate masses?
C.T. Vairavan, Madras

• I was shocked to learn of the plight of the poor people of Kalahandi. However, the situation is not very different in other parts of the country.
Saeed Aktar, Lucknow

• The report exposed the inefficient, government headed by J.B. Patnaik. The government is in the habit of making tall promises but hardly any of its policies are implemented. I wonder why our energetic Prime Minister is turning a blind eye to the state of affairs in Orissa.
Deepak Acharya, Phulbani (Orissa)

COVER STORY

Rajiv Gandhi's Discovery of India

Shubhabrata Bhattacharya reports on the Prime Minister's visits to the tribal areas and their impact on the integrated programmes for rural development

There is an umbilical link between Rajiv Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru's book, *The Discovery of India*. Nehru wrote his masterpiece as a detenu in the Ahmednagar Fort prison during the five months, April to September, 1944. Rajiv Gandhi was born in this period on 20 August 1944. Forty-one years after his grandfather had recorded for posterity his experiences, Rajiv Gandhi has embarked on a voyage of discovery. His visits to the tribal areas, which began in mid-July, are not mere administrative visits by a head of government. During these trips, he is treading on grounds so far untrodden by VVIP feet. The remote areas which he is visiting are not even visited by the local politicians on occasions other than election campaigns. The attempt is to understand India: to get a kaleidoscopic view of the problems of development. The Seventh Plan has an outlay of Rs 2,400 crores for the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) alone. Huge amounts have been allocated for other programmes: the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP), the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), Training of Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM), etcetera. Crores have been spent on these programmes in the past. A review of the effectiveness of this expenditure is an integral part of the young Prime Minister's voyage of discovery. While on the one hand he is getting a first-hand knowledge of the realities of India, on the other, the administrative machinery in each district of the country is becoming vulnerable to scrutiny by the head of the government.

Four trips have been undertaken by the Prime Minister so far. Be-

The Prime Minister, accompanied by K. Karunakaran and Sonia Gandhi, cruises through the backwaters of Kuttanad





Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi cross the Sundar river in Borda block in Orissa

tween 12 and 15 July, he visited drought-affected areas in Madhya Pradesh. Jhabua, Sarguja, Shadol, Raipur and Bastar districts of the state were covered in the three-day helicopter-hop tour. On 26 and 27 July he went to Phulbani and Kalahandi districts in Orissa. Between 8 and 10 August, Udaipur, Sirohi, Barmer, Jaisalmer and Bikaner districts in Rajasthan came under his scrutiny. On 5, 6 and 7 September, he was in Kerala. Coastal Travancore, the backwaters of Kuttanad, the Girijan villages near the Periyar sanctuary in Thekkady, the Silent Valley, the Muslim-dominated Moplah district of Mallapuram on the coast and Palghat in the east were part of his itinerary. In the coming weeks, he is planning trips to Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. The peripheral regions of the country are receiving his attention first. The voyage of discovery is being effectively followed by back-up action. The petitions which are received by him during the trips are being judiciously processed and reports sought from the concerned departments. A team of three—two officials and one politician—has been entrusted with the task of following up these complaints. Wajahat Habibullah, a Jammu and Kashmir cadre IAS officer, coordinates the official part of the monitoring, while AICC(I) joint secretary Tarun Gogoi (from Assam) is entrusted with the political monitoring. A career diplomat, Mani Shankar Aiyar, joint secretary in the PM's office, is in overall charge of these trips. The trio accompanies Rajiv Gandhi on each trip and at the end of each day there is a review meeting. While the PM flies back to the capital at the end of a tour, the previous trip's follow-up action is reviewed by him along with Habibullah, Gogoi and Aiyar on board the Indian Air Force Boeing 737. Rajiv Gandhi's discovery of India is no gimmick. On the contrary, it is an attempt to ensure that the tribal and rural development projects do not become mere ideas on paper while crores of rupees are spent on them year after year.

On the morning of 7 September, two helicopters carrying the Prime Minister's party landed at Kottathara near Silent Valley. The previous night's stopover had been at the Periyar sanctuary in Thekkady. The day had begun on a pleasant note when the visitors from Delhi had taken an hour-long boat ride on the Periyar Lake. Later on in the day, the motorcade rushed towards the Silent Valley. Suddenly, all cars came to a screeching halt. The Prime Minister had ordered the caravan to stop. The pleasantness of the morning disappeared. He was annoyed because he found that the trees on the roadside had been cut indiscriminately. The district collector was summoned. He could not give a satisfactory explanation. The trees had been felled due to security reasons was one of the explanations offered. Rajiv Gandhi was furious. "I think a person who is the head of a department should know what is happening in his department. If he does not know what is happening, then he has no business to be the head. Do you agree?" shouted Rajiv Gandhi. The visibly shaken officer mumbled, "Yes." He was asked to find out why the vandalism on nature had been carried out and report back before the helicopters took off from Kottathara three hours later. The motorcade drove to Chindakki, where the party got into jeeps and drove into Silent Valley. (Even the sound of crickets is missing in this densely-forested valley, hence the name.) Due to the hue and cry raised by environmentalists, the hydel power project which would have inundated large portions of this unique valley had been scrapped last year. The threat of technology to nature disappeared when Rajiv Gandhi unveiled a plaque in Silent Valley, declaring it as a national park. Ironically, the hutments built to house the abortive project's office served as

the landmark for the spot where the plaque was unveiled.

While driving through Silent Valley the Prime Minister stopped to talk to tribals. Later, addressing a meeting at the Adivasi Higher Secondary School at Chindakki, Rajiv Gandhi admitted that the laws protecting the jungles had created problems for the adivasis. While protecting the environment, his government would also try to remove the hardships of the adivasis caused by forest laws. This was not the first time the Prime Minister had expressed such sentiments. Officers accompanying him told this correspondent that since his visit to the tribal areas in Madhya Pradesh, Rajiv Gandhi has been exercised about the problems created by environment protection laws on human beings who live in the jungles. For example, in places where firewood is the only source of fuel and timber is used for beams to construct houses, mere laws banning the felling of trees cannot solve the problem. Easy availability of alternative fuels for the poor and making LPG cylinders available in good numbers in the towns near the forests have been suggested as deterrents to the felling of trees. The union works and housing ministry has been asked to explore the possibility of developing an alternative to wooden beams for house construction. The concept that forests are mere ecological preserves is undergoing a change. Today, adivasi welfare is moving out of government files to become a reality. And to ensure that the files tell the truth, the Prime Minister is visiting tribal areas himself to monitor implementation. An advisory council on forests at the union government level is being set up soon.

Are all complaints of the tribals being redressed? The maximum number of petitions plead for the lease of forest land for agricultural purposes. Here, the district administration is told to explain the importance of forest laws to tribals and at the same time explore the possiblities of offering them employment through one of the many integrated programmes of the government.

The visit to Kerala had begun on 5 September with the inauguration of the new international airport terminal at Trivandrum. This was the only programme in an urban area apart from the public meeting which the PM addressed at Palghat at the end of his tour. Rajiv Gandhi made an attempt to see the living conditions of the different sections of society and gain first-hand information of the production process in traditional industries during his trip. He visited the sea coast to see the damage caused by the sea's erosion. At Pannathura near Kovalam, when the villagers demanded a bridge across the backwaters to link their village with the main road as well as a sea wall to stop the erosion caused by the sea, Rajiv Gandhi asked Kera-



Sakhatora village, Orissa: a tiny parrot perches comfortably on Rajiv Gandhi's hand while Sonia Gandhi and J.B. Patnaik look on.

The Impact



Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi with Girijans in Kerala

The policemen at Jonk in Orissa's Kalahandi district are regretting the Prime Minister's visit to Navapara block on 27 July. Some young men complained to Rajiv Gandhi that they had been wrongfully detained by the police and beaten up. The local DIG was asked to enquire into the incident and on learning that the allegation was true, the Prime Minister's office has advised the Orissa government to take the erring officers to task. The policemen are presently facing trial at the sub-divisional judicial magistrate's court.

In mid-July, when the PM visited Shahdol district in Madhya Pradesh, Ramdin Singh and some other villagers of *gram panchayat* Lakhnouti complained about the state of the local school. There was not even *tatpatti* (jute rugs) for the students to sit on and the teachers were corrupt, they alleged. In early September the district magistrate of Shahdol reported to the Prime Minister's office (through the chief secretary of Madhya Pradesh) that an enquiry had been conducted by the assistant district inspector of schools and some corrupt teachers had been transferred. As for *tatpatti*, the funds were being provided under the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP), the officer reported. The matter did not end with the transfers. A note has been sent from New Delhi about the steps being taken to ensure that the teachers who had replaced those charged with corruption did not indulge in the same practices.

The petitions received by the PM during his visits are categorised as "community-social," "community-economic," "individual" and "political." The last category is tackled by the Congress(I) network. The "individual" petitions are mostly of job-seekers. The possibility of helping them under the integrated programmes is explored. In case of requests for roads, bunds, bridges, school buildings, etc, the district authorities are asked to examine them on merit and report. The plea by Surjan Singh, the *sarpanch* of Dungardola of Nagri block (Raipur district) for the extension of irrigation facilities from the Sondur dam has been accepted by the government, but at the same time his plea for providing forest land for agricultural purposes has been turned down. The *sarpanch* of Balerbahara, Phul Singh Dhruv, had asked for hand pumps for his village, the construction of a tank for water storage and the linking of the village by a road. The first two pleas have been upheld, but in the case of the demand for a road, the Prime Minister's office has accepted the district authorities viewpoint that it is not feasible. The report from the district had said, "a rivulet intercepts the proposed road. Unless a bridge is constructed, the construction of the road is not likely to serve any purpose. The population of the village is less than 500, which does not satisfy the norms for linking villages to roads." Only a detailed explanation like this one leads to the rejection of a petition. The answers received are cross-checked before they are accepted by New Delhi.

In the case of Barbarpur village in Bandavgarh *tehsil* of Shahdol district in MP, the population did not justify the setting up of a higher secondary school, but funds have been provided under the ITDP for a primary school in the village. The villagers of Khaira village in the same district complained that mid-day meals served to school children in the local *balvadi* had been discontinued. On enquiry it was found that the meals were being provided under the CARE programme till June 1984, when the CARE funds stopped coming. The possibility of reviving the programme under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is being examined by New Delhi. Already, ICDS is providing food in some of the blocks in Orissa's drought-stricken Kalahandi district, after the PM discovered that the programme existed under the *anganvadi* programme, during his Orissa tour.

la chief minister Karunakaran to send him reports about their feasibility. At one point, he stopped to ask an inhabitant of Pannathura if potable water was available in the village. On receiving a negative answer, the Prime Minister smiled and said that apart from the sea wall and the bridge, potable water should also be considered important by the villagers. It was at Pannathura again that Rajiv Gandhi acquainted himself with the process of husk-retting and coir work. The next day at Quilon, he saw how cashewnuts were processed at a cashew factory. At the fishing harbour at Vizhinjam, he witnessed a fisherman auctioning his catch. At Neendakara, he visited a marine products processing plant to see how canning was done. At Chavra, he visited the rare beach where ilamenite sands are washed ashore by the sea. At Kulathupuzha, he visited a rubber plantation where Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka had been rehabilitated ten years ago. (It was a symbolic move: he did not visit the refugees who are pouring in now, lest the sentiments of the Sri Lanka government are hurt. At the same time, the PM's visit to the rehabilitation plantation at Kulathupuzha was certainly going to become a talking point among the Tamil refugees there.) Apart from the rehabilitated refugees, the PM also saw the tapping of rubber at the plantation.



Witnessing rubber-tapping in Kerala

For three hours Rajiv Gandhi cruised through the backwaters of Kuttanad on 6 September. On the face of it, the cruise, which began at Alleppey and ended at Pulinkunnu seemed to be a pleasure trip. (At Pulinkunnu, a boat race was organised specially for Rajiv Gandhi.) But the Prime Minister did not board the Kerala police motor launch, Kuttanad Rover, for a pleasure trip. A glowing example of human endeavour is there in the backwaters of the Vembanadu Lake. For the past five decades, with a process started by a pioneer called Murugan, land is reclaimed from the lake for paddy cultivation (Kuttanad is Kerala's rice bowl). Bunds are erected by dumping material ferried by boats and the area surrounded by the bunds is dewatered for paddy cultivation, known as *punchakrishi*. Acres after acres of paddy lands under *punchakrishi* have to be sustained by constant dewatering of these areas, which are eight to ten feet below the mean sea level, by pumps. At places the help of the Dutch government has been taken in recent years to reclaim land for *punchakrishi*. Rajiv Gandhi visited the man-made "islands" to acquaint himself with the cultivators' problems. Only a visit to the dewatering pumps (set up with government subsidy) can explain the importance of pumps in Kuttanad. Sitting in New Delhi the demand for pumps in Kainakery "island" in the Vembanadu Lake may not look as serious as after a visit to the paddy lands under *punchakrishi*. Apart from paddy, coconut, cocoa and plantains are also grown on these "islands."

Rajiv Gandhi had cruised on the backwaters of Vembanadu Lake way back in 1952, along with his grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru. He noticed the progress made over the years. Along with the progress, the aspirations of the people too had changed. At Alleppey, his boat was greeted by slogans demanding the setting up of a railway link between Quilon and Alleppey. Along with the cheering, local aspirations were also coming to the fore.

Devigarh village in Madhya Pradesh's Jhabua district was the starting point of Rajiv Gandhi's discovery of India. While the Prime Minister accompanied by the state chief minister, Motilal Vora, and senior district officials met the villagers, two members of his party quietly moved out among the people. The report which Tarun Gogoi and Mani Shankar Aiyar gathered by moving incognito was different from what was being given out by the officials. Severe drought had affected the area and the local population, primarily agricultural people, faced an acute fodder shortage for their cattle The feedback was given to the PM. The next scheduled stop was at Kathwara village, but Rajiv Gandhi made an unscheduled stop on the way to talk to the people who had lined up by the roadside. What he discovered there amazed him. In a district affected by fodder shortage, the government had been supplying buffaloes under the IRDP. Instead of uplifting the economic standard of the IRDP beneficiary, the buffalo was adding to his economic burden. He had to buy fodder imported from Gujarat at a high price and at the same time pay back the IRDP loan. At Abujhwar in Bastar district, the PM discovered that the tribals did not drink milk. But because someone sitting in New Delhi or Bhopal had decided that the best thing to supply under the IRDP to the Bastar tribals was a cow,



On the sand dunes of Jaisalmer

Abujhwar was being flooded with cows by the government. At Jaisalmer district in Rajasthan, the IRDP has been supplying goats. While on the one hand Rs 500 crores are being spent to close the gaps in the Aravalli so that the desert does not spread, an animal which lives on almost every kind of foliage and aids the process of desertification is being supplied to the Jaisalmer villagers by the government.

As a result of Rajiv Gandhi's trips, the IRDP is being given a fresh look. A project approach is being introduced. Cattle will be supplied only if fodder is available in the area and infrastructure for marketing the

Problems of Access

Are local politicians benefited by the Prime Minister's trips to tribal areas? The areas are inaccessible and if local politicians do not tread on them, the resource constraints on them are understandable. While AICC(I) joint secretary Tarun Gogoi accompanies Rajiv Gandhi to coordinate the political angle of the trip, security restrictions often deprive the local politicians from accompanying the Prime Minister when he tours their constituencies.

The Kerala PCC(I) president, Padmanabhan,was candid when he told this correspondent that he had great difficulty in explaining to his partymen why they could not be allowed to accompany the PM. Only six cars are allowed to be in the convoy. Apart from the state chief minister, only the PCC(I) chief can be squeezed in. On a representative basis, this should suffice, but Congress culture has it that everybody who is somebody in the area being visited by the VVIP should be in the entourage. At Kottathara, for example, the MP from Palghat, Vijayraghavan, had to literally squeeze into Tarun Gogoi's car to be able to accompany the PM. At Pulinkunnu, the local MP, Vakkom Purushottaman, was asked by the crowds to turn his face towards them so that they could have a glimpse of their MP. Apparently, this was Purushottaman's first trip to the area after the elections.

The Parliament of India provides funds for a MP to travel between New Delhi and the headquarters of the constituency. Perhaps, while computer monitoring of Congress(I) MPs' performance is being undertaken, this financial aspect could also be looked into. Tarun Gogoi was non-committal when confronted with this practical difficulty which is faced by local politicians. After all, when funds are provided for elections, can the party not help its legislators to nurse their constituencies? Perhaps, monitoring by computers can eliminate misuse of the money.

Politics, of course, is not entirely missing from Rajiv Gandhi's visits. At Thirurangady in Mallapuram district, he visited an orphanage, the managing committee of which is headed by the Indian Union Muslim League leader, Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait. The IUML is an important constituent of the ruling United Democratic Front in Kerala. For Sulaiman Sait, this was a good opportunity for sycophancy. If he is to be believed, then Mrs Indira Gandhi used to praise Sonia Gandhi in front of him. The opportunity denied to local Congress(I) politicians was made available to Sulaiman Sait, thanks to the fragility of Karunakaran's coalition government.

milk (or in the case of goats, the meat) will be created. From fodder to a chilling plant for milk will be a part of the integrated programme in areas where cows and buffaloes are to be supplied. Similarly, under the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), if a school building is to be built, it will be integrated with the construction of roads and bridges in the area. While imparting training under TRYSEM (Training of Youth for Self-Employment), the requirements of a particular area would be taken into account. So far, in many cases because tailoring was proving attractive, many youths from the same village were trained as tailors under TRYSEM. In a village with a population of 500, if ten tailors were to spring up suddenly, none could possibly earn a reasonable livelihood. In many places, TRYSEM has created two or three blacksmiths in a village, whereas the requirement of three neighbouring villages could have been taken care of by one blacksmith. The basic aim of the IRDP is to help the poorest of the poor and to help them cross the poverty line. In his reviews, Rajiv Gandhi has discovered that the IRDP assistance has mainly benefited those sections of the population which were in the higher brackets of the definition of "poor" and who needed a little push to cross the poverty line (having an annual income of Rs 6,000 and above). Statistically, IRDP has done well. The number of people below the poverty line has declined, but the benefit has not reached those for whom it was primarily meant. The below-poverty line population is categorised as "destitutes" (annual income below Rs 2,265); "very, very poor" (annual income between Rs 2,265 and Rs 3,500); "very poor" (annual income between Rs 3,500 and Rs 5,000); and "poor" (annual income between Rs 5,000 and Rs 6,000). The "poor" have crossed the poverty line, while the "destitutes" are yet to qualify as being "very, very poor." In the last five year plan, 16 million people were helped under the IRDP. In the Seventh Plan, the target is to help 14 million people: two million less than the Sixth Plan. But the assistance this time is being aimed where it ought to have reached before.

Special monitoring of the IRDP has been ordered by the Prime Minister. Two blocks in each state are picked at random for review each month. A year-and-a-half will be taken to monitor the whole country. Twenty families which are receiving IRDP assistance in each of these blocks are under the focus of this survey. Of these, ten are those who have come under the IRDP in the past few years. Their income is being reviewed to see if they have indeed benefited from the assistance. Ten families of recent beneficiaries are being canvassed to ascertain if there are any procedural delays. Fifty per cent of the IRDP funds will now be released only after the centre is satisfied with the implementation of the initial programme. Projectivisation of IRDP will be the criterion while releasing the second instalment of the central funds. The Rs 2,400 crores earmarked under the present plan, therefore, will be spent after due scrutiny.

An incident which took place on the second day of the Prime Minister's visit to Kerala highlights his way of functioning. He had been taken to the fishing harbour at Vizhinjam. Rows of newly-constructed houses were being shown to him. Suddenly it struck him that the houses were not occupied by anyone. On enquiry he learnt that the houses had been completed sometime back and had not been allotted due to a local dispute between Muslim and Christian fishermen. He was furious. An official tried to bluff him by saying that some allotments had been made but the allottees had not moved in. This infuriated Rajiv Gandhi further. "*Kuchh gadbad hai* (there is something fishy)," he told an official accompanying him. Chief minister Karunakaran, who is also the minister for fisheries, tried to offer an explanation. But it was too late. The Prime Minister had spotted AICC(I) general secretary A.K. Antony (former chief minister of Kerala) in the crowd. "Antony, can you locate an allottee in the crowd?" Rajiv Gandhi ordered. The bluff had been called. That evening, sitting in the Lake Palace Hotel in the middle of the Periyar Lake at Thekkady, the Prime Minister asked Kerala chief secretary Ramchandran to send a report on the Vizhinjam episode to New Delhi. On 11 September, the Prime Minister's office sent a reminder to Trivandrum. The incident was not being forgotten. The Doordarshan report on the Kerala visit also showed this incident. The message of Vizhinjam was being flashed to officers across the length and the breadth of the country. "The government which works faster" was trying to ensure that inefficiency did not mar its pace.

Prize, Not Punishment

Postings to tribal areas are generally considered as "punishment" by bureaucrats. It is not because of any lack of interest in tribal welfare that officers avoid transfers to the backward areas, but the hardships which their families have to suffer as a result of these assignments that makes administrative jobs in tribal areas unattractive. The childrens' education is a major casualty when a bureaucrat is posted to tribal areas. As a result, good officers seldom get posted to areas where their efficiency can benefit the common man. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has directed the department of personnel in New Delhi to formulate a policy guideline for the state governments under which a posting in the tribal areas will become a prize posting due to the package of incentives which will be offered. (As the bureaucracy is primarily under the control of the state governments, the union government's policy guideline will only have persuasive effect, the final decision will rest with the state chief ministers.)

[illegible] the proposed guideline, [illegible] will be given a substantial [illegible] so that they can maintain [illegible] one in the place of previous posting (where the children are studying) and the other in the new place of posting. If the officers want to send their children to boarding schools, then seats will be reserved for their children in the best boarding school in the state. In case the schools do not have adequate boarding facilities to cope with this demand, then the state government (with central assistance) will construct additional facilities in these schools. Apart from school and boarding house fees, the children studying in boarding schools will be paid fares by the government during holidays so that they can visit their parents stationed in tribal areas.

Under the existing rules, after a certain period of time (usually six months) officers cannot retain their government accommodation in the place where they were last posted. These rules will be liberalised so that the family of the officers posted in backward areas can retain the accommodation in the state or national capital during the officer's tenure in the "prize" posting. A fixed tenure will be offered for these postings and after a stint in the tribal areas, the officers will be offered a choice of posting.



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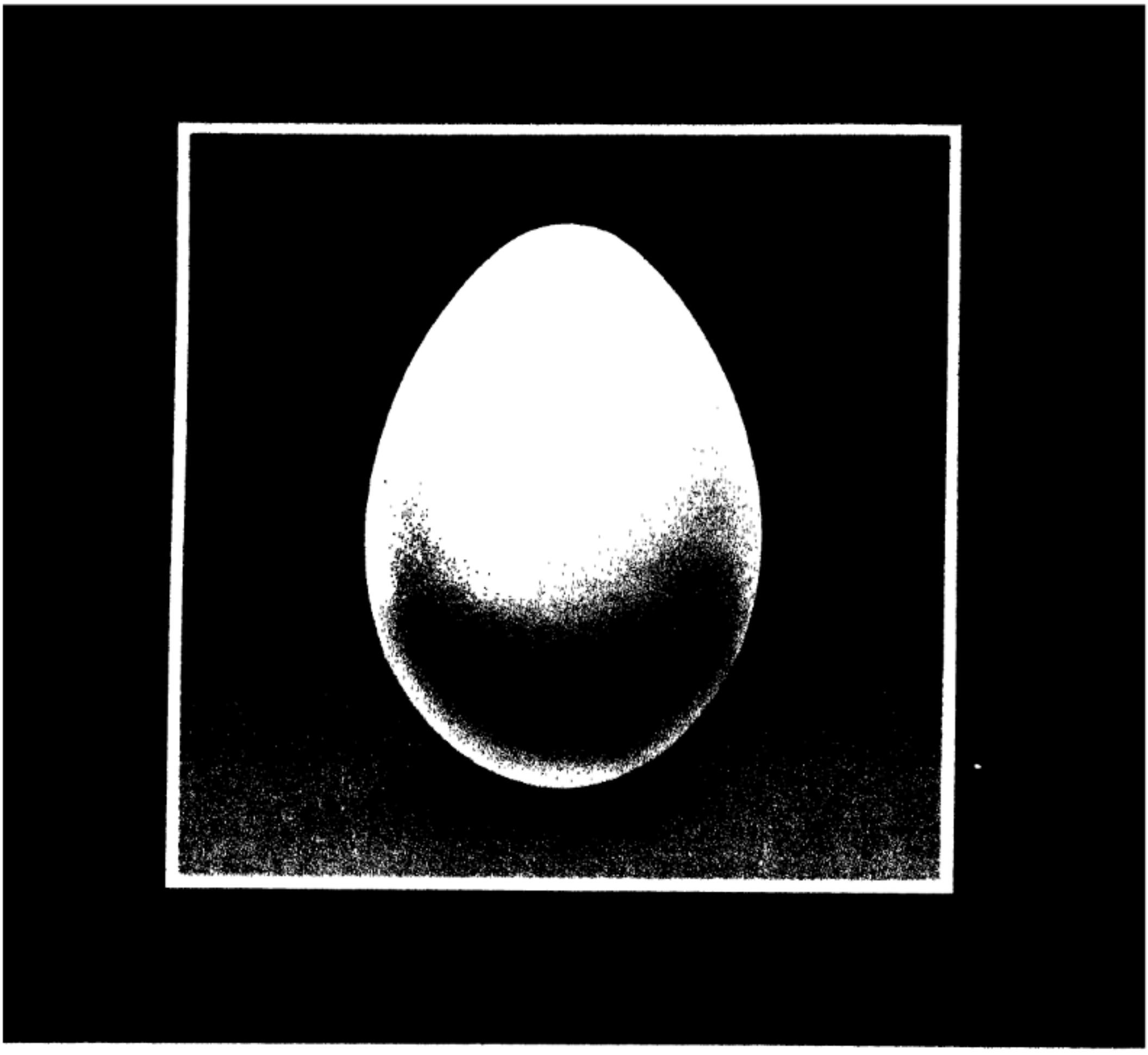
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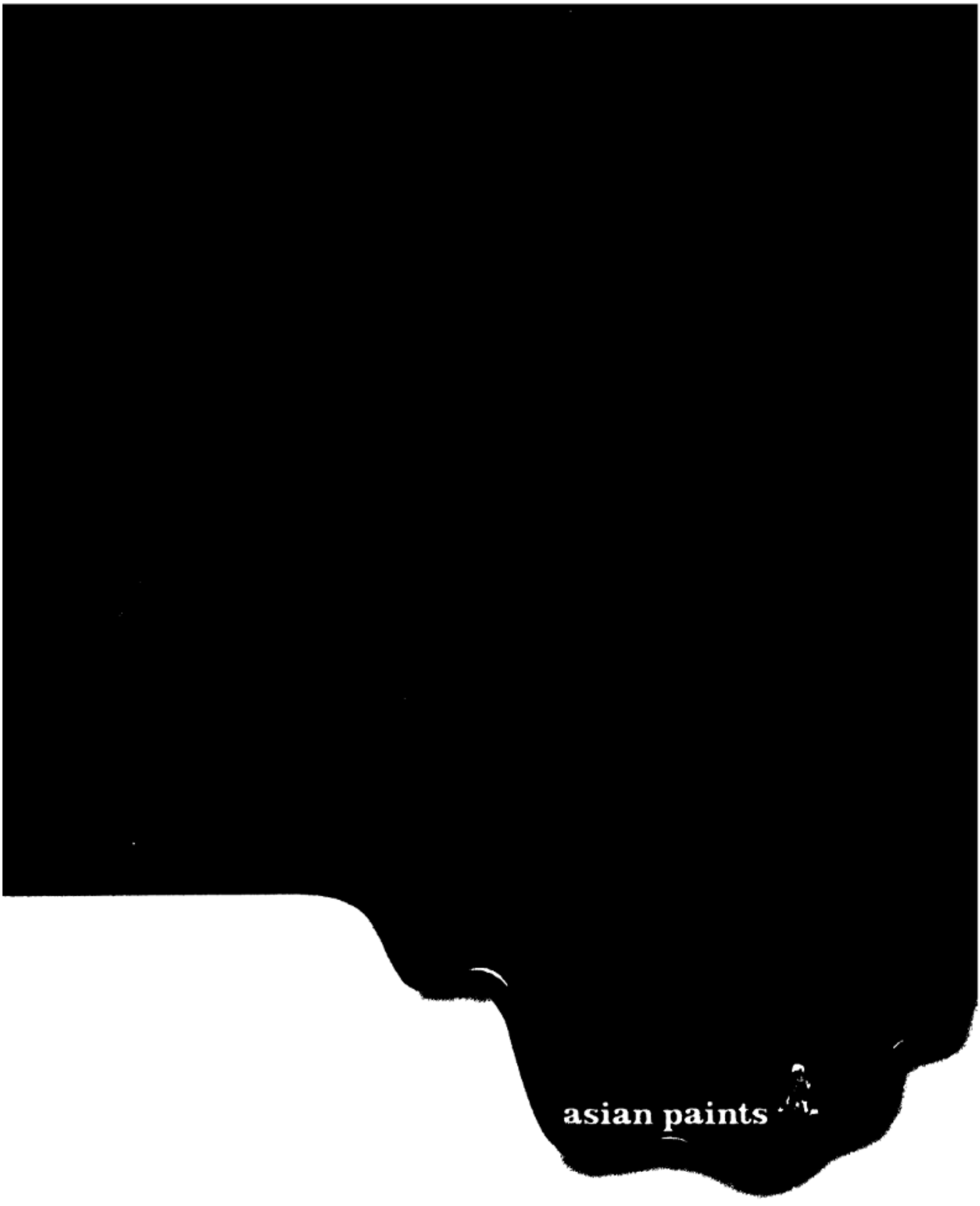


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SPECIAL REPORT

Punjab: Elections Amidst Turmoil

Janardan Thakur feels the pulse of the state

"Fear? What fear?" asked the strident Sikh police inspector who had thumbed a lift in our taxi somewhere between Ropar and Chandigarh. "It's only the outsiders who are frightened, not the people of Punjab," he went on. "Don't you know more people are killed just in New York city every month than in the whole of Punjab in a whole year!" Wherever he had picked up his statistics, it was obviously making him feel good. He was as perky and voluble as his clean-shaven colleague was tense and taciturn, and all through the short ride with us he kept correcting the "exaggerated notions" about fear and violence in Punjab.

And indeed in the clear calm morning of the lush green countryside, fear and violence could seem unreal. Alien. Something that was elsewhere, only in the newspapers perhaps. There were, of course, the little knots of jawans waving the cars and trucks down for identification and search every ten kilometres or so, bunches of helmeted soldiers sprawled under a roadside tree, their guns and carbines beside them, but then you also felt the rhythm of normal life all around you. A merry-looking Sardarji riding a scooter pillion, carrying not a gun but a huge banjo in his arms; a whole family of five perched happily on another two-wheeler; a big circle of sprightly school girls playing games out there in the field; a big roadside huddle of milk-proud buffaloes with their gleaming ebony flanks, being bought and sold, haggled over. Who could say this was a state under siege? And yet the calm and normalcy could be so misleading—blood and mayhem just a pull of the trigger away. One remembers a group of French journalists returning from Punjab convinced that all the stories about fear and violence in the state were grossly exaggerated and then a week later came Operation Bluestar!

"You may not find any scare," the 85-year-old journalist of Amritsar, G.R. Sethi, had told me, "but there is fear in the hearts. It may grow as the date of poll comes closer."

"*Darna Khalsa ka dharam hi nahi ji* (a *khalsa* or pure knows no fear)," were the brave words of the first campaigner I had met on my way out—a tall, hulking Sardarji fixing a poll banner to his car. He had absolutely no doubt they—the Akalis—were going to win "hands down." His candidate, Jasdeo Singh Sandhu, an ex-minister, had never lost an election in his life, and "this one there is no question of losing. Badal may lose, but not my candidate."

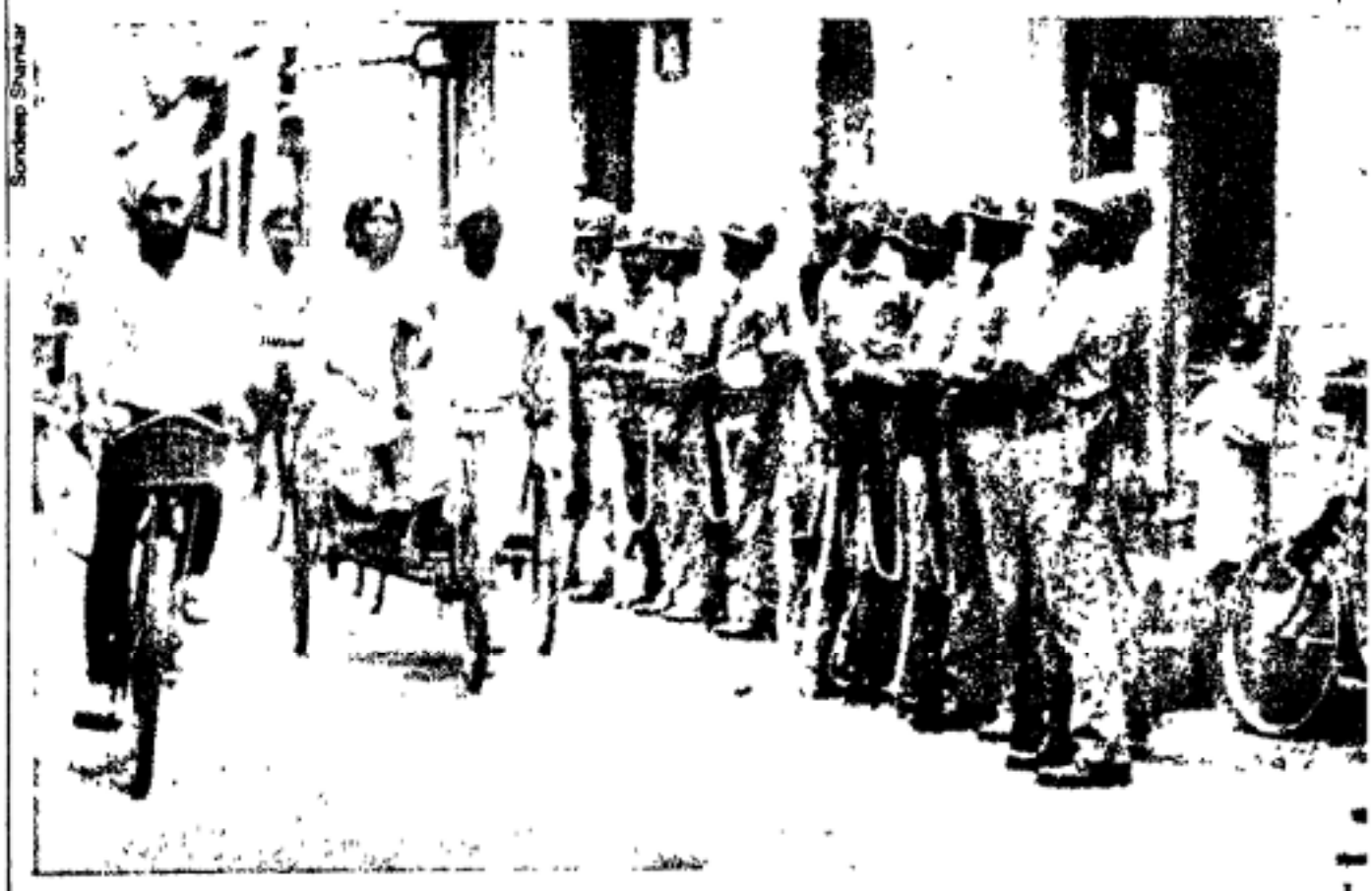
Part of his confidence, one felt, stemmed from the fact that the Congress(I) had fielded a "new and weak" candidate. No matter where you went, you could hardly miss the "rumour" that the central leadership was out to manoeuvre a victory for the Akalis in the state. Some insisted this was not just a rumour but a fact.

"They (Congress-I) are committing *hara-kiri*," asserted Birendra, the editor of the Jalandhar Hindi daily, *Vir Pratap*, known to be one of the strong champions of Hindu interests in Punjab. He said he was not going merely on impressions. "It was one of the observers of the Congress(I) who himself told me that they were looking for weak candidates. He told me it was a CPI(M) government in West Bengal which had finished the Naxalites, and in Punjab only an Akali government could end the menace of terrorists."

Even Satyapal Dang, the eminent CPI leader who is himself fighting a crucial battle in Amritsar, thought this could well be the plan of the Congress: to manoeuvre a victory for the Akalis in the Assembly. He said this was the common talk in the Punjab secretariat, with officers saying, "You have to set a thief to catch a thief..."

To the hard-core Sikhs who would have nothing to do with the Rajiv-Longowal accord, it looks like a "dubious game of the Congress(I)." Devinder Singh Duggal, a vitriolic scholar of Sikh history, thought the centre wanted the "Sikhs to face the Sikhs and capitalise on it...this I think is their game."

I had run into Duggal in the Guru Nanak Nivas, for long the abode of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Or, perhaps, the meeting was set up for me by one of the secretaries of the SGPC chief, G.S. Tohra, who did not want to get into any controversy himself and yet was keen that I get a good slice of the real hard-core thinking among the Sikhs.



Armed police around the Golden Temple: tension without end

The Men Who Speak Bhindranwale's Language

Jagjit Singh Rode, the elder brother of the slain militant Sikh leader, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale is an ambitious man. The eldest son of Baba Joginder Singh by his first wife (Bhindranwale was the youngest by his second wife), Jagjit Singh (53) is a senior member of the "United" Akali Dal (UAD) today. He is also a member of the party's nine-member *ad hoc* committee which the Baba had formed on 4 May this year after dissolving the two Akali Dals led by the assassinated Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi.

Jagjit Singh is following the footsteps of his younger brother. He too has begun by attacking the government and the Akalis, besides supporting the terrorists in Punjab and Delhi. Jagjit Singh made a fiery speech at the party's convention presided over by Baba Joginder Singh in Amritsar on 8 September in the famous Manji Sahib Hall. During the speech, Jagjit Singh justified the recent killings of the two Congress(I) leaders, Lalit Maken and Arjun Das, in Delhi. He said, "*Do chuk ditte hai. Baki chuke jaan ge* (Two have been liquidated. Others will also meet the same fate." He also threatened the Akali Dal (Longowal) secretary-general, Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, saying, "Ramoowalia says that the Akalis will finish the terrorists after forming the government. But he may be finished before that."

Equally provocative were the speeches of Baba Joginder Singh and Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi as well as the resolutions passed at the 8 September convention. Said Talwandi, "The Anandpur Sahib Resolution is no more the issue. Now the main issue before the Sikhs is to have their own home." The Baba launched a frontal attack on the Akali leaders of the Longowal faction and accused them of betraying the Sikh *panth* for signing an accord with the "Delhi *sarkar*." Barring the former Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal, who remains in the UAD *ad hoc* committee and whose supporters are also in the party, Baba Joginder Singh also attacked Sant Longowal, the acting Akali chief, Surjit Singh Barnala, former Punjab minister Balwant Singh and the SGPC president, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, and called them "*quom de gaddar* (traitors of the Sikh nation or community)."

On 9 September Surendra Nath, senior adviser to the Punjab Governor Arjun Singh and the state home secretary, N.N. Vohra, told the press in Chandigarh that the government was examining the fiery and provocative speeches made by the UAD leaders in Amritsar. Pro-Khalistan slogans were made and Sikh youths with *kesari* turbans dominated the 10,000-strong gathering at the Manji Sahib Hall and cheered the party leaders with slogans of "Khalistan *zindabad*" and "Bhindranwale *zindabad*."

The resolutions passed at the five-hour convention too, were provocative. In one of the resolutions, it was clearly stated that a separate Sikh state was the real demand of the Sikhs supporting the UAD. The resolution also called upon every Sikh to strive for the establishment of a political system in which religion reigns supreme. In another resolution, the convention reiterated its earlier stand of boycotting the Punjab elections. The Sikhs were also urged to oppose the Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal accord of 24 July.

Sanjeev Gaur, Amritsar

The elections and the accord were all bunkum, thought Duggal, and nothing was going to be solved by them. A small man with sharp eyes peering through thick glasses, Duggal heads the Sikh History Research Board of the SGPC. "To understand the problem of Punjab," he told me, "you must understand the tradition and psyche of the Sikhs. They have never given in (to force)..."

What can be done to heal the injured psyche of the Sikhs, I asked him, and it is as though the floodgates opened. "The Sikhs are being persecuted. They have not released any genuine people of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF). Unless the rule of law is established for the Sikhs there can be no peace in Punjab. The Delhi riots have caused a terrible hurt to the psyche of the Sikhs and time alone cannot heal it."

I begin to ask about the inquiry set up by the Prime Minister, but Duggal cuts me short, "You think the Sikhs are so naive? It's a bogus inquiry, its terms of reference are not genuine at all. The culprits must be brought to book..." Somebody intervenes to say that two of the culprits have already been killed, and for the first time a little smile plays on the lips of the intense researcher of Sikh history. "The government," he says, "is encouraging illegal justice." He relishes his words and goes on, "If they are serious they must enlarge the terms of reference to finding whether there was a plan behind it and identifying the culprits. Do you know there are 14 Sikh widows huddled up in one little room, being given a paltry compensation of Rs 2,000 and some not even that? But for the Hindus killed here they have given Rs 50,000 or even Rs one lakh. Is that the rule of law? Any security officer who does not like my face, or my saffron turban can put me behind bars. Is that rule of law? I tell you, if something is not done speedily, I repeat speedily, they are going to lose the Sikhs for all time to come...it will be a point of no return."

And what does he think of elections being held now? "Most impolitic. Things are going to recoil with much greater force than in Assam, because this is not Assam, people here are different." You can tell it is more of a threat than a statement. "The people at large would not accept the verdict," he tells me, "even if the Akalis come to power." He doesn't tell me, but you can see the iron has entered his soul. His inside is as charred and blackened as the burnt-out shells of the vehicles outside the building: grim reminders of Operation Bluestar.

As we come out, a local Sikh journalist tells me Duggal was echoing the very thoughts of Tohra. He says I ought to have asked the man what he thought of the accord. Was there anything in it that he was opposed to? That was a question that a foreign journalist had put to him some days before, and there was no point Duggal could oppose. All the same he was against the accord. The Akali demands conceded, they had graduated to other demands. As a parting shot, Duggal had said: "Let Rajiv Gandhi come to the Golden Temple and seek our pardon. The Sikhs will forgive him."

Will they? The very same point was referred to by another man, but with what difference! If Duggal breathes fire, Mubarak Singh exudes only love. It is not for nothing that this 68-year-old man is one of the most respected citizens of Amritsar. After serving the state and the city in various capacities, Mubarak Singh has been editing a journal he calls

The Art of Living for the last 12 years, and what sets him apart from other Sikh scholars and writers is his ability to see the problem of his state as a humanist rather than as a Sikh.

"I have been one of the unhappiest men during the last three years," Mubarak Singh told me. "I can understand a Lalit Maken or a Bhatia being shot down but what about a couple of Hindus dying unsung and unnoticed?"

He is an anguished soul, and he knows better than anybody the great divide that has come between the Hindus and the Sikhs. Unlike many other Sikhs who may have forgotten the horrors of partition, Mubarak Singh knows exactly what another partition can bring to his people. But are they in the mood to understand? He tells me Khushwant Singh was one of the persons who had suggested that Rajiv Gandhi should come to the Golden Temple and perhaps the Sikhs would forgive and forget. But Mubarak Singh knows it is not going to be that easy. "His coming will be hazardous," he told me. "There are young Sikhs who are going around with their heads in their palms..." And he quotes a few lines from Guru Govind Singh: "*Je to prem khelan ka chao sir dhar talli galli mori ao...*"

He cites another instance to emphasise the extent to which the suspicions have taken root in the Sikh mind. Some time back he told Dr Satya Dev, the head of the department of Public Administration in Punjab University, that the young Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, seemed to be " doing very well." The professor stopped Mubarak Singh and said, "You may be right but tell me...the Delhi killings...what was Rajiv Gandhi's role?"The Delhi killings, Mubarak Singh tells me, weighs heavily on the Sikh mind, whether he is a child or an old man. "What Punjab needs today is a dozen psycho-analysts. It is no longer a political problem."

Going from Mubarak Singh to Satyapal Dang was something like going from a scholarly sant to a political sant. Many in Amritsar call him the *Faquir Siasatdan* (the saintly politician), and believe me, that's the impression he leaves on most people. A symbol of hope in the cesspool of politics, although even he has not been spared from all sorts of allegations, except that none of them has stuck. Dang said he had no doubts that election or no election, there were forces which were out to sabotage the accord. "The murder of Longowal was not only because of the elections but because he signed the accord." The terrorists would now work out a different strategy, and if our apprehensions come true, the task of secular, patriotic forces will become far more difficult."

We had barely started talking when in came some officers of the Punjab police. They had brought a bullet-proof jacket for Satyapal Dang. Obviously he was one of the candidates thought to be high on the hit list. Dang looked at the jacket—"point-blank body armour"—and smiled at me. Indeed, I had never thought comrade Dang would need this armour to fight elections some day. Behind him stood policemen with sten guns. Dang looked amused no end. Not that he would rule out the possibility of being attacked. "Don't write I am going to wear it," he said jokingly, "for then they might go for my head."

Dang, you could see, was far from sanguine about the post-election scenario. No matter which side won, there would be the terrorists and the extremists to contend with. Under the banner of the "United" Akali Dal, they had raised the slogan of "*Panth* in danger," and behind them there was the backing of the "foreign forces." Outside Dang's office in Chheharta was the somewhat rare sight of an independent candidate campaigning on foot. Almost surrounded by gun-toting securitymen. And yet how secure were these candidates? They obviously know there are too many chinks in the best of armours, which is why they have to resort to all manner of ruses. Fighting from Hoshiarpur is the fiery Jathedar, Suchcha Singh Chhotepur. He has a dozen personal bodyguards around him all the time, but that is not enough. One of his styles of fobbing off the potential killers is to announce three or four meetings at the same hour of the day and then go to the fifth unannounced meeting. His supporters, they say, are not annoyed with this at all, for they know he is high on the hit-list and the killers mean business.

What do the elections hold for Punjab? Much would obviously depend on the turnout of voters. How many would go out and vote, knowing the dangers involved? Many voters are getting letters from their friends and relatives elsewhere telling them not to go out to vote,come what may. Why risk your lives? Another question mark, of course, is whether or not the rumours about the Congress wanting an Akali victory are true. About the only objective onlooker who seemed to poohpooh the rumours was the old journalist, G.R. Sethi. "No political leader," he thought, "would like to commit political suicide." And if the rumours really got hold of the electorate there would be a "terrible backlash" among the Hindu voters. If that happened the Congress(I) would be nowhere: "It would fall between two stools."

Whatever the results of the polls, there would still be a long dark tunnel to traverse. As I returned from Punjab the words of Mubarak Singh kept coming back: "It is no longer just a political problem..." When will the healing of the psyche come? ■



Sondeep Shankar

Plainclothesmen at an Akali Dal camp in Longowal village

SPECIAL REPORT

"We Consider the Killings as the Will of God Almighty"

Baba Joginder Singh told SUNDAY

The president of the "United" Akali Dal does not like being called an angry old man. He is sore that the press has been misstating his age as 83 when he is actually 74. He is still convinced that his son, the slain militant Sikh leader J.S. Bhindranwale, is alive and well. Like his son, he is defiant of authority and believes the "Amritdhari" Sikh to be above all other men: to compare Longowal with Mahatma Gandhi, according to him, is an insult to the former. He lives in the quarters of a Golden Temple granthi *(priest) behind the famous Manji Sahib Hall, the Akalis' meeting place. The Baba had just returned from prayers at the Harimandir Sahib and looked fresh and alert at the beginning of his interview to* SUNDAY. *Among those present during the conversation were Amolak Singh, private assistant to the Baba and grandson of the late head of the Damdama Sahib Taksal, Sant Gurbachan Singh Bhindranwale, and Tejwant Singh Gill, a leading businessman from Ludhiana and staunch follower of Baba Joginder Singh. Excerpts:*

***Q** What do you make of the recent terrorist attacks in which six persons were killed and over dozen injured in several districts of Punjab?*

A: Whatever *Wahe Guru* (God Almighty) wishes happens. The will of God hurts some people.

Q: Do you approve of terrorist violence?

A: We consider it as the will of the *Wahe Guru*.

Q: Who is behind the violence in Punjab now?

A: This the government would know better.

Q: Do you think some foreign forces are behind the terrorist violence in Punjab?

A: I stay here with my colleagues (pointing to some aides sitting in the room). But sitting here I hear that the government is saying that those who are boycotting the poll in Punjab are extremists and they will be crushed. In the eyes of the government I am the biggest terrorist. And the government is trying to crush me and my colleagues.

Q: What do you feel about the recent murder of a Congress(I) leader Arjun Das and his bodyguard in Delhi?

A: People in Delhi would know better. The killing could be a result of personal enmity. But we consider it as the will of *Wahe Guru*. Still I suspect that there is some kind of government conspiracy behind these killings.

Q: There is a feeling that Arjun Das was killed because of his hand in the November riots.

A: People in Delhi would know better.

Q: What do you think about the killing of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal?

A: It was the will of the Guru. But it is also felt strongly that there was a government conspiracy behind his murder. This is evident from the recent action taken against policemen for their gross negligence in failing to provide him (Longowal) the necessary security. The policemen were sacked because they were slack in performing their duties. And if the policemen in charge of the security of Longowal were not good, why were they entrusted the task, in the first place? This exposes the government conspiracy.

Joginder Singh: the answer is God's will



CNS

Q: You have also been reported to have commented that Sant Longowal was responsible for creating the circumstances that led to his death. What were these circumstances?

A: I have not said this.

Q: What do you think of Sant Longowal as a human being?

A: A true human being is one who acts like a human being. And one who acts like a devil is a devil. But mind you, I am not referring to any particular person. I am just saying this in general.

Q: What will be Sant Longowal's place in Sikh history?

A: The historians will write as they understand.

Q: But after his assassination, Sant Longowal is being compared with Mahatma Gandhi. What do you say to that?

A: The question should be put to those who are comparing him (Longowal) with Gandhi. But we consider an "Amritdhari" Sikh to be above any other person. Hence it is no compliment to any Sikh to be compared with Gandhi. It is rather damaging to him (Longowal).

Q: Do you think Sant Longowal was playing into the hands of the government as is being alleged in some quarters?

A: Those who are making this observation will know better. But people have such feelings because the Delhi accord was against the Sikh *qaum* (the word *qaum*, according to Akali moderates means community, and nation according to Akali hardliners). That is what the people say. We have already rejected the Delhi accord. It has no meaning for us.

Q: What do you think of the other four senior Akali leaders—Prakash Singh Badal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Surjeet Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh?

A: They are also with Rajiv Gandhi.

Q: There is a strong feeling about a 'brain' behind Baba Joginder Singh.



Sondeep Shankar

Baba Joginder with his followers: unyielding

Who is he?

A: (Smiles) Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Granth Sahib. Whatever he wills happens But he is at our head, not 'behind' us.

Q: Why did you boycott the elections in Punjab?

A: The Guru Granth Sahib was desecrated in the holiest Sikh shrine, the Harimandir Sahib, during the June army action here. The Golden Temple was attacked with tanks. Two thousand and five hundred copies of the Guru Granth Sahib were set on fire. The government employees entered our holiest place with shoes on. They demolished the Akal Takht with shells of tanks. They smoked cigarettes and *bidis* inside the holiest temple. Devout Sikhs—men, women and children—were shot dead inside the Golden Temple. In the November riots, thousands of innocent Sikh men, women and children were butchered. Copies of Shri Guru Granth Sahib were scattered at crossings in Delhi and desecrated. Innocent Sikh children were put into gunnybags and set on fire. When the children screamed, they (the rioters) said that the Khalistan of the Sikhs was screaming. Keeping in view this tragedy, and demanding the release of the members of the Damdama Sahib Taksal, Sikh soldiers and members of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) went to jail besides resolving to continue the fight for the achievement of the rights of the Sikh *qaum*. I decided to use the authority entrusted to me and boycott the poll and not to cast my vote during the elections.

Q: Do you propose to take some action against party leaders, Randhir Singh Cheema and Jaswinder Singh Brar, who recently revived the Akali Dal (Talwandi) after parting company with the 'United' Akali Dal?

A: I feel bad about the mistake they have committed. But it is a family matter. We will think over it and decide the matter.

Q: Are you in touch with the convener of your party's ad hoc *committee Simranjit Singh Mann, currently in Bharatpur jail, and Harinder Singh, another senior member of the committee, who is in Norway these days?*

A: Simranjit Singh Mann is in jail. They don't allow us to meet him. The other one, Harinder Singh, who had resigned from the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in protest against the army action in the Golden Temple, has also not met us. But they were given these important positions in the party on the basis of the sacrifices made by them.

Q: You say that your fight for the rights of Sikhs will continue. Could you kindly tell us what those rights are?

A: Those rights are the concern of Rajiv Gandhi. When the time comes and he (Rajiv Gandhi) also realises that it is necessary to know about the rights of the Sikhs, I will explain the matter to him. But then he can't keep quiet after hearing us out. I can also tell you what our rights are. But that will be of no use. You will write them in your newspaper and after half an hour, the newspaper will be thrown into the wastepaper basket.

Q: Do you think the elections will pass off peacefully in Punjab?

A: It all depends on the will of the government. If the government wants to hold the elections peacefully, it has got the whole administrative machinery under its control. But if it (the government) is bent on creating some mischief then it can always organise some killings and put the blame on us to crush us. It might be thinking on these lines. It would know better. The government has already started arresting and harassing our leaders and workers.

Q: What do you think of the Punjab situation now?

A: Atrocities are going on against us.

Q: What are your views about Khalistan?

A: I have stated my view on this subject many times before and I repeat the same. If Khalistan is in your hands, then I will talk to you. But if things are not in your hands, then there is no point talking to you. The Khalistan issue can be discussed only with the person who is to decide the issue.

Q: Do the Sikhs plan to get their rights within the framework of the Indian Constitution?

A: This too we will talk to it (the government) about. But Rajiv Gandhi is suppressing our rights.

Interviewed by Sanjeev Gaur



Mahesh Bhatt, Kumar Gaurav and Shernaz Patel on the sets of *Janam*

Janam of the Indian Telefilm

Will Mahesh Bhatt usher in a new genre in entertainment?

Janam is the coming to life of a new genre of commercial entertainment in the country. It is not simply the title of a film to be premiered over Doordarshan's national hook-up on 22 September, it is also the first-ever telefilm to be made. *Janam* is different from the run-of-the-mill Hindi films; it is a non-formula film and the difference is that it has been conceived and produced for the intimacy of the drawing room. The popular telefilm, a concept in the West, makes its debut on Indian television when the quality and content of films telecast by Doordarshan has come under strong criticism. The Sunday evening entertainment package is mostly a stereotype ordeal. Today, there is a demand for clean films being shown on television. While, this demand will, to a certain extent, be fulfilled with *Janam*, the telefilm is aimed at upgrading the existing standard of films on Doordarshan and encouraging healthy cinema to enter the privacy of homes. The telefilm is the latest in a series of imaginative steps taken by the Doordarshan authorities for better fare on television. There is optimism, that *Janam*, will begin a spate of such films. It will be yet another avenue for television advertisers and commercial houses to pump money into the idiot box.

For television-viewers entranced by the poignancy of Mahesh Bhatt's *Janam*, there may be no difference if the film was either made exclusively for Doordarshan or purchased by the directorate to be telecast on any Sunday. But to the discerning filmmaker, there is a change of technique and presentation, unique to a television film. The panoramic view of a formula film has been adapted to the limited range of the television screen. The maker of the telefilm has to keep in mind that the artistes would be enacting their roles on a screen much smaller than the cinema screen. There is an absence of long, sweeping shots of the camera in favour of close-ups. The telefilm is Doordarshan's premier which is enjoyed without the purchase of tickets. The biggest bonanza is for Doordarshan itself, which has been under constant fire for showing only "C grade" films: it will be able to select the kind of films it wants. In the process, it will substantially add to

its commercial revenue.

The first serious proposal for making a film exclusively for television came a few months after Doordarshan's director-general, Harish Khanna, and information and broadcasting secretary, S.S. Gill, had sent "feelers" to directors who could be interested in small or medium-budget ventures to be shown on television first and later released commercially. Before Doordarshan could issue guidelines on the kind of telefilms it had in mind (no guidelines have, in fact, been issued so far) some directors including Mrinal Sen, Basu Chatterjee, Mahesh Bhatt and Sai Paranjpye approached Doordarshan with their film scripts. Mahesh Bhatt, producer of *Arth* and more recently *Saraansh* was the first to place on Doordarshan files a concrete proposal. His plan to launch the first telefilm received a boost when Mudra Communications, an advertising concern, decided to tie up with Bhatt and sponsor the film. It was originally planned that Doordarshan would pay the director Rs eight lakhs as telecasting fees, as it had done with *Damul* and *Sukha* (both films were premiered over Doordarshan this year but were not made exclusively for television). But by the time *Janam* was in the cans, the sponsor (Reliance Textiles) stepped in with a proposal that Mudra Videotec, a subsidiary of Mudra Communications, would pay Doordarshan Rs one lakh for sponsorship in return for four minutes of free advertising time. In the revised advertising rate chart of Doordarshan released in August this year, the telefilm was introduced as a new category for sponsorship. The rates for sponsoring such films, effective November this year, would be Rs one lakh for 90 minutes' duration, with four minutes of free advertising time. For a 60-minute film the rate would be Rs 70,000 with three minutes free advertising time.

With no more telefilms in the pipeline, there is a feeling that telefilms like *Janam* is perhaps the last of its kind. There is also the feeling that *Janam* is the pioneer of a new brand of cinema which is here to stay.

The second initiative, perhaps, has been taken by Mudra Videotec which, according to its own officials, has "taken a calculated risk in investing in the film without being assured of its success at the box office." For Mudra, the creation of *Janam* is only one of the many firsts it has achieved in the short span of time since it stepped in to make programmes for television. The company itself has grown from a Rs 13.2 crore billing in 1980-81 to a Rs 80 crore projection for the coming year . Today, Mudra is handling seven programmes including *Rajani* which has replaced the earlier top-rated serial *Hum Log*, Doordarshan's home production. *Rajani* has been so popular that the serial has been mentioned in the columns of the *New York Times* and over the BBC as one of the finest serials in the world. Besides, Mudra has already made a name for itself by importing high-profile, popular programmes like the Grammy awards, the Oscar and the Nobel prize presentations, the Miss Universe contest and the Live Aid pop show. For the television viewer, Mudra has brought in late-night shows.

While many might have complained about Mudra receiving a favoured position with the directorate in New Delhi, the decision to produce the country's first telefilm has once again reiterated the innovative approach of the agency. Said Sam Balsara, general manager, Mudra Communications: "From the marketing point of view, making telefilms is not profitable. We realised someone had to show the way and introduce a new medium of film entertainment. Now we expect, others will take the cue from *Janam* and enter into producing films exclusively for Doordarshan."

Consider the financial implications of making a telefilm like *Janam*. The film has cost Mudra Videotec over Rs ten lakhs, with one lakh paid as telecast time. According to the *pro rata* cost of sponsorship (for a 30-second sponsored programme, Doordarshan charges Rs 70,000 and offers two minutes of free advertising time) the 120-minute film should have attracted eight minutes of commercial time. According to Anil Gupta of Mudra Communications: "Doordarshan had initially allowed us the eight minutes for our telefilm. They later changed it to only four minutes cutting our revenue from the clients by 100 per cent." He added that while the production and telecast fee from the sole sponsor of *Janam* was still to be worked out, Mudra was negotiating the terms for selling cinema and video rights, after the film's telecast by Doordarshan.

According to Mudra officials, they were fortunate in finding an excellent producer and a superior theme. For Mahesh Bhatt, the telefilm is an important venture as it is an autobiographical attempt revolving around the life of a struggling film director. At the same time, it is a bold treatment of the sensitive subject of illegitimacy and the portrayal of the producer who has himself declared many many times: "I am a bastard." Again, in the selection of the theme of *Janam*, Doordarshan has shown that it is broadminded and can accept treatment of such sensitive subjects which have a social relevance and moral message. *Janam* has been seen by some critics as an attempt to legitimise illegitimacy. But, according to the producers, it attempts to remove the stigma of illegitimacy so firmly entrenched in our society and remove the veil of ignominy faced by a bastard child. The story rotates around Rahul (Kumar Gaurav) who is viewed as an outcast by society since he is the illegitimate son of Virendra Desai (Anupam Kher, who played the lead in Bhatt's *Saraansh*), a filmmaker who is no longer wanted. Rahul and his mother Nalini (Anita Kanwar) constantly face a barrage of insults,



Kumar Gaurav: big break

remain separated from Desai's family. It is on his way to discovering himself as a director that Rahul has to fight not only for the name of his father but also for a rightful place in his life after having been spurned by him at every step. In the concluding scene he is granted a new life, a *janam*. The climax of the film is reached at an award-presentation ceremony where Rahul is to receive recognition for his first film. His father gives the award to him and in an emotionally-surcharged moment grants the stamp of legitimacy on his son. The telefilm, it is obvious, is a personalised attempt by Bhatt. It has given an opportunity for the director to say what he wants to and he says it exclusively for the television-viewer.

Ritu Sarin, Bombay

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'TV Will be the Trend-setter for Film Industry'

S.S. Gill, information and broadcasting secretary, told SUNDAY

***Q**: It was during the Tenth International Film Festival held in New Delhi that you first approached directors with a proposal to make films exclusively for Doordarshan. What was the objective?*

A: I spoke to some directors, as I have on several other occasions about the sad approach we have for telecasting films. The films that are shown by Doordarshan are too far removed from reality. They are an attempt at escapism with an excess of violence, sex and crime without even a hint of a social message. It was to show over Doordarshan, films with a social relevance that I decided on a three-pronged approach, of which one aspect was to have films specially produced for Doordarshan. This is the practice with several other broadcasting companies in Germany where telefilms lead the film industry. In a couple of years, I foresee a similar situation developing in India. Television will be the trend-setter for the film industry.

Q: What perceptive difference would there be in a film made for Doordarshan and one usually broadcast on a Sunday?

A: A film made for the theatre will use panoramic views, large sets. For a TV film, more emphasis would be laid on close-ups and mid-shots. It is a closer, a warmer contact. But the basic idea of mooting this concept of telefilms was to give opportunities to those directors who are not bothered about the commercial success of their film. They are not interested in the monkey tricks like dances, cheap songs, semi-nude scenes. Take *Janam* itself. It is an autobiographical film and the director, Mahesh Bhatt has said what he wants to—without bothering about the sale of a single ticket. He does not compromise on quality for making his film a box-office success.

Q: Who are the directors who have responded to your invitation and would be now making telefilms for Doordarshan?

A: In the eight-ten months since we launched the idea, several top-class directors have come to us. They include Mahesh Bhatt, Basu Chatterjee, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Mrinal Sen and Sai Paranjpye.

My hope is that within six months, half of the films shown on Doordarshan, would be made for us.

Q: Will Doordarshan be playing the role of the censor for choosing the theme and sequence of telefilms to be broadcast?

A: Someone has to exercise judgement. If Doordarshan is going to be selective, it is perfectly understandable. There are artistes who may not have very strong social and moral commitments. But if we feel a particular scene or theme is socially damning, then we will decide whether to air it or not. Sex scenes may be permissible for some producers and cinema-goers, but not for Doordarshan. There have been complaints that with the TV serial boom, the film culture is being perpetuated into homes. But the fact is that the serials are very different. They are not escapist, nor romantic celluloid dreams, but films which deal with the ordinaries of life.

Someone has to exercise judgement. If Doordarshan is going to be selective, it is perfectly understandable. There are artistes who may not have strong social commitments. Sex scenes may be permissible for some producers and cinema-goers, but not for Doordarshan.

Q: The first telefilm to be aired by Doordarshan deals with a sensitive subject of illegitimacy. Should such a theme be exposed on, as you say, a home entertainment medium?

A: *Janam* has a bold theme. But the question is: how is the theme handled by the director? It is a film about the social trauma faced by an illegitimate child and his mother. The film is a depiction of true life and if there is any censorship it is for the advantage of the viewer.

When we see a deviation from purpose, that is where we will step in. The same as we have done in the case of serials and any number of sponsored programmes have gone off the rails. Take a serial like *Rajani* which has a social message to convey. I have personally contacted the director, Basu Chatterjee, and instructed him not to spare government officers and corruption in the establishment in future episodes.

Q: Do you expect any big banners to be attracted into making films for television, or only the small-budget film makers?

A: The point here is that no producer or director will sink with the film. If he, say, spends five lakhs on making a film, he will get eight lakhs from us. Though he will be allowed to get video and theatre rights, my own hunch is that after a telefilm has been premiered over Doordarshan, it would do well commercially. Television would provide tremendous publicity for it and after all only five crore people are watching it on TV. Seventy crore have still not seen the film.

Q: How is it, in the very first telefilm, the sponsor has stepped in and eventually Doordarshan would be earning a lakh of rupees instead of spending eight lakhs for paying the director, in this case Mahesh Bhatt, for showing it over Doordarshan?

A: Mudra Videotec who is making *Janam* with Mahesh Bhatt have been imaginative and have taken the calculated risk of embarking on something new. This does not mean that Doordarshan has favoured Mudra Communications and said no to others. The only favourites we have are those companies which can give us good quality films. What has Doordarshan to lose if someone else is willing to pay the tab and we get the money? I am confident, that as in the case of television serials, where we have ten programmes for a single slot, there will be a rush of good telefilms made by some best talents in the country.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

CONTROVERSY

'A Handful of Jealous Politicians Do Not Constitute the AIADMK'

Jayalalitha Jayaram, MP, reacts to SUNDAY*'s report*

Anita Pratap's cover story, *Jayalalitha: Skating on Thin Ice* (25—31 August) is full of statements that are factually wrong and comments that are absolutely baseless. At the onset, no priest was flown in from Madras to Delhi by Ms Jayalalitha as mentioned by the author and no *puja* was performed in the bungalow allotted to her. Moreover, Ms Jayalalitha was never in any dilemma as to whether she should continue to stay in the MPs bungalow or return to Madras.

The fact is that she did not stay in the bungalow even for a day. She was informed that the bungalow had been renovated and was ready for occupation But on arriving at the house on 14 July, she saw that it was in a dilapidated condition and within an hour she moved to the Tamil Nadu house in New Delhi. From there she sent a letter to the chairman of the house committee of the Rajya Sabha, formally surrendering the bungalow on the ground that it was unfit for human habitation. Incidentally, she took with her 180 pieces of luggage and not 19 pieces as mentioned. Moreover, Ms Jayalalitha is a member of the parliamentary consultative committee for the departments of atomic energy, space, electronics, science and technology, environment and forests and ocean development and not just for electronics The allegation that she sent messages to the Prime Minister levelling charges against AICC(I) general secretary G.K Moopanar and others is also false and baseless.

In yet another part of the article, Ms Pratap says, "Jayalalitha is still waiting for MGR to lead her out of the shadows to political prominence again." Is Anita Pratap a mind-reader? How else would she know what is in Ms Jayalalitha's mind? In another place, Ms Pratap writes: "MGR is not favourably disposed to his partymen giving press interviews, something which had made Jayalalitha totally inaccessible to the press when she was the propaganda secretary in 1983 and 1984. She broke this hallowed edict only when she felt persecuted and needed the press to air her grievances to the public." Such remarks are baseless, for when



Jayalalitha: resurrected Shubha Studio

Ms Jayalalitha was the propaganda secretary she was not inaccessible to the press. She gave interviews during this period to several English periodicals as well as Tamil magazines. When she was first sent to the Rajya Sabha in 1984, Ms Jayalalitha held a press conference in New Delhi where the entire national press was present. Has Ms Pratap forgotten all this? Ms Jayalalitha was always accessible to the press. It seems to be a case of sour grapes on the part of the author who could not meet Ms Jayalalitha despite her repeated attempts.

Anita Pratap also says, "MGR was outraged when he learnt that she (Jayalalitha) had publicly questioned his mental alertness. This was an act of personal betrayal." Here Ms Pratap sounds like "the voice of R.M. Veerappan" and "the coterie." The author has conveniently forgotten or deliberately suppressed and ignored the fact that from the moment MGR fell ill and was admitted in Apollo Hospital in Madras on 5 October 1984, Ms Jayalalitha was denied access to him. Mrs V.N. Janaki and R.M. Veerappan saw to it that Miss Jayalalitha was not allowed to see MGR even once, not even when he was flown to the USA for medical treatment. After the campaign for the December '84 elections was over, during which Ms Jayalalitha campaigned tirelessly for the party's victory, it was made explicitly clear to her that even if she chose to defy party "commands" and went to the USA, V.N. Janaki would not allow her to see MGR.

Under such circumstances, how could Ms Jayalalitha know the state of MGR's health? The whole country knows how she was ill-treated, humiliated and persecuted during MGR's absence. The climax came on 31 December '84 when she was thrown out of Tamil Nadu House in New Delhi on a cold winter night. At that time R.M. Veerappan was making public announcements that MGR would be returning to India within two weeks. In anguish Ms Jayalalitha wondered how these people could persecute and humiliate her if MGR was really going to return home soon and was mentally fully alert.

It must also be remembered that R.M. Veerappan and his cohorts mounted a severe onslaught on Ms Jayalalitha both from public platforms as well as in the press, right from the moment MGR lapsed into unconsciousness on 13 October 1984. Their attack on Ms Jayalalitha continued unabated for four-and-a-half months. The only time they ceased their onslaught was during the three weeks in December 1984 while she was campaigning for the party in the Lok Sabha and Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. Anita Pratap and everyone else should remember that Miss Jayalalitha bore all this with stoic

silence and fortitude. Despite the unbearable mental agony she was undergoing, she did not utter a word in self-defence or retaliation.

It was only towards the end of January 1985 that Ms Jayalalitha broke her silence and spoke to the press lashing out at her tormentors. Even then, she gave press interviews only four times: on 20, 21, 22 and 23 January. After that, although the attacks on her continued ceaselessly right till the eve of MGR's return to Madras on 4 February 1985, Ms Jayalalitha did not make any further statements to the press. The author's remark that Ms Jayalalitha "repeatedly gave press interviews" is untrue. It was the press which kept on repeating the interviews she had given just once, making it appear that she was repeatedly giving interviews. Apart from dailies, Ms Jayalalitha gave interviews to weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies as well. Naturally these interviews appeared later, at delayed intervals. But all interviews were given by her only on those four days in January, and not afterwards.

Elsewhere in the cover story Anita Pratap says: "Earlier Janaki was nowhere by his (MGR's) side when he made public appearances. Now she is always seen with him . Earlier, it was Jayalalitha who stood next to MGR at public functions Till today he has not made a single public appearance with her (Jayalalitha) after his return." Here again Anita Pratap is totally wrong. Even before MGR's illness, the CM and Ms Jayalalitha *never* made public appearances together. Even when she was the propaganda secretary in 1983 and 1984, she always had her own separate public engagements. In fact they made it a point never to appear together at any public function or meeting. Even at that time, V.N. Janaki *always* accompanied MGR whenever he attended marriages or other public functions where he chose to take her along.

The only major occasions when MGR and Ms Jayalalitha made public appearances together were at the AIADMK rally in Cuddalore in June 1982, and the valedictory function of Mahakavi Bharathiar centenary celebrations in December 1982, and a few other occasions which are rare. Even on those occasions, Ms Jayalalitha never stood next to MGR. They only sat on the same dais for a little while, with several chairs and people between them.

In another place Anita Pratap writes: "Jayalalitha threw one of her famous tantrums and decided to leave Madras for good and settle down in Delhi. In a fit of temper she wound up her links with the city (Madras) and was all ready for closing the Tamil Nadu chapter and opening a new one in the capital." This again is another instance of the author's feverish imagination running riot.

In the first place, what does she mean by "one of her famous tantrums?" Has Anita Pratap ever witnessed Ms Jayalalitha "throwing a tantrum?" No one has, for that matter. She is a very dignified lady with poise and grace.

Secondly, Ms Jayalalitha did not decide "to leave Madras for good in a fit of temper." The house at No 12, Safdarjung Lane in New Delhi, had already been allotted to Miss Jayalalitha at the end of March 1985. But she was told that the house would be vacated only after three months and that she would have to wait until then. Accordingly, on 9 June 1985, Ms Jayalalitha was informed that the house had been vacated and that she could take possession of it. She needed two weeks to make the necessary preparations to set up a new establishment and so decided to go to Delhi to occupy the house in the second week of July. All Members of Parliament are allotted official accommodation in Delhi. When MPs set up house in the official accommodation allotted to them, it does not automatically mean that they are leaving their home state, or winding up their permanent residence in a fit of temper. Miss Jayalalitha set out to occupy the house allotted to her in Delhi. It was not due to any fit of temper. She had no intention of leaving Madras for good. She did not cut off her links with Madras either. Such reports were only fanciful speculations which appeared in the press.

Anita Pratap declares: "Jayalalitha has visions of playing a dynamic role on the national canvas." What is the basis or justification for such a statement? How does she know that Ms Jayalalitha has such visions? Has Ms Jayalalitha ever said so or made any such statements in public or in the press? This may be Anita Pratap's personal view.

The author also states that "Jayalalitha had made considerable efforts to cultivate Indira Gandhi." This again is totally wrong. Where is the proof that Ms Jayalalitha did so? The truth is that Ms Jayalalitha never made any effort to cultivate Indira Gandhi or anybody else for that matter.

Khushwant Singh speaks the truth when he says in another article in the same issue: "Jayalalitha was withdrawn, much younger and shyer (than Nargis). She rarely cared to look up or smile at anyone." That is the plain truth. Ms Jayalalitha is by nature too shy and reserved to go out of the way to cultivate anyone. Such behaviour is alien to her character. The truth is that Indira Gandhi was impressed by Ms Jayalalitha's performance in Parliament, and went out of the way to show kindness to her and encourage her, because she believed that Miss Jayalalitha had great potential which should be fully utilised.

At yet another point Anita Pratap says, "She (Jayalalitha) had been pestering MGR to give her at least a ministerial berth long before he fell ill." This again is absolutely untrue Such a remark is based upon hearsay and rumour. How does Anita Pratap know this to be a fact? Did she ever witness Miss Jayalalitha "pestering" MGR for a ministerial berth?

Anita Pratap goes on to comment about Ms Jayalalitha's "personality flaws" and her "unbridled arrogance." Granted that nobody is perfect, but Anita Pratap's sweeping assertion that "Jayalalitha is unpopular with her partymen" because of her "arrogance" is again only a case of reporting hearsay. Ms Jayalalitha is a human being and she may have her faults, but arrogance is certainly not one of them.



Jayalalitha's house in Madras

As regards Ms Jayalalitha's popularity with her partymen, Anita Pratap should realise that a handful of jealous ministers, MLAs and MPs do not constitute the AIADMK. Let the

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author take the trouble to undertake a tour of Tamil Nadu, and let her make the effort of speaking to the lakhs of grassroots workers who constitute 99 per cent of the party, as well as party functionaries at all levels, and let her try to elicit their opinions. Anita Pratap will then discover the extent of Ms Jayalalitha's popularity, and if she questions them about her alleged "arrogance," she will discover that the rank and file, the cadres of the party will tell her that Ms Jayalalitha was the only AIADMK leader who took the trouble to listen sympathetically to their problems and grievances and helped them out of their difficulties.

Anita Pratap comments elsewhere that "in the last six months it was evident that deprived of his (MGR's) patronage, she (Jayalalitha) had fast become a nonentity, a recluse whom the public stopped talking about," is rather ridiculous and sounds like wishful thinking on the part of R.M Veerappan and company. Moreover, the remark is self contradictory. If Ms Jayalalitha has really become a nonentity, a recluse whom the public has stopped talking about, why did SUNDAY feature this "nonentity" on the cover?

Anita Pratap observes: "Apparently, there are not many callers as the phones are always free All this is in striking contrast to the scenario two years ago. At that time Jayalalitha was besieged by partymen and outsiders." Such remarks are totally unwarranted. Ms Jayalalitha has always believed in preserving the peace and privacy of her home. Even two years ago, one could never see crowds at her house. She was besieged by partymen and outsiders at the party headquarters in Madras. All those who wanted to meet her had to go there. Crowds could be seen at her residence only on festival days or on special occasions when partymen and others would flock to her house to offer their greetings. On all other days it was made clear to everybody that if they wanted to meet her they had to go to the party headquarters.

Anita Pratap is welcome to spend one or two days here in my office room at Ms Jayalalitha's residence. If she sits here she will observe for herself the amount of mail we still receive every day, the numerous telephone calls requesting appointments and the innumerable requests inviting Ms Jayalalitha to preside over some function or address some meeting. It is a different matter that for the present, Ms Jayalalitha has decided not to accept any public engagements. Because she is not making public appearances now, it does not mean she is not in demand

N. Jegatheesan, personal assistant to Jayalalitha Jayaram, MP, Rajya Sabha, New Delhi

'If My Intent Was Malice, I Would Not Have Censored Shocking Details'

Anita Pratap replies

I was right. Jayalalitha is her own worst enemy. Even if I had intended to be malicious I could not have possibly succeeded in damaging her as she has done herself with her absurdly long, hysterical letter. I have every reason to believe that though the letter is signed by her personal assistant it has been authored by Jayalalitha herself. For some odd reason, Jayalalitha rarely puts her own signature to the letters she writes. Even if one were to give her the benefit of the doubt (which I am not inclined to do as I know her all to well), the letter must necessarily have had the endorsement of Ms Jayalalitha

It is a fact that I made repeated attempts to meet Jayalalitha. It took three days for my request to be communicated to her. Finally, an appointment was made for 29 August, which was abruptly cancelled with the excuse that she was unwell. I conveyed to her PA that we were planning to do a major cover story on her and that we were very keen to have her views. He said, he would get back to me. In the meantime, the main article was prepared and despatched. The interview was supposed to serve as an adjunct, where I would have elicited her opinion on three points: Why she chose to be a recluse; did she expect to be reinstated to her preeminent position in the party and her controversial dealings with the Congress(I). So the fact that she did not give an interview, in no way altered the main article as it had already been despatched. As a magazine of stature and repute, SUNDAY and I as its representative do not need to operate at the absurd and crass level of "sour grapes."

One of the basic contentions of the letter is that the article is the product of my fevered imagination Why on earth would I be interested in concocting stories about Jayalalitha (incidentally she has not denied any of the substantive issues in the article)? The article was written after detailed discussions I had with various people in the AIADMK, DMK and the Congress(I) ranging from ordinary party workers to ministers. I spoke to independent sources as well as my contact in the Jayalalitha household I talked to people close to MGR I took special care to elicit the opinion and views of the "coterie" as well as Jayalalitha's supporters (though they seem to be an endangered species these days and were surprisingly lukewarm in their support). In other words, the article was not an expression of personal views but a collation of facts gleaned from various people.

Another basic contention of the reponder is that no journalist can write about an event or situation unless he or she is a witness to it. This is manifestly absurd It that were to be the case any statement that I have to make about Jayalalitha's very existence would be invalid by virtue of the fact that I had not seen her for sometime. Except on two issues in which I am accused of being "factually wide off the mark" (I shall come to them later), the running argument in the 11 page letter is "How does Anita Pratap know this to be true?" or "Has Anita Pratap witnessed Jayalalitha throwing a tantrum?" and so on Not a single journalist saw Mrs Gandhi being assassinated but there have been detailed authentic reports on how exactly it happened. Journalists depend on their reliable sources who are privy to goings-on or have access to reliable information For the substantive issues of my article I have relied on independent sources who have nothing to gain or lose by Jayalalitha's descent or ascent but who by virtue of their unique positions have access to reliable information pertaining to her. So, while I have not actually witnessed Jayalalitha throwing a tantrum before MGR, or for that matter before newsmen when she threw out a newspaper correspondent in one of the January press conferences for having called her "hysterical" in his despatch about her, it does not mean that the scenes did not take place.

Javalalitha says I am factually wrong in saying that she was inaccessible when she was the propaganda secretary. Accessibility is ascertained not by press conferences given by the individual (it is called because the person wishes to communicate something specific) but the ease with which a journalist can establish contact with the person. MGR has given three, while the

Prime Minister and chief ministers like NTR and Hegde have given countless number of interviews. Jayalalitha has given less than ten interviews in two years.

As for the comment that Jayalalitha never stood next to MGR because there were tables and chairs between them is so ludicrous that one wonders whether it merits a reply. I don't know how right is the claim that "they (MGR and Jayalalitha) made it a point never to appear together at any public function." While sources close to MGR verify that MGR felt frequent public appearances with Jayalalitha would invite adverse comments from within his party and the DMK, I don't know whether Jayalalitha thought so too. The point is, as admitted in the letter itself, there were occasions when the two were seen together at the same public function. Despite Jayalalitha's claim at the time of the December 1984 election campaign, that she would accompany MGR in the rounds of thanksgiving, she and MGR have not made a single public appearance—with or without chairs in between. So though she openly hankers to undertake joint tours with MGR, the latter has not chosen to do so. This is seen by partymen and political observers as indicative of MGR's desire to keep her at a distance

When I interviewed her in Coimbatore in December 1984 at the time of the elections, I asked her whether she really believed that MGR was as fine as Mr Veerappan and others projected him to be. At that time her reply was that there were many people who had seen MGR and testified to his good health. Pictures also showed he was fine and active. Mr Thirunavukkarasu, her supporter, was also victimised when his major portfolios were taken away from him when MGR was still in New York. He very wisely registered a protest and then left it at that. I have made no moral judgments on whether Jayalalitha was right or wrong in her outburst, all I said was that it made the Congress(I) leaders wary because the "Avenging Bhadrakali," as she called herself, sounded rash and immature (this was what the Congressmen had to say, not I)

I know that Jayalalitha has visions of playing a role at the national level because she told me so herself (like she did about her desire for a ministerial berth). This was an off-the-record session that I had with Jayalalitha. Much as she would love to attribute this to my imagination, fevered or otherwise, she cannot do so, because another journalist was present with me when she made these statements. She said, she had no intention of being strait-jacketed in Tamil Nadu and that ultimately she would join the Congress(I) and use Delhi as the centre of her activities.

As for her agreeing with Khushwant Singh's assessment of her being "shy," I would like to point out that he (Mr Singh) himself admits that he does not know her very well. Everyone in Tamil Nadu who have had some exposure to Jayalalitha will confirm that she is not shy. Sometimes she chooses to be reticent. She does not complain about what is admittedly Mr Singh's personal views because it is favourable comment, right or wrong.

As for wasting space on Jayalalitha because she was becoming a non-entity stripped of MGR's patronage, I would like to enlighten her that Gibbons wrote hundreds and hundreds of pages on the decline and fall of the Roman empire. The decline of a person, empire or phenomenon is as important as its evolution because it exposes the crucial play of forces. The fact that Prem Nazir, Malayalam film star (SUNDAY, 1-8 September), is today unwanted by the film distributors is as important to newsmagazines as the fact that he is mentioned in the Guiness Book of World Records for acting in the maximum number of films.

Regarding the remark about the lack of callers at her house—since January there have been so many festivals—how is it that even on festival days she gets very few callers compared to the number she received two years ago? She can no longer meet visitors in the party office as she holds no important post in the party. But if she is a political phenomenon in her own right as she claimed before pressmen and is still very much in demand, then her house (since she cannot use the party office as she holds no party post) would have been besieged by callers, irrespective of the fact whether she chose to see them or not.

Lastly, she alleges that I have written the article out of malice, spite and venom. I have always been sympathetic to Jayalalitha because I felt it must be difficult for her to prove her worth in politics which, particularly in Tamil Nadu, is a man's world. Fellow-journalists have always teased me for being 'soft' towards Jayalalitha. When everyone chose to dismiss her off, I took the trouble of following her on her election trail and wrote about how hard she worked and the large crowds she attracted. It required some effort on my part to ensure that my personal sympathy for her did not come in the way of the criticism levelled against her by her partymen or the current predicament that she found herself in. If my intent was malice, I would have referred to the absolutely shocking and abusive epithets Jayalalitha used in January to describe MGR who alone was responsible for the political heights she scaled prior to his illness. She cannot deny this because she made the vituperative remarks about MGR at the same session where the other journalist was also present.



MGR with his wife Janaki Shubha Studio

The irrefutable proof of the authenticity of my report was Jayalalitha's reinstatement as propaganda secretary of the AIADMK on 5 September, nearly two weeks after the 25 August issue of SUNDAY hit the stands. I had stated, based on my discussions with certain key persons, that MGR would reinstate her as the propaganda secretary as he now feels the need for a glamorous crowdpuller, a need necessitated by his speech impediment. So now is Jayalalitha inclined to believe that I am not just a mind-reader but a soothsayer as well?

SPECIAL REPORT

Brute Force

Andhra Pradesh police are blamed for the murder of a civil rights activist

Was Dr A. Ramanatham, vice president of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) shot down by policemen or by extremists? He was shot at when a police funeral procession was passing by. Andhra Pradesh home minister Vasantha Nageswara Rao said in the state Assembly that the APCLC vice-president was a member of the CPIM(L) and that he might have been killed by a rival extremist group. He added that the funeral procession had passed by Dr Ramanatham's clinic more than half an hour before the murder. But this has failed to convince most people

Dr Ramanatham was a leading private pediatrician of Warangal town. He had also been a civil rights activist for a long time. His activities centred round his medical practice and work for civil liberties. The APCLC says that the police are deliberately portraying civil rights activists as extremist sympathisers and anti-social elements while they are trying to prove that Dr Ramanatham's murder was the result of an extremist attack in order to cover up the fact that he had been killed during a police funeral. The procession included the district superintendent of police and the DIG (range).

On 2 September, a sub-inspector of police was killed in a bomb attack at the busy Kazipet railway station. Sub-inspector Yadagiri Reddy had gone to the station to see off his wife who was travelling by the Madras-bound train in the evening. Suddenly six unidentified men began to throw bombs and then rushed up to him and shot him at close range. Yadagiri Reddy was killed and two others were injured. This bomb attack in a crowded railway station sent a wave of shock through Warangal town.On the morning of 3 September the slain sub-inspector was given a police funeral. The funeral procession began at the mortuary of the government hospital and ended at the victim's village near Warangal. The procession passed through the Warangal Main Road post near Dr Ramanatham's clinic. Soon after the procession passed, Dr Ramanatham was found bleeding profusely.

On that day some patients had already arrived at Dr Ramanatham's clinic but he had not begun to see them The doctor and two of his neighbours were standing in the lane which runs behind the row of shops. N. Murthy from one of these shops, the Bharatha Engineering and Electricals, said, "Dr Ramanatham, Ramulu and I were talking behind the shop. We heard some noise so we moved to the third shop which has a grill door, but it was locked. So we entered Kalpana Opticals from the back door which was open. We saw the procession going past, so Ramulu and I rushed off to close our shops as the other shutters were coming down." Dr Ramanatham was left behind in the empty shop. After the procession had gone by, the shop boy raised the shutter and found the doctor lying in the back room with bullet injuries. While no one noticed how Dr Ramanatham was shot at, people said that as the procession was passing by, a few of the processionists began to beat up the young man who was standing next to the doctor's clinic. According to them, in the commotion some people entered and assaulted the compounder and the patients too.

Dr Sampath Rajaram, a private medical practitioner who has a clinic near Dr Ramanatham's, corrobo-

People in front of the opticals shop where Dr Ramanatham was murdered





Murthy pointing out the back room of the Kalpana Opticals where Dr Ramanatham was shot

rated the time sequence. Dr Sampath was driving to his dispensary in the morning when his car got caught up in the funeral procession. So his car had to proceed slowly behind the procession till he reached his clinic. Said Dr Rajaram, "I was starting to examine the second patient when two boys ran in. They said Dr Ramanatham was hurt. So I went with them to the opticals' shop. I found Dr Ramanatham in a bad condition but he recognised me and said, 'Sampath take me to hospital.' I rushed him to the government hospital. My only concern at that time was to reach him there alive." However, within an hour the news spread that Dr Ramanatham was dead. The shops started closing and Section 144 was promulgated. The situation became tense when the people heard the shocking news of the second brutal death in less than 24 hours.

The district police authorities claimed that the procession had already left the area at the time of the shooting. They also said that apart from the policemen in uniform, many others had joined the procession since there was much resentment about the killing of the sub inspector. Interestingly, according to reports, the police also claimed that some policemen had entered Dr Ramanatham's clinic to drive away a mob which had entered the clinic.

Four bullets were recovered from Dr Ramanatham's body during the post-mortem. The bullets were from a service revolver but the Warangal district superintendent of police K. Aravinda Rao had an explanation for this: many Naxalite groups possessed service revolvers which had been seized from policemen. A portion of the wooden partition in the Kalpana Opticals shop was shattered and a bullet was found embedded in the wood also.

According to some witnesses, Dr Ramanatham, on leaving his companions, was returning to his clinic by the back lane when the assailants saw him and chased him to the optical shop to gun him down. No sound of firing was heard. It is suspected that the revolvers were fitted with silencers. However, Dr Ramanatham's wife refuted the vendetta theory. She said, "He was a popular doctor. He has had his clinic for 19 years. Why should he have any enemy who would take revenge? He never did anything against any person, he was only fighting for civil rights, the police killed him." It is true that Dr Ramanatham was very popular especially among the poor since he dispensed medicine to poor patients at a nominal cost. And this gives credibility to the words of people like Kannabiran who said, "There is a calculated attempt to blur the distinction between civil liberties work and extremist political activity, so that the attack on one is not distinguished from the other."

In recent months, the police have launched an intensive programme against the extremists. The district police have taken to producing plays and *burrakathas* (folk dramas) to educate the public about the activities of the extremists. The propaganda, by way of plays with long rhetorical speeches, attracts the crowd. Whether the message attracts at the same rate is another matter. Police encounters with alleged extremist groups have also increased. This has started a conflict between the police administration and the civil liberties groups. The police are also becoming increasingly intolerant about the civil liberties groups.

Meanwhile, the state government has rejected a demand for a judicial inquiry into the murder of Dr Ramanatham. But the circumstances in which the murder took place during a police funeral procession speaks of the need for an impartial inquiry especially when there is ample circumstantial evidence to implicate the police. A young college lecturer who refused to be identified said, "It is difficult to believe that such killings could take place in broad daylight. But I have one question: what would have been the attitude and action of the police if such a murder had taken place during a procession of some other group of people?"

Shubha Singh, Hyderabad



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SUNDAY SPECIAL

Maulana Azad's Forgotten Home

Will the West Bengal government's takeover of the decrepit house in which the great Indian nationalist once lived bring back its lost prestige?

Today, the quaint and dignified house at 19-A, Ballygunj Circular Road in south Calcutta where Maulana Abul Kalam Azad once lived presents a sorry sight. Garages and barrack-like quarters have sprouted within its premises, oil drums are stacked in a corner, and during the monsoons the mud and slush makes it difficult to walk down the portico. There is very little evidence that once one of the founding fathers of the Indian Independence movement, lived and conferred with his colleagues like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and even Motilal Nehru to free India from the British colonial rule.

Maulana Azad had spent the early years of his life in this house. It became a meeting place for Congressmen. In fact, senior citizens of the locality still remember Azad's spellbinding oratory at a Congress meeting held at the residence. Despite its historical significance the house has been neglected for years. But when the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha and a grand-daughter of Azad, Najma Heptullah visited Calcutta in July, she met chief minister Jyoti Basu with the proposal to convert the house into a memorial for the fiery educationist. Mrs Heptullah later told SUNDAY that Mr Basu had been "receptive" to her proposal and had sought the details.

Mrs Heptullah also expressed her desire to hand over the house to the Asiatic Society. According to its general secretary Chandan Roy Chowdhury, the society is ready to take over the house and establish its Institute of Higher Learning in Islamic Studies there. "We are very interested in the house and await its requisition by the state government," said Roy Chowdhury.

The house is presently owned by the Kalimata trust under the chairmanship of A.S. Naskar and divided into three flats. While two flats have been leased out to companies, the third is occupied by a tenant who runs an anti-rust oil factory. The tenants feign ignorance about the possibility of a takeover by the government. Said one of them, who did not want to be named: "I am not at



The porch of Azad's house: can it be a site for a memorial?

"Converting the House into a Memorial Would be a Tribute to Him"

Najma Heptullah, deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha, told SUNDAY

***Q**: When were you first approached by the trustees for the renovation of Maulana Azad's house inCalcutta?*

A: I received intimation about the house in May this year from the board of trustees which is under the chairmanship of A. S. Naskar. Before this I did not even know the address of the house and had never seen the place since I was seven years old when Partition took place and after Partition my grandfather shifted to his New Delhi residence at 19, Akbar Road.

Q: Did the old house hold any memories for you and was your visit to the house reminiscent of your family history?

A: This was the first time that I stepped inside the house. But I immediately recollected some stories which my grandmother, Fatima Arzu had told me about *Dadaji*. The first thing that struck me about the house was a room on the building's first floor, which had big windows and a huge tree on the side of it. One day a thief had climbed on the tree and entered Maulana Saheb's study room. He was in the room writing a book and the keys to his safe were lying on the table close to where he was sitting. The thief picked up the keys, opened the safe and stole his cigarette case and other valuables. He then walked out leaving the keys on the same table. When my grandmother came into the room and found the money, and jewellery from the safe missing she informed Maulana Saheb. He replied that he had been so engrossed in his book that he did not notice the entrance and exit of the thief. The Calcutta police later arrested the robber as he was selling the gold-monogrammed cigarette case. When the thief was brought before Maulana Saheb, he simply said: "I did not commit any theft. You were sitting in the same room when I picked up your things." Maulana Saheb after hearing this, requested the police not to punish the guilty man. This whole story which my grandmother had related to me during my childhood suddenly came back to me when I visited the house.

Q: Is there nobody else in the family who could have maintained the house after he left Calcutta following Partition?

A: No. Though I was only 17 years old when he died I was very attached to him. Besides, I am the only one who is active in public life and involved in politics. Therefore, I think the trustees have contacted me. But the importance of the house is not only that Maulana Saheb lived there for so many years, but it was the seat of decision-making where several national leaders used to visit and stay. Gandhiji, Nehruji and Motilal Nehruji came and stayed with Maulana Saheb in the same house. Momentous decisions were taken on the very spot. Besides, the house has a historic significance for the Congress since its seat of power was at Calcutta before Independence. Similar houses in Allahabad, the Anand Bhawan and the Swaraj Bhawan which are filled with memories have been converted into permanent memorials where hundreds of people come and relive the past and recapitulate on the lives of national leaders. This is what I had proposed for the house in which Maulana Saheb lived. But what can I do alone? I have to have the cooperation of the state government. Since 1988 is the centenary year of Maulana Saheb, converting the house into a memorial would be a befitting tribute to his memory.



Najma Heptullah

Q: In what state has the house been presently maintained?

A: The house is bereft of any sign that a great national leader once lived there. I felt so disillusioned at seeing the house that I did not want my illusions to be shattered further by visiting all the floors. There are three or four tenants who have occupied it and the biggest hurdle would be providing these tenants with compensation or alternate accommodation before they can be shifted.

Q: How much rent do the tenants pay?

A: It is not important how much they are paying. Even if they are paying five rupees every month and they refuse to vacate the premises, there is nothing I can do without the intervention of the state government.

Q: You had a meeting with the West Bengal chief minister, Jyoti Basu, on the subject. What was his opinion about converting the house at Ballygunj into a memorial?

A: He seemed receptive to the idea and simply said he would let me know what can be done. What I only want is that the memory of Maulana Saheb should not be obliterated forever. I suggested to the chief minister that the memorial need not only provide an insight into the life and times of Maulana Azad but also his contemporaries who made a contribution to the freedom struggle. The personal contribution that Maulana Saheb made, before and after Partition, and then in framing the Indian Constitution is incomparable in history. It was Maulana Saheb who was so opposed to the two-nation theory that he said it would not last more than 25 years. How true his words were! The major decisions about the Quit India movement took place in the same house when he was the Congress president. He spent years in jail fighting for the freedom of this country and was one of the closest aides of Gandhiji. He stood like a rock when people were killing each other.

Interviewed by [illegible]

all worried. Obviously our company will provide alternative accommodation. And we will be proud to tell our friends that we lived in the same house where Azad lived." According to Mrs Heptullah, the trust is willing to allow the conversion of the house into a memorial for Azad. The local people claim that the third tenant who has stacked oil drums all over the compound, will contest the takeover.

The attention that Najma Heptullah's intervention has focussed on the forgotten building, however, will not be sufficient to transform the decrepit house into a museum and place of public interest. If this were true, the feeble protests that have been raised about the pitiable condition of Azad's former residence would have spurred the state government authorities to take action. Said Mrs Heptullah: "Though the chief minister has assured me that he would take action and even the Prime Minister with whom I have spoken in Delhi has promosed (to take) action, it is sad that nothing has been done so far. If I had enough money then I would have myself rebuilt the house and pieced together all those memories which still linger in its rooms and corri-

Sunit Ghosh



Azad's house: full of memories

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Mrs Heptullah has made a passionate plea for the conversion of the house into a memorial, adding that it would be a befitting tribute if the residents could be evicted before 1988, the centenary year of Maulana Azad. After her return to the capital, she wrote to the chief minister reminding him of their talks and hoping that expeditious action would be taken. She also wrote in her communication of 2 July that she had sought legal advice. It was pointed out to her that there is a provision in the law for the requisition of such property, whereby a suitable compensation could be paid to the trust in lieu of the property. The three tenants who live in the house and have occupied it since Maulana Azad (who was himself a tenant) left it, could be asked to vacate the premises under the provision of the Requisition Act.

It is imperative that prompt action be taken to preserve the place where this great man lived. This would only set a precedent for the rehabilitation of other such historic residences and buildings which have been lying neglected. In another letter to Jyoti Basu, Mrs Heptullah has drawn attention to the Manicktalla burial grounds in Calcutta where the *mazaars* of her great grandparents exist. The letter dated 25 July, states: "I understand the burial grounds are in an utterly bad shape in as much as its iron gate which is supposed to protect the grounds from unauthorised encroachment is reported to have been removed. The burial grounds are being used as playgrounds and for dumping scrap material." Now as the centenary year of the late Maulana Azad is approaching, it is an insult to his memory that such shocking neglect has been allowed to set in.

Soutik Biswas, Calcutta and Ritu Sarin, New Delhi


Sunil Ghosh

Maulana Azad's residence in south Calcutta: dilapidated

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UNITED KINGDOM

Asians in Peril

Racial violence erupts in Birmingham

Indians or South Asians living in the United Kingdom may be prosperous but they are hardly secure. The recent incident in the Handsworth district of the central England city of Birmingham last week, when marauding Black and White youths raided and set fire to an East African-Asian owned sub-post office, causing the deaths, by carbon monoxide poisoning and asphyxia, of two brothers, Kassam Ali and Amirali Moledina is only another example.

Strangely, it was the first time that immigrants of African-origin who are quite steadfast in their allegiance to their brown brethren, displayed a vicious streak towards Asians. Why they did so, has been rather naively explained in the British media as jealousy, since the Asians are relatively well-to-do, while the Blacks are poorer and less well educated. This view has been endorsed by a section of the Asian shopowners who suffered heavy losses as a result of the riot. But according to reports, the Asians are also to blame for the chaos.

Wherever they go, a majority of South Asians tend to carry their "fair bride" syndrome with them. In the West, they are additionally afflicted by the "new rich" complex. These two shortcomings also contribute to a racist attitude. It would not be incorrect to say that Asians hold the darker-complexioned West Indian race in considerable contempt, especially if they are not financially well-off. In fact, many Asians would be proud to entertain a White in their houses, but would rarely contemplate inviting a Black.

But nothing can justify the mob fury in the Lozells Road area of Handsworth. This suburb of Birmingham witnessed one of the worst incidents four years ago, when riots in Toxteth in Liverpool and Brixton in south London took place. Ironically, Handsworth had been portrayed as a showpiece of community relations. In fact, a day before trouble broke out, Handsworth had witnessed a peaceful and enjoyable carnival. But the underlying tensions surfaced soon after. In Handsworth, 58 per cent of the population are from the "New Commonwealth" or in other words, those from the West Indies, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and East Africa. The rate of unemployment, however, is highest among the Blacks. The unemployed Blacks are also believed to be involved in drug-trafficking and other breaches of the law.

Recently, the West Midlands police had, in fact, cracked down on drug peddlers leaving behind disaffection among many West Indians. Over the years, links between the guardians of the law and the Black immigrant sections have been rather tenuous in Birmingham, as elsewhere in Britain. The "stop and search" laws, complain the West Indians have always been used against them, rather than being directed at the population as a whole. Consequently, the anger built up, with the slightest provocation having the potential of creating an explosion.

The first conflagration took place five years ago in Bristol, which the authorities believed to be an one-off incident. Then, in 1981 the riots were more widespread prompting the setting up of a major commission of enquiry headed by the distinguished judge, Lord Scarman. Only the proposals regarding effective policing have been implemented by the Thatcher government, while the fundamental issues like social and economic problems were ignored or not tackled with adequate sincerity. The tendency of racial discrimination among White policemen and their differences between them and the Blacks have continued.

Handsworth, in this respect was believed to be an exception. An enterprising police officer had taken the initiative to win over the West Indians and make them feel that the latter were their friends. But this energetic superintendent of police resigned after he disagreed with his superiors on policy and finance. But in recent months, the situation in Handsworth was worsening rapidly and it was no surprise that another nasty flare-up occurred.

It has been said that Whites (the highest number arrested following the riots) ganged up with the Blacks to vent their wrath on the Asians. This is probably true. But at the same time, Black community leaders in Birmingham have been quick to realise the damage that has been brought on relations with immigrants from the subcontinent. They have given out apologies and severely condemned the riots. Nonetheless, the hunt for those responsible for the tragic demise of the Moledina brothers has begun. But one thing is clear: the killers must be captured and convicted. Otherwise the incensed Asians will have no respect in future for the police.

Ashis Ray, London



A car damaged by rioters: a regular occurrence

BOMBAY

Quietly Fades the Don

Varadarajan Mudaliar is slowly losing his clout

Varadarajan Mudaliar, once the most powerful underworld figure of Bombay, is slowly losing his grip over his empire. Reason: deputy commissioner of police Y.C. Pawar, who is in charge of the Matunga police station, has been slowly clipping his wings over the last three years. According to one source, Varadarajan may even quit Bombay permanently to settle down in Madras where he is financing a film in which his son has a major role. Besides, says an informed source, he will have to pay less people in Madras than he does in Bombay where allegedly every political party receives pay-offs.

The immediate reason for Varadarajan's distress is the controversy over the Sarvajanik Mama Ganapati Pooja Committee's request to hold the Ganapati festival. According to residents of that area, the festival is held with great pomp and splendour. For ten days, the roads from Matunga post office to Podar College are turned into a fairyland with coloured lights brought from Indore and the *shamiana* from Baroda. Over Rs ten lakhs, most of which is extorted from shopkeepers and hotel owners in the area is spent during these ten days. The members of the Pooja committee however deny that they extort money.

Apart from the entertainment which it provides to the people who throng the show, the cover of religion gives added acceptability and clout to Varadarajan. It is said that the police and politicians were "in his pocket" and that he could organise such a massive show only by keeping the police (including the traffic police) away from the area. For ten days, his men would be in total charge in the area. The festival gave employment to at least 100 unemployed youths who were also given khaki or white uniforms. It is believed that he invested in them for his alleged nefarious activities.

In the last three years, the festival has been held on a less lavish scale. It was said that Varadarajan had to keep the show going or his empire consisting of illicit dens and brothels would crumble. Varadarajan was also being cornered by the deputy commissioner of police Y.C. Pawar whom he tried to harass through court cases filed by his henchmen. For the first time, the then police commissioner Julio Ribeiro managed



Varadarajan: losing ground

to put Varadarajan behind bars for nearly a month under the National Security Act early this year. Varadarajan had already taken refuge in Madras and had tried to seek anticipatory bail. When this failed he was brought to Bombay and sent to Nasik jail. Even in prison, he continued to wield immense clout. However, when legislators protested against the VIP treatment given to him, four policemen were suspended.

In July this year, the Pooja Committee applied for permission to the Bombay Municipal Corporation with a copy to the Matunga police station. On 21 August, a police *chowki* was put up in the area where the festival celebrations are held. Permission was given but the organisers were allotted far less space than was usually given. The committee protested and filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court. Justice Sujata Manohar, while dismissing the petition, asked the organisers to come to an amicable agreement with the municipal authorities regarding the amount of space. The advocate-general of Maharashtra, who appeared on behalf of the government, said that the authorities could only give an area of 1,500 sq feet. To justify this, Mr Pawar told SUNDAY since the area is very near the Matunga railway station, the police could only allow a smaller space.

The organisers rejected this offer and appealed to the divisional bench. They also approached the Shiv Sena which controls the corporation to get the necessary permission. Pramod Navalkar and Manohar Joshi, the two lieutenants of Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, met the commissioner to intercede on behalf of the Pooja Committee. Pramod Navalkar later clarified that they were intervening on behalf of the committee and not Varadarajan. The organisers maintain that Varadarajan has nothing to do with the pooja committee. Varadarajan was the president of the committee for 17 years: a post he had held till three years ago. But it is Varadarajan who is behind the committee because none of his henchmen have the money or access to the large amount of money which is spent on the show.

Olga Tellis, Bombay

MAHARASHTRA

A Return to "Swadeshi"

Cloth made of imported fibre to be burnt

On 2 October, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, a series of bonfires of *Rajivastra* will be lit in about 125 places throughout Maharashtra. The most important incident, said Sharad Joshi of the Shetkari Sanghatana, will take place at Wardha a few kilometres from Nagpur and a town closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi and the Independence movement. *Rajivastra*, as the peasant leader Sharad Joshi told SUNDAY is not imported cloth. It is cloth made after blending imported fibre and petrochemicals. Lighting the bonfires will be the farmer's way of protesting against the anti-cotton growers policy of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government. The recent reduction in excise duty on polyester yarn from Rs 45 per kg to Rs 25 per kg is detrimental to the farmers, said Mr Joshi. "In Maharashtra, the farmers are forced to sell their cotton to the government through the cotton monopoly purchase scheme and the government pays a price that is below the cost of production. Maharashtra produces about 20 lakh bales of cotton, 65 per cent (13 lakh bales) of which is of the superior long staple variety. Two

other states. Karnataka and Gujarat also grow the long staple fibre. The mills are, however, not keen on using long staple fibre and Mr Kedar of the State Trading Corporation had admitted that 28 lakh bales of long staple fibre where lying in godowns throughout the country. The Maharashtra state government had asked the centre for permission to export 12 lakh bales of long staple fibre and it was only recently that the government has given the go-ahead for the export of three lakh bales. Mr Joshi said that Rajiv Gandhi's new textile policy permits "fibre flexibility" which, for cotton-growers is a harmful policy. Till recently, production was regulated in a way that 80 per cent of the total raw material used by a mill had to be cotton fibre. It was C.R. Rajagopalachari who was the author of this policy. But today, cotton fibre is a minor element in the combination and the government is also allowing liberal imports of machinery to handle this fibre. "In fact," said Sharad Joshi "this is the only aspect of the new textile policy that is being implemented. The gov-



Peasant leader Sharad Joshi

ernment had promised that production of *Janata* cloth would be given over to the handloom sector, but now they have gone back on this and given it to the national textile corporation mills. We have therefore called this cloth of polyester cotton blend *Rajivastra*."

The 2 October incident will not be an isolated one but will be followed by various other *Rajivastra* burning programmes. On 6 October, a rally of sugarcane producers will be held at Rahuri in Ahmednagar district and they will show their solidarity with the cotton growers by burning "Rajivastra." On 7 October at Pune, there will be a huge bonfire of "Rajivastra" to coincide with the eightieth anniversary of the burning of foreign cloth by Lokmanya Tilak in Pune in 1905 to protest against British imperialist policy of exploitation. Mr Joshi said, "Throughout the week, we will gently persuade people in a non-violent manner to put their "Rajivastra" into the fire. As far as the shopkeepers are concerned, we have asked them to start disgorging their stocks from 15 September onwards so that by 2 October there will not be any "Rajivastra" left in their shops. "We have set a deadline of 15 October for the shopkeepers by which they should return their stocks of *Rajivastra*. If they fail to do so by that date, then we will picket all such shops at *taluka* level."

Olga Tellis, Bombay

TERRORISM

A Breakthrough, at Last

The Delhi police made a major breakthrough when they recently arrested six hardcore terrorists who had come to the capital from Punjab. The arrests were made days before they were to execute their plan to blow up the Shan-e-Punjab Express which runs between Delhi and Amritsar. The interrogation of the suspects, some of whom were wanted for the July bomb blast cases, is expected to lead to further arrests for which special teams have been sent to Punjab. The leader of the terrorists, Jagdish Singh however, committed suicide by consuming potassium cyanide minutes before his interrogation by the Delhi police. Jagdish Singh was also wanted for his involvement in the transistor bomb blasts and had been released on bail following his arrest in the Palika bazar bomb blasts in the capital last year.

While the suicide of Jagdish Singh has permanently silenced one aspect of the conspiracy, the six men who are facing interrogation at various places in the capital have told the Delhi police of their connections with the terrorists in Punjab, especially the men who were to finance the purchase of explosives for blowing up the train. The interrogation is believed to have led the Delhi police and the crime branch to important clues linking the members of the gang with the assassination of Lalit Maken and his wife and later, the killing of Congress(I) metropolitan councillor, Arjun Das on 4 September. According to Delhi police sources, the connection between the present arrests and the assassinations of Congress (I) leaders in the capital could not be firmly established. It has, however, been confirmed that the deceased suspect, Jagdish Singh, knew the persons arrested on 5 September following the murder of Arjun Das.

The police have in their custody, Harmeet Singh, another hardcore terrorist, who was arrested on 7 September. Harmeet Singh, a professor in the Khalsa College and an executive member of the Delhi State Akali Dal (Longowal) was remanded to judicial custody with five other suspects and was charged under Sections 3 and 4 of the Anti-terrorist Act. After sustained questioning by the police, it was revealed that Jagdish Singh, who was a resident of Narela and his accomplice Balbir Singh, also under arrest had approached Harmeet Singh in early September for money to blow up the Delhi-Amritsar Express in a week. The attempt was foiled following a tip-off received by the police who arrested Harmeet Singh and Balbir Singh on 7 September. It was also established that Jagdish Singh and Subeh Singh, another suspect, had come to Delhi from Amritsar four days ago and were since staying at the Paharganj residence of Mohinder Singh Goggi, a local anti-social. They had also collected large quantities of explosives.

The six terrorists, Mohinder Singh Goggi, Harinder Singh, Subeh Singh, Sukhdev Singh and Balbir Singh were produced before metropolitan magistrate, V.K. Malhotra and remanded to judicial custody till 20 September. The observation of the magistrate concerning the case was: "keeping in view the nature and gravity of their offences, the suspects should be remanded to prolonged judicial custody."

Ritu Sarin, New Delhi

KERALA

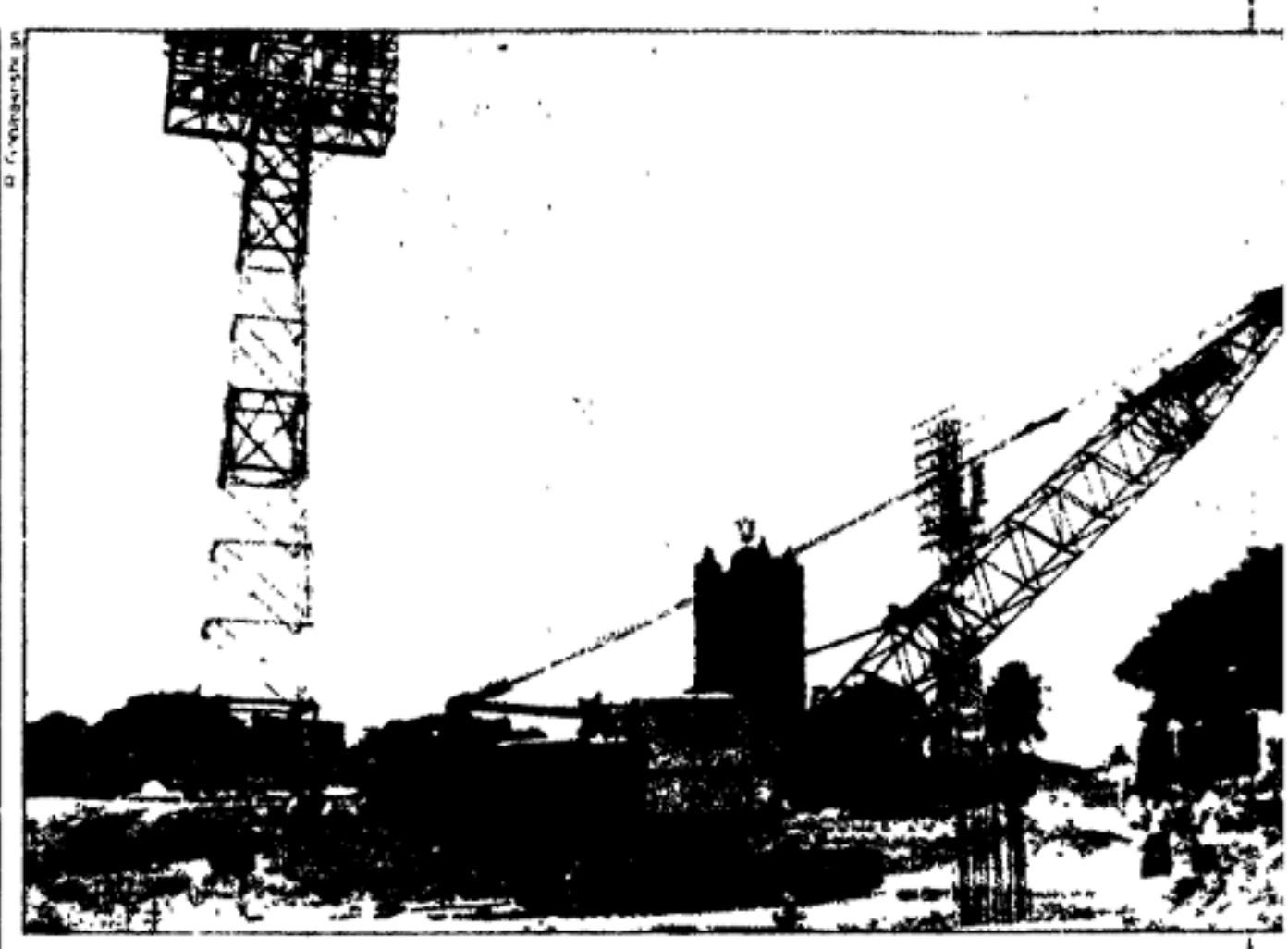
Foul Play

Row over soccer stadium

The construction of a large gallery in the Chandrashekharan Nair stadium to accommodate 40,000 spectators for the Nehru trophy soccer tournament in January 1986 has raised a number of questions about the impact such a structure will have on the congested cityscape. The stadium is situated in the heart of the city with narrow roads on three sides and the gallery will prevent the construction of a fourth road which is part of the approved master plan for the city. Voluntary organisations like the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishat (KSSP) have expressed their concern about building such a haphazardly-planned concrete structure without proper facilities or exit points for spectators. In retaliation, the sports associations in Trivandrum took out a procession and shouted slogans supporting the construction of the gallery. They argued that the construction would ensure that the open stadium space was not utilised for the widening of Palayam Road, the most important thoroughfare in Trivandrum.

"We are sports lovers and football fans and we would love to have a beautiful stadium in the city. But as citizens of Trivandrum, we have every right to see the plan of the gallery and whether proper facilities are being provided. We cannot understand why the whole project is shrouded in secrecy," said Dr Iqbal, a neuro-surgeon who is president of KSSP. The Chandrashekharan Nair stadium belongs to the Kerala police and the construction is being overlooked by an organisation consisting of senior police officials. After Trivandrum was given the opportunity to hold the Nehru trophy tournament, this stadium was selected as the venue because of its superior ground conditions. The stadium also has floodlights which the bigger university stadium nearby lacks.

The budget for constructing the gallery is Rs two crores and the police had planned to take a loan from the toddy-tappers welfare fund. But there were objections to this and now a consortium of nationalised banks in Trivandrum is financing the project. The Kerala police have got the chief architect of the PWD, Mr Ramaswamy, to draw a plan and entrust the construction to the Uttar Pradesh Bridges Corporation. The corporation faces the task of finishing in four months a project which would normally have taken over a year. The senior police officials gave the go ahead signal for the construction without getting the approval of the Trivandrum Development Authority (TRIDA) which has to sanction all construction in the city. Instead, an expert committee was constituted (vide Go no 1953/85/home) to consider the safety measures and needs of town-planning. The report has not yet been submitted but work on the project has begun.



Construction of the gallery at the stadium in progress

It was initially decided to construct a two-tier gallery covering almost the whole of the stadium. But as it would block the view of the beautiful Palayam church and the Palayam mosque, the gallery circumference was reduced to about half its original size. The police have not made the plan public and have refused to show it to KSSP officials. The secretary of the Trivandrum Development Authority has in a letter to Mr Ramaswamy pointed out that "a structure about 250 metres long and 18 metres high would mar the aesthetic quality of the present green open space." But others feel that such a structure will only enhance the beauty of the city which has no tall buildings. Police officials are allegedly keeping the plan a secret as the gallery is bound to scuttle plans for the proposed six lane road on the eastern side of the stadium. The road had already been sanctioned by the government in 1978. "The government is acting contrary to its own plan," said Benny Kuriokose, a young architect. "As a citizen, I have a right to know what is going to happen to my city. See how well the Asian Games stadia in Delhi were planned. The stadia in Delhi are situated in different parts of the city. This gallery here has only five exit points with staircases connecting the two tiers. What will happen in the case of a stampede with the narrow adjoining road completely blocked? Total evacuation will take at least 45 minutes, according to some architects. Moreover, they have reduced the width of steps from one metre to 60 centimetres which is against all accepted norms."

The last time a football tournament was held here the bamboo stand collapsed killing two people and injuring many others. The sports council, the government and the district football association have probably not given any compensation so far. The issue is now pending in court. Moreover, many of the senior officials of the Kerala football association were chargesheeted for siphoning off money when the Santosh Trophy tournament was held in Calicut. Obviously, Trivandrum should not forfeit the chance to host the Nehru trophy. But the way in which the police is going through with the project, damaging the city's master plan, is objectionable. As the existing floodlights have to be changed another stadium could have been chosen. The chances of the two-tier gallery being completed in time are also dim.

Binoo K. John, Trivandrum

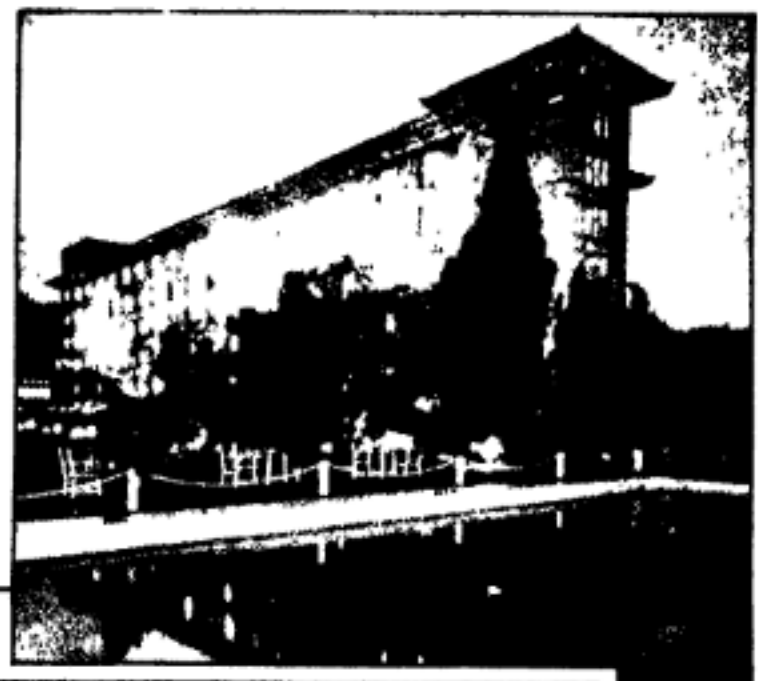
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MEDIA

AIR Raids

Commotion at Broadcasting House in New Delhi

The bleeps were sounding and the red bulb overhead was flashing. There were four seconds left for newsreader Vijay Daniels to go on the air for the 9 pm English bulletin on 21 July when the door of studio no. ten at the Akashvani Bhavan opened and the two "turbaned youths in their late twenties," walked in. One of the strangers stood behind the newsreader's chair while the other stood by his side. Supressing his rising alarm, Vijay Daniels who has been reading the news for the last 14 years kept the quiver out of his voice and reached for the emergency bell on his desk. Throughout the broadcast, he kept his finger on the button but the alarm did not ring. When the first five minutes of the bulletin were almost over, peon Satyanarayan entered with additional matter and the two strangers left the room on seeing him.

After the broadcast, Daniels asked Satyanarayan to find out who the men were and why they had entered the room during the news broadcast. On his return to the newsroom, he informed news editor Radhakrishnan about the incident Meanwhile, the peon returned to say that according to the security guards, the men were from the control room. The matter was dropped as men from the control room walking in during a news broadcast is a common practice at the AIR studios in Delhi.

On 10 August, the chief producer, features, Chitra Narain walked into her first floor office in the AIR building to find a stranger going through the papers on her desk. When she questioned him, the stranger said he was on the Prime Minister's security staff, and did she not know that the PM was to visit the premises? Then he quickly walked out of the room. Chitra Narain later mentioned the incident to some "high-ups."

The director-general of AIR, Suresh Mathur, made a round of the studio after the incident relating to Vijay Daniels was reported in a local newspaper. Daniels was asked to make a statement to the deputy director-general (security), D.S. Gerewal. On 29 August, suspension orders dated 23 August without charge sheets were handed over to five people in connection with the 21 July incident The suspended persons are news reader Vijay Daniels, news editor Radhakrishnan, peon Satyanarain and two security guards.

This action has stirred up a major controversy. The central information services association, the staff artists association, the Class IV Employees Association and the stenographers association have formed a joint action committee to protest against the suspension orders. The staff threatened to take direct action if the suspension orders are not withdrawn, and according to a member, it is looking for "justice." In fact, the news room staff have even threatened to boycott news bulletins. "Why should the news room people suffer if the concerned authorities cannot look after security? It is not our job Besides Vijay Daniels had informed the news editor and the matter was dropped when we were informed that they were control room men," one of the news readers pointed out.

The incidents bring into focus the slack security in a sensitive place like Akashvani Bhavan. The two guards supposed to be on duty outside studio no. ten were found missing. The control room denied that they had sent any men to the studio. How the two men got past four security points– the main gate, broadcasting house gate, main studio gate and the studio gate next to the general news room, remains a mystery. Why the emergency bell did not ring is another mystery. A complaint about the non-functioning of the bell had been entered in the service report on 12 July and 19 July by newsreader Spruti Sinha and news editor Radhakrishnan.

That security is not up to the mark is common knowledge in Broadcasting House. That it should remain so in these days when threats from terrorists loom large is surprising. Securitymen roam about without uniforms. Control room men walk into the studios and often, visitors are allowed in by men who work there.

Rashmi Saksena, New Delhi

INDO-PAK BORDER

Keeping the Extremists Away

To ensure that the 25 September Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections are not disrupted in Punjab, the 553 km-long Punjab-Pakistan border has been sealed from the midnight of 1 September. Patrolling has been intensified all along the state's international border. About one lakh securitymen including ten battalions of the Border Security Force (BSF) and an equal number of men from other security set-ups including the army, have been deployed so far.

According to home ministry sources, the border has been sealed in order to thwart any attempt by terrorists to create trouble and the government is deploying troops near the new infiltration routes being used by extremists. Some activists of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) may also have crossed the border after the Punjab accord. These people are likely to cross over just before the elections with the intention of creating trouble.

Union home minister S.B. Chavan confirmed reports that infiltration from Pakistan into Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir have been continuing for long. He added that the government was sure that extremists were interested in destabilising the country and that they were being trained in Pakistan. The Punjab Governor Arjun Singh said that the border had been sealed to check any possible infiltration by "undesirable elements," into Punjab. This, he added, was part of the massive security measures being taken to ensure a peaceful poll in the state.

Sealing the border completely is an impossible task say top army officers. However, such a move usually acts as a deterrent. Sealing the border in actual terms, means a massive movement of forces towards the border. All traditional routes are carefully watched and the strength of troops at such places are doubled. Mobile patrolling is also intensified. Patrols move from area to area at irregular intervals giving those attempting to crossover no indication of when they may check the spot again. The duration of patrolling is also reduced. Ambushes are laid to catch those attempting to cross over. Besides watching traditional routes, the troops keep a look out for any new route made or discovered by the infiltrators.

Rashmi Saksena, New Delhi

ACCOUNTANCY

The Cost of Power

Anomalies in the ICWAI raise eyebrows

The Company Law Board (CLB) is believed to have sought an explanation from the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of India (ICWAI) on a number of anomalies in the institute's financial and administrative management following several complaints by a section of its members. These allegations have one common point, "alleged fraud and mismanagement and alleged advantages and benefits obtained by council members, secretary and director of finance and their associates."

An interesting feature of the controversy is that these anomalies stand recorded even in the minutes of different council meetings of the ICWAI. An indictment was also made against the secretariat of the institute in the 33-page internal audit report for the quarter ended December 1984. The council meetings on 17 March and 21-22 July this year also recorded profound displeasure on a Rs 32-lakh bank reconciliation lacuna, pointed out in the internal audit report. This report also pointed out several other inadequacies such as foreign tours by some council members in violation of the Cost and Works Accountants Act 1959 and the Cost and Works Accountants Regulations 1959 (Act No 23 of 1959).

A very interesting episode centres around a writ petition filed by the director (administration and finance), Sunil Kumar Rakshit, and assistant director (a & f) Swapan Dey, against the then president of ICWAI, Roshan Lal Bhatia, and the institute on 9 May 1985 in the High Court of Calcutta against bifurcation of the finance and administration portfolio and redesignation of the petitioners as director (finance and accounts) and assistant director (finance and accounts). The petition, *inter alia*, states: "...Ever since the respondent no 4 (i.e. Bhatia) became the president of the respondent no 2 (i.e., ICWAI), your petitioners had frequent differences of opinion with the respondent no. 4 in reimbursing T.A. and other bills, amongst others, concerning the respondent no. 4. In fact, your petitioners were asked several times to pass the bills as submitted by the respondent no. 4 without verification and checking and reimburse the same to the respondent no. 4 but your petitioners being loyal and conscientious officers of the respondent no. 2 refused to oblige the respondent no. 4 and thus invited the wrath of the respondent no. 4...

"That your petitioners state that being unable to force your petitioners to accede to improper requests for ignoring the irregularities in the bills of the respondent no. 4, the respondent no 4 threatened to snatch the powers of your petitioners from their respective positions as held in the directorate of administration and finance."

Mystery surrounds the subsequent actions in regard to the writ petition in which such serious allegations were raised against the ICWAI chief. Firstly, the petition was withdrawn the very next day. Item no. 7 of the minutes of the ICWAI council meeting subsequently held on 12 May states: "The committee noted the interim orders of *status quo* passed by the High Court of Calcutta in the writ petition filed by Shri S.K. Rakshit and Shri Swapan Dey on 9 May. The committee also noted that the petitioners in their letter dated 10.5.85 addressed to the secretary of the institute have conveyed their decision to withdraw the writ petition. The committee resolved that the official designation of Shri S.K. Rakshit as director (finance and administration) and the official designation of Shri Swapan Dey as assistant director (finance and administration) be restored immediately."

Insiders allege that the entire writ petition episode was a stage-managed affair. They question as to why the committee did not take notice of the derogatory remarks about the president of the institute. Secondly, a close scrutiny of the petition documents reveals that the plaintiffs, *inter alia*, produced copies of correspondence exchanged between Bhatia and ICWAI secretary, D.C. Bhattacharya. One letter, for instance (No.G/142/11/84/5038, dated 27 November, 1984) records Bhattacharya's opposition to the idea of bifurcation of the finance and administration portfolio.

ICWAI: a stage-managed affair?



DP Sahu

The question posed is: how did the plaintiffs get hold of these letters? The suspicion of stage-managing intensifies when one finds that Bhattacharya failed to react after the leakage of these documents.

Was the ICWAI secretary interested in preventing any enquiry into the work of these two officers, viz. Rakshit and Dey? One possible reason for this alleged cover-up may be the yawning gap in the bank reconciliation for which the responsibility apparently lies with the director (a & f) and the secretary. Thus page 8 of the internal audit report referred to earlier states. "Huge amounts were found deposited as per cash book in different banks which were not found credited in bank statements. Similarly, amounts were found credited in bank statements which were not linked with cash book." In four banks—Central Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce and two branches of the State Bank of India—the amounts deposited per cash book but not linked with the bank statement or *vice versa* were noted as Rs 12,58,792 and Rs 20,17,140 respectively.

ICWAI is not a government organisation but it functions within the bounds set out by Act no. 23 of 1959 and deals with public money. Some members have lodged a complaint with the minister of industry and company affairs, suggesting that the centre should take action under section 35 of the Act which states in sub-section (3): "If, in the opinion of the central government, the council has persistently made default in giving effect to the directions issued under this section, the central government may, after giving an opportunity to the council to state its case, by order dissolve the council, whereafter a new council shall be constituted in accordance with the provisions of this Act with effect from such date as may be specified by the central government."

Will the centre seriously go into the happenings inside an institute which has over 1.5 lakh students and over 6,000 affiliated members and associate members and, in fact, represents the cost and works accountancy profession in the public eye?

Sankar Ray Calcutta

ENTERPRISE

High but Dry

Non-resident breathes life into Asiad tower

Delhiites can now go high—for food—with the opening on 1 September of the Bombay Palace restaurant on the dome of the 180 ft Asiad Village tower.

The tower was one of the monstrosities built during Asiad '82 so that participants could have a small bite while contemplating the vastness of the capital city. But astonishingly, there was no initial provision for running it as a restaurant since no kitchen had been built. During the Asiad, the food served on top was taken up from downstairs. And contrary to popular belief, neither is it a revolving restaurant, nor was it constructed with such a provision in mind.

Nevertheless, these drawbacks are not strong enough to dissuade Surjit Singh, the Delhi-based director of Chatwal Hotels and Restaurants (India) Pvt Ltd, from going ahead. To start with, he has chosen to serve Chinese cuisine—and has spruced up the tower with Chinese decor—because in a survey of South Delhi eateries he found Chinese food to be "the most popular kind of dish."

But what makes this piece of entrepreneurship one-of-a-kind is that the promoting group behind the show is a non-resident Indian restaurant chain, viz. Chatwal Hotels and Restaurants Inc (estimated turnover: US $25 million or Rs 30 crores) which runs ten restaurants and four hotels in the US, Canada and the UK. Invariably, their restaurants overseas bear the name "Bombay Palace," which presumably evokes nostalgic visions of India in those distant lands. The idea of setting up a restaurant on home turf came from the chairman of the group, Sant Singh Chatwal, who during a visit to New Delhi at the time of the Asiad thought that a tower restaurant might not be a bad idea after all.

After the Asiad *tamasha* was over, though, it was not clear what the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) wanted to do with the tower it was now saddled with. After about two years of dilly-dallying, DDA thought of giving it out on lease for a restaurant. Some "large groups" in India reportedly did show initial interest but later backed out. Chatwal stepped in at this stage and entered into a 20-year lease agreement with



Joydeep Vaidya

Asiad Tower: resurrected

DDA in July 1984. According to the terms of this agreement, the company will have to pay Rs 50,000 or five per cent of the gross receipts every month—whichever is more—and this rate is subject to renegotiation every five years. Also the company has to maintain the lawns around the tower, the building itself plus the adjoining constructions.

Surjit Singh says the restaurant has a capacity for 96 persons and the idea is to get a five star classification from the tourism department. The prices are also in the five star range. However, only one lift is available for patrons, the only other one being reserved for service. Singh plans to open a bat be cue on the lawns. The idea is that "while waiting for a table up there, customers could have a place to sit and munch something." Singh admits that the tower-top restaurant, because of its construction, is "not spacious. But once you sit down, the view from the window makes up for it," he promises.

The directors expect the restaurant to break even within three years. But whether it will be viable in the long run is something one has to wait and see. Singh says that the company is trying to get a licence for a bar. The floor above the restaurant, he feels, is ideally suited for this purpose and providing a bar "will make the whole project really viable." But this is a ticklish decision for the puritan Delhi administration which is known not to look too kindly on the opening of places of inebriation. It is likely, therefore, that Delhiites wanting to really go high will have to wait.

Hardev Singh, New Delhi

INDUSTRY

New Balm for Old Ailment

Bill to cure sickness is unlikely to work wonders

The Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Bill, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 29 August, spells out several admirable objectives to deal expeditiously with the problem of industrial sickness. It highlights the serious consequences arising from the persistence of widespread and chronic sickness—*inter alia*, loss of production, employment and revenue to the central and state governments as well as the blocking up of substantial sums of investible funds belonging to banks and financial institutions.

The outstanding credit on the latter's books, presently locked up in sick units, was Rs 3,778 crores at the end of 1983 when the sick list consisted of 491 large, 1,256 medium and 7,856 small-scale units. The Bill contains several provisions to revive and rehabilitate at least those sick units which are reckoned to be potentially viable.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has welcomed the Bill as "a salutary step." But it seems doubtful if the Bill will really succeed in its aims in view of the fact that similar attempts made in the past have not produced the desired impact to solve this problem.

For instance, the government set up in 1971 the Calcutta-headquartered Industrial Reconstruction Corporation of India (IRCI) for rehabilitating and reconstructing ailing industrial units. Although the

Proudly, we are taking India back to the 12th century.

Time was when the world knew India as a great trading nation. Today, centuries later, India is all set to regain that position in the global market place.

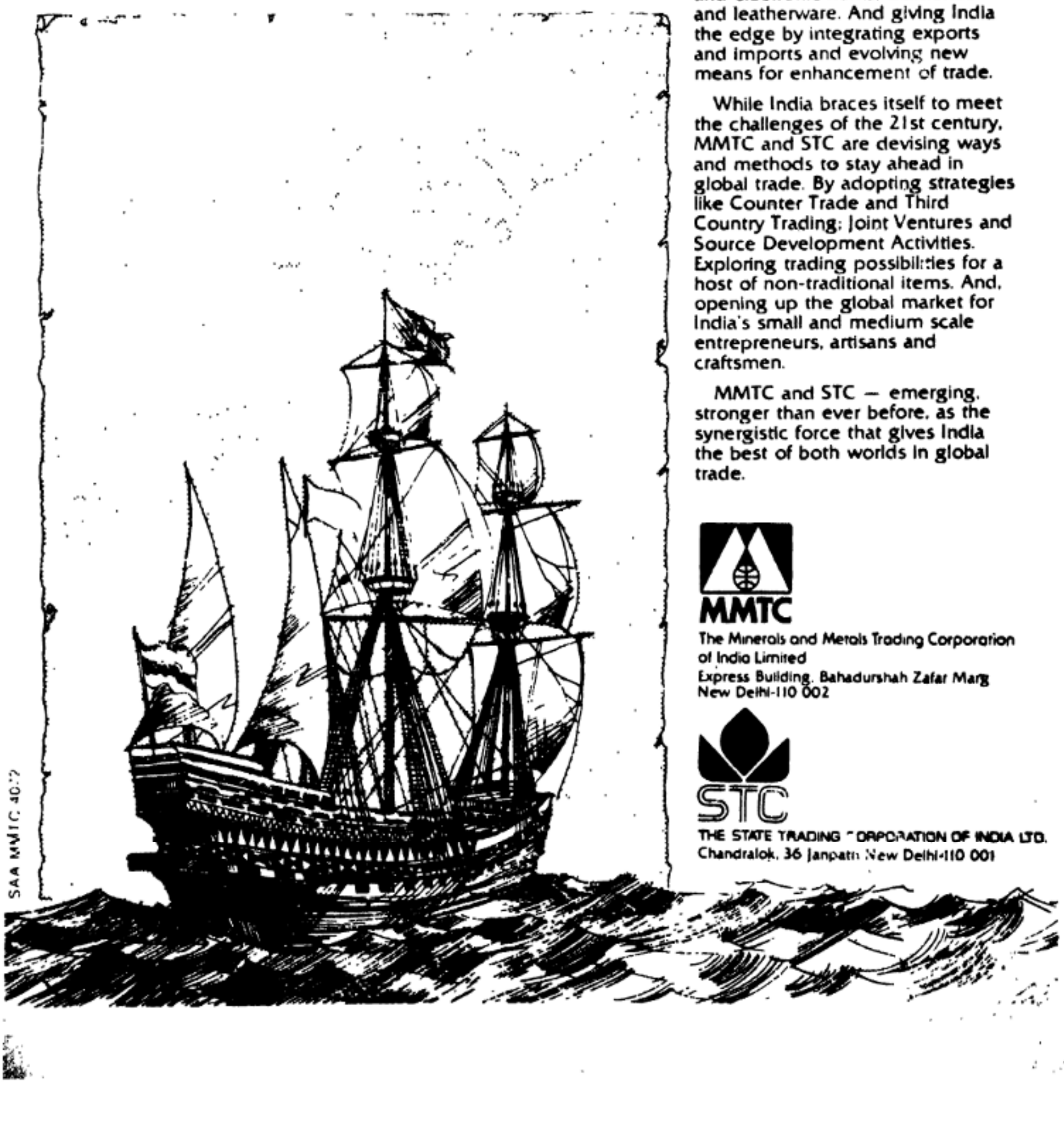
And, bringing India into prominence amongst the world trading community are MMTC and STC.

The Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Limited and The State Trading Corporation of India Limited. Premier organisations that serve as the two arms of India's foreign trade. Whose combined expertise has taken Indian goods to countries all around the globe. And whose formidable bulk-buying capability has brought a wide range of products for India's needs. At the right time, right price and in the right quantity. To serve the consumer as well as the core sectors of India's growing economy.

MMTC and STC. Trading in items as diverse as minerals and textiles, metals and sports goods, fertilisers and electronic items, diamonds and leatherware. And giving India the edge by integrating exports and imports and evolving new means for enhancement of trade.

While India braces itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century, MMTC and STC are devising ways and methods to stay ahead in global trade. By adopting strategies like Counter Trade and Third Country Trading; Joint Ventures and Source Development Activities. Exploring trading possibilities for a host of non-traditional items. And, opening up the global market for India's small and medium scale entrepreneurs, artisans and craftsmen.

MMTC and STC — emerging, stronger than ever before, as the synergistic force that gives India the best of both worlds in global trade.



MMTC

The Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Limited
Express Building, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg
New Delhi-110 002

STC

THE STATE TRADING CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.
Chandralok, 36 Janpath New Delhi-110 001

SAA MMTC 40:?

IRCI was able to revive a few sick units, it could not play an effective role mainly owing to financial and managerial constraints as well as some legal impediments in effecting mergers. According to T. Tiwari, former chairman of IRCI, "It is difficult for any organisation to survive purely as an intensive care unit." The government, therefore, decided last year to convert the IRCI into the Industrial Reconstruction Bank of India. Obviously, the government now realises that this re-naming exercise is hardly the answer to revive sick units and prevent future sickness.

The provisions of the Sick Industrial Companies Bill now before Parliament are broadly on the lines indicated by the finance minister in his budget speech. But it is not exactly clear as to how the government is going to deal with situations where not only individual units but entire industries have become sick. For example, in the sugar industry there are at présent 339 mills in the country, of which 166 are in the cooperative sector, 103 in the joint sector, and 70 in the public sector. According to the New Delhi-based Indian Sugar Mills Association, "The outlook for all of them is bleak."

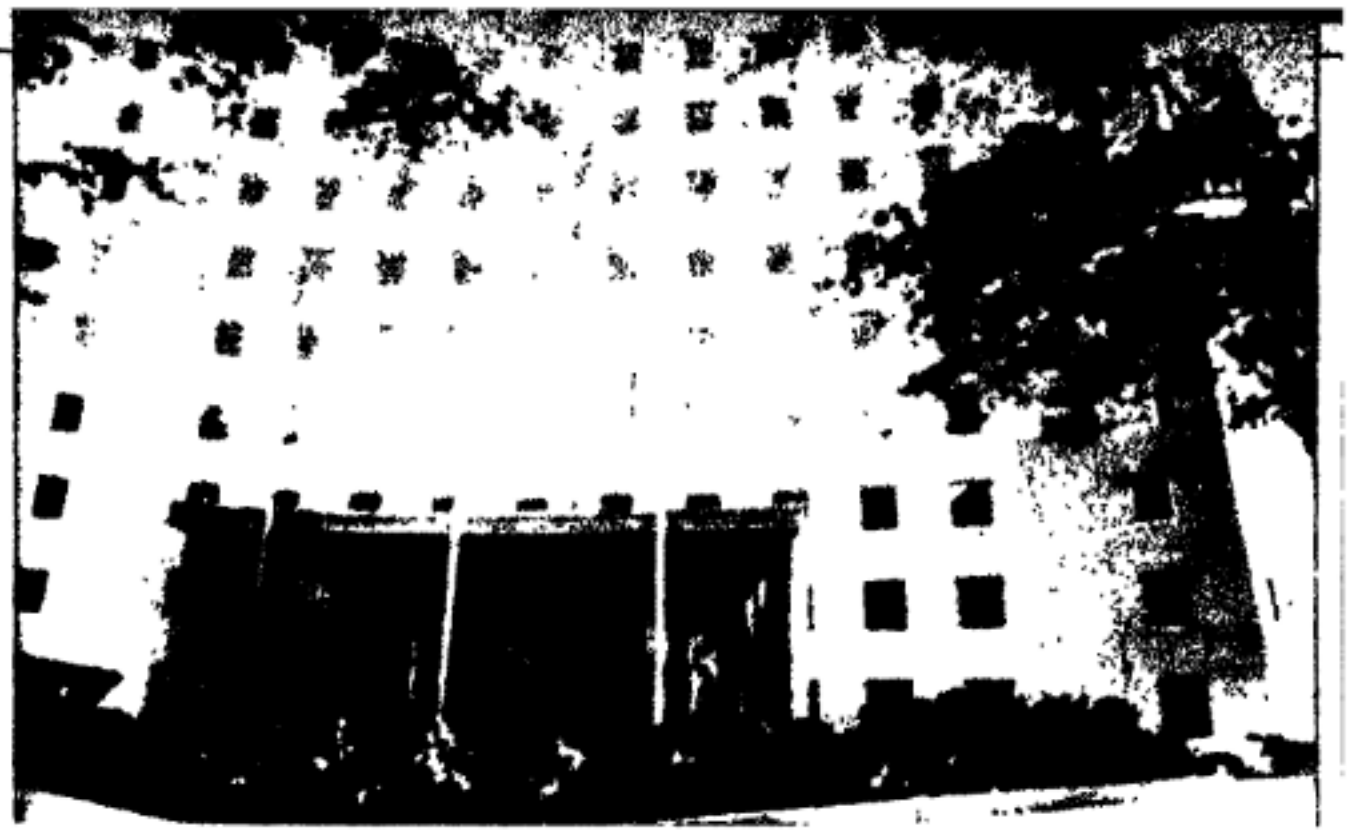
The association reveals in a recent brochure that the losses suffered by mills in all the sectors and all the regions in the three years—1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84—were more than Rs 800 crores.

In setting up the Board for Financial and Industrial Reconstruction, the government has assumed that mismanagement is the sole cause of sickness. This assumption is wrong. It does not recognise that there are several external factors too which can cause sickness: unrealistic price controls, lack of demand, excessive taxation, severe power shortage, labour's opposition to modernisation and rationalisation and so on.

While the Bill no doubt reflects the government's anxiety to revive sick units and to prevent future sickness, some of its existing policies actually aggravate it. For instance, the price preference given to the public sector units in the matter of government purchases has been unfairly affecting the profitable working of a large number of private sector units. The government is now the single largest buyer of manufactured goods in the country and, therefore, its purchase policy has a great deal to do with the healthy functioning of industries in the private sector.

If industrial sickness is spreading, could the root source of the contagion be the government itself?

R.J. Venkateswaran, Calcutta



World Bank's Washington headquarters; Indian Railways should buy Indian

RAILWAYS

Bidding for the Outsider

But the World Bank is not impressed

The Indian Railways have chalked out a massive modernisation and expansion plan with World Bank aid. Under the programme, the Railways floated global tenders for the supply of 48,000 cartridge taper roller bearings, an essential ingredient in the construction of railway wagons. In October 1984, ten firms from countries like Japan, USA and Italy sent their offers. National Engineering Industries (NEI) of Jaipur was the only Indian company to join the race. Although NEI was the lowest bidder, the decision was manipulated in favour of a Japanese firm and the railway authorities recommended to the World Bank to approve the purchase from Japan.

The World Bank, however, rejected the proposal objecting that though the comparative statements of various offers had been tabulated the norms set by it in this regard had been overlooked. In the circumstances it asked the railway authorities to reconsider the whole matter and compute the rates correctly. While reassessing the offers made by the ten companies the rates of the NEI bid turned out to be the lowest. Once again, the railway authorities sent their recommendations in favour of the same Japanese firm, but the World Bank was not impressed.

Reportedly it has taken exception to the undue interest being shown by Indian Railways authorities in favour of the Japanese firm, despite the fact that the rates being offered by the Indian firm were lower by over Rs 200 per bearing. The World Bank also pointed out that besides the rate factor the capability of keeping to the delivery schedule also weighed heavily in favour of the Indian firm. The railways required 6,000 cartridge bearings per month but the the Japanese firm was not capable of supplying even half of the requirement. Moreover, it wanted six months' time to start the supply after the order was placed. Against this the Indian company was ready not only to supply the requisite quantity every month but was also in a position to start immediate delivery. In the circumstances the World Bank saw no justification for the railways favouring the Japanese firm. Placing an order with the Japanese firm would have cost the nation a sum of Rs one crore in foreign exchange

The story does not end here. The World Bank's insistence that the order be placed with the Indian firm was not relished by the railway board. However, as it could not oblige the Japanese firm, the lobby in Rail Bhawan favouring the Japanese, drastically slashed the order. To NEI's great surprise, the order was placed for the supply of only 12,000 cartridge taper roller bearings against the initial enquiry for 48,000.

While it took eight months for the deal to be finalised the wagon manufacturers' yards piled up with unlifted stocks of cartridge taper roller bearings. Meanwhile, the railways continued to pay a sum of Rs 70,000 per day as service charges to the World Bank for not utilising the sum earmarked for the modernisation and expansion of railway facilities in the country.

Milap Chand Dandia, Jaipur

At a Glance

DIVIDENDS

ITC: Recommended higher equity dividend of 22.5 per cent for year ended 30 June 1985 (20 per cent).

Jullundur Motor Agency (Delhi): Recommended dividend of 15 per cent for year ended 31 March 1985.

Autolite (India): Declared dividend of 15 per cent for the year ended 31 March 1985. Company planning to enter capital market and has assured minimum dividend of 18 per cent to the new shareholders for the current year.

J.J. Exporters: Maintained equity dividend at 15 per cent for the year ended 31 March 1985. Dividend will be payable as on 30 September.

Aruna Sugar: Board announced interim dividend on equity of ten per cent for the year as also 11 per cent on preference.

Sica Breweries: Company stepping up dividend to 25 per cent (20 per cent).

Cholamandalam Investment: Recommended higher dividend of 20 per cent (18 per cent) for the current year.

Darjeeling Dooars Plantation: Declared equity dividend of 20 per cent for the year ended 31 March 1985.

Kamanwala Housing Development Finance Company: Recommends a ten per cent dividend for the year ended 30 April 1985. Profit before tax of the current year's three months, ending 30 July, is Rs 31.3 lakhs on a paid up capital of Rs 15 lakhs.

ISSUES

P. L. Finance: Issuing 75 lakhs Rs ten equity shares and 1.5 lakh 15 per cent secured non-convertible debentures of Rs 100 each. The equity is linked to the debentures and will be on a rights basis, with holders of 50 equity offered 30 equity shares linked to six debentures.

Ranbaxy Laboratories: Equity shares of Rs one crore tied to non-convertible debentures of Rs 1.5 crores on rights basis to existing shareholders and holders of convertible parts of 13.5 per cent debentures of the company.

W.S.Insulators: Will be issuing equity linked non-convertible debentures on rights basis. Equity issues will bear a premium of Rs 15 per share and holder of 50 equity shares will get 15 shares. The 15 per cent non-convertible secured debentures will be allotted at the rate of ten debentures for every 50 shares presently held.

Super House: Company intends to enter capital market with public issue of 5.7 lakh equity shares of Rs ten each at par towards end of November 1985.

Madhya Pradesh United Polypropylene: Fixed 5 October 1985 as record date for determining eligibility for issue of rights shares at par on a two-for-five basis.

Punjab Alkalies and Chemicals: Will make a rights issue of 20.5 lakh new equity shares in the proportion of one for every five shares

PRODUCTS

United Electronics: Diversifying into manufacturing biomedical equipment, including blood pressure equipment, automatic fever thermometers and other sophisticated equipments.

Chloride India: Threatening to break the monopoly of Standard Batteries by entering the market for supplying costly submarine batteries for Indian Navy, with each battery costing about Rs two crore.

Ion Exchange (India): Launched new consumer product for bacteria-free drinking water. Named Zero-B, company claims it to be the best preventive against waterborne diseases. The water is made 100 per cent bacteria free, using iodine in a controlled manner.

Autolite (India): Claimed to be the first Indian company to develop and introduce 'hi-power' and halogen lamps in the country, is diversifying into manufacturing of wiring harness, plastic auto parts, parking and indicator lamps, horns, cutouts, ignition coils, miniature bulbs, aerodynamic fuel efficient head lamps and quartz halogen bulbs.

RESULTS

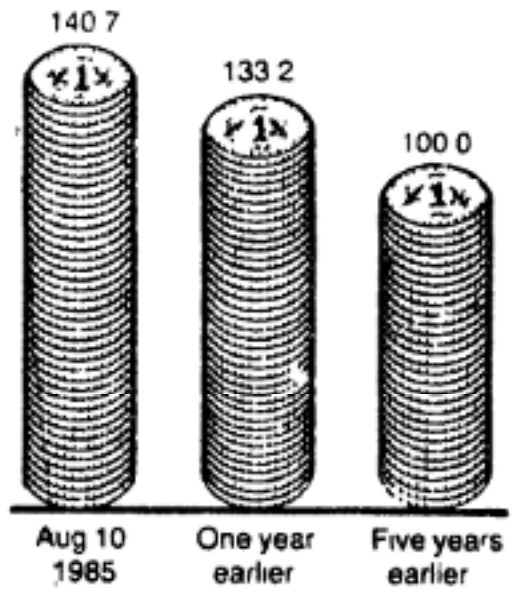
National Rolling and Steel Ropes: Company's turnover increased to Rs 18 crores (Rs 5.6 crore in 1983-84) with gross profit of Rs 1.23 crores and net profit of Rs 53.38 lakhs.

SHARES / TOP TEN

	1985 High	1985 Low	Opening market quote on Sept 16
	Rs	Rs	Rs
ACC	595.00	385 00	539.00
Andhra Cement	44.50	22 75	40.00
Birla Jute	88.75	51.70	81.50
Century Spinning	1310.00	840 00	1210.00
Guj State Fert	790 00	537.00	700 00
Hindustan Motor	85.50	31 81	74.20
Indian Organic	134.50	50.50	134.50
Premier Auto	627.50	322 00	570 00
Reliance Industries	247.00	120 00	227.00
Tata Tea	168.00	68.75	90.50

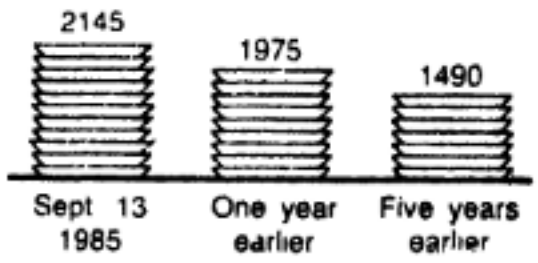
Note: The most actively traded shares last week

DEARNESS LEVEL

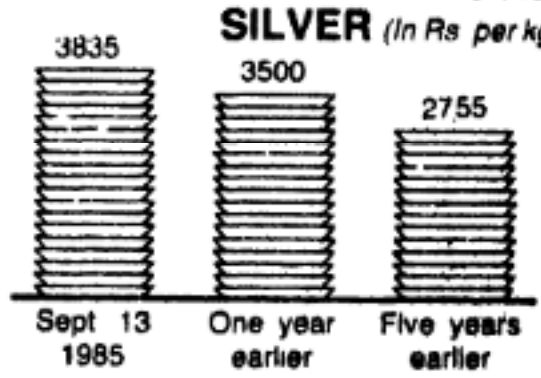


Note Based on wholesale prices of selected essentials

GOLD *(In Rs per 10 gms)*

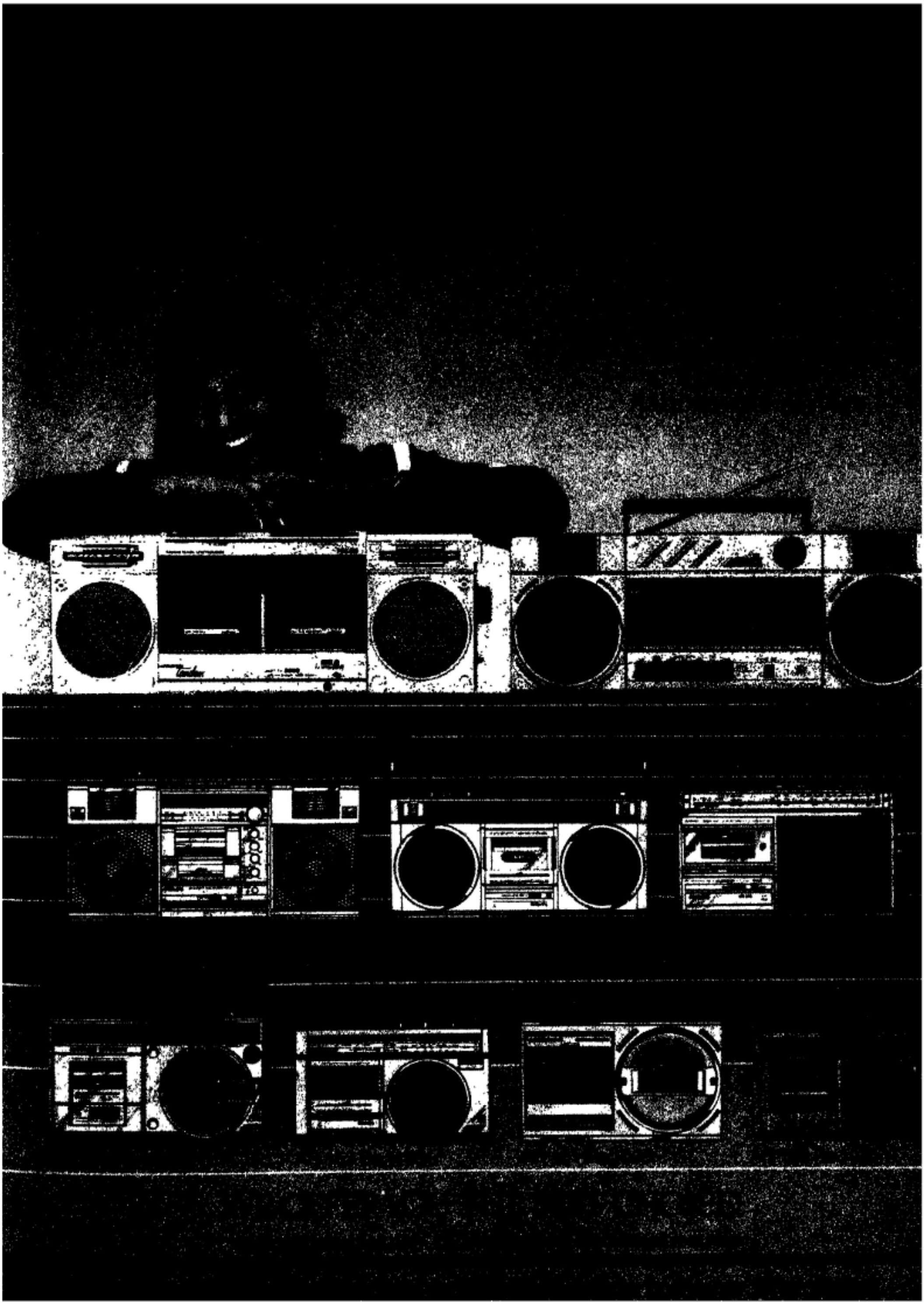


SILVER *(In Rs per kg)*

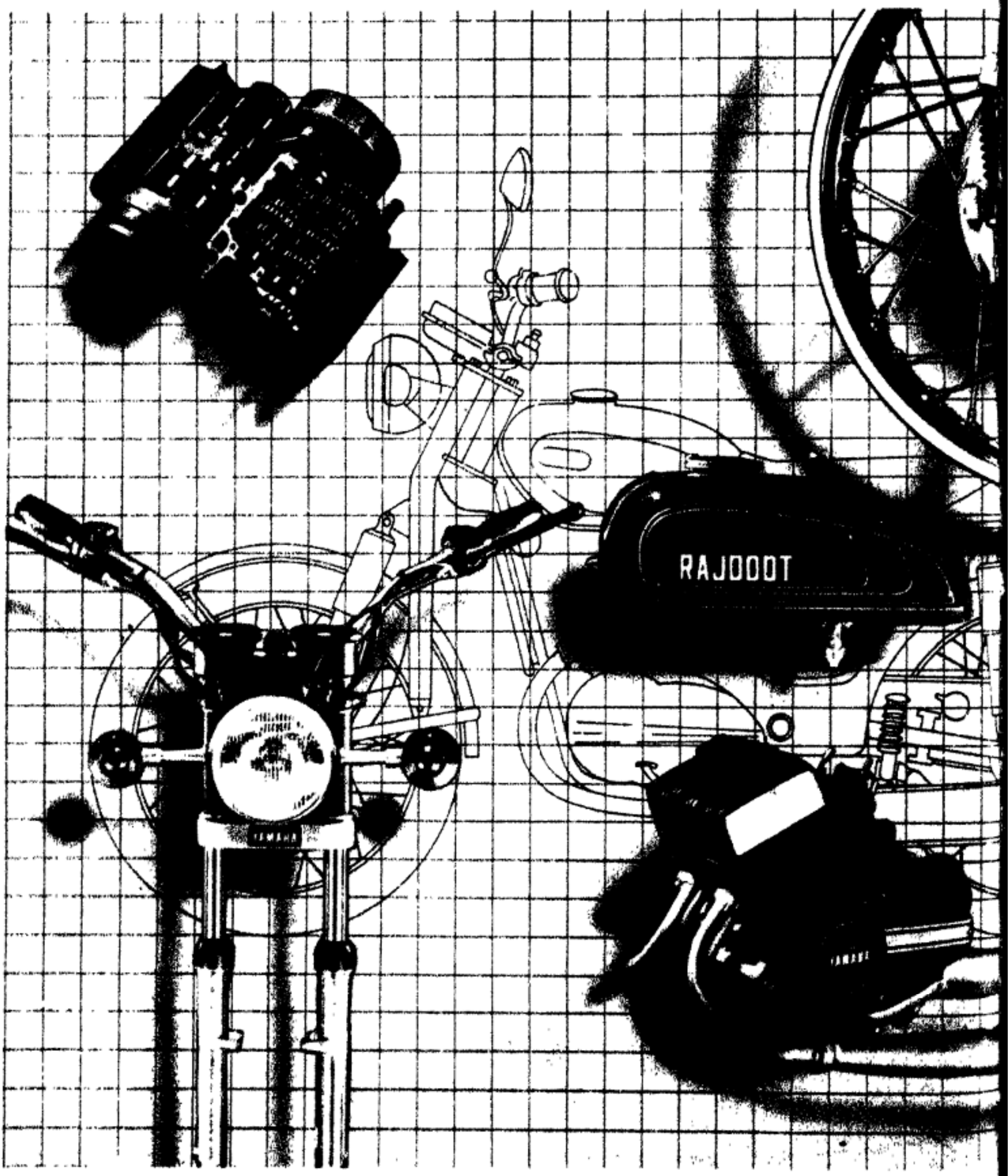


Source Bombay Bullion Association Ltd

Chart by Nirmlan Maity

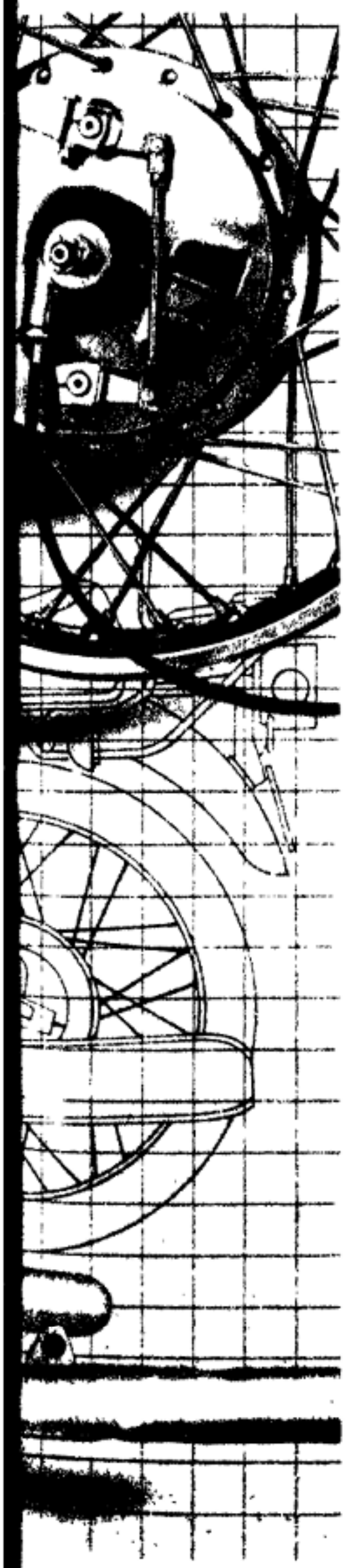


JAPANESE TECHNOLOGY IS NEWS FOR EVERYONE EX



FOR INDIAN BIKES CEPT RAJDOOT

ESCORTS



It was news for us too. But that was eleven years ago when Rajdoot was the first Indian motorbike to 'go' Japanese.

Collaborating with **MIKUNI**—the world-famous makers of carburettors.

And that signalled a technology avalanche.

FUJI for clutch assemblies.
HOSHI for swaged spokes.
And **KAYABA** for front-forks.

Which means that there's a lot of Japanese know-how making the Rajdoot a very efficient machine.

And, when you add the hottest name in motorcycle engineering world-wide—**Yamaha of Japan**—it makes big news in the form of the Rajdoot-Yamaha breed of 350 cc motorbikes. Soon to be followed by the highly fuel-efficient 100 cc bikes.

Yes, the foresight is paying off. Because today, one of every two bikes on the road is a Rajdoot.

Which, incidentally, is not very surprising news.



RAJDOOT

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LEADER

ESC-8615

VARIETY/KHAAS BAAT

Whatever he does, *Feroz Khan* seems to be the cynosure of all eyes. Even when he decided to move into his sprawling bungalow in Bangalore, people started spreading rumours of how success had gone to his head. The grapevine has it that when he ventured out of his farmhouse, he would dress like a cowboy and ride on horseback on the streets of Bangalore. But Feroz came back to tinsel town and announced his latest film, *Jaanbaaz*, with great fanfare. Contrary to expectations he took a long time to begin the shooting of the film, causing a lot of tongues to wag once again. Now, after a change in the cast of his film—his brothers Sanjay and Akbar have been replaced and the new stars included are Anil Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia, Feroz himself and Amrish Puri—he has finally begun shooting.

She could not have asked for a better start for her career. In her very first film, *Hum Kisise Kum Nahin*, *Kaajal Kiran* worked with one of the well-established directors, Nasir Husain. Everybody predicted a bright future for her, but after her debut, she just missed the bus to fame, acting in small roles in films that did nothing to boost her career. Ten years after her first film, she has thrown in the towel. "Everyone wanted to exploit me because I am a girl. I played along with them till I could. I can no longer play their games. I am giving up," she says, disgusted. According to reliable sources, she has married a millionaire and has settled down to a new life.



Jayant Das

Jayaprada: in dire straits?

Kaajal Kiran: surrender



Nagra

The one-time contender for the number one position among the heroines (till she was overtaken by Sridevi) seems to be facing rough weather. *Jayaprada*, who is being written off as a has-been, is very upset about the rumours, and she has reason to be: she still has eight films on the floors and a few others in the offing... which is hardly a sign of bad times!

Has success gone to *Jackie Shroff's* head? While producers allege that he is beginning to show signs of a swollen head, Jackie vehemently denies this charge. He says whatever success he had achieved with his first film, *Hero*, has been stemmed after his two subsequent films, *Shiva ka Insaaf* and *Mera Jawaab*, flopped. Meanwhile, his relationship with Ayesha Dutt continues to be indeterminate. All talk of their betrothal was dashed to the ground when the celebration turned out to be nothing more than Ayesha's birthday party.

Donning a New Mantle

The changeover has been smooth. With the untimely death of Lalit Maken, the mantle of leading one of the largest unions in the country, the National Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers, which has over 50 affiliated unions and federations and a 16-lakh membership, has fallen on Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, the Congress(I) MP Kumaramangalam (33) who is the son of the late Mohan Kumaramangalam, is an active trade union leader He has been actively involved in leading unions since 1973 when he was president of the National Students Union of India (NSUI). He got his break in active trade unionism in 1977. After the death of Maken, says Kumaramangalam, he will have only "to work harder" to make Parliament an active forum to voice the demands of the workers.



Sunil Dutt with members of the delegation: breaking new ground

Ramayana Japanese Style

Indian epics have evinced much interest in foreign climes. First, it was the French, led by Peter Brook who took on the onerous task of transforming the *Mahabharata* into a marathon play. And now, the Japanese are keen on filming the *Ramayana*. An Indo-Japanese project, the film is to be a full-length feature in animation and is to be shot in both 35 and 70 mm. It will be originally done in English, Hindi and Japanese. Among the luminaries attached to this project are Amitabh Bachchan and Sunil Dutt, who recently led a delegation to Japan to finalise the details. S.S. Oberoi, a big name in the advertising world, as well as the producer of the TV serial, *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi*, will be the producer of *Ramayana*. Vinod Sharma of *Gandhi* fame will write the dialogues for the Hindi version while Bachchan will lend his voice to the film.

Epitome of Energy

It has been the nucleus of his life: nuclear energy. Whether at the department of nuclear energy at Trombay among distinguished colleagues like Sir Homi Bhabha or besides German scientists as the head of department of atomic energy at Karlsruhe, West Germany, Dr Deepak Gupta has made safeguards system the theme of his vocation. Dr Gupta, who hails from an illustrious family in Bikrampur, Dacca, graduated in chemical engineering from Jadavpur university, Calcutta, in 1951. Presently the head of the department of safeguard systems at the Nuclear Research Centre, Karlsruhe, he developed the process of making heavy nitrogen indigenously, a no mean achievement. A naturalised German citizen, Dr Gupta's dedication to his work has not gone unrewarded: the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management, Albuquerque, New Mexico, has conferred on him the Distinguished Service Award, bringing glory not only to his motherland but also to Germany. He is also the first German to win this award in the last 26 years. His wife, Mrs Eva Maria Gupta, has produced an authentic book on *Alpona*, the folk art of Bengal.



Dr Gupta : yeoman service

Birdwatcher Turns MP

What started as a childish curiosity matured into a relentless search for the rare and beautiful. At the age of nine, ornithologist Salim Ali had shot down a yellow-throated sparrow but when he could not recognise it he took the help of his uncle, who guided him to the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). Ever since birds have obsessed him. Today, on the threshold of his nineties, Salim Ali is no less active than he was in the prime of his youth. He is more than a bird-watcher; he is also an ardent supporter of the conservation of wildlife and protection of the environment. Countless awards and laurels have come his way. His recent nomination to the Rajya Sabha, therefore, hardly causes a flutter. But the hyperactive octogenarian still craves for adventure. Sometime in October this year, he attempts to trek along a Himalayan route in search of the mysterious Himalayan quail.



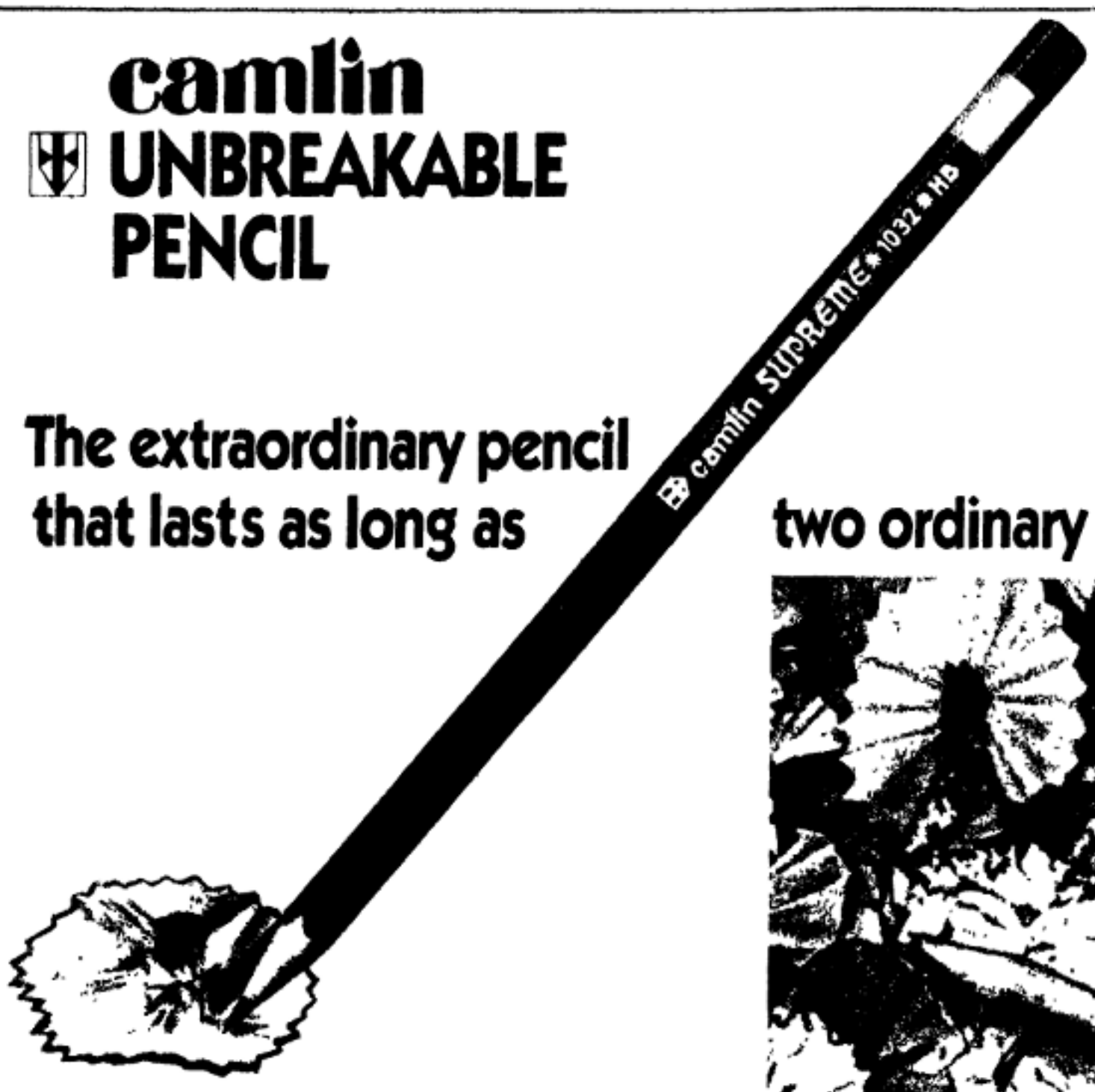
Salim Ali: a new role

Poet of Brotherhood

Literature is his obsession; and his quest for the aesthetic has not only made him study the niceties of his own mother-tongue, Bengali, but also that of a foreign language, German. Dr Alokeranjan Dasgupta, besides translating the works of German authors like Peter Weiss, Botho Straus, Marie-Luise Fleisser, Georg Buechner, and others into Bengali, is also a recognised Bengali poet and essayist. His poems have been published both in English and German. Dr Dasgupta's efforts for the promotion of Indo-German cultural ties have not gone unnoticed: he was recently awarded the Goethe Medal instituted by the Goethe Institute, Munich.

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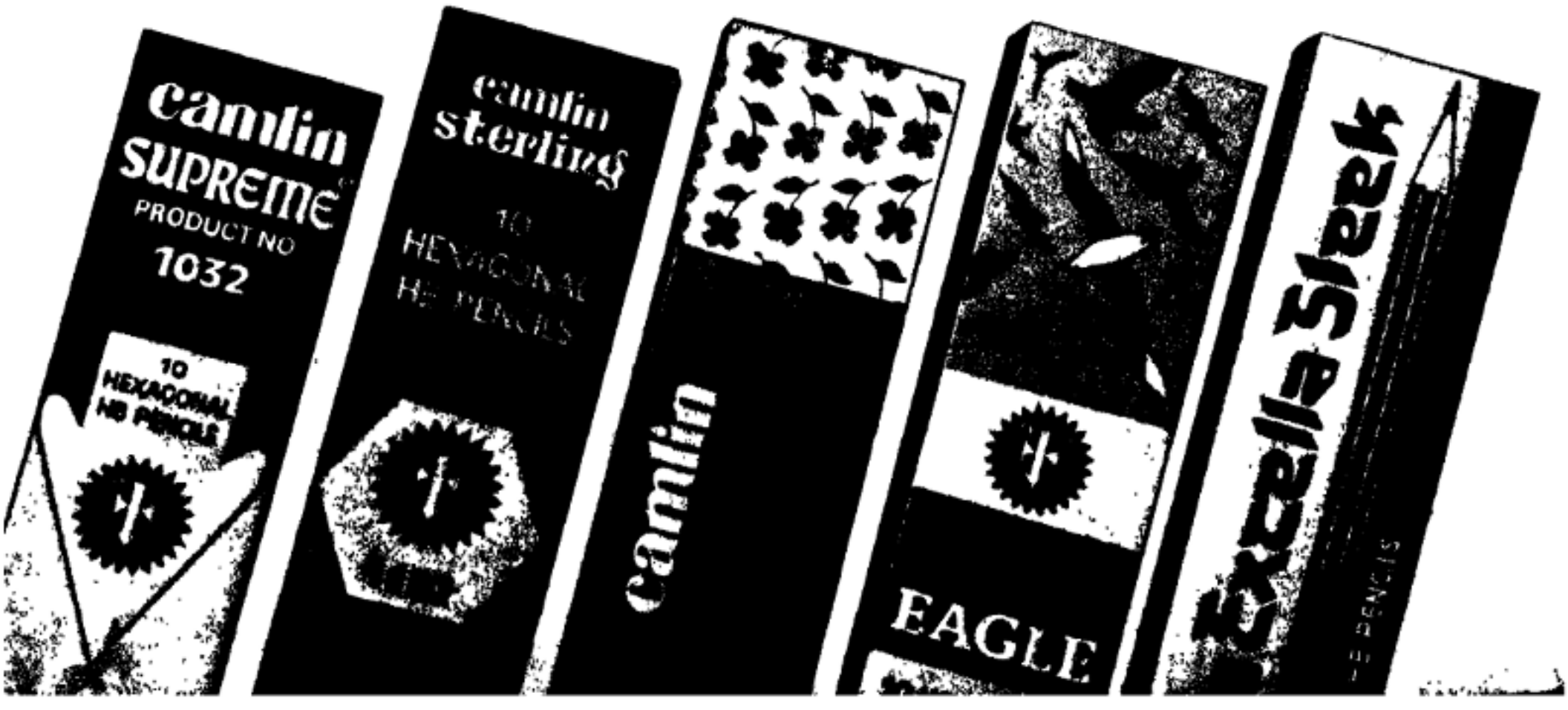
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The Small Screen

Dominique Lapierre of the Collins-Lapierre duo, who have authored a number of bestsellers, will soon start shooting for a serial for French television on the life and times of Mother Teresa. Though Lapierre had approached Mother Teresa with the idea almost two years ago, it was not until recently that she finally gave her consent. Indian television viewers too will be able to watch this programme once it has been broadcast on French TV.



Lapierre: from books to TV

If all goes well, tube-addicts should be able to see from January 1986 a new Hindi serial made by none other than internationally-renowned Satyajit Ray. Based on his own stories, the script for the 13 episodes has also been written by Ray. Among the eminent actors who have already been signed on are Victor Banerjee, Om Puri and Mohan Agashe. Ray's son Sandip is also involved in the production



Agashe, Banerjee and Ray's son, Sandip: another masterpiece?

First Rajesh Puri, then Lovleen Mishra and now Rajendra Gange: all have bagged major roles in films. All of them owe their successful entry into films to television's marathon serial *Hum Log*. Rajesh (Lallu) Puri currently has 20 films on the floors, and Sushma (Dadi) Seth too is busy shooting for films in between her assignments for the bi-weekly serial. Lovleen (Chutki) Mishra has just finished shooting for Govind Nihalani's *Aaghaat*. Gange, who plays the role of inspector Saamdar in *Hum Log*, has walked away with a prize role. A small-time actor till his TV debut, Gange has been signed on by director Kidar Sharma to enact the role of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, in his early years. Ardhendu Bose will play the role of the leader in the later years of his life.



Satish Shah (right), one of the talents in Pathak's new serial

Pankaj Kapoor, who plays *Karamchand* in the serial of the same name, is a veteran actor, and has already acted in over 70 plays and a number of films including *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro*. Kapoor, who hails from Ludhiana, had decided to join the Film and Television Institute at Pune, but was rejected after the screen test. "They liked my acting but didn't like my screen presence," he recalls ruefully. But he was luckier when he applied for the National School of Drama where he went on to win a gold medal. A lesser-known fact is that he dubbed for Ben Kingsley for the Hindi version of *Gandhi:* he seems to have come a long way since his rejection by the FTII!

The Shafi Inamdar-Satish Shah-Rakesh Bedi trio will be seen once again by TV viewers, this time in a new serial. The man responsible for producing it is Avinav Pathak, who already has one TV serial, *Paying Guest*, to his credit. The only one who is conspicuous by her absence is Swaroop Sampat, the other member of the popular *Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi* team.

Basu Chatterjee's serials are turning out to be popular favourites these days. First, it was *Rajani*, which took the country by storm; now it is *Darpan*.



A. K. Hangal in *Darpan*

Sensitive and thought-provoking, each instalment of *Darpan* shows a TV adaptation of a short story by a contemporary Indian writer in a vernacular. In all, 13 such adaptations are to be telecast. The Hindi adaptations are by noted writer Kamleshwar.

Idols With Feet of Clay

Six months ago, after their triumphs in Australia and Sharjah, the Indian cricketers were on top of the world. The 'world champions' have, however, been rudely shocked by the Sri Lankans

The only consistent feature of Indian cricket is its inconsistency. Barely six months ago, the Indian cricketers were world beaters, yet today they are being humiliated by a side that many thought didn't even deserve to play Test cricket. The Sri Lankans, considered happy-go-lucky weekend cricketers have proved, by beating India in the second Test, that they are a force to reckon with in international cricket and not merely carefree wielders of the willow.

What can one say about the Indians? That they are a depressed and humiliated lot? That they are lacking in spirit and confidence? What excuse can there be for their performance, in the Emerald Isles? When a team is going through the rebuilding process, fluctuations in performances can be forgiven. But from eleven 'professionals' with a total of 367 Tests under their belts, performances, such as India's in the first two Tests, can only be condemned. After having only just saved the first Test, one thought that the Indians would finally pull up their socks. But the second Test saw a repetition of the debacle. India's gifting of a historic Test win to Sri Lanka will be hard to forget and many a fan, who six months ago was on top of the world, will now have to hang his head in shame when reminded of India's first tour of the tropical island.



Nikhil Bhattacharya

Duleep Mendis: victorious captain

Given a total of 348 to win in 330 minutes and 20 mandatory overs, the "world champions" failed to save the match, leave alone win the Test. A side which has sufficient talent to send its number nine batsman-wicketkeeper as an opener failed to bat out a day or even score 200 runs against an attack which can only be described as 'above average.' The main wreckers: the Sri Lankan pace trio of Asantha De Mel, Rumesh Ratnayake and Saliya Ahangama did nothing more than keep the ball up to the batsman and the Indians obliged with mistakes.

With all the front-line Sri Lankan batsmen in good form, the side does not have to depend only on skipper Duleep Mendis and vice-captain Roy Dias for runs. Amal Silva has been tormenting the Indians in front of the wickets as much as he has been doing behind it while Arjuna Ranatunge and Ranjan Madugalle have also added to the frustrations of the Indian attack.

The visitors were simply outplayed in both Tests. But it has become a habit in cricket to find fault with the umpires. And so, the Indian skipper Kapil Dev blamed the umpires for his team's humiliation. "We were outplayed in all departments," he said sarcastically, "in bowling, batting,

Vice-captain Ravi Shastri: cool in a crisis



Krishnamachari Srikkanth: swashbuckling batting

Nikhil Bhattacharya





Roy Dias being escorted back to the pavilion by a Sri Lankan supporter waving the national flag

Nikhil Bhattacharya

fielding and umpiring." He went on to say that the Lankans would not have pulled off a victory had it not been for 'biased and motivated umpiring.'

Responsibility is a detachable burden easily shifted onto the shoulders of God, Fortune or Luck. But with cricket captains it is customary to blame the umpires. Kapil merely maintained the custom. He blamed the umpires for not giving his batsman the benefit of the doubt and for not calling the Lankan bowlers when they stepped across the crease. Granted, the decisions that went against Srikkanth and Dilip Vengsarkar might have been debatable, but even that does not justify the poor Indian showing. Kapil's explanation was that the fall of three early wickets, two due to umpiring mistakes, rattled the confidence of his side When asked how a team of experienced professionals could get rattled with the fall of three quick wickets, Kapil was silent.

The Indian skipper would have done well to admit defeat and live to fight another day. But perhaps Kapil felt that confessions, though good for the soul, are bad for the reputation. Bare statistics themselves show how the visitors have been overwhelmed by a team, who on paper are far inferior to them. But then Test matches are not played on paper. Till the end of the second Test the Indians had not reached a total of 300 in any innings of the tour. On the other hand all the teams the visitors have played against have been able to cross the 300 mark in at least one innings of the game (except the first one day international). Only a single Indian (Dilip Vengsarkar) has scored a century on the tour while five Sri Lankans—Asanka Gurusinghe, Sumithra Warnakulasuriya, Amal Silva, Arjuna Ranatunga and Ranjan Madugalle—have accomplished the feat.

Dilip Vengsarkar: fighting innings



Nath Bhattacharya

If the tourists' batting has been poor then their bowling has not been any better. The main two strike bowlers Kapil Dev and Sivaramakrishnan have failed to make any mark on the Sri Lankan batsmen. In four matches Kapil Dev. has taken only eight wickets. "Siva" has only four wickets to his credit. The unbalanced comparisons are never ending and for this we in the cricketing world should admire the new entrants to the game.

The main reason for India's disastrous showing was complacency. Kapil's comments after the fourth day's play of the second Test merely confirmed the belief. He told journalists, "We will win, you see. Come and see me tomorrow after we have won." The best remedy for the Indians would be to try and rebuild their confidence again. But they should not forget that there is still time enough for revenge if not in Sri Lanka then in Australia and time enough to prove that the success of last season was not a brief interval between a stroke of good luck and a stroke of apoplexy.

Clive Andrew O'Brien

A Sight to Behold

"On 29 August, a 'broom-star' was seen in the morning in the northeast. It was 10° east of Chung-t'ai (Ursa Major). Its length was 6° and colour: pure white. It moved northwest but pointed southwest. On 1 September, it was 1° to the north-west of Hsia-t'ai (in Ursa Major). It went out of sight on the morning of 4 September. In the evening it reappeared in the northwest. It was 1° in length and pointed southeast. It gradually moved and entered Ti (in Libra). On 23 September it was barely seen. On 27 September it was extinguished."

That was how the imperial astronomers of China recorded their observations of comet Halley's apparition in 530 AD. And when the celebrated comet reappears this year it will receive one of the grandest receptions by astronomers around the world. Halley may be visible by telescope from September but will not make the closest approach to earth until 27 November when it will be at a distance of 92.7 million kilometres. At that distance its long luminous tail will cover one-eighth to one-tenth of the heaven—an awe-some spectacle.

The lemon-shaped comet that was last seen in 1910 will not appear again until 2061. This and next year's show will, however, be less spectacular than the one that was seen in 1910 as the relative position of the sun, earth and the comet is unfavourable. Halley would also be further away from earth than it was in 1910 and would rise and set with the sun whose glare would mask it.

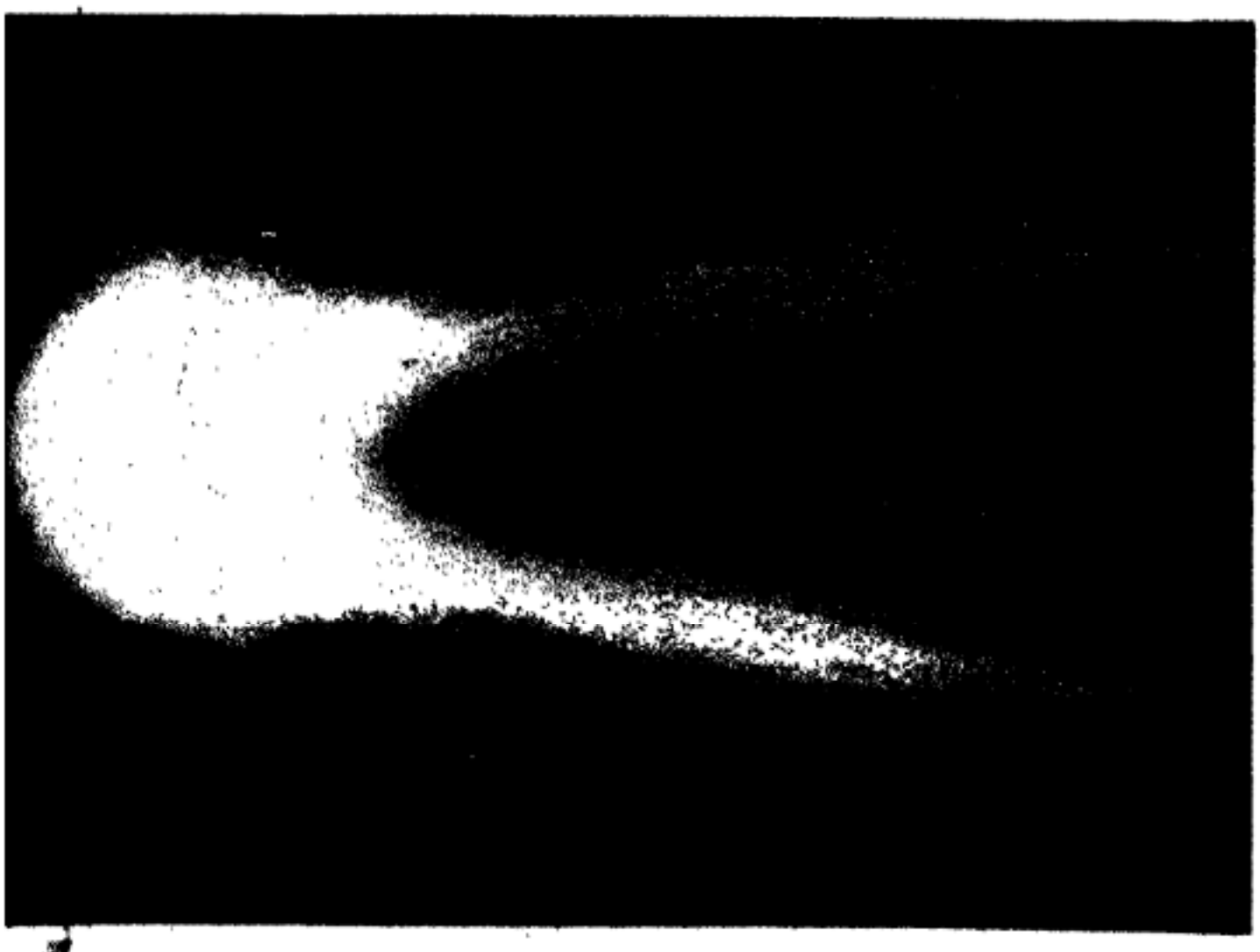
Described as a "dirty snowball," a comet's nucleus consists of ice, snow and condensed gases mixed with particles of silicates, metals and metal oxides which can be as small as a grain of sand or might be several centimetres long. They are the primordial matter preserved in original form by the cosmic 'refrigerator' and so are likely to contain information about the physical and chemical processes that took place 4500 million years ago when the solar system was being formed. Scientists hope to obtain information about the original cosmic matter from which the entire solar system evolved, by studying the close-up shots of the Halley's comet which give details of dust and gaseous composition.

While the biggest telescopes are being prepared for the celestial visitor, six spacecraft are already on their way for a close encounter with the comet in March 1986. The probes may unlock the comet's time capsule and reveal vital clues to the origin o the solar system.

Two Soviet Vega spacecraft laun ched in December 1984 are on thei way to meet Halley's comet on March. The probes with two T cameras will get as close as 3,000 t 10,000 kilometres from the comet' nucleus. The Japanese probe Sak gake which took off on 8 January wil take a look at the comet from distance of seven million kilometres The second Japanese spacecraf Planet-A launched in August wil take photographs of the comet i ultraviolet light from a distance o 20,000 kilometres. The US probe Ic will encounter another comet—Giacopini Zinner—in September be fore joining the Halley study. It wil watch the comet from a distance o 30 million kilometres. A Europea craft Giotto launched on 2 July wil get as close as 100-500 km to th comet's nucleus. During the four hour encounter it will send picture of objects as small as 50 metres i diameter. Giotto is likely to be des troyed while flying through the man tle of gas and dust. A space particle of the size of a pea could destroy the Rs 525 million craft as it will be hitting the comet in a head-on colli sion at a relative speed of 69 km pe second.

Until now, man has observed more than 1000 comets. Most comets fly past the sun only once before return ing deep into space, never to be seen again. Halley, however, is trapped i an orbit within the inner solar system and returns repeatedly once in 76 years. The comet was, reportedly, first sighted by the Chinese in 12 BC. It was the British astronomer, Edmund Halley (1658-1742), who struck by the similarity of comets that appeared in 1531, 1607 and 1682., concluded that it was the same body and predicted its next appearance in 1758. But he did not live to see it. Although this comet is not the brightest, it is one of the few comets, the return of which could be accurately predicted.

When the core of a comet approaches the sun, it is warmed and gas and dust are released to form a giant cloud that gives the comet its distinctive tail. The core of Halley's comet was originally 20-km thick but every time it goes around the sun it loses a two-meter thick layer. The comet's diameter is now halved to 10 km. After another 2500 journeys the

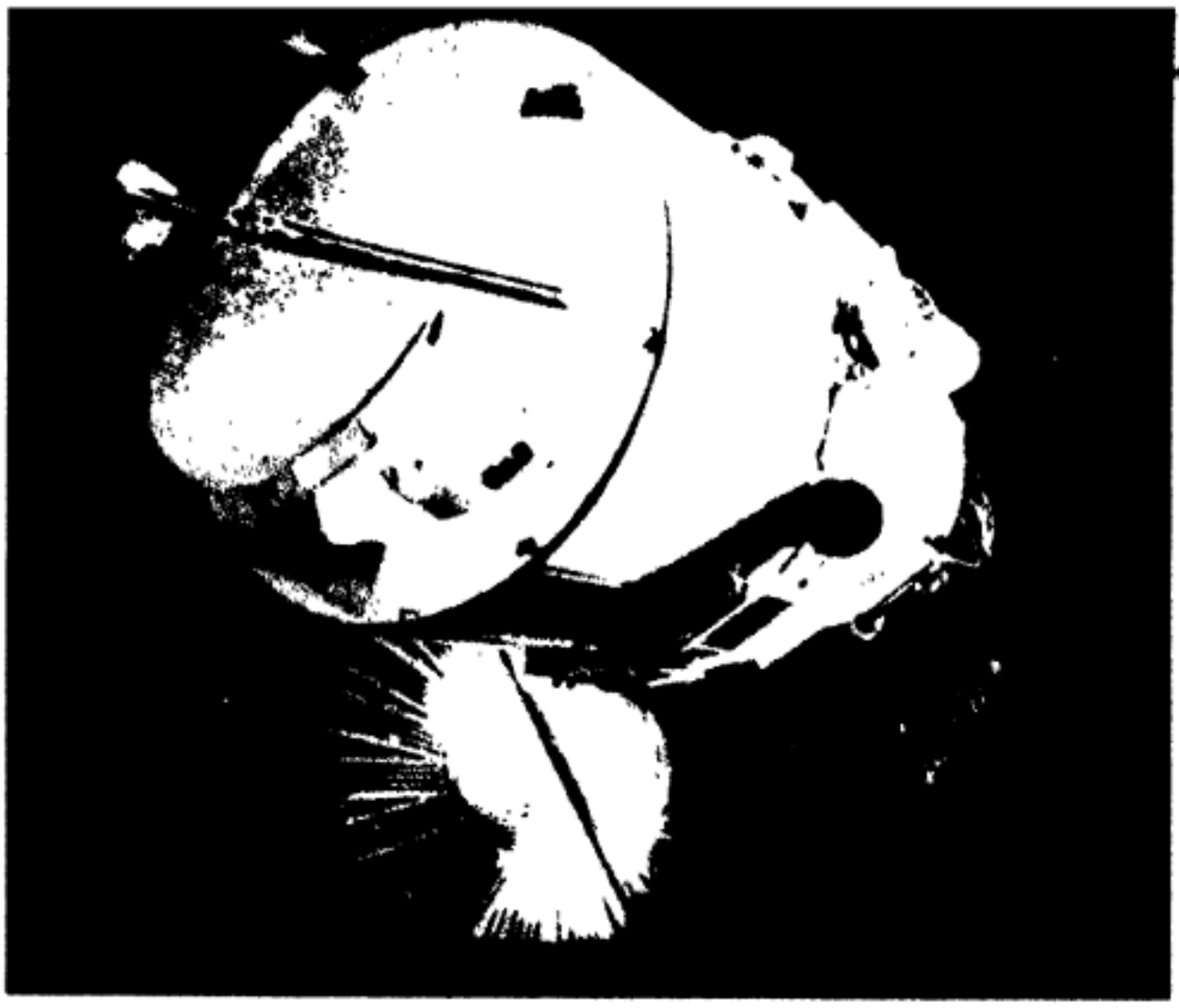


Halley's comet: great expectations

comet will disappear.

Halley's appearance has brought the world astronomers together. The International Halley Watch (IHW) has been formed to coordinate the observations made in laboratories scattered all over the globe. All data will be passed on to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, USA, and Erlangen University's Jurgen Remeis observatory in Bomberg, Bavaria. The space agencies of the US, USSR, Japan and Europe have set up an inter-agency consultative group to consolidate data sent by their respective Halley's probes.

India has been invited to join the IHW because of the strategic location of its three major observatories where hectic preparation is going on for the Halley study. These observatories at Kavalur (Tamil Nadu), Nainital and Hyderabad will bridge the longitudinal gap between Chinese and Soviet observatories. India has also signed a protocol with the USSR under which Indian observatories will supply astrometric data needed for calculating the comet's trajectory. The data will be used by the USSR for mid-course corrections to the Vega spacecraft. Besides astrometry, the protocol envisages collaborative observations from the Indian and Soviet-based stations for measuring polarisation, speckle interferometry of the comet, infra-red and radio observations



Giotto: close encounters

The Indian Halley Watch programme is being coordinated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in Bangalore. Participants in this programme include the Uttar Pradesh solar observatory in Nainital, Physical Research Laboratory, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and the Positional Astronomy Centre in Calcutta and solar observatories in Udaipur, Punjab, Delhi and Osmania universities.

The 40-inch reflector telescopes at Kavalur and Nainital and the 48-inch reflector at the Osmania University in Hyderabad are the major instruments that will be used to study the comet. Besides these, half a dozen smaller telescopes will also be used. The radio telescope at Ooty will be used for scintillation studies of radio sources (stars) that will be occulted by the comet's tail. The radio telescope at Gauribidanur will be used to observe the comet in decameter wavelength. The TIFR will send balloons carrying telescopes to the height of 30 kilometres to take pictures of Halley. Additional equipment has been purchased from the Rs 1.3 million fund, provided by the department of science and technology specifically for the Halley watch.

In the past, Indian astronomers have observed comets such as Ikeya-Seki, Bennet, Kohoulek, West Churymov-Gerosimenko and Crommelin. The Nizamiah observatory in Hyderabad made pioneering efforts in astrometric work during Halley's appearance in 1910. "This year," says Dr J.C. Bhattacharya, IIA director, "we are better prepared and equipped to watch Halley."

Waiting for Halley

If you want to know the latest information on Halley's comet you can get it by dialling the London telephone number 01-790-3400. British Aerospace, the prime contractor to European Space Agency for Giotto spacecraft and Halley's Comet Society in conjunction with British Telecom has begun the Halley comet nationwide hotline service. The special service which was started in January 1985 will be made available for 24 hours till May 1986 and will be updated every week. Callers will receive the latest information on the progress of the Giotto space probe which will make the closest study of Halley's comet. Recognising the contribution to astronomy by non-professionals, the International Halley Watch has set up an "Amateur Observers' Network (AON)."

The work of Indian amateurs is being coordinated by A.I. Siddiqui, a scientist at the atomic power project in Narora, UP. The data collected at Narora will be sent to the California Institute of Technology. Siddiqui says the study "will include magnitude estimates, coma size and tail studies, recorded time of abrupt changes in brightness, positioning, drawings and observations of halos, envelopes, jets, and streamers in coma."

The Indian amateur astronomers will depend on four-inch and six-inch telescopes available in the country and SLR-35 mm camera fited with 50 mm diameter lens and orange and blue filters. Binoculars (7×50) will also be used. According to Siddiqui, a visit to the Nainital observatory has been proposed to acquaint the amateurs with the particular region of the sky where the comet will be observed. One important aspect of the amateur programme is to study the socio-psychological impact of the comet on people. Siddiqui says groups of social workers throughout the country will register the public reaction. The people will be given lectures and "information packs" on Halley's comet. Siddiqui also wants the word "apparition" used to describe a comet to be replaced by the word "appearance." The Oxford dictionary defines apparition as a supernatural being or ghost—an obviously incorrect description of a comet, especially in a scientifically advanced society.

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BEGINNING 22 SEPTEMBER 1985 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (15 April—14 May) A lucky week lies ahead of you. Monetary gains through unexpected sources are indicated. Professionals will make steady progress and businessmen will clinch profitable deals. Friends, relatives and family members will contribute to your happiness. Lovers may go ahead with marriage plans. But do not neglect your health and diet.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 25.
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6.
Favourable direction: North-east.



TAURUS (15 May—14 June) Businessmen should not hesitate to undertake risky ventures this week Lovers will find this period congenial. However, students should exercise caution while accepting opportunities. This is not a lucky phase for professionals. Your children may be demanding but deal with them sympathetically Sportsmen and artists will prosper.
Good dates: 23, 24 and 26
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7.
Favourable direction: South.



GEMINI (15 June—14 July) This is not a good week for businessmen. you may lose heavily if you indulge in risky financial deals Professionals, too, should be wary of their colleagues The financial front is not very encouraging. The domestic front will cause fresh problems. A journey you were looking forward to is in the offing For those in service, a promotion cannot be ruled out
Good dates: 24, 25 and 27
Lucky numbers: 3, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



CANCER (15 July—14 August) Parties and social engagements will keep you busy this week but do not overstrain yourself as this will have an adverse effect on your health. The domestic and financial fronts will remain inspiring Businessmen and professionals will make steady progress. Success is in store for sportsmen too. Your health will improve But this is not a very bright week for lovers
Good dates: 25, 26 and 28.
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East



LEO (15 August—14 September) This is the ideal time to get married The domestic front will remain peaceful. If you are looking for a job, there are chances that you will find one this week. Friends will be particularly helpful. Your financial prospects look bright. You will be called upon to shoulder more responsibilities. If you plan to change your career, do so only after consultation.
Good dates: 23, 25 and 27.
Lucky Numbers: 2, 3 and 4.
Favourable direction: South



VIRGO (15 September—14 October) This is a good week for those in love: you can go ahead with marriage plans. If you are unemployed, there are bright chances that you will find a job this week. A letter will bring unexpected good news towards the middle of the week. But businessmen will find the going tough Avoid legal problems The domestic front will create tension Stay away from politics.
Good dates: 24, 26 and 28.
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7.
Favourable direction: North



LIBRA (15 October—14 November) You are advised not to make any changes in your career this week Professionals will win the praise of their employers while businessmen will encounter opposition Financial gains are in store for you. Lovers should delay marriage plans and avoid controversies. A pleasure trip towards the middle of the week is in the offing
Good dates: 22, 24 and 25.
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



SCORPIO (15 November—14 December) Social engagements will keep you occupied for most of the week but avoid mixing business with pleasure Businessmen should devote more time to their business and they should consult relatives before taking crucial decisions At home, one of your relatives may suddenly fall sick. Avoid undertaking pleasure trips
Good dates: 23, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 3
Favourable direction: North-west



SAGITTARIUS (15 December—14 January) A good phase for lovers and speculators. The mail will bring welcome tidings. The domestic scene will remain peaceful Do not consult your friends and relatives on crucial issues. Be prepared for setbacks on the professional front. Financial gains may come your way but you may have difficulty in retrieving money lent out.
Good dates: 25, 27 and 28.
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



CAPRICORN (15 January—14 February) For those in love and intending to get married this is the opportune time to do so. Those, connected with the fine arts, are likely to find this period favourable The financial prospects are also bright but avoid extravagance. On the domestic front, your children will be a source of joy A close friend is likely to let you down.
Good dates: 22, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7.
Favourable direction: South-west.



AQUARIUS (15 February—14 March) If you have legal problems pertaining to property, this is the ideal time to pursue them This period is favourable for creative artists and sportsmen. However, this is not a good period for those in service Businessmen, too, should avoid undertaking risky ventures. A short trip towards the middle of the week is in the offing Watch your health closely.
Good dates: 23, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6.
Favourable direction: North.



PISCES (15 March—14 April) This is the ideal time to settle lawsuits relating to property matters Professionals and businessmen will forge ahead Financial gains are in store for you this week, but do not be extravagant and save something for the future The domestic front will remain inspiring But take care of your health A letter from a friend will give you a lot of pleasure
Good dates: 22, 24 and 28
Lucky numbers: 3, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East

For those born between 15 October and 14 November:

Your eagerness to help others, even at the most inappropriate moments, is so great that it often causes embarrassment You are attracted towards members of opposite sex and it becomes difficult for you to resist their advances Persons born during this period are advised not to imitate others but to be their natural selves in their day-to-day activities You should be more decisive and must not change your opinions so often as you do. You are an avid reader of books and enjoy travelling. Women born under this sign are especially interested in music and painting.


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Modistone Compumiler range— few car tyres are quite like them because they are literally built by the computer! That's why 2,50,000 people chose Modistone for their cars last year. Proof enough that they're the largest selling car tyres in India
Modistone
When miles matter
Intreads

...IS INDIA



Illustration: Debasree Deb

...NGALORE: B. K. M. Gowda had the ...que honour of being made the city's ...yor twice on the same day—first ...e for real and the second time for ... sake of the idiot box. It happened ... this Soon after he was elected ...yor, the outgoing mayor M. L. Sub...aj called him up to the dais and ...ced a Mysore turban on his head to ...bolise the transfer of power. The ...rdarshan crew, who arrived some ...utes later, missed the ceremony. ... the participants obligingly went ...ough the whole ceremony again for ... benefit of the TV crew, to every...'s amusement. Later, it happened ...in when Mr Subbaraj ceremonious...escorted a robed Mr Gowda to the ...yoral chair. The TV crew were late ...in and the participants went ...ough the rigmarole a second time—...*lian Express* (Rumjhum Sanyal, ...cutta)

...IPUR: Can an examinee score 106 ...rks out of 100? Apparently, the ...swer is 'yes'—provided the ex...inee has appeared in any examina...n from the MP Board of Secondary ...ucation. Hemlata Verma, who ...peared in this year's high school ...mination, was virtually stunned ...en she received her duplicate mark...et. Hemlata scored 106 marks out ... 100 in her history paper. Yet ...other amazing discovery was in ...re for her, when she saw that de...te scoring 329 aggregate marks out ...400 she was bracketed in the "third ...ision" category—*M.P. Chronicle* (...njay Kumar Barik, Jagdalpur)

...NGALORE: An employee of the ...rnataka Electricity Board has cre...ated a marathon walking record for his organisation by walking from Bangalore to Mysore—a distance of 145 km—in 42 hours. Mr Venkataraju, who came to the PTI office to relate his achievement said he took the momentous decision of covering the distance on foot while he was engaged in a conversation with his friends. "My friends told me, 'we will give you Rs 5,000 if you reach Mysore on foot within 48 hours.' But I told them if you are really taking a bet, give me Rs 2,000, it is sufficient," he said and added, "They thought that I was joking." Mr Venkataraju said that his friends followed him on two-wheelers as he walked. "When I reached Mysore, they paid me Rs 2,000," he added—*Deccan Herald* (S. N. Sreenivas Rao, Bangalore)

NAGERCOIL: A pigeon stayed in the air for 12 hours and 40 minutes at a stretch to secure the first place in a competition for pigeons organised here. The bird belonged to one Pichayappan of Arukuvilai. The second place in the competition, in which 11 pigeons took part, went to a pigeon owned by one Kandappan of Pallivilai, which flew for 12 hours and ten minutes--*Indian Express* (B. Meenakshi Sundaram, Trichy)

HYDERABAD: Ramesh Reddy, an ardent fan of the chief minister for the past 20 years, waited for six hours beyond the schedule of his *muhurtham* for the arrival of N. T. Rama Rao before tying the sacred *thali* around his bride's neck. This incident was narrated by the chief minister himself to newsmen recently. Mr Rama Rao said that while the *muhurtham* was scheduled for 7.20 am, the bride and the groom had waited in the marriage pandal till 1.30 pm for his arrival Similarly, one Mr Basha of Kamalapuram village in Cuddapah district has also been waiting for the last four years to marry in his presence, the chief minister added. Mr Basha has been waiting for the chief minister to fix his marriage date so that he would be able to attend the marriage—*Newstime* (V.S. Bhavani, Hyderabad)

BOMBAY: Mr Ali Hasanmohammed Saif Khan of Grant Road has received his telephone bill for the period between 7 May and 20 July 1985. He has been billed Rs 200 for the rent of the instrument. He has not made any local call or trunk call. Nor could he have done it. Because he does not have a telephone! The only mistake that Mr Khan has made, to date, is in applying for a phone in 1981—*Mid-day* (B. Ramadevi, Hyderabad)

WITHOUT COMMENT



Alpaa Mehra

Your law is my foot—Dr Farooq Abdullah, when Jammu and Kashmir CM, G.M. Shah, assured the Assembly that the law would take its course with regard to the arrest of a legislator

Despite a penetrating media system in the US, the average American believes that Rajiv Gandhi is the grandson of the Mahatma and that Indira Gandhi was the daughter of the same Mahatma—Dr Subramaniam Swamy in *Imprint*

If any leader can tell me how terrorism can be stopped by *satyagraha*, I am prepared to yield him my place—Sri Lanka President Junius Jayewardene quoted in *The Statesman*

Certain people in the US are driving nails into this structure of our relationship, then cutting off the heads So the Soviets must use their teeth to pull them out—Mikhail Gorbachev, on US-USSR relationship in *Time*

I train the people in certain specific skills. If they go out and become terrorists afterwards, what can I do?—Frank Camper, mercenary who is said to have trained Sikh terrorist Lal Singh, in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*

I call myself the lazy man's guide to enlightenment—Bhagwan Rajneesh quoted in *The Sunday Observer*

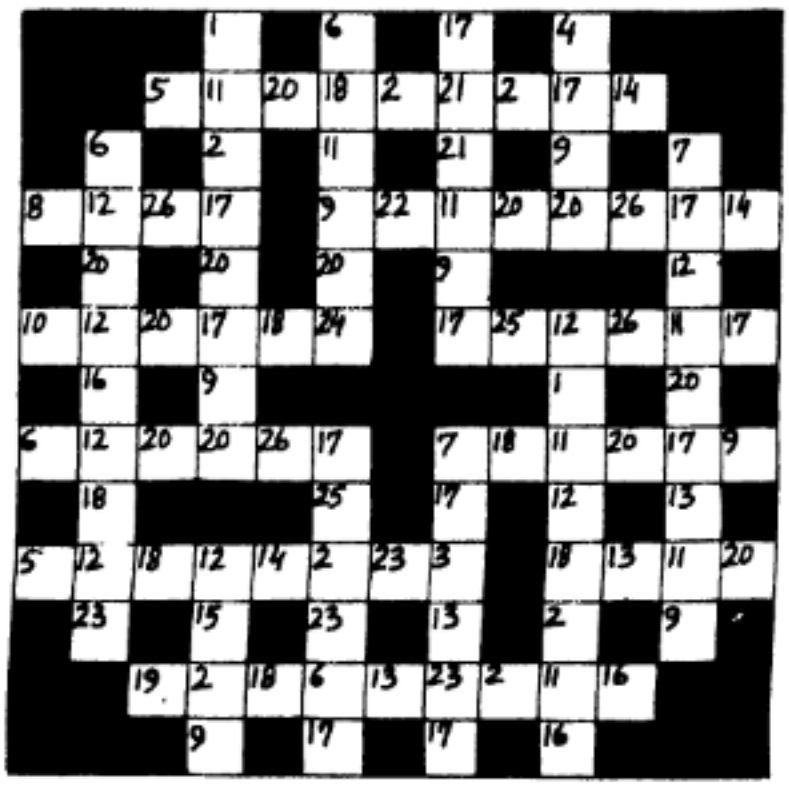
He doesn't have to be good looking...millionaire...ambitious...famous...doesn't have to have a good physique...share my interests either, he just has to be a friend. A good listener—Rekha, on the type of man she wants to marry in *Hindustan Times* Sunday Magazine

Interads

TEASERS

BY SHAMLU DUDEJA AND CHAMPAK BASU

Cryptocross

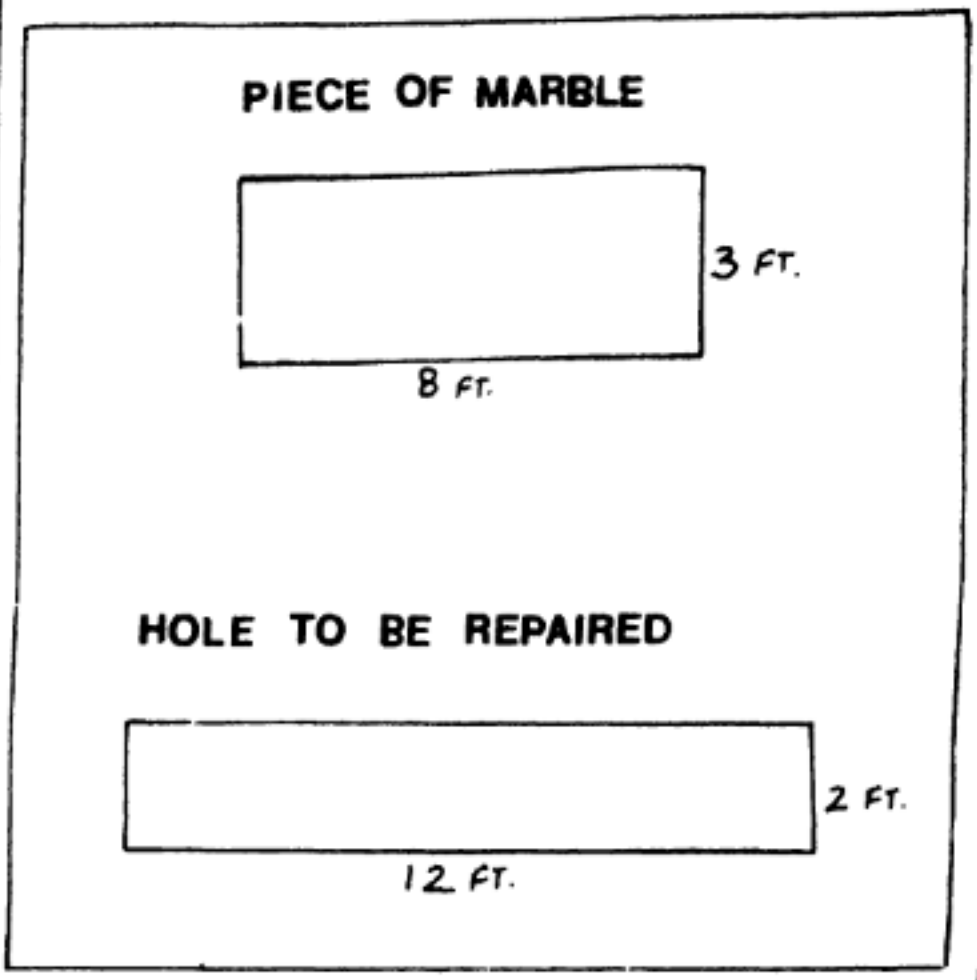


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
										U		

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				R			F					

Each number in the main grid represents a letter. The same number always represents the same letter. Three letters have been given to help you make a start. Can you now substitute the rest to complete the grid?

Shape Sleuth



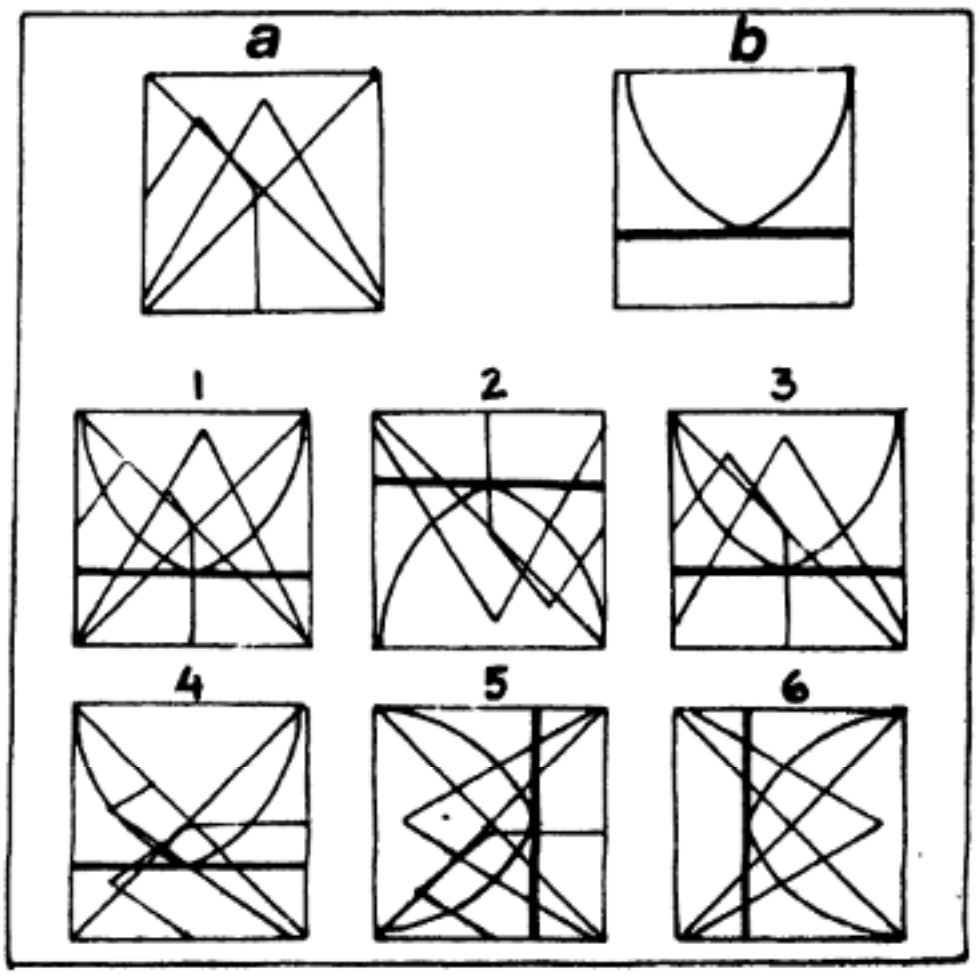
A marble cutter was asked to mend a hole in the marble facing of a wall. He was given a single slab of marble and told to fill the hole by cutting a new piece into two pieces only, and since marble is so expensive, no bits were to be left over. The hole measured 2 ft by 12 ft, but the piece of marble was 3 ft. by 8 ft. Difficult though it was, the clever marble cutter managed the job. Can you?

What's in a Word?

LIGHT	[ ]	CORE
RICK	[ ]	RITE
VENT	[ ]	LATE
ASCENT	[ ]	ARROW
ROW	[ ]	LOVER
SLAM	[ ]	DEAL
EASE	[ ]	ODE

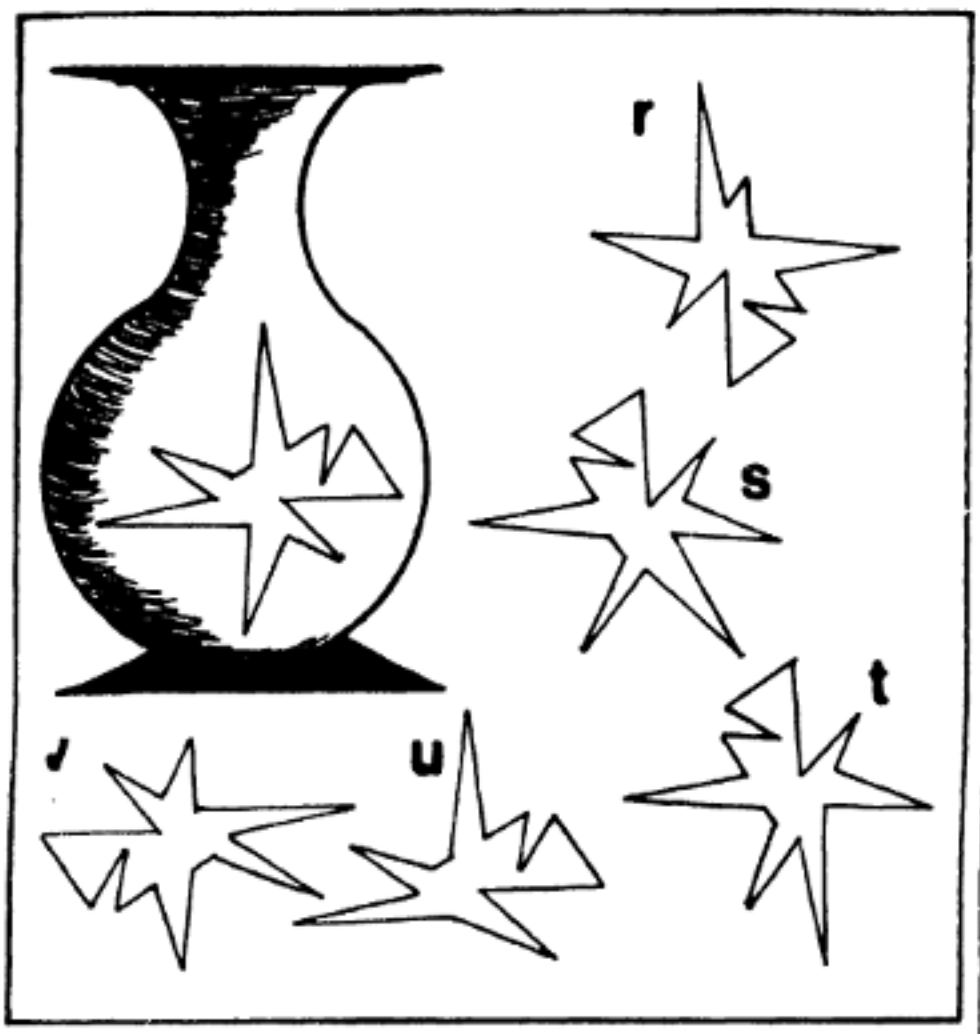
Fit a letter into each of the brackets so that this letter put at the beginning of the word to the left and right of the bracket is changed into another word. If you do it correctly, the letters in the brackets will read downwards to give you a word that can help you copy.

Quick Look



Only one of the figures given above can be formed if figure a is superimposed on figure b. Can you say which one it is?

Figure it Out



The expensive vase fell down and broke. Luckily the broken piece was found, but with a number of other pieces. Can you tell which piece will fit the hole in the vase?

Witsharpener

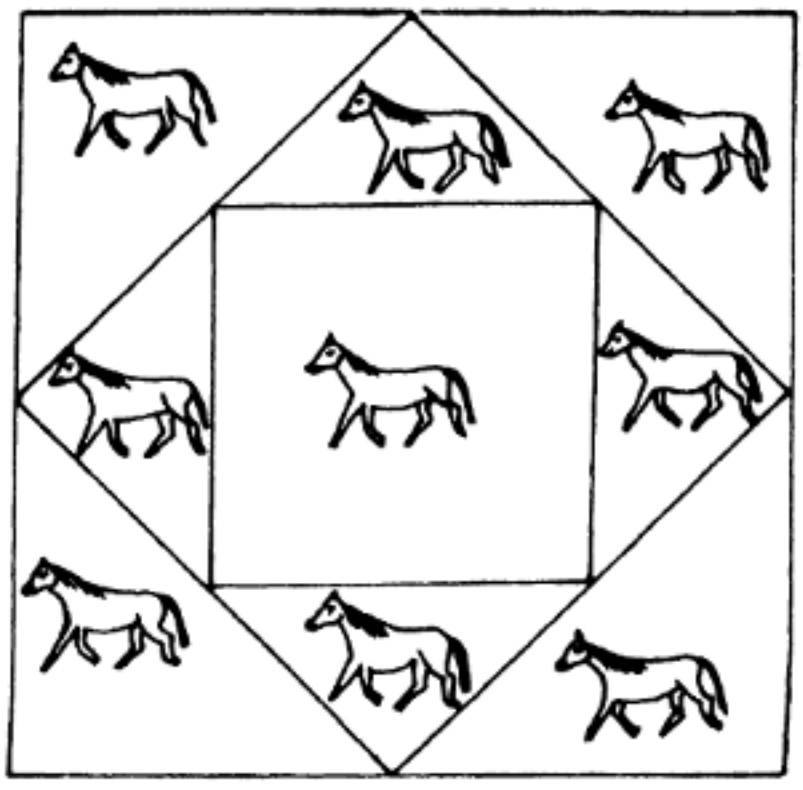
B	A	T	A	I
L				S
E		5		Y
E				O
D	U	K	L	V

A detective found this clue which helped him track down a criminal. Can you work out the message that helped him find the criminal?

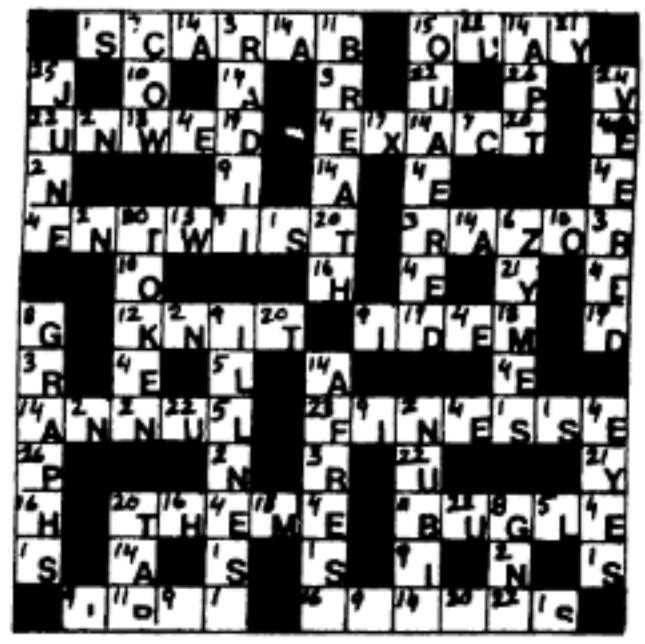
Solutions to last week's Teasers

Matchmates: 1b, 2c, 3a
Squaring Up: 2
Word Power: PEPPER
Figure it Out: d

Shape Sleuth:



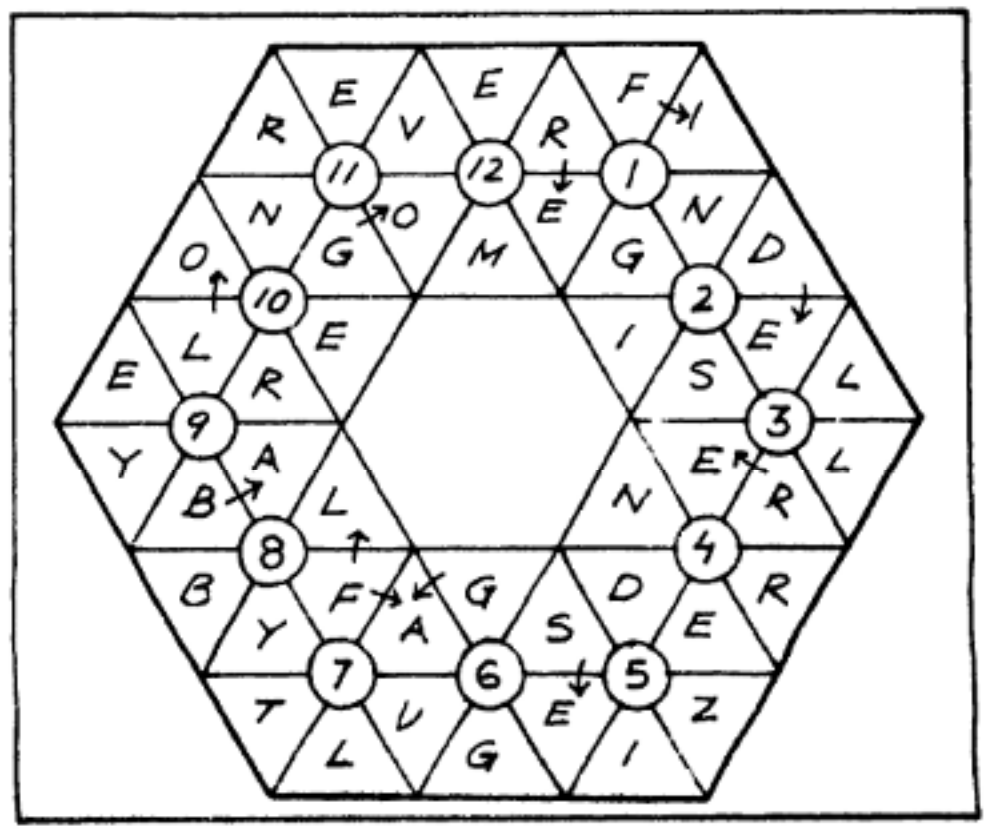
Cryptocross:



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	N	R	E	L	Z	C	G	I	O	B	K	W

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
A	Q	H	X	M	D	T	Y	U	F	V	J	P

Word Play



VARIETY

CHESS

Many players seem to believe that positional chess and tactical chess are two different games. In particular, when faced with a gambit opening they lose sight of the possibility of a positional response.

In fact, most gambits are best met by careful simplification into a positional game in which the would-be gambiter is left permanently scarred by the effects of his earlier enterprise. Such play requires a perfect understanding of the balance between the three major forces of material, initiative and position. In the following game, White gets this wrong and goes sadly astray.

White: P. Popovic. Black: B. Kurajica. Ruy Lopez – Schliemann Defence. Sarajevo 1985.

1 P–K4	**P–K4**	**2 N–KB3**	**N–QB3**
3 B–N5	**P–B4**	**4 N–B3**	**PxP**
5 NxP	**N–B3**	**6 Q–K2**	**P–Q4!?**

A relatively new and highly ambitious move. The problem is the terrible weakness of Black's KP.

7 NxN	**PxN**	**8 P–Q4**	**B–N2**
9 PxP	**0–0**		

Kurajica (Black)



Popovic (White) to move

The point If 10 PxP QxP 11 0–0 B–N5 Black has superb counterplay Naturally therefore White must find a good way to return the pawn

DIAGRAM

10 P–K6?!

How sloppy not first to take the knight. After 10 BxN PxB 11 P–K6 R–K1 12 0–0 BxP 13 N–Q4 B–Q2 14 Q–B3 Black's position is a wreck.

10 . . .	**N–K4!**	**11 0–0**	**P–B3**
12 B–R4	**BxP**	**13 N–Q4**	**B–Q2**
14 P–KB4			

Another poor move which allows Black to assume complete control.

14 .	**Q–N3**	**15 P–B3**	**B–N5**
16 Q–QB2	**N–B5**	**17 P–B5**	**KR–K1**
18 Q–B2	**B–K7**	**19 R–K1**	**B–Q6**
20 R–K6	**RxR**	**21 PxR**	**R–K1**
22 P–QN3	**N–K4**	**23 B–B4**	**B–N3**
24 K–R1	**Q–R3**	**25 P–R4**	**Q–Q6**

Simplest. 25. . P–N4 could have been met by 26 P–R5 BxP 27 Q B1, but now White's precarious position falls apart at the seams.

26 P–QN4	**QxP**	**27 R–Q1**	**QxP**
28 B–B2	**N–N5**	**29 Q–K2**	**P–KB4**
30 P–R3	**Q–B5**	**31 QxQ**	**PxQ**
32 K–N1	**R–Q1**	**33 N–B3**	**RxR+**
34 BxR	**B–B1**	**35 P–R4**	**B–B4+**
36 K–B1	**K–B1**	**37 B–K2**	**P–N4**

38 Resigns.

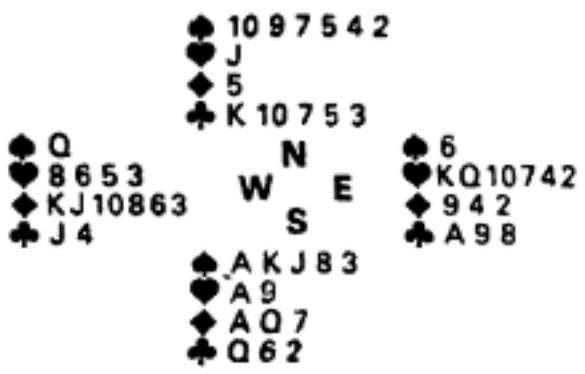
MICHAEL STEAN

BRIDGE

This deal (*next column*) from the final of a Patton team event in Morocco contained two unusual features (apart from deciding the result): North at one table, South at the other, opened 2NT; and the placing of a jack decided whether one team or the other won the short match by a conclusive margin

An American team was playing the top French team and the American North

Dealer North Game all





opened 2NT, signifying an unspecified weak pre-empt. Such is life nowadays. Further inquiries established the spade fit and North became declarer in Four Spades. He made twelve tricks.

At the other table the bidding was more natural:

South	*West*	*North*	*East*
—	—	No	No
2NT	No	3♥	dble
4♠	No	5♣	dble
5♦	No	5♥	No
6♥	No	6♠	No
No	No		

North's Three Hearts was a transfer bid; East's two doubles pretty silly, in my opinion.

The American West led a trump, leaving declarer to tackle the side suits on his own. Now South could eliminate the red suits and play either West or (by leading low to the king) East for the jack of clubs. He did the wrong thing.

As the other three boards in the set had been small, this result, representing (much) more than 33 per cent of the difference in aggregate points, gave one side an 8-0 advantage. There were also 2 points available on the board-a-match principle; a ridiculously complicated and unfair method of scoring, also practised in Britain

TERENCE REESE

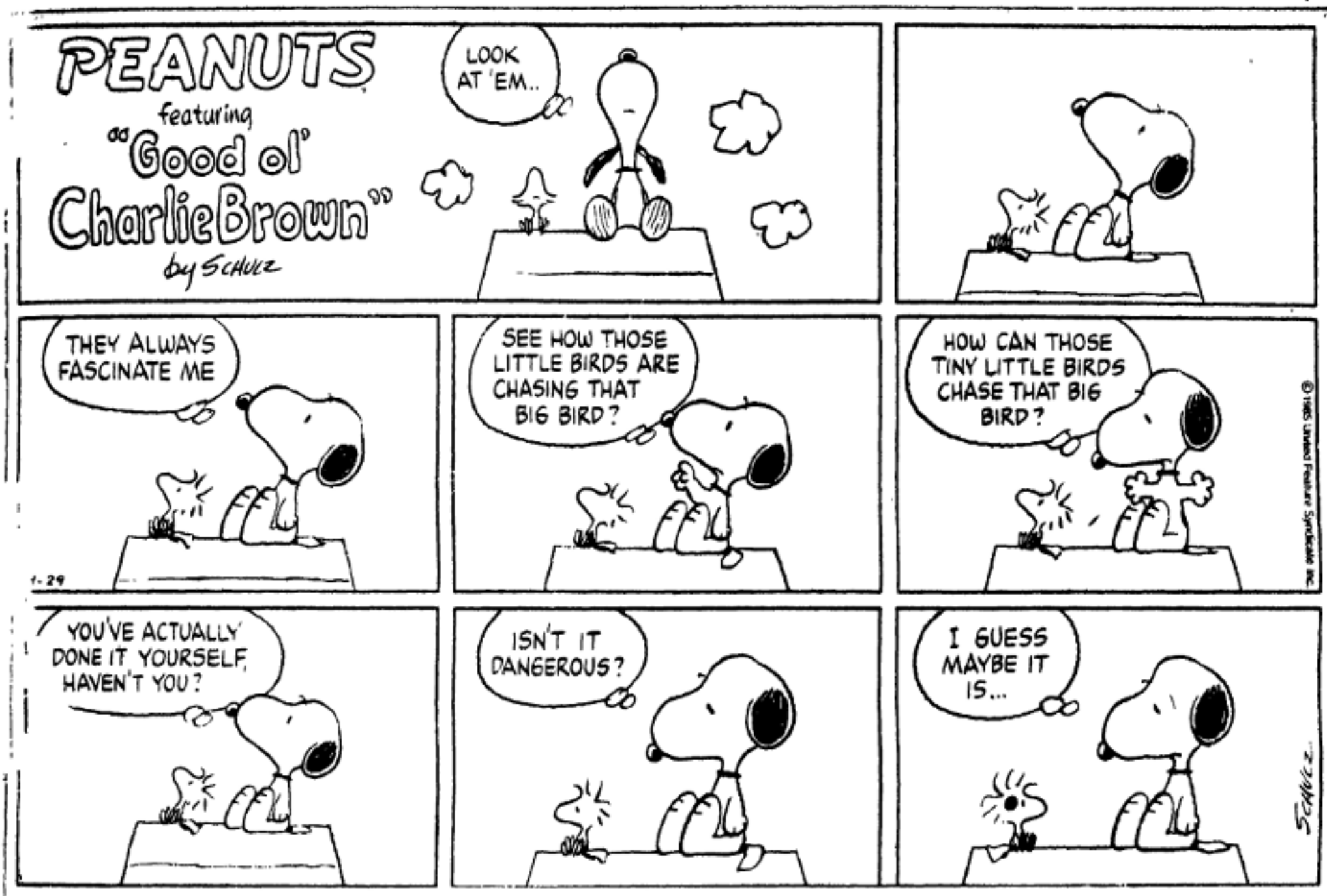
QUIZ

QUESTIONS

1. In computer terminology, how many bits make a byte?
2. *Who is the Roman god of love?*
3. *What is a "Portuguese man of war?"*
4. When is Halley's comet due to appear?
5. How is retinol better known as?
6. In the United Kingdom, who is the first Lord of the Treasury?
7. Which was India's first indigenously produced commercial computer?
8. *The State Research Agency was the intelligence agency of which country?*
9. *What are the Nicaraguan rebels backed by the United States called?*
10. How are Rontgen-rays better known as?
11. What is known as "Devil's picture book?"
12. *Which is the world's most widely circulated newspaper?*
13. In World War II, who was the leader of the Free French forces?
14. "A taste of paradise, is the slogan of which international airline?
15. What is known as "light fantastic?"
16. What is a gompa?
17. What is common to the following: Calcutta, Karachi and Istanbul?

ANSWERS

1. Eight
2. Cupid.
3. A species of jellyfish.
4. 9 February 1986.
5. Vitamin A
6. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
7. Trombay Digital Computer (T.D.C.)
312.
8. Uganda during Idi Amin's rule
9. The Contras.
10. X-rays.
11. A pack of playing cards
12. *Pravda.*
13. General Charles de Gaulle.
14. Sri Lanka.
15. Laser beams
16. A Buddhist religious place.
17. They are all former capitals.



VARIETY

An Imagineer's Dream Come True

To understand what or who an imagineer is, one must dwell on the man who created imagineers. The man was none other than Walt Disney.

Walt Disney's favourite dream was a playground for the whole family: a large fair where the entire family, could learn while having fun. In 1964, Disney conceptualised EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow) to give shape to his dream. He visualised a futuristic community, which would never stop growing and would be continuously testing, introducing and demonstrating new materials and systems. EPCOT would take its "cue from new ideas and new technologies that were emerging from the creative centres of America."

Sadly, while EPCOT was still on the planning board, Disney died on 15 December 1966. It seemed that EPCOT would never materialise. However, imagineers at Walt Elias Disney (WED) Enterprises were determined to make Disney's dream a reality. As a result of the blending of the professional skills and creative imagination of these specialists, EPCOT finally opened as the world's largest fair, nearly three years ago in Florida, USA.

At the entrance of the fairgrounds, stands the geodesic sphere which has become synonymous with EPCOT. It stands on steel legs and is 180 feet in diameter, with millions of shiny facets of aluminium 'skin.' Glittering in the sunlight during the day, and reflecting the polychromatic hues of its surroundings at night, the sphere itself is a stunning work of art: the only one of its kind in the world. And, what lies within the surroundings of EPCOT is even more mind-boggling. The unique 'wedding' of history, technology, entertainment and learning, under the warm Florida sun, occupying acres of spotlessly maintained land, is a truly unforgettable and fascinating experience. Every step is a step into tomorrow.

The highlights of EPCOT are made possible by four unique innovations.

- The audio-animatronic figures (popularly known as A-A figures): A-A is a novel system which blends sound with animation of startlingly life-like, plastic figures of animals and human beings constructed in a Disney workshop.
- The DACS computer central: This controls not only the synchronisation of lip-movements and gestures of the A-A figures, but also looks after minute details of closing and opening of theatre doors and the monorail.
- The monorail system: This innovative system has carried nearly 400 million passengers, to date, between EPCOT and Disney World, through a hotel lobby, over immaculately manicured and verdant countryside.
- The WEDWAY people movers: This is another transport system within EPCOT—a linear induction powered transport system—which carries visitors, on land and through water, along corridors of city bazaars, marshy swamps with lifesize dinosaurs looming large, a world of computers, and on scores of other fascinating journeys.
- Last, but not the least, is the 'city beneath the kingdom': This massive basement helps to maintain the systems above—miles of drainage canals, pipes and cables, hundreds of sewers and garbage disposers, workshops and many other revolutionary technical innovations, which help to keep the city above in perfect spotlessness

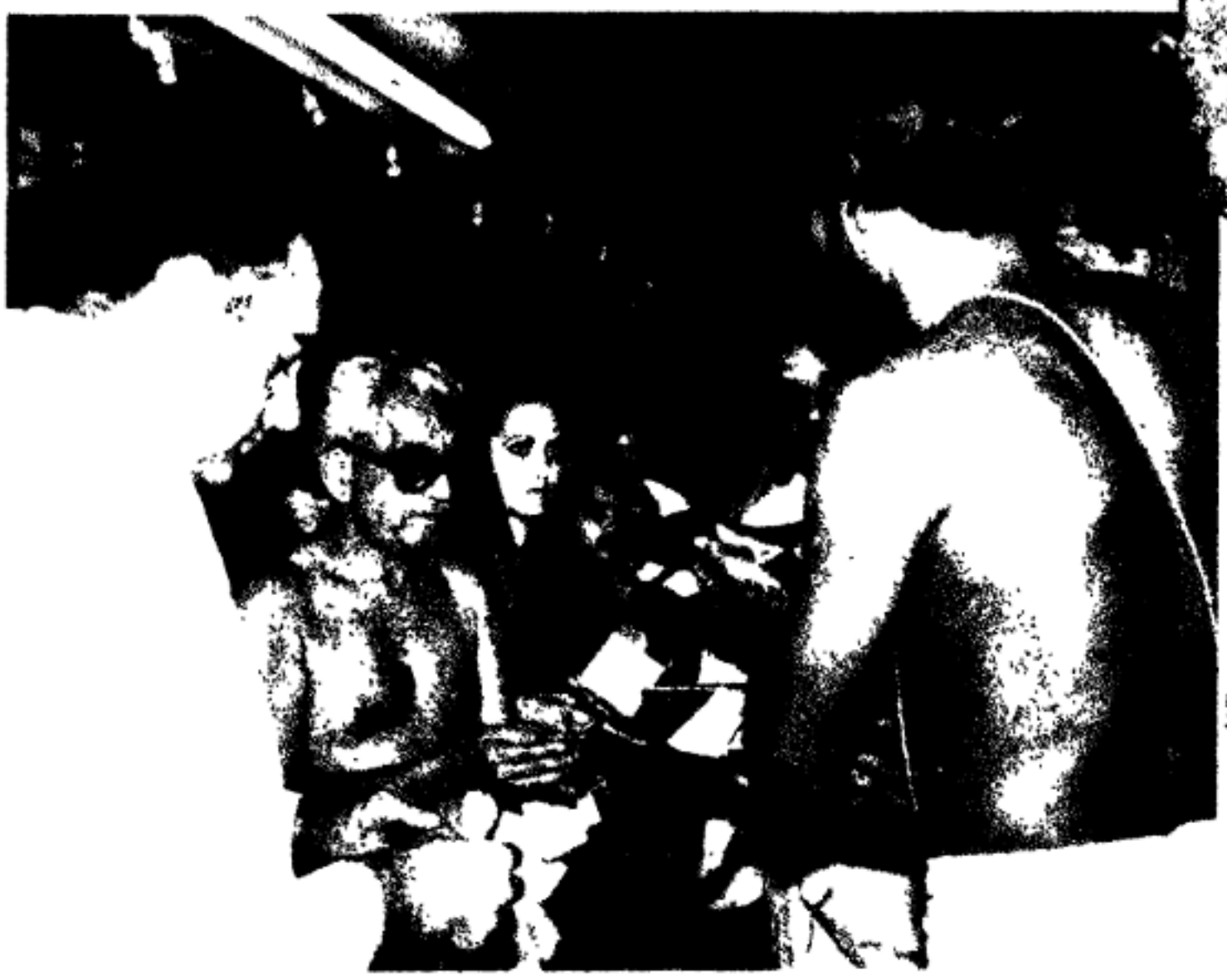
And, this is only a glimpse of what imagineering is all about!

Shamlu Dudeja

DELHI DIARY

Prayer Time

On Janamashtami day Mrs Indira Gandhi was often seen donning traditional clothes (once she wore a *Garara)* and heading for the Laxminarayan temple in Delhi. What did the Prime Minister of India do on Lord Krishna's birth anniversary this year? Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi were on the last lap of their Kerala visit on 7 September. After addressing the public meeting at Palghat, the VVIP couple, accompanied by the chief minister of Kerala, K. Karunakaran, suddenly deviated from the printed programme and the motorcade rushed off to an unknown destination. On learning that there was a famous Krishna temple at Palghat, Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi decided to offer their Janamashtami prayers in the ancient shrine.



Rajiv Gandhi, Karunakaran and Sonia Gandhi at the Krishna temple near Palghat

Amar, Akbar, Anthony

The Prime Minister's office has two sets of "Amar, Akbar, Anthony" teams. The three parliamentary secretaries, Arun Singh, Ahmed Patel and Oscar Fernandes constitute the first level. They are backed up by the trio of joint secretary Mani Shankar Aiyar, director Wajahat Habibullah and personal secretary Verghese George. Aiyar has been allotted the room in South Block which hitherto was occupied by Mrs Indira Gandhi's (and for a while Rajiv Gandhi's) principal secretary, Dr P.C. Alexander. Apart from advising the PM on media matters, he doubles up as an effective public relations man during Rajiv Gandhi's tours outside the capital. Wajahat Habibullah, who joined the PM's office in the days of Mrs Gandhi, is in charge of processing the public grievances received by the PM's office. George, an old AICC office staff, is always active behind the scenes, unlike his predecessor, R.K. Dhawan (who could always be seen in the photo frames during Mrs Gandhi's public appearances).



Dilip Banerjee



Arun Singh and V. George : active behind the scenes

Uplift for UP

With the sole exception of Morarji Desai, all Prime Ministers so far have come from Uttar Pradesh. But the state still remains a backward state. Policy planners now seem to have realised the importance of UP. The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) has trebled its assistance to the state. In 1984-85 Rs 692 crores were allocated for UP by the IDBI against its assistance of Rs 225 crores in 1983-84.

TAILPIECE: The Press Trust of India (PTI) is also known as the "Palghat Trust of India" because of the proliferation of appointees in the news agency from this particular Kerala district. It was, perhaps, ironic that the news agency chosen to accompany the PM to Palghat was the UNI, and not the PTI.

O. E. Nizamuddin

OXFORD KING SIZE

Reserved for those who appreciate the finest...



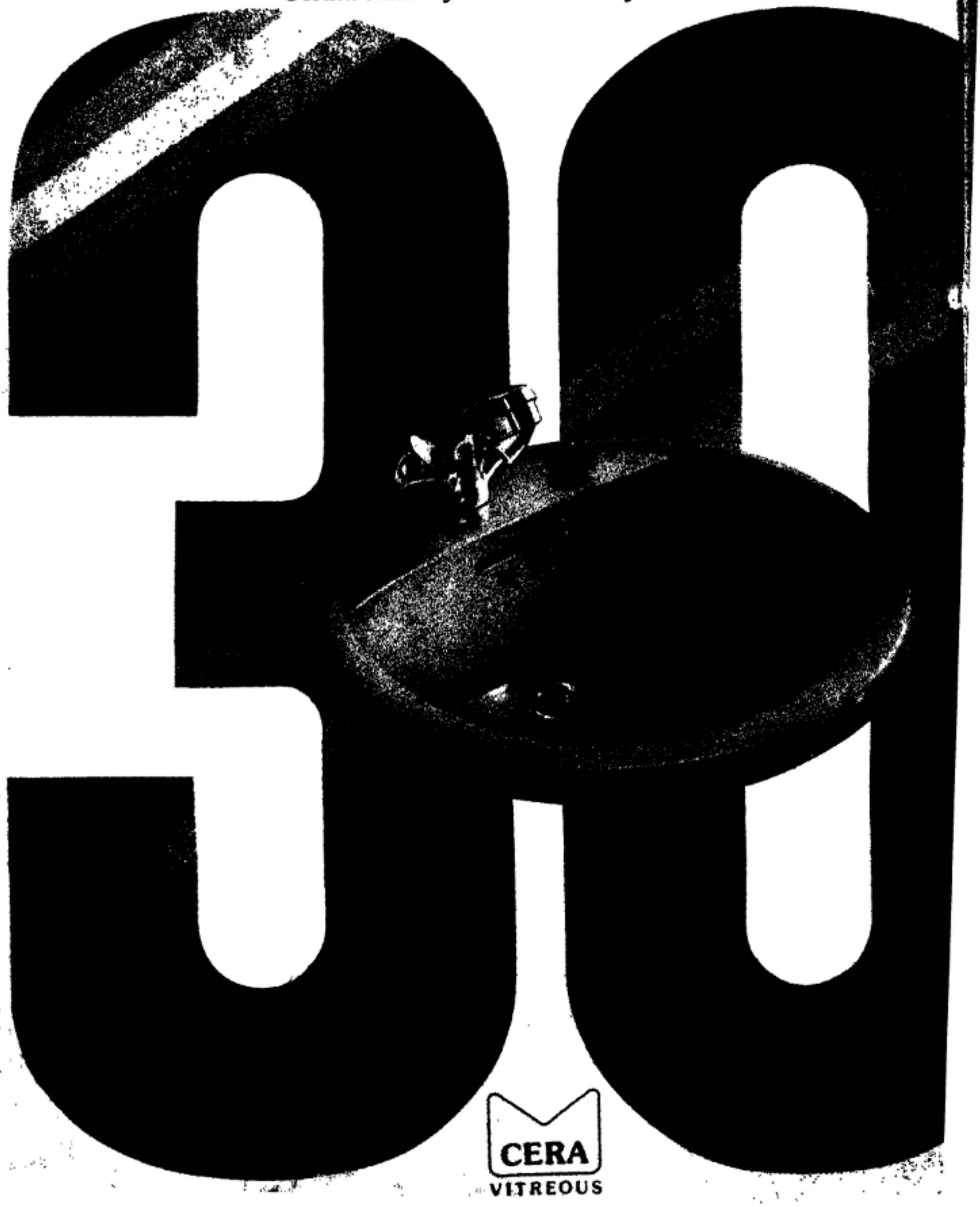
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Without a shade of doubt we could get your bathroo to reveal its true colours

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